

The Citizen-Soldier in the American Imagination: Traces of the Myths of World War II in the “Army Strong” Recruitment Campaign

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Abstract

The myth of the citizen-soldier resonates strongly in the American imagination and helps (re)construct America the nation. The construction of this myth in the historical context of World War II is especially prominent in contemporary American culture. The myth of the World War II citizen-soldier functions as an individualized discursive formation with specific rules of formation. I contextualize the construction of this individualized discursive formation within the historical era of World War II, and show how it excludes in direct contradiction to the ideals of civic nationalism that shaped the concept of national citizenship of that era. The United States military, which changed to an All Volunteer Force in 1973, functions as a neoliberal state apparatus in modern America. However, the United States Military still largely relies on the rules of formation and the ideals of civic nationalism in order to recruit volunteers for its forces. Traces of the myths of World War II, particularly the myth of the citizen-soldier, can still be found in the United States Army’s recruitment material in its current “Army Strong” campaign despite the contradictory ideals of civic nationalism and neoliberalism. I conduct a Critical Discourse Analysis of three recruitment television commercials from the “Army Strong” campaign aired in 2009. I explain how the United States Army uses both the ideals of civic nationalism and the characteristics of neoliberalism in order to encourage potential recruits to join its ranks.

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Chapter 1: Introduction: The Citizen-Soldier

The Focus of the Research Project

The concept of the “citizen-soldier”¹ is found in many embodiments and representations of America the nation. The discourse of the American “citizen-soldier” permeates American history books, ranging from the Revolutionary War to our present day wars. It can be seen in popular media through film and television shows. It can also be found in recruitment material for all branches of the contemporary United States military. In this project, I intend to analyze if the modern United States military uses the concept of the “citizen-soldier” to encourage individuals to volunteer for military service. I argue that recruitment for the United States all volunteer force (AVF)² must rely on some sort of higher calling beyond a paycheck and benefits to attract recruits. In the past nine years, the events of September 11, 2001 and the subsequent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have provided a catalyst for the United States military to try to tap into sentiments based on unity and duty rather than career opportunity and individual gain in order to increase recruitment.

¹ I put quotations around “citizen-soldier” when I do not specifically refer to it in terms of a myth. This is to indicate that I do not assume what the term means outside of the concept of myth and imagined community.

² The contemporary United States military relies upon volunteers to fill its ranks, rather than conscription of mandatory service. It is therefore an all-volunteer force. From this point forward I will refer to an all volunteer force as an AVF.

I argue that the United States military's focus on a higher calling for recruitment today resonates with the myths that have come out of what resides in the American imagination as the "last good war," or World War II.³ More specifically, today the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier and his or her duty to nation is prominent in United States military recruitment efforts despite this myth's tense relationship with a military that has become a state apparatus within a neoliberal system. Prior to demonstrating how the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier has been uncomfortably embedded within a neoliberal system, it is first necessary to delve into a specific historical era that embodied, strengthened, and perpetuated this contextualized myth of the citizen-soldier: the post World War II era and its construction of "the greatest generation."⁴ Chapter 2 introduces the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier and the supporting myths of "the last good war" and "the greatest generation." This chapter specifically looks at some of the prominent literature written about the World War II "citizen-soldier" in an effort to understand some of the ways in which the "citizen-soldier" is constructed in this historical era. Chapter 2 also looks at the G.I. Bill in depth as a defining component of "the greatest generation."

Chapter 3 looks at some of the exclusions based on the construction of the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier as drawn out in Chapter 2. In explaining these exclusions, Chapter 3 confronts the myths of World War II as constructs that try to simplify history and offer an inclusive perspective of the "citizen-soldier" in World War II and "the greatest generation."

Chapter 4 explains some of the ways in which the United States military functions as a state apparatus within a neoliberal system. It compares the type of belonging that helps construct

³ Edward W. Wood, Worshipping the Myths of World War II: Reflections on America's Dedication to War (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, Inc., 2006).

⁴ Tom Brokaw, The Greatest Generation (New York: Random House, Inc., 1998); Tom Brokaw, The Greatest Generation Speaks: Letters and Reflections (New York: Random House, Inc., 1999).

the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier with the type of belonging found in a neoliberal society. It also explains the ways in which the contemporary United States military uses both privatization and professionalization to make the argument that it is a state apparatus within a neoliberal system.

Chapter 5 includes an analysis of the ways in which the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier is used in current Army recruitment material, with the goal of drawing out and explaining the tensions between this usage and the military's position as a state apparatus within a neoliberal system. I also include my overall research approach and rationale, site and population selection, data gathering methods, and data analysis procedures in this chapter. The analysis uses Critical Discourse Analysis as a methodological tool to analyze the official United States Army perspectives on and objectives for the "Army Strong" recruitment campaign. I also analyze three television recruitment commercials from the "Army Strong" campaign.

I conclude with some theoretical implications of this analysis for America the nation. I also include a list of recommendations for future research.

The Displacement of "We"s: The "Citizen-Soldier" in the Contemporary United States Military

The United States military went to an AVF in 1973. Since then, it is not clear that any American soldiers have to be citizens in the sense of embodying the hyphenated identity of the "citizen-soldier." The "citizen-soldier" identity, as it is constructed in the World War II era⁵, requires that ordinary citizens embody the ideals of unity, duty, and sacrifice in the name of the nation. Mark Shields makes the vague claim that "[b]ack when the nation had a draft, fully three

⁵ This will be explained and elaborated upon in the following chapters, especially Chapter 2.

out of four high school graduates and three out of four college graduates served in the military. At that time, a full third of college graduates were found in the enlisted (non-officer) ranks.”⁶ While Shields does not specify a time period, or from where this data comes, his perspective parallels with the makeup of the United States military during World War II. Though the United States military that fought in World War II functioned under conscription, many of the soldiers serving in World War II fell between the dictates of compulsion and pure volunteerism. The United States military during this war experienced a plethora of volunteers who knew that they would probably be drafted even if they did not volunteer. These volunteers are often written about and remembered as though they were temporarily responding to a call of duty to nation, rather than citizens entering war due to compulsion. The post-conscription, AVF contemporary United States military, however, exists largely as an occupational career track that requires professionalism. The focus on military service as a career across ranks and branches is a stark departure from the perception of military service as national duty. The contemporary military has also experienced change in its composition since 1973. John Lehman, the Navy Secretary under Ronald Reagan, commented in an article written for the *Washington Post* on January 26, 2003 that “the burdens of defense and the perils of combat do not fall even close to fairly across all of our society,” as many Americans no longer feel the desire or necessity to sacrifice in the name of the nation.⁷

While the World War II military functioned along gender and Jim Crow racial lines, it was still remarkably representative of the class composition of the United States. Today’s

⁶ Mark Shields, “In Power, but Not in Peril,” in *United We Serve*, ed. E.J. Dionne Jr., Kayla Meltzer Drogosz and Robert E. Litan (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), 134.

⁷ E.J. Dionne Jr. and Kayla Meltzer Drogosz, “United We Serve? The Promise of National Service,” in *United We Serve*, ed. E.J. Dionne Jr., Kayla Meltzer Drogosz and Robert E. Litan (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), 9; John Lehman, “Degraded into a Trade,” in *United We Serve*, ed. E.J. Dionne Jr., Kayla Meltzer Drogosz and Robert E. Litan (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), 141.

military is progressively integrated by race and gender but increasingly segregated by class.⁸ Even after increased interest in joining the armed forces after the events of September 11, 2001, the military experienced a drop in so-called quality. Despite this increased interest and even though recruitment goals were met immediately after these events for the 2001 recruiting year, scores on the Armed Forces Qualification Test fell, the army took in double the recruits with felony arrests as compared to 1998, and desertions also increased.⁹

There are many popular arguments that advocate actively reinvigorating the ideal of the citizen-soldier in order to combat the trends of falling quality in the American military and to alter the military's composition based on class lines to one more representative of the American population at large. This is a direct challenge to the military's recent emphasis on military service as a career opportunity. This debate highlights the complex character of the contemporary military. The United States Army, the largest branch of this contemporary military, once relied upon the slogan "An Army of One" for its recruitment efforts. Many within and outside of the Army have been critical of this short-lived recruitment campaign that lasted from 2000 to 2006. For example, an online search of "An Army of One" on youtube.com elicits many parodies of this campaign's recruitment commercials.¹⁰ In response to these criticisms a diffuse understanding of what the "One" means in this slogan has emerged that indicates the "One" is an acronym for officers, non-commissioned and enlisted.¹¹ The militarytimes.com has

⁸ Shields, 134.

⁹ Charles Moskos, "Patriotism-Lite Meets the Citizen-Soldier," in *United We Serve*, ed. E.J. Dionne Jr., Kayla Meltzer Drogosz and Robert E. Litan (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), 34-35.

¹⁰ EbonicProd, "An Army of One Parody," *Youtube*, 5 December 2006
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nwt5WkmwFp8> (22 April 2010).

When I visited youtube.com on 22 April 2010 and searched "An Army of One" the number one video listed was titled "Army of One Parody."

¹¹ I could not locate an official Army document that commented on what the "One" in "An Army of One" actually means.

a forum encouraging comments on an article titled “Making of a Marine Officer” where the *Marine Corps Times* spent 8 months following the men and women of Class 186 through officer training in Quantico, Va.¹² One respondent on this forum was a potential recruit and makes the comment that “The Army has this whole new slogan: "An Army of ONE", which I know stands for Officer, Non-Commissioned Officers and Enlisted; but talking to officers, NCOs and enlisted in the past few years...it seems like it is an Army of one :D ...every enlisted and officer for him/herself :thumbdown . Of course, I'm generalizing, but this seems to be true no matter which country or base I work on with soldiers...no one wants to help the other and everyone--officer and enlisted--just complains and complain some more. :argue:.”¹³ This forum respondent acknowledges that the “One” is supposed to stand for inclusiveness of all members of the Army, but he or she is highly skeptical of what the “One” truly represents. A personal statement from Captain Joe Swiecki, a member of the 10th special forces group, on the goarmy.com website tries to reinforce the unity of the “One” in the “An Army of One” slogan. He states that “[w]e have engineers, we have weapons experts, we have medics. But really, we aren't a true success until we come together as a team. And that's what an Army of One really represents.”¹⁴ In his implied effort to combat the criticisms of “An Army of One,” such as expressed by the forum respondent at militarytimes.com, Captain Joe Swiecki reveals that the contemporary Army has experienced a displacement of the “we” that *is* the army and the “we” that is not, but that *has* the army. The “we” that has the engineers, weapons experts and medics in Captain Swiecki’s statement is the “we” that is the Army. In the contemporary United States military, there is a divide between the

¹² “Making of a Marine Officer,” *Marine Corps Times*, 9 September 2005, <http://militarytimes.com/forums/printthread.php?t=80> (22 April 2010).

¹³ Dionysus1178_guest, “Re: Making of a Marine Officer,” *Marine Corps Times*, 29 October 2005, <http://militarytimes.com/forums/printthread.php?t=80> (22 April 2010).

¹⁴ Captain Joe Swiecki, “Cpt. Joe Swiecki: 10th Special Forces Group,” http://www.goarmy.com/special_forces/index.jsp?fl=false (22 April 2010).

once hyphenated “citizen-soldier” from World War II and beyond; today the soldier represents the “we” that is the army and the citizen represents the “we” that has the army. This divide occurs largely along class lines in the contemporary United States military, rather than the racial and gender lines that defined the World War II military. The common truth the contemporary displaced “we”s share resides in a society defined by a hegemonic and naturalized neoliberal system. The citizen and the soldier are both careerist and require professionalization under this system.

Despite the displaced “we”s in the neoliberal system, I argue that the military must rely on a myth more powerful than any neoliberal society can provide in order to recruit for a non-conscription force. This became especially significant after September 11, 2001, as the United States entered two wars within a three-year span. The possibility for attaining any sort of government subsidized economic benefits through military service, such as higher education or skills that might translate over into a civilian job, is not quite potent enough to convince volunteers to potentially sacrifice life and limb in the name of the nation if sent to war. Many modern Americans deny the republican ideal of duty to nation in the form of military service. Instead American’s see their country’s job as preserving personal and economic individual liberty.¹⁵ The events of September 11, 2001 arguably altered this sentiment, even if only temporarily and on a superficial level.

¹⁵ Dionne, JR. and Meltzer Drogosz, 2.

The Myth of the World War II Citizen-Soldier as an Individualized Discursive Formation

The potency of war as an element in the American imagination relies upon and revels in myth and purified perspectives of the history of its wars. One way scholars of America the nation can analyze and interpret some of the purified perspectives of war is by explaining the myths that have shaped popular American thought and images of World War II. One such myth of the “citizen-soldier” resides in the World War II era. The decision to focus on this historical era in no way implies that the characteristics of the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier begin and end with the era of World War II. However, due to the limitations of this specific research project, and its stated scope, I will specifically focus on the World War II era’s construction of the myth of the citizen-soldier. The particular myth of the World War II citizen-soldier is intricately bound to the concept of “the greatest generation.” Only “citizen-soldiers” coming out of what has become known as “the last good war” could create “the greatest generation” ever known to America. The myth of the World War II citizen-soldier, and all of its supporting myths, have worked as agents in (re)constructing America as an imagined community, or rather, as a nation.¹⁶ America the nation is an amorphous construction that exists dialectically with the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier, and its supporting myths. These myths function under the guise of clarity. This clarity operates under an overstated brilliance that subsumes everything obscure and deviant into its dialectical understanding of history. It is in this way, by subsuming and then *excluding* what lies outside of itself, that the myths of World

¹⁶ Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities (London, New York: Verso, 2006).

War II have helped develop the sense of familiarity that individuals can feel toward America the nation.¹⁷

As I demonstrate in the next chapter, the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier has constructed a clarified version of history that excludes certain elements. These elements include individuals and identities of the time that challenged (and continue to challenge) the very simplicity upon which the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier relied to uphold national cohesiveness in a time of war. As Michel Foucault has illustrated, the exclusion of which myths are capable is partly a result of individualized discursive formations.¹⁸ The myth of the citizen-soldier is both known and reliable in the American imagination. A set of rules of formation exists for the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier. The rules for this particular myth include a dedication to unity, duty, and cohesiveness. A popular wartime saying during World War II was “We are all in this together.”¹⁹ The collective sentiment in this saying extended beyond those who actually fought in the war, which demonstrates a particular conception of national unity during that era. Duty in the context of World War II is understood in terms of service to nation. Cohesiveness relies upon an absolute and total conception of America the nation. I elaborate on these rules in the following chapters. The rules apply to “*all* of its objects (however scattered they may be), *all* its operations (which can often neither be superposed nor serially connected), [and] *all* its concepts (which may very well be incompatible).”²⁰ I argue that the

¹⁷ Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2002), xvii.

¹⁸ Michel Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972).

¹⁹ Stephen Ambrose, Citizen Soldiers: The U.S. Army from the Normandy Beaches to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany June 7, 1944-May 7, 1945 (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 332.

²⁰ Michel Foucault, “Politics and the Study of Discourse,” in The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality, with two lectures by and an interview with Michel Foucault, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 54.

myth of the World War II citizen-soldier fulfills the basic criteria outlined by Michel Foucault in order to function as an individualized discursive formation. Explaining some of the ways in which the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier indeed fulfills the criteria for an individualized discursive formation, and how this formation is illustrated in contemporary United States military recruitment ads, allows me to open up a space that has the potential to “substitute differentiated analyses for the theme of totalizing history.”²¹ While myths do not have the same comprehensive nature as Foucault’s conception of *episteme*, they do have similar qualities in that they both offer “a space of *dispersion*.”²² For the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier this dispersion comes in the form of its exclusions, especially marginalized social identities of the time, and those “citizen-soldiers” who speak out against or do not embody the myth’s rules of formation (unity, duty, and cohesiveness). These excluded identities, explained in depth in Chapter 3, challenge the World War II citizen-soldier myth’s disciplinary tactic of linking the singular and the multiple. They defy the characterization of the individual defined by unity, duty and cohesiveness, and they disrupt the order of the multiplicity that is simplified into the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier.²³ The explanation of these dispersions will add clarity to the tension of the contemporary United States military’s usage of the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier in a society that no longer prescribes to the same rules of formation that it takes to uphold this myth; more specifically, the usage of this myth exists in a tense and incompatible relationship with a military that is an apparatus within a neoliberal system (which *is* an *episteme* of contemporary America).

²¹ Foucault, “Politics and the Study of Discourse,” 54.

²² Foucault, “Politics and the Study of Discourse,” 55.

²³ Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 149.

In order to explain the rules of formation for a specific myth that upholds the imagined community of America the nation, it is necessary to historically contextualize that myth. Edward Wood Jr., World War II veteran, author and critic of some of the most popular myths which have come out of the World War II era quotes Roland Barthes when he discusses myths: a myth “is constituted by the loss of the historical quality of things: in it, things lose...memory...Myth does not deny things, on the contrary...it purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact...Myth acts economically: it abolishes the complexity of human acts.”²⁴

The economical quality of myths, to which Barthes refers, allows them to exist in “homogenous empty time,” where lapses in memory and non-historical qualities make it difficult to ascertain the exact moment they are conceived.²⁵ The task of explaining all of the ways in which the rules of formation have come into being for the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier in the American imagination is beyond the scope of this paper. However, I contextualize a historical era (the World War II era) that took a particular construction of the myth of the “citizen-soldier,” fostered it and (re)constructed its importance to the American national imagination.

Additionally, I attempt to analyze ways in which traces of this particular (re)construction have traveled through homogenous empty time and been implanted into the contemporary timeframe despite historical, social, cultural and political contextual changes.

War and conflict provide a powerful lens through which to explain one of the ways in which the concepts of national unity, duty and cohesiveness are fashioned. America the nation is

²⁴ Wood, xi. Wood states that this quote comes from Kevin Foster’s Fighting Fiction.

²⁵ Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities. For a further discussion of homogenous empty time see Partha Chatterjee, The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004), 3-25; Homi K. Bhabha “Anxious Nations, Nervous States,” in Supposing the Subject, ed. Joan Copjec (New York: Verso, 1994), 201-217; Homi K. Bhabha, The Location of Culture (New York: Routledge, 1994), 215-217.

imagined as a *community* through the rules of formation for the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier. In this imagining, America is devised “as a deep, horizontal comradeship,” one that compelled millions of people (mostly men) to summon the willingness to sacrifice their lives in the name of “such limited imaginings.”²⁶ The experience of World War II, and the historical recollection of this experience, helps devise a common truth about the American people, providing them with a framework within which they position themselves as collective nationals.²⁷ The common truth framework is based on a supposed shared history and ancestry, which has been narrated through time, resulting in the creation of an idea of national cohesiveness and absolutism.²⁸ In the context of World War II, this national cohesiveness and absolutism is based upon a collective sense of unity and duty. This framework constructs an American national citizenship, conflating two distinct concepts: citizenship and nationality.²⁹ America the nation purports to represent a cultural solidarity, providing an identity formation in the concept of nationality. This nationality is premised upon the common truth of a supposed shared history and ancestry, including the shared history of the World War II era’s cohesiveness based upon unity and duty. Citizenship, however, is a legal conferral of belonging. The “citizen-soldier” as a part of the common truth coming out of World War II is a national myth that helps construct a specific conception of national citizenship. This conception combines the elements of nationality’s cultural solidarity with the belonging aspect of citizenship into one identity, blurring the distinction between the two. The conception of national citizenship coming

²⁶ Anderson, 7.

²⁷ Kwame Anthony Appiah, “Cosmopolitan Patriots,” in Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation, ed. Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 99-101.

²⁸ Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman in Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 393.

²⁹ Mary K. Bloodsworth-Lugo and Carmen R. Lugo-Lugo, “Citizenship and the Browning of Terror,” Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice 20 (2008).

out of the World War II era has no need to distinguish between the technical conceptual differences of nationality and citizenship. Recall that the rules of an individualized discursive formation (unity, duty and cohesiveness for the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier) apply to *all* of its concepts, which may be incompatible. The concept of national citizenship is part of the World War II citizen-soldier myth. It is therefore subject to the rules of the individualized discursive formation. The fusion of nationality and citizenship are indeed incompatible, as they arguably embody two different conceptual meanings. This is evident through the vast literature that devotes much time and energy to parsing out the differences between nationality and citizenship.³⁰ However, I intentionally use this term with an assumed clarity that it does not really possess in order to highlight the ways in which the rules of the individualized discursive formation apply to it.

Benedict Anderson lends insight to the ways in which the cultural roots of the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier allowed its particular conception of national citizenship to take on incredible authority and power, both over collectives of individuals and over those individuals' lives themselves. Dedication to the rules of formation, cohesiveness based on unity and duty, relies upon an accessible narrative to produce a feeling of collective belonging. The myth of the World War II citizen-soldier provided a narrative of sacrifice in war and allowed those with American national citizenship to imagine the existence of an entity larger and greater than its constituent parts. Indeed, "it is during war that the nation is imagined as a community

³⁰ For a further discussion of the conceptual differences between nationality and citizenship see: Cara Wong and Grace Cho, "*Jus Meritum: Citizenship for Service*," in Transforming Politics, Transforming America: The Political and Civic Incorporation of Immigrants in the United States, eds Taeku Lee, Karthick Ramakrishnan, and Ricardo Ramirez, (University of Virginia Press, 2006); T.K. Oommen, Citizenship, Nationality and Ethnicity (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997); David McCrone and Richard Kiely, "Nationalism and Citizenship," Sociology 13 (2000): 19-34.

embodying ultimate values,”³¹ which allows it to exist within a homogenous empty time.³² American national citizenship is an identity construct that has neither an obvious beginning nor end. It is embedded in a cauldron of continuity, where “ ‘forgetting’ the experience of this continuity...engenders the need for a narrative of identity.”³³ The national citizenship of the World War II era relied upon the continuity provided by the narrative myth of the World War II citizen-soldier to perpetuate the feelings of national absolutism and simultaneity that exist within homogenous empty time. This narrative constructs the idea that in the struggle of World War II, citizens were able to imagine their own secular perpetuation through the existence of America the nation. Death and sacrifice played central roles in the construction of this narrative. When individuals imagined their own secular perpetuation through America the nation by means of death and sacrifice in World War II, they could transform their own fatality into continuity through secular means.³⁴ The “citizen-soldiers” of World War II survive their own mortality by exposing themselves to the threat of death, or by actually dying in war.³⁵ They supposedly live on through America the nation for which they made the ultimate sacrifice. Survival thus becomes possible for the nation *and* for the sacrificing “citizen-soldier.” The unstated assumption in this logic is that America the nation has and will continue on in perpetuity. Furthermore, it assumes that all soldiers who died in World War II combat or as members of the military during this war fall under this ideal of sacrifice. In this narrative myth, each soldier’s sacrifice restores the past of the nation.³⁶ This past, however, has neither a clear beginning nor

³¹ Gopal Balakrishnan, “The National Imagination,” ed. Gopal Balakrishnan in Mapping the Nation, (London and New York: Verso, and in association with New Left Review, 1996), 209.

³² Anderson, 26.

³³ Anderson, 205.

³⁴ Anderson, 11. The onslaught of the century of Enlightenment brought on a necessity for a sense of continuity beyond religious belief; see also Horkheimer and Adorno, 38.

³⁵ Horkheimer and Adorno, 38.

³⁶ Horkheimer and Adorno, 41.

end. The obscurity apparent in these assumptions is subsumed into the clarity of the myth of America the nation and the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier that upholds this nation.

Using death and sacrifice in World War II allowed those with American national citizenship, particularly the “citizen-soldiers” who fought in the war, to alleviate fear through a secular process that transformed their fatality into continuity. The continuity occurred through the strengthening of America the nation as a grand narrative. The myth of the World War II citizen-soldier embodied the kind of absolutism that America the nation as a grand narrative necessitates. This absolutism is defined by limited and absolute boundaries.³⁷ Absolute boundaries work toward an eradication of the unknown by disallowing anything inside to remain outside of its borders, since fear comes from the “outside.” This eradication process creates a belonging to the inside that results in an identity construction in terms of national citizenship. The construction of identity based on national borders relies on an outside that delimits its interior. Individuals’ identities are constructed by rejecting “others.” There is thus a border that exists between the national citizenship self and ‘others’ that do not embody the limited definition of the national citizenship of any given time. This absolute border must be persistently maintained because there is constant projection and transgression across it.³⁸ National citizenship is further solidified by the assumption that there is a “permanent continuity beneath apparent change.”³⁹ There is no room for the unknown or the unorthodox in a grand narrative *or* a myth defined by absolutism. The myth of the World War II citizen-soldier, as part of the grand narrative of America the nation based on a common truth, thus has no room for the peripheral

³⁷ Anderson, 56.

³⁸ Dr. Gerard Toal, Writing on Border Lines: Discourse, Identity & Power, 2: Cultural Studies, Feminism & (Post) Colonial Discourse Analysis, PSCI 5504 course lecture, Module 6, Macromedia Breeze Presentation Virginia Tech Blackboard, accessed 29 November 2008.

³⁹Jonathan Ree, “Cosmopolitanism and the Experience of Nationality,” ed. Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins in Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 85.

identities or the aberrant citizen-soldiers of the era. However, the attempt to extinguish the unknown and delineate sharp borders has ensured the construction of the World War II citizen-soldier as a myth even if it is perceived as true for some of those who experienced and were part of its construction.⁴⁰ It is a myth because it attempts to separate the “other” or differences outside of its absolute borders. However, difference not only separates but it also connects.⁴¹ Alongside the strictly delineated borders of the national citizenship that supports the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier lingers those “others” or differences that support the practices and discourses that perpetuate that myth’s borders.

The Composition of the Myth of the World War II Citizen-Soldier: Ties to “virtu”

The American military is an institution of America the nation that has devised powerful enough ways to create meaning out of serving, where sacrifice is always a real and distinct possibility.⁴² Serving is dependent upon an ideology of national absolutism. The limited and absolute boundaries of the nation must be defended, and the military is one of the institutions responsible for this. This defense comes in multiple varieties. The obvious is literally defending

⁴⁰ This discussion is based upon Horkheimer and Adorno’s conception of the nation as a grand narrative (11). They speak more broadly in terms of Enlightenment rationale. In these broader terms, the concept of the nation, which Enlightenment rationale wants to define as “the unity of the features of what it subsumes” is rather “a product of dialectical thinking, in which each thing is what it is only by becoming what it is not.” The concept of the nation as an absolute and limited whole has, as a myth, become detached from the thing that it really is. The nation is what it is only by becoming what it was never intended to be under Enlightenment thinking: a myth. Using this reasoning, I deduce that an idea (the World War II citizen-soldier) that supports the collective and absolute conception of the nation is also a myth. This is supported in the previous ten pages of this manuscript as well.

⁴¹ Dipesh Chakrabarty, Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), 110.

⁴² Anderson, 53.

against a real or perceived aggressor. Less obvious are the ways in which the military as an institution reifies myths of America the nation, for example, through its recruiting mechanisms. This reification defends the ideas, concepts, constructs and myths that help uphold the limited and absolute boundaries of America the nation. This second mechanism of defense, much more abstract and less tangible than the first, comprises the theoretical focus of this research project.

The World War II citizen-soldier is one of the myths that help create American national absolutism. It therefore is an actor in the more abstract mechanism of defense that reifies the myth of America the nation through homogenous empty time. The myth of the World War II citizen-soldier has become a part of the grand narrative myth of America the nation, and it also has been transported through homogenous empty time to occupy a space in the contemporary American national imagination. However, the concept of the “citizen-soldier” is not unique to America the nation; it significantly predates America the nation’s obscure date of conception. Niccolo Machiavelli was writing about the importance of the “citizen-soldier” to a collective body in the early 16th century, and there was a long philosophical history on this subject before him. His points in The Art of War are useful in understanding the World War II “citizen-soldier’s” importance to the concept of America the nation. He frames his discussion in terms of the “citizen-soldier’s” importance not only to the military, but also to civil society. In his view, the military should provide the type of defense necessary to preserve all that men cherish. For this reason, the importance of military training and the experiences of the “citizen-soldier” reach beyond the function of defense to the enhancement of civic education.⁴³ For the military to be able to accomplish these goals the people of a nation must acquire and foster a sense of *virtu*. The military can provide the venue to inculcate and condition this quality into individuals and

⁴³ Niccolo Machiavelli, The Art of War, revised edition of the trans. Ellis Farnsworth (Cambridge, MA: De Capo Press, 1965), xlviiii-xlix, 4.

collectives of individuals through incredible discipline and training.⁴⁴ He makes clear, however, that a requirement for fostering *virtu*, which is largely a military quality, is that all soldiers must be citizens, constructing a hyphen between the two. Moreover, the occupation of the soldier should be a part time endeavor of the citizen when the defense of the nation calls for his services. Once the nation no longer requires the services of the soldier, he should return to his former occupation or choose another as a citizen, unless his duty and services are required again and he is able to serve. The hyphen that connects the citizen to the soldier is thus maintained prior to and after military service is completed. This hyphen requires a society that privileges a sense of republican duty to nation. If military service and soldiering become full time occupations then the attributes of *virtu*,⁴⁵ which the military can foster, can become transformed into ones of cruelty, corruption, licentiousness and discontent.⁴⁶ The benefits of *virtu* require the “citizen-soldier.” While they are instilled in the soldier during military training and experience, they are most useful to society when the soldier resides as a citizen outside of these venues.

The concept of the “citizen-soldier” is also found in the contemporary popular American imagination. For example, multiple elected politicians and non-elected military personnel met in Fort Hood, Texas on Tuesday 10 October, 2009 to address the tragedy that had taken place there just days before Veterans day. On 5 November 2009, an Army psychiatrist opened fire at Fort Hood, Texas. He killed twelve people and injured thirty-one.⁴⁷ General George W. Casey and President Barack Obama both spoke of the cohesiveness and unity of the armed forces in the face

⁴⁴ Machiavelli, *lv*.

⁴⁵ Machiavelli, *lv*. These characteristics include boldness, bravery, resolution and decisiveness.

⁴⁶ Machiavelli, 14-15, 21, 23, 30. *Virtu* is honored in a republic, as opposed to a monarchy where it is feared, according to Machiavelli (77). I make an assumption that the same can be said for a nation. The connection between a republican form of government and the nation is not drawn out here. This is certainly a recommendation for future research to expand this project.

⁴⁷ Pete Williams, Savannah Guthrie, Scott Foster, Kameko Jones, Joel Seidman, Bill Dedman, and Alex Johnson, “Gunman Kills 12, Wounds 31 at Fort Hood,” *NBC News* and *msnbc.com*, 5 November 2009, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/33678801//> (22 April 2010).

of this tragedy. The discourse of these speeches constructed the cohesiveness and unity as derivatives of the core values that its service members embody and through which their legacies will live. These esteemed men thus discursively constructed continuity for any honorable soldier through the concept of a soldier's service to America the nation. The United States military's service men and women are said to represent America's best due to their sacrifice to stand up for "the values that live in the hearts of all free peoples."⁴⁸ This sentiment is seamlessly translated to those who were killed during the shooting at Fort Hood through the discourse used by those in positions of power, most notably General Casey and President Obama.

This discourse functions within the individualized discursive formation of the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier. The murdered soldiers at Fort Hood have become objects of this formation defined by cohesiveness, unity and duty. The President and General's discourse validates the lives of the thirteen victims in terms of service to the armed services, rather than as victims of an individual who was both a product of and supposed aberration within the contemporary United States Army. The gunman, Major Nidal Malik Hassan, had received a poor performance evaluation, was supposedly upset about his pending deployment to Iraq, and was the potential author of online postings that discussed suicide bombings and other threats.⁴⁹ Despite these findings, Hassan was still an active member of the United States Army when the shootings took place. President Obama and General Casey discursively elevated the crime of murder to the sacrifice of warfare by framing the victims' deaths in terms of the service of and necessary sacrifice for being a soldier. These esteemed speakers label the victims as "the fallen" because of their subject position as soldier, even though some of them had yet to see battle and none of them actually fell in battle. Their position as soldier resonates with the myth of the

⁴⁸ Barack Obama and George W. Casey. "Presidential Speech." Presidential Speech. Fort Hood, TX, Fort Hood. 10 Oct. 2009. Speech, viewed on CNN.

⁴⁹ Williams, et al., "Gunman," page 1.

World War II citizen-soldier because the President and General discursively define their service in terms that evoke cohesiveness based on unity and duty, and *virtu*.

The military and its constituent parts, politicians, nationals and citizens often speak of contemporary American soldiers in terms of the characteristics that define *virtu*, no matter the criticisms these same individuals might levy against the policies that send soldiers to war. American soldiers are thus correlated with the individualized discursive formation of the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier. *Virtu* illuminates the rules of formation for the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier: cohesiveness based on unity and duty. Conceptually, for a nation to glean the most benefits from *virtu* it must embody a sense of cohesiveness that results in a perspective of duty to nation. Citizens and soldiers must thus hold a sense of unity with the nation that allows *virtu* to traverse the hyphen between the “citizen-soldier.” Not only does *virtu* become more beneficial when it is used in the civic realm, which allows a sense of cohesiveness based on unity and duty to exist outside of military service, but it also requires the hyphen to be a constitutive connector between the citizen and the soldier. The two components are unified through the traversing effect of *virtu*. The assumption the individualized discursive formation of the myth of the citizen-soldier makes is that these rules are translated across the hyphen between citizen and soldier. Those citizens with *virtu* will volunteer to serve in an AVF; they will carry this *virtu* with them as soldiers and it will become strengthened; if they return to the civilian realm again then they will further carry this strengthened *virtu* into their new existence as the “citizen-soldier.” The *virtu* that exists as a catalyst for service constructs the hyphen between the citizen and the soldier because it is strengthened through military service and is used beyond this service. The United States military and its constituent parts, politicians, nationals and citizens use *virtu*-laden discourse to place American soldiers as an object subject to the individualized

discursive formation of the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier. This is true despite the fact that American military service was decoupled from conscription in 1973. Machiavelli's endorsement of the "citizen-soldier" steeped in *virtu* directly warned against a military comprised of all volunteers, stating that "it could not properly be called a *delectus*, and few would be willing to serve."⁵⁰ He concurrently warned against a military based on compulsive service. Rather, a military that is able to defend the nation and all that it cherishes beyond its mere borders requires that soldiers be motivated by a sense of duty to their nation.⁵¹ An AVF that is not composed of a citizenry with a sense of duty to nation cannot allow the benefits of *virtu* to infiltrate the military and civilian realm in the same comprehensive way that a military composed of "citizen-soldiers" makes possible.

Before I discuss the ways in which the American AVF as an apparatus in a neoliberal society is in tension with the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier, I must first introduce the World War II "citizen-soldier." This myth is upheld by the supporting myths of the "last good war" and "the greatest generation;" it upholds that the "citizen-soldiers" who emerged out of the "last good war" embody the rules of formation intimately related to Machiavelli's *virtu* and subsequently have become "the greatest generation" America the nation has ever known.

⁵⁰ Machiavelli, 29. The concept of *delectus* refers to a military composition based on selective service, footnote page 25.

⁵¹ Machiavelli, 29.

Chapter 2: Meet the Myth of the World War II Citizen-Soldier

The Myth of the World War II Citizen-Soldier and Supporting Myths

Many of America the nation's contemporary myths of equity and equality derive from the ashes of World War II. World War II's legacy, and all that it ostensibly made possible for American the nation and its nationals, carries an incredible amount on its broad and lofty shoulders. Americans often tout it as the catalyst for the Civil Rights Movement, the Woman's Rights Movement, broadening American prosperity and increased equity in the economic, political and social spheres, as well as yielding what Tom Brokaw and many others have labeled "the greatest generation" in American history.⁵²

Tom Brokaw's work, as one piece of literature in popular American culture, collects and tells personal stories through the collective *zeitgeist* of the World War II era, which centered on cohesiveness through duty and unity, and moral certitude. These characteristics defined ideal national citizenship at the time. In his book, The Greatest Generation, Brokaw largely allows the veterans to tell their own stories.⁵³ However, he surreptitiously weaves these narratives into a larger story that he wishes to convey. Brokaw's voice narrates the first two chapters, "Generations" and "The Greatest Generation." He provides insight into why he decided to author and compile the narratives contained in his books. He states: "Looking back, I can recall that the grown-ups all seemed to have a sense of purpose that was evident even to someone as young as four, five, or six. Whatever else was happening in our family or neighborhood, there

⁵² Michael D. Gambone, The Greatest Generation Comes Home: The Veteran in American Society (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2005), 13-14.

⁵³ Brokaw, The Greatest Generation; Brokaw, The Greatest Generation Speaks: Letters and Reflections.

was something greater connecting all of us, in large and small ways.”⁵⁴ He perceived a collective sense of unity with “the greatest generation,” which had flowed through generations in homogenous empty time. He is “in awe of them” and wants “to pay tribute to those men and women who have given us the lives we have today.”⁵⁵ In his writing, he conveys an urgency to share their greatness through their own voices because “they are dying at an ever faster pace.”⁵⁶ In these statements he constructs an absolutist perspective on “the greatest generation’s” greatness, and how all Americans have benefited from them. In his words, their greatness has “given us the lives we have today” by traveling through homogenous empty time. We are therefore all indebted to this “greatest generation” in some way, big or small. Brokaw unabashedly ignores any criticism to the phrase he coined so long ago, helping to construct not only the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier, but also a series of myths about the after-effects of these soldiers’ victory in World War II. Brokaw uses criticisms as illustrations of modesty, humility and selflessness when they come from the veterans themselves. He constructs the World War II veterans as citizen-soldiers, who have lived heroic lives but refuse to associate the term hero with their military or civilian experiences. Furthermore, he uses the citizen-soldiers’ demurrals as added evidence of their true heroic nature. He uses their personal narratives as a way to show how they came home and embraced the citizen part of the hyphen with as much diligence and determination as they had in the war when they were the soldier, rather than live with a sense of entitlement. The Greatest Generation’s account of the World War II “citizen-soldier” argues that they not only rebuilt their own lives; they also rebuilt America with their incredible drive and determination.

⁵⁴ Brokaw, The Greatest Generation, 11.

⁵⁵ Brokaw, The Greatest Generation, xxx.

⁵⁶ Brokaw, The Greatest Generation, xxx.

Brokaw's ability to weave the World War II veterans' individual successes and actions into a collective synergistic force relies upon their collective identity as the "citizen-soldier." Their character, defined in terms of *virtu* by Brokaw, allowed them to maintain the quality of the "citizen-soldier" in post-war America that provided the basis for victory in World War II. The rules of formation for the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier as an individualized discursive formation determined the incredible amount of success they experienced. They not only embodied cohesiveness based on duty and unity in a time of treacherous war, but they also embodied the same type of cohesiveness when they came home in order to build a better America. Machiavelli's *virtu* had successfully spanned the hyphen for the World War II "citizen-soldier" in Brokaw's account.

Brokaw's argument is inspiring and its "periodic" criticisms often draw ire and backlash.⁵⁷ Even with the chapters on women, African-Americans, Asian-Americans and various other marginalized identities of the time, one cannot help but notice that, with few exceptions, the stories end with great success regardless of where the individual started before the war. As mentioned above, this success is defined in terms of *virtu* and as an object of an individualized discursive formation. They "answered the call to help save the world from the two most powerful and ruthless military machines ever assembled."⁵⁸ When they came home, "they were a new kind of army...moving onto the landscapes of industry, science, art, public policy, all the fields of American life, bringing to them the same passions and discipline that had served them so well during the war."⁵⁹ Simply put, they became once again "ordinary people" who wanted to build normal lives.⁶⁰ Brokaw displays their narratives as if the rules of formation

⁵⁷ Brokaw, *The Greatest Generation*, xxx.

⁵⁸ Brokaw, *The Greatest Generation*, xix.

⁵⁹ Brokaw, *The Greatest Generation*, xx.

⁶⁰ Brokaw, *The Greatest Generation*, 15.

that contributed to their success as the soldier easily and seamlessly translated across the hyphen to their role as the post-war citizen.

Individual veterans tell the narratives in The Greatest Generation, often as they look back over their experiences, which are separated by perspective, time, and new experiences. The way Brokaw frames these narratives as a comprehensive whole resembles an archive, which is often no more “than a social tool for the work of collective memory,” according to Arjun Appadurai.⁶¹ The Greatest Generation is most likely not criticized often because many of its readers view it as a container of the spirit of all of those who lived through the hardships of World War II. As an archive, it helps perpetuate the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier as an individualized discursive formation because of the way its readers use it as a “sacralized...site of the past of some sort of cultural collectivity (often the nation), which is seen as sacred by definition.”⁶² The practice of archiving a supposed collective memory is a practice that gives the myths of the World War II citizen-soldier and “the greatest generation” belief and meaning.⁶³ The collective, personal character of Brokaw’s work subsumes all differences outside of the myths of the World War II citizen-soldier and “the greatest generation” into one totalizing “majority history” by excluding the differences. Even when narratives of those holding marginal identities are included, they work to uphold this “majority history” because all of the successes in Brokaw’s work are framed as objects of the individualized discursive formation of the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier. Brokaw’s construction of these narratives is more than a recollection; it is

⁶¹ Arjun Appadurai, “Archive and Aspiration,” ed. Joke Brouwer and Arjen Mulder (Rotterdam: V2 Publishing/NAI Publishers, 2003), 14-15, http://www.appadurai.com/publications_01-pres.htm. For a further discussion of memory and the rewriting of history, see Homi K. Bhabha, The Location of Culture, 229-232.

⁶² Appadurai, 15.

⁶³ Chakrabarty, 111.

an aspiration for perpetuating the idea of American greatness in “the last good war” through the personal stories of “citizen-soldiers.”

The goal of this research is not to invalidate these narratives, nor to question the sentiments or facts of their writers. It is however, to problematize the framework of the myths of the World War II citizen-soldier and “the greatest generation,” which uses these narratives and others like them as evidence for unquestionable truth and absolutism. Furthermore, I also wish to glimpse an understanding of how these largely unproblematized ideas are still used today to (re)construct the American national imagination. This requires looking beyond the actual material that is present to what is excluded. Brokaw seems to select the narratives that will construct his overall argument, an argument that is based on his own personal experience as a child growing up in the World War II era and as an adult in awe of the benefits “the greatest generation” purportedly provided the entire nation. While there is incredible value in capturing these narratives, another incredible opportunity is the ability to open up a discourse about how they may or may not contribute to the (re)construction of an absolute and exclusive imagined community. Brokaw’s archival rendering of a totalizing history, one in which all soldiers who fought in World War II are considered “citizen-soldiers,” excludes numerous “minority histories” even while it includes chapters on a few marginalized identities.⁶⁴ In this context, “minority” refers to the role that those holding marginal identities played in the myths of World War II. Brokaw’s incorporation of some of the successful narratives of individuals holding these marginal identities converts the past of their marginality into lesser importance.⁶⁵ Their narratives are only important in so much as they support the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier. Brokaw thus includes them as success stories despite being part of a “minority history”

⁶⁴ Chakrabarty, 97.

⁶⁵ Chakrabarty, 100.

and without delving into the relationship between the “majority history” and the “minority histories.” Rather than reveal heterogeneity in the histories of those who fought in World War II, or were denied the prerogative to fight, Brokaw’s account perpetuates a totalizing and absolute myth through homogenous empty time.

Brokaw is not an academic historian, but his work has experienced widespread readership, support and appeal. His work has provided literary space to a “majority history” while simultaneously excluding “minority histories.” The myth of the World War II citizen-soldier has also been supported by more academic historical accounts of the heroism and comradeship that permeated the combat soldiers’ existences in World War II. These two characteristics are further examples and objects of the cohesiveness based on unity and duty that define the rules of formation for the myth of the World War II citizen soldier as an individualized discursive formation. As objects of this formation, heroism and comradeship become defining and comprehensive characteristics for the “citizen-soldiers” of World War II. Stephen Ambrose, prominent historian on the World War II soldier, highlights these characteristics in his in depth look at the World War II “citizen-soldier.” Like Brokaw, he also fails to “help us see limits to modes of viewing enshrined in the practices of the discipline of history” by supporting the “majority history” of the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier.⁶⁶

Ambrose frames comradeship by taking a closer look at the human side of the soldiers’ existence during war.⁶⁷ His documentation of the “citizen-soldier,” again largely told through their own voices, does not shy away from the very human aspects of their experience. The men on the frontline, who lived and often died in precarious moments cramped into small foxholes close to the enemy’s line, were forced to deal with the difficulty of performing bodily functions

⁶⁶ Chakrabarty, 106.

⁶⁷ Ambrose.

when they were desperately trying to stay warm and leaving the foxhole could mean death. Beyond the difficulties of everyday tasks such as finding a safe and somewhat hygienic place to urinate and defecate, many men also experienced feelings of helplessness, boredom, and fear.⁶⁸ Despite the drudgery of foxhole living, the loneliness that accompanied these circumstances, and the strain of living in such close quarters with another man, the general consensus was that comradeship and closeness ruled the day. Sergeant Egger is quoted in Ambrose's Citizen Soldiers as saying, "I never observed any loners on the front lines...The men automatically paired up. The buddy system worked very well; it provided additional security...it provided additional warmth...We were a team, and sharing the adversities of the elements and combat brought us together and created a bond."⁶⁹ In this account, the isolation and fear bred by the climate of war worked to further solidify the comradeship necessary for the "citizen-soldiers" of World War II to achieve victory.

In addition to comradeship, heroism proved to be a key ingredient for the "citizen-soldiers'" victory. Ambrose largely describes heroic acts as those that require the "citizen-soldier" to comply with the spirit of unity and duty. Ambrose reveals unthinkable acts of heroism in his narrative of the "citizen-soldier." These acts had far-reaching range. For example, one German-speaking American fell in with a German patrol and captured over 100 Germans.⁷⁰ In another more systemic example, many men who had served on the front line for months on end had the unofficial heroic task of training soldiers in the midst of combat after United States Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall speeded up the training time of soldiers and ended the Army Specialist Training Program after the Normandy battle incurred more

⁶⁸ Ambrose, 264-265.

⁶⁹ Ambrose, 266.

⁷⁰ Ambrose, 268.

casualties than had been anticipated.⁷¹ Nearly a million men were sent to battle through a series of Replacement Depots, known as the Repple Depple.⁷² While many of the men who went through the Repple Depple died shortly after making it to the front line, the ones who did not were often greeted with disinterest and disdain. This dire situation, caused by a complete disconnect from the American high command in the European Theater of Operations and the men on the ground, called for incredible heroism in order to save soldiers' lives and survive. They had to rely on unity with and duty to one another in order to make up for the ineptitude of the high command. Comradeship thus requires heroism. One tank commander recalled his experience with the replacements by stating, "Could they shoot straight? They couldn't even hold the gun right! In the midst of the toughest fighting of the Third Army's campaign I was teaching men what I had learned in basic training."⁷³ Despite the miserable failure on the part of the United States Army in terms of training and informing the soldiers coming out of the Repple Depple, World War II was still won through incredible acts of heroism by combat soldiers.

Unlike Brokaw, Ambrose does not exclude the delinquents and incorrigibles that helped constitute the United States military during World War II. He provides an entire chapter dedicated to explaining the way "jerks, sad sacks, profiteers, and Jim Crow" all made it that much more difficult for the real heroes of World War II to forge the Allies' way to victory. Men from all ranks occupied these labels during the war. Their attributes ranged from desertion to petty thievery. Ambrose even criticizes General Patton under the guise of these labels. Patton insisted on requiring front men to shave and wear ties everyday, demonstrating an obvious disconnection between their existence and his perception of what it should have been.⁷⁴ Jim

⁷¹ Ambrose, 274.

⁷² Ambrose, 276-77.

⁷³ Ambrose, 285.

⁷⁴ Ambrose, 225.

Crow was another hurdle for the “citizen-soldiers” to overcome. Due to circumstance, heroism and comradeship through battle, these delinquent elements of the army were overcome. Despite them, the “citizen-soldier” prevailed. Though Ambrose includes them, they mostly function to more sharply draw an absolute border around the World War II “citizen-soldier.” They are used as a stark contrast to highlight everything that the “citizen-soldier” was not.

Ambrose uses the frames of comradeship and heroism to describe the strength it took to triumph. America the nation gave young citizens turned soldiers incredible amounts of responsibility. They embraced this responsibility as a “we” generation, believing that “We are all in this together.”⁷⁵ The “We” in “We are all in this together” differs greatly from the collective implications of the more recent “An Army of One” campaign, where the implied “we” actually only includes those in the Army. The “we” in “We are all in this together” was supposed to include everyone who had national citizenship in America the nation, rather than only the “we” that actually fought. As is shown in Chapter 3, the “we” in America the nation during the World War II era was not as inclusive as this slogan indicates. However, the sentiment and myth-laden understanding behind the slogan was one of inclusiveness for the entire nation. From Ambrose’s framework of comradeship and heroism, the “citizen-soldiers” of World War II came home to build modern America. Through decades of interviewing ex-GIs, Ambrose concludes that patriotism and idealism were not major components of the “citizen-soldiers” drive and determination, if they even played a part at all. Rather, a sense of duty, obligation and “unit cohesion” held them together despite all of the challenges of battle and inefficiencies within the United States military.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Ambrose, 332.

⁷⁶ Ambrose, 473.

The G.I. Bill: The Defining Component of “The Greatest Generation”

“The greatest generation” and “citizen-soldier” arguments of World War II have been further upheld in other rigorous research endeavors. Many writers and researchers have conducted collaborative research projects with World War II veterans about the ways in which the “citizen-soldiers” came home and became “the greatest generation”. World War II saw ordinary American citizens perform the most demanding civic responsibility possible: national defense.⁷⁷ The fact that 80% of American men born in the 1920s were military veterans of the World War II era, and that these men that served were more representative of the American male population than any subsequent war, exemplifies this idea.⁷⁸ World War II veterans often commented upon the ways by which the military equalized its members despite its obvious lack of homogeneity. The hierarchical structure aided in this perception. The officers, most of whom were career military men, were charged with training new recruits, most of whom were defined by the concept of the “citizen-soldier” and who would later go on to invoke labels such as “the greatest generation” and the builders of a better America.⁷⁹ This created some friction at times, and coupled with the hardship of warfare caused many veterans to reflect on their service as a fulfillment of a sense of duty but also something that they were glad to move beyond by returning to the civilian world.⁸⁰ This desire for “normalcy” is indicated by 81% of soldiers in 1945 asserting that they had fulfilled this duty and wanted to be discharged as soon as possible.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Suzanne Mettler, *Soldiers to Citizens: The G.I. Bill and the Making of The Greatest Generation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 3.

⁷⁸ Mettler, 7, 26.

⁷⁹ Mettler, 36.

⁸⁰ Mettler, 37.

⁸¹ Gambone, 30.

These veterans were born into an era when government was becoming a part of American citizens' lives at an unprecedented level, through public policies such as The New Deal. After going from ordinary citizen, to soldier, back to citizen as a veteran, they were further molded into positions attuned to civic engagement through public policy such as the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, better known as the G.I. Bill of Rights. In 1944 President Roosevelt addressed the nation and proclaimed that, "freedom from fear is eternally linked with freedom from want."⁸² He essentially tied his New Deal vision to post-war America in order to create lasting peace and create a standard of living greater than any ever known before. While a veterans' benefit package was but one part of his vision, his speech reflected the tone that would connect the "citizen-soldiers'" secular process of transforming fatality into continuity through military service to a human striving for alleviation from fear. This logic resonates with a concept of the nation that seeks to eliminate the unknown and create an absolute whole. The fear they would tackle would be the fear from want, which many of them had experienced during the Great Depression prior to becoming "citizen-soldiers."

The G.I. Bill, one result of Roosevelt's vision, deemed the veterans deserving based on their ultimate performance of "participatory citizenship" through military service.⁸³ These "citizen-soldiers" often invoked the traditional republican ideal of military obligation in their personal testimonies, which required a sense of duty from common American males when the nation required sacrifice.⁸⁴ This sentiment, often regarded as part of the traditional social fabric

⁸² Edward Humes, Over Here: How the G.I. Bill Transformed the American Dream (Orlando, Florida: Harcourt Inc., 2006), 19-23.

⁸³ Mettler, 22. Mettler uses the term "participatory citizenship" to define military service in World War II and also to define the "veterans' participation in two different types of civic activity. The first is their membership in a wide array of civic organizations...The second is their political activity, including membership in political organizations—both clubs and party committees—and participation in a wide range of other political activities..." 107.

⁸⁴ Mettler, 25.

of the time, feeds the idea of “the greatest generation.” They were a generation of young men and some women who sacrificed for their nation as a call of duty, and who returned home without any sense of entitlement. They aptly demonstrated Machiavelli’s combination of *virtu* and *prudenza*, which resulted in a dedication to the common good.⁸⁵ Along this line of thought, the benefits they received upon their return through policies such as the G.I. Bill imbued in them a further sense of duty, this time toward civic and political obligation and participation.⁸⁶

The G.I. bill was one of the key elements in prompting World War II veterans’ civic and political involvement, which were driving forces in their ability to rebuild America after the war.⁸⁷ More importantly, there were a number of interpretive effects that transformed the attitudes of the Bill’s recipients. The veterans who used the G.I. Bill increasingly saw government as for and about people like them. Their responses to these interpretations were to become more active citizens.⁸⁸ Other factors such as socialization, how involved parents were in civic and political activity, played a large role as well. Increased participatory citizenship could be seen for those who used the G.I. Bill to attain college education, as well as those who used it at the sub college level. Only over time did educational level seem to influence civic and political participation unevenly, with the most highly educated veterans remaining the most involved after the 1950-1964 time frame.⁸⁹

These findings are significant considering 51% of all who had served in the military attended school or went through training by using the G.I. Bill.⁹⁰ Veterans transferred their sense of duty and immediacy from the soldier part of the “citizen-soldier” hyphen to the citizen part as

⁸⁵ Machiavelli, lvi.

⁸⁶ Mettler, 111, 115.

⁸⁷ Mettler defines this involvement as membership in a wide array of civic organizations and their political activity, 107.

⁸⁸ Mettler, 110.

⁸⁹ Mettler, 107, 108, 118.

⁹⁰ Mettler, 42.

a student as well. They proved wrong the college faculty members and administrators who doubted their abilities in the classroom. They were often very serious students, forgoing many frivolous traditions associated with college life at the time.⁹¹ Veterans who went through the college programs and those who went through the sub college programs often reflected on these opportunities as turning points in their lives.⁹² Besides attaining higher levels of educational achievement than non-Veterans, G.I. Bill users achieved incredible upward social mobility in terms of occupational status and income over time.⁹³ All of these factors could be expected to correlate with an increase in civic involvement.⁹⁴ These findings, however, are largely only inclusive of white male veterans. The myth of “the greatest generation” frames war as a catalyst for this specific racialized and gendered cohort of the American population to build a new America and construct a better nation.

Machiavelli’s concept of *virtu* and duty to a collective whole illuminates the myth of the citizen-soldiers of the World War II era. They are constructed as selfless parts of a nation comprised of individuals willing to put their lives as citizens on hold to defend America and all that is good in the world. They sacrificed, many even with their lives, because they perceived themselves as part of something bigger than one man. They thus live on in the American national imagination in perpetuity with the nation they saved through sacrifice. Ambrose and Brokaw’s books, and the many other works that have told their stories, are reflections of the “citizen-soldiers” and the nation’s immortality. They help comprise the archives that allow America the nation to exist in homogenous empty time. In this narrative, or myth, which they help comprise, the nation has been purified. To revisit Barthes’ quotation, their stories constitute

⁹¹ Mettler, 71.

⁹² Mettler, 80.

⁹³ Mettler, 96, 100.

⁹⁴ Mettler, 105.

part of the larger narrative of the nation and offer a kind of clarity that make it easy to neglect the exclusions of this myth.

War has long provided the opportunity to sharpen the identity of America the nation as an imagined community and to provide a basis for strengthening national citizenship.⁹⁵ Theodore Roosevelt's largely indulgent narrative of the Rough Riders helped (re)construct the myth of the military as "a crucible." This crucible was constructed as being capable of creating a homogenous entity out of many differences.⁹⁶ The crucible myth traveled through homogenous empty time to strengthen the basis for the homogenizing hero aspect of the citizen-soldier myth. Thus, it was possible for the victory of the United States military in World War II to be easily transferred to the individual "citizen-soldiers" that comprised the crucible of the United States military, all of whom became heroes after the war. This myth becomes especially potent considering that the military during World War II was largely representative of the national male population, which encompassed many perceived differences at that time.⁹⁷ This homogeneity was then easily transferred to these "citizen-soldiers" once they returned to civilian society, allowing the myth of "the greatest generation" to (re)construct and reinforce the myth of the "citizen-soldier," and vice versa.

These myths are rooted in civic nationalism, where the nation is imagined, "to use Michael Ignatieff's words, 'as a community of equal, rights-bearing citizens united in patriotic attachment to a shared set of political practices and values.'⁹⁸ Civic nationalism, like the myths of World War II explored thus far, relies upon homogenous empty time and the unifying and equalizing effects of the nation. It also upholds the republican ideal of duty to nation. Those

⁹⁵ Gary Gerstle, American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 9.

⁹⁶ Gerstle, 41.

⁹⁷ Mettler; Gerstle, 204.

⁹⁸ Gerstle, 45.

who are willing to sacrifice in the name of the nation “ascend to the highest stage of humanity” in a society defined by civic nationalism.⁹⁹ Military service reinforces, protects, and embodies the concept of national cohesiveness. It works as one of the nation’s primary instruments for “rous[ing] unlike peoples in dramatically unlike conditions in an impassioned chorus of voluntary co-operation and sacrifice,” thus upholding civic nationalism and creating a simplified and absolute national citizenship.¹⁰⁰

Civic nationalism supports the idea that the American military was successful in World War II because it reflected the quality of the civil society of which it was a part.¹⁰¹ The “citizen-soldiers” coming out of World War II then rode their victory, based on their exceptional collective character that drove them to victory in the first place, to a post-war era where they demonstrated their abilities as “the greatest generation” ever known to America. However, the military and national citizenship excluded many of those who served, especially Blacks and women, from becoming part of this crucible, thus refuting the ideal of civic nationalism. “Ascend(ing) to the highest stage of humanity,” as civic nationalism promises, was not a possibility for them, and thus civic nationalism was not a possibility for America the nation as a whole. The national citizenship of World War II, that is based in civic nationalism, created an imagined community that excluded in its inclusions. The “citizen-soldier” and “the greatest generation,” rooted in a concept of civic nationalism, embody the false clarity of myth. They purport to describe and encompass a whole. In this assertion, they exclude so many that were not a part of the civic nationalism of the time, and thus did not have full national citizenship, but who still sacrificed in the name of a nation that did not fully include them.

⁹⁹ Gerstle, 57.

¹⁰⁰ Timothy Brennan, “The national longing for form,” ed. Homi K. Bhabha in Nation and Narration, (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 45.

¹⁰¹ Machiavelli, lxxii.

Chapter 3: Confronting the Myths of World War II

While Black male veterans used the G.I. Bill's educational provisions at rates similar to or even above their white counterparts, especially for the sub college programs, the same rate of correlation cannot be said for a subsequent increase in income and occupational status. This largely reflects the institutionalized character of racism at the time, and also the lack of pre-established infrastructure, such as all Black universities, for the veterans to enter after their service.¹⁰² It arguably, however, provided Black Americans with a catalyst for potential change, as many of them reflect on the bill as being the most inclusive and comprehensive policy from which they had ever benefited.¹⁰³ This catalyst may derive from the contradiction between equalization and cohesiveness, and the strict racial lines that were observed between Blacks and whites in World War II. The military saw the differences between whites and Blacks as too different, and thus detrimental to the fighting effectiveness of American troops if they were allowed to exist in the same units.¹⁰⁴ World War II functioned as an equalizer for those ethnicities that were brought under the umbrella of the white race by fighting or serving with white men for the American nation. These ethnicities included, but were not limited to, those of southern and eastern European descent. However, the American military during World War II distinctively excluded Black service men from this possibility.¹⁰⁵ This exclusion from the American imagined community, as illustrated through war, was reflected in the possibilities for

¹⁰² Mettler.

¹⁰³ Mettler, 141.

¹⁰⁴ Gerstle, 227.

¹⁰⁵ Gerstle, 231.

the subsequent benefits following Blacks' usage of the G.I. Bill upon their return home. A similar situation existed for women.

Social norms and expectations largely stood in the way of women's usage of the G.I. Bill as well.¹⁰⁶ All else being equal, the women who served had the qualities of the cohort of men who used the G.I. Bill at the highest rate. While all women who served were volunteers, they were also mostly from an elite sector of society, had experienced higher standards of living in childhood, were more likely to be protestant, and had been socialized toward education.¹⁰⁷ Women were less likely to see themselves as rightful beneficiaries of the G.I. Bill, and the overall potential upward social mobility was significantly less for women than for men during that time period in general.¹⁰⁸ While not much changed as far as women's position in the American political society due to their service in World War II, their relative position to men's decreased due to the incredible surge of empowerment the white male population received due to public policy such as the G.I. Bill.¹⁰⁹ The majority of women who served in World War II held all of the social markers that should have given them national citizenship as it had been constructed in that era. However, their gender adversely affected their participation in terms of what kind of service they could perform as members of the military during the war, which was relegated to auxiliary corps for the most part. Gender also limited their access to the G.I. Bill, which correlates with participation in the construction of a better America as part of "the greatest generation."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Glenn C. Altschuler and Stuart M. Blumin, The GI Bill: A New Deal for Veterans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 117-149.

¹⁰⁷ Mettler, 146.

¹⁰⁸ Mettler, 153.

¹⁰⁹ Mettler, 159.

¹¹⁰ Mettler.

Less information is available about collective Asian-American or Hispanic or Latino G.I. Bill usage. Many of the veterans holding these identities used their service as a way to carve a space in mainstream American society after the war. The Hispanic and Latino veterans created the American G.I. Forum, which gave them a platform for displaying their nationalism as veterans of what many consider the “last good war.”¹¹¹ Many Asian-American veterans, particularly the Japanese-Americans, used their service as a crucible of their loyalty to a nation that had interned Japanese-Americans during the war. Native Americans are rarely if ever mentioned as a population involved in the World War II efforts. If World War II eventually led to many of the 20th century’s defining social movements, then, immediately after the war many of these groups were trying to gain entry to an imagined national community that largely excluded them as members and that privileged white male service over others.

The G.I. Bill is a major component of the argument of the “citizen-soldiers” who comprised “the greatest generation.” Already, however, the exclusive character of the effects of this major factor is evident. Many soldiers and military volunteers, Blacks, women, Asian-Americans, Hispanics or Latinos, and Native Americans were not considered full members of the nation before the war, the way an ideal of civic nationalism might dictate. Furthermore, the social norms and expectations of the time, as well as institutionalized discrimination, prevented them from embodying the concept of the “citizen-soldier” in the ways white male veterans could. Of course there were exceptions to the typical veterans holding these identities, some of which Brokaw included in his book on “the greatest generation.”¹¹² However, these narratives are not

¹¹¹ Gambone, 131; Mettler, 119.

¹¹² There is a chapter named “Shame” in Brokaw’s *The Greatest Generation*, pages 185-233. This chapter includes the narratives of Martha Settle Putney (African-American female), Johnnie Holmes (African-American male), and Luis Armijo (Spanish-Apache male), Nao Takasugi (Japanese-American male). Each of their stories reflects the racial and gender hurdles these individuals had to face, and each one tells

necessarily representative of these cohorts at large. They thus work to uphold a myth of cohesiveness that by and large excluded others in similar positions. This exclusion takes on greater significance since military service became a critical test for public office at the local, state and federal levels for the World War II veterans.¹¹³ Those who were able to achieve greater civic and political participation through such mechanisms as the G.I. Bill were much better poised to occupy powerful positions in society.

The ideal of civic nationalism framed the high ground of the American and Allied forces during World War II. This ideal has traveled through homogenous empty time as a mechanism for establishing the ways in which the “citizen-soldier” heroes of World War II are remembered in the popular American imagination. The excluded service men and women have subsequently been lumped into the homogenous myth of the citizen-soldier despite their exclusion from both parts of the hyphen to a large degree. They get jumbled in with and lost between the lines of the popular wartime saying, “We are all in this together.” These groups are often praised as the torchbearers of civil rights and equality, which came out of movements in the post-World War II era. Lumping them in such a way mistakes the existence of civic nationalism at the time with the excluded groups’ usage of civic nationalism’s ideals to try to accomplish its touted but lacking goals. These groups manipulated the idea of civic nationalism, which existed prior to World War II albeit in a very exclusionary fashion, in order to accomplish the goals that would allow future historians, politicians, journalists, etc to bestow the title of “citizen-soldier” and “the greatest generation” upon them along with their white male counterparts. Their manipulation of these ideals should not be conflated with their actual existence within a nation that privileged civic nationalism’s non-exclusionary ideals.

a story of triumph despite these hurdles. They have each contributed in some way to the accomplishments of “the greatest generation” and have embodied the concept of the “citizen-soldier.”

¹¹³ Gambone, 51.

Another component of the myths of World War II includes the ways in which the “citizen-soldiers” personal lives, both before and after the war, reflected the national unity that their public lives upheld in terms of military service and civic participation. In many of the narratives in The Greatest Generation the traditional family plays a pivotal role.¹¹⁴ Other research has found that this nostalgic view of the post World War II American family is misleading. While a great increase in marriages paralleled the war, there was also a 42% increase in illegitimate births between 1939 and 1945. Likewise, marriages entered into hastily often suffered consequentially. The divorce rate was 16% in 1942 and rose to 27% by 1944. It reached the status of the highest recorded divorce rate in the world, at 31%, by 1945.¹¹⁵ Many fathers returning from the war had a difficult time communicating with their families about the experiences that would stay with them and affect them forever. For some families there was a constant disconnect between the soldier who had fought in the war for the possibility of the American dream and the man who had come home to fulfill this promise as a citizen, providing for his family. When writing on the subject of growing up in the shadow of “the greatest generation” Tom Matthews wonders “how so many heroes could return from whipping the Germans and then turn into such Huns as fathers.”¹¹⁶ Growing up, Matthews could not see the connection between what he constantly heard about the greatness of those who fought in World War II and his veteran father. He did not understand how this greatness did not transfer over to being a great father and family in terms of personal relationships. As an adult beneficiary and direct progeny of “the greatest generation” he could not help but wonder about the dark

¹¹⁴ A chapter titled “Love, Marriage, and Commitment” in Brokaw’s The Greatest Generation tells five narratives that center around this theme.

¹¹⁵ Gambone, 25.

¹¹⁶ Tom Matthews, Our Fathers’ War: Growing up in the Shadow of the Greatest Generation (New York: Broadway Books, 2005), 28.

underbelly of the heroic surface that is stridently portrayed in the celebration of the “citizen-soldiers” that comprised “the greatest generation.”

The desire to return to civilian life and leave the war behind was also accompanied by the desire to use the benefits of the G.I. Bill and new and different perspectives on life in order to fulfill nearly a generation of deferred gratification.¹¹⁷ Many historians of this era use characteristics such as self-indulgence and materialism as descriptors, often citing the unimaginative and consumer driven suburbs as the pinnacle of this assertion. While there may be some truth to this in terms of having more to spend due to a post-war economic boom, this perspective sits uncomfortably with another one that views the “citizen-soldiers” as the backbone of a rebuilt America with an eye toward the future and a happier vision of the American Dream based on a less superficial definition of what prosperity can mean.¹¹⁸ This tension *can* exist because the “citizen-soldiers” that comprised “the greatest generation” were not a completely homogenous group with all of the same goals and desires after the war the way a myth-laden version of these concepts portray. Not all of the “citizen-soldiers” were active in civic and political involvement, giving up all personal ambition for the so-called greater good. Likewise, not all of them were tied completely to their personal ambitions and self-interest. Many of them glided between these two perspectives, and no doubt many other perspectives not mentioned.

This idea resonates with some of the other characteristics of the “citizen-soldier,” such as humility and modesty. Humility and modesty should be connected to the *virtu* that the World War II “citizen-soldiers” held. The “citizen-soldier” with *virtu* would use his resolute character to come home and apply the same sense of duty and unity to the civic realm. He would not require pomp to accompany the traversing of duty and unity across the hyphen between citizen

¹¹⁷ Gambone, 62.

¹¹⁸ Gambone, 82.

and soldier. He would thus have humility and modesty in applying his sense of unity and duty to the civic realm. For some the desire to move beyond the war to a life of “normalcy” was a result of being raised with a sense of personal modesty. However, for others this desire had other motivations beyond humility and modesty. Many wanted to avoid sharing the horrors of war. For others it was a way to personally avoid reliving these horrors.¹¹⁹ There are so many World War II veterans who have not been interviewed or surveyed for any number of these reasons and more, and many who have spoken have done so relatively recently with time and change buffering their experiences.

Glorification of the effects of the victory in World War II can suggest some sort of return to the underlying social and political structures that created “the greatest generation.” This is often the case when the myths of World War II are discussed, considering the lack of civic and political involvement American society demonstrates today. A popular assertion is that the replacement of a highly civic generation, “the greatest generation,” by others that are less so lies behind the decline in political interest and participation and organizational involvement, among other forms of civic engagement.¹²⁰ The crux of this civic generation was born between 1925-1930, a time span that includes the birth years of “the greatest generation.” The emphasis on intergenerational differences, rather than life cycle differences, points to something unique about the era in which “the greatest generation” came of age.¹²¹ While historical lessons can be learned and are inherently important for understanding contemporaneous contexts, a nostalgic desire for “going back” is only possible in a homogenous empty time. Furthermore, when this desire is fueled by purified, mythical versions of history that do not fully confront the exclusions

¹¹⁹ Gambone, 87.

¹²⁰ Robert D. Putnam, Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2000), 250.

¹²¹ Putnam, Bowling Alone, 254.

created by these myths then one reaches back toward a time and place that did not exist for everyone with something at stake. With this realization it becomes more important to focus on the deeper questions and even some of the darker angles of World War II and its aftermath. It then also becomes necessary to contextualize the character of the American military and its use of the citizen-soldier myth today. Confronting the myths of the citizen-soldier and “the greatest generation” that they comprised then becomes more feasible.

This confrontation does not refute or deny the narratives or perspectives that construct the “citizen-soldier” and “the greatest generation.” It concedes to the same stories Brokaw uses, for instance, but with quite a different perspective. Using the discourse of *myth* does not propose that these narratives are lies, but that they are used to construct a simplified and parochial vision of a much more complex history. Simply including a chapter with the narratives of a few minorities (Japanese-American, Spanish-Apache-American, Blacks, Women) does not necessarily add the required depth to dismiss the criticism of “myth” leveled against the concept of the “citizen-soldier” and the “greatest generation” coming out of “the last good war.”

An alternative perspective looks closely at a simple conception of what war is about: killing. Ambrose addresses this aspect quite closely, but he does so within the frameworks of comradeship and heroism. He quotes Sergeant Carwood Lipton’s take on the difficulty of killing, but it is framed in the context of buddies dying or American soldiers coming close to their own death. These experiences made men nervous about going back to the front line, but once there “the callousness, the cold-bloodedness, the calmness return.”¹²² These characteristics are thus framed as harsh realities of war, necessary to uphold comradeship and accomplish heroism. The evils that the Allies fought in World War II required them. These evils provide a polarized perspective of war. Since popular American history sees the Holocaust and German

¹²² Ambrose, 272.

occupation as offensive, because the axis powers killed innocents directly, it then frames the defensive killing by the Allies as not only necessary but pure.¹²³ Much of the Allies' defensive killing was accomplished from the air. Many of the fighter pilots' narratives from World War II reflected the thought of purity and defensive killing. Richard Hillary, whose The Last Enemy is one of the most well known narratives of this sort, considers how "lucky" the fighter pilot is because "he has none of the personalized emotions of the soldier...the fighter pilot's emotions are those of the dullest—cool, precise, impersonal."¹²⁴ The myth of the citizen-soldier as fighting against pure evil in "the last good war" places the individuals in this subject position above the nasty, blunt business of war, which requires killing people, many of whom were innocent. This facet of the citizen-soldier myth places the individual within that subject position above spiritual and moral consequences. Furthermore, it implies that the nation for which he fights pays no price for these acts either.¹²⁵ The vast majority of the veterans of World War II were not fighter pilots, waging war dispassionately from the air as depicted by Hillary. The "citizen-soldiers" on the ground in the European Theater of Operations faced death, both their own and their enemies', on a much more personal level. Furthermore, the wars in North Africa and the Pacific Theater of Operations were so vastly different that they cannot fit into the anecdotal perceptions of the European Theater, much less the fighter pilot perception.¹²⁶ Many of the "citizen-soldiers" from World War II paid dear personal prices for the brutal and blunt killing aspect of their war, which the myth of the citizen-soldier denies and purifies. This price came in the form of post-traumatic stress disorder and physical disability, along with many other

¹²³ Wood, 23.

¹²⁴ Samuel Hynes, The Soldiers' Tale: Bearing Witness to Modern War (New York: The Penguin Press, 1997), 127.

¹²⁵ Wood, 54.

¹²⁶ Hynes, 159-176.

ailments. Despite all of this, the idea that World War II was the “last *good war*” still does not strike the popular American imagination as an oxymoron.

Some of the “citizen-soldiers” who do not comfortably carry the myths of their war have achieved the type of success measured and found in many studies conducted on the veterans of World War II. A number of them have earned and received fame, fortune, prestige, and notoriety in many sectors of the post-war American society, while many others no doubt have not. Some have embedded disdain for these myths within their success. Kurt Vonnegut used a collection of his own personal memoirs to describe citizens today, including himself, as A Man Without a Country.¹²⁷ His cynicism about the kind of society the “citizen-soldiers” of “the greatest generation” supposedly created screams from the pages. When he refers to his novel, Slaughterhouse Five: The Children’s Crusade, which creatively narrates his own personal experiences as a prisoner of war in the bombing of Dresden during World War II, he describes this bombing as “pure nonsense, pointless destruction.”¹²⁸ He claims that the truthfulness of his novel about this experience was only possible when he realized he had to tell it from a realistic perspective. For him, this meant acknowledging that soldiers “are in fact babies. They are not movie stars. They are not Duke Wayne.” For him, the truth was that “we were children,” not purposeful citizens turned soldiers back to citizens who knew exactly what they were doing and why.¹²⁹ This realization met paper only twenty-three years after his experiences in Dresden. Even then he seems to indicate that he is writing about a reality he cannot fully understand, but to which he tries to give form in the shape of words that can be shared.¹³⁰ He has to use the medium of fiction and satire to even begin describing his experiences as a “citizen-soldier,”

¹²⁷ Kurt Vonnegut, A Man Without A Country (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005).

¹²⁸ Vonnegut, 17.

¹²⁹ Vonnegut, 19.

¹³⁰ This is portrayed in a similar way to Wood’s struggle, as articulated in Wood, 95.

making him an unfit candidate to provide the types of narratives found in Brokaw's and Ambrose's work.

Similarly, Edward W. Wood, Jr. has led a prominent life as a city planner and a well-published writer. He came home from World War II and lived the type of life that could have been neatly placed amongst the narratives of Brokaw's The Greatest Generation and subsequent books. Instead, like Vonnegut, he has written subversively about the myths of World War II. He criticizes the hero worship, comradeship and glory that are so often used as standards for judging social commentary or art on World War II.¹³¹ The simplistic and homogenous view of the war's "citizen-soldiers" as heroes excludes the perspective that many veterans never fully recovered, feeling as if "a part of us [was] lost forever in the world of combat where we discovered truths about ourselves that changes us in ways we never fully understood."¹³² The hero perspective also assumes that many soldiers were in a position to become a war hero. Less than one in sixteen soldiers in World War II actually participated in extended combat. Of these, extended combat constituted a small amount of their time in service. A full one-quarter of the armed forces never even went overseas, but rather, served on the home front.¹³³ The argument could be made that the heroic aspect of the World War II citizen-soldier came from the willingness to volunteer for military service out of a sense of duty to nation. However, most of the narratives that are used to (re)construct and uphold the hero aspect of the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier is based upon experience in combat.¹³⁴ All of the celebration and praise used to support the hero aspect of the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier, and the narratives and memoirs

¹³¹ Wood, 73.

¹³² Wood, 85.

¹³³ Mettler, 35.

¹³⁴ Brokaw, The Greatest Generation; Ambrose.

chosen as accomplices in this effort, deny the level of killing involved in industrial warfare.¹³⁵ For those subversively writing about the myths of World War II, breaking through these myths and their subsequent results require documented personal experience that do not “mask truths the writer cannot admit, turning combat into a place only of heroism, not of pain, only of comradeship, not of alienation.”¹³⁶ For some these results are dire, not reflective of the “greatest generation’s” rebuilt America, but rather a distrustful, greedy consumer society that is dedicated to war and weaponry.¹³⁷

This section has highlighted some of those who are excluded from the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier as an individualized discursive formation, and some of the ways in which these “minority histories” challenge the absolutism of this myth. The marginalized identities of the World War II era, most notably Blacks and women, and the World War II “citizen-soldiers” who do not comfortably carry the myths that supposedly define them and which they embody, open up spaces of dispersion that challenge the World War II citizen-soldier myth’s disciplinary tactic of linking the singular and the multiple. They defy the characterization of the individual defined by unity, duty and cohesiveness, and they disrupt the order of the multiplicity that is simplified into the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier.¹³⁸ Their defiance and disruptions (re)construct the history of the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier in such a way that refutes homogenous empty time. These deviants represent a heterogeneous time that disrupts the myths of World War II.¹³⁹ According to Dipesh Chakrabarty, a heterogeneous account of history “put[s] us in touch with the plural ways of being that make up our own present.”¹⁴⁰ To invoke

¹³⁵ Wood, 102.

¹³⁶ Wood, 103.

¹³⁷ Wood, 81, 126.

¹³⁸ Foucault, Discipline and Punish, 149.

¹³⁹ Chatterjee, The Politics of the Governed, 7.

¹⁴⁰ Chakrabarty, 108.

Foucault, the heterogeneous discourses involve discontinuity in the myths of World War II as discursive structures that claim continuity.¹⁴¹

The next chapter seeks to explain the ways in which the contemporary United States military functions as an apparatus in a neoliberal system. This function is in direct contrast to the myth of the United States military as an institution in a nation defined by civic nationalism. The neoliberal connection will provide a basis for explaining the tensions involved with a military as a neoliberal state apparatus that tries to use the rules of formation for the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier in its recruiting mechanisms. These rules of formation that define this myth as an individualized discursive formation are incompatible with a neoliberal system that privileges individualism and political-economic advancement over cohesiveness defined by unity and duty.

¹⁴¹ Glyn Williams, French Discourse Analysis: The Method of Post-Structuralism (New York: Routledge, 1999), 252.

Chapter 4: The Neoliberal Connection

National Citizenship: Civic Nationalism vs Neoliberalism

Wood's perspective on and criticisms about "the greatest generation's" rebuilt America more closely align with a neoliberal system than one based on civic nationalism. This system shares common traits with the ideals of civic nationalism, while simultaneously sharply deviating from them. Liberty and freedom are crucial components driving both. However, the shapes these components take differ greatly within these two systems of nation construction. A nation shaped by civic nationalism requires a level of equality amongst its nationals, and it further requires its nationals to be united to a shared set of political practices and values.¹⁴² This type of nation thus serves as a unifying and equalizing agent that upholds the republican ideal of duty to nation and sacrifice. It is this ideal that supports and drives the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier.

While the neoliberal system also necessitates the ideals of liberty and freedom, these elements take shape through individualism rather than national cohesiveness. This individualism is particularly highlighted in the realm of political-economic practices. It promotes individual liberty and freedom *from* state power rather than seeing state institutions as vanguards of these ideals.¹⁴³ Neoliberals at the University of Chicago developed an ideology where an economic conception of cost-benefit analysis could be applied to the social domain.¹⁴⁴ Freedom becomes

¹⁴² Gerstle, quoting Michael Ignatieff, 45.

¹⁴³ David Harvey, "Neoliberalism as Creative Destruction," *The Annals of the American Academy* 610 (March 2007): 23-25.

¹⁴⁴ Thomas Lemke, (2001) "The birth of bio-politics": Michel Foucault's lecture at the College de France

equated with free markets, and state intervention is theorized as an evil that works against freedom. Within civic nationalism, war and the military as a state institution responsible for warfare become nation building tools capable of sharpening American national identity against external enemies, ensuring loyalty to nation, disciplining heterodox perspectives, and overall acting as determinative of national citizenship.¹⁴⁵ However, the military and war become less capable of achieving these undertakings within a neoliberal system. Rather than nation building tools, war and the military have become state apparatuses. Furthermore, the political-economic individualism that defines neoliberalism places all responsibility for welfare on the individual. Neoliberalism has become a hegemonic system, a discourse that has infiltrated the way many Americans interpret and experience the world.¹⁴⁶ This individualized responsibility permeates the ways in which Americans view state institutions and apparatuses. Though the state has not completely privatized the United States military, it has undergone massive changes in purpose and composition since neoliberalism became a dominant paradigm at the state level.

Civic nationalism was never fully realized in the World War II era, but its ideals resonated through military service and the American nation's collective sense of duty both at home and abroad in battle. Even many of those excluded from the nation that operated within a flawed ideal of civic nationalism acted on this sense of obligation and duty. Within the modern, naturalized and hegemonic neoliberal system, the military has become one of many state apparatuses that have become careerist and that push toward the agenda of neoliberal political economic practices.

The shift from a society defined by the ideal of civic nationalism, no matter how flawed that ideal materialized in reality, to one defined by neoliberalism's strict individualism affects the

on neo-liberal governmentality, *Economy and Society*, 30. no. 2 (May 2001): 197.

¹⁴⁵ Gerstle, 9.

¹⁴⁶ David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 3.

ways in which national citizenship is constructed. The sense of duty and obligation to nation, articulated by Machiavelli so long ago, largely defined national citizenship during the World War II era. The development of neoliberal ideology and its growing strength throughout the 1960s and 1970s in the United States worked toward the decimation of this national sentiment. The same economists who stood at the helm of the ascendancy of neoliberalism in the United States also spearheaded the push from conscription to voluntary service.¹⁴⁷ These economists and their political following tinkered with the theoretical relationship between individual freedom and the need for defense supplied by the state. This relationship represented an unresolved tension in the work of classical liberal theorists. Classic liberal ideology attempted to address this tension by accepting different expectations for different classes even while embodying a universal conception of freedom. The universal ideal of freedom actually resulted in stratification along class lines within the classical liberal ideology. Universally, the poor served to defend the nation and the propertied class did not. The poor thus paid for their dependency on the state through military service.¹⁴⁸ Like classic liberalists, neoliberals promote a universal freedom as well, but one based on a political-economic perspective. They thus viewed conscription as an infringement on individual freedom by the state. This discussion took place largely in the 1960s, and ultimately acted as a major factor in the decision to end conscription in 1973.¹⁴⁹ This allowed an argument for individual freedom, while preserving the need for defense provided by the state in order for this freedom to be possible. While a different logic of universalism contributed to neoliberalism's fight against conscription as compared to the classic liberal theorists', they both share similar end results. A non-conscription, or AVF,

¹⁴⁷ Deborah E. Cowen, "Fighting for "Freedom": The End of Conscription in the United States and the Neoliberal Project of Citizenship," *Citizenship Studies* 10, no.2 (May 2006): 169.

¹⁴⁸ Cowen, 174.

¹⁴⁹ Cowen, 169.

military in the United States has largely resulted in a stratified force based largely on class lines. More importantly to this research project, it also largely eliminates the concept of the “citizen-soldier.”

The ascendancy of neoliberalism resulted in “individualism, private property, personal responsibility, and family values” supplanting and ultimately intending to eliminate all forms of social solidarity.¹⁵⁰ A system based on civic nationalism also relies upon the promise of prosperity, but it does so in a way that stresses the personal and the national intermeshed and a more equitable distribution of prosperity amongst ordinary Americans.¹⁵¹ Civic nationalism prevented the classic liberal perspective on dual universalism from materializing during the World War II era. Poor and affluent all served, though stratification did occur along racial and gender lines as opposed to economic class lines. The victory of World War II, the “last good war,” united Americans in the belief of the virtue of their nation, and it supplied faith in the American economy to provide prosperity for all based on an ideal of civic nationalism.¹⁵² Of course, as illustrated earlier, civic nationalism was exclusionary in its own right, but the desire to achieve civic nationalism helped fuel the great American social movements of the 20th century.¹⁵³

Despite the successes of these social movements, their struggles also revealed the glaring deficiencies in the ideal of civic nationalism that worked to uphold the idea of American greatness as an imagined community and its concurrent national citizenship. For example, the Black Nationalist movement revolted against the mainstream cultural practices of the American nation. This, and other similar movements including the Vietnam War protests, emphasized the

¹⁵⁰ David Harvey, *A Brief History*, 22-23; Gerstle, 362.

¹⁵¹ Gerstle, 199.

¹⁵² Gerstle, 277.

¹⁵³ Altschuler and Blumin, 118-119.

importance of particularist culture over the ideal of a cohesive American culture.¹⁵⁴ The Vietnam War protests in particular provided ammunition for the neoliberals to exploit the deficiencies in civic nationalism and push their agenda of the importance of individual freedom against state power. The anti-war protests were largely held against the biopolitical state and its violence. The protesters, like the neoliberals, were arguing for an ideal of freedom, but this freedom stood in opposition to a perceived struggle against the development of an imperialist and military state.¹⁵⁵ Neoliberals, however, successfully framed these protests strictly against conscription. This allowed them to use these protests as part of their structured argument against the state and in favor of a radical individualism framed within the discourse of a political-economic domain.¹⁵⁶ The social movements that had once voiced a response to the inadequacies of civic nationalism in an effort to *achieve* civic nationalism coincided with the growing influence of neoliberal ideology. Neoliberals co-opted and used some of these protests to support its own agenda. Thus in 1979, when neoliberalism became the prominent economic doctrine that regulated public policy at the state level in the United States, the social solidarity of civic nationalism was not available on a large scale to challenge it.

With its call to end conscription, the neoliberal system helped determine the decision to create an AVF military. Milton Friedman, of the Chicago School, lobbied for a military that recruited based on volunteers. In this system, individuals would exercise a cost-benefit analysis of their own future prospects.¹⁵⁷ The social and political decision to sacrifice oneself in the name of the nation boils down to an economically driven conception of cost-benefit analysis within a

¹⁵⁴ Gerstle, 312.

¹⁵⁵ Michel Foucault, The Birth of BioPolitics: Lectures at the College De France, 1978-1979, ed. Michel Senellart, Francois Ewald and Alessandro Fontana, trans. Graham Burchell, English ed. Arnold I. Davidson (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 218.

¹⁵⁶ Cowen, 179.

¹⁵⁷ Cowen, 172.

neoliberal system. Neoliberalism thus framed conscription as an “intolerable tax,” as opposed to a civic nationalism system’s conception of cohesiveness based on duty to nation, and unity. The perspective of conscription as a tax on individuals was articulated in a book titled The Draft that came out of a Chicago School conference and that highly influenced President Nixon’s decision to end conscription in 1973.¹⁵⁸ President Nixon subsequently created the Gates Commission to advise him on how to end conscription and implement an AVF. This commission echoed neoliberal ideology. Frederick B. Dent, reflecting back on his work on the Gates Commission commented that:

“[b]ecause of deferrals granted to certain individuals, the draft encouraged students to stay in college and graduate school, to flee to Canada, or to take other actions to avoid being drafted. It interfered with the operation of the civilian labor market and the choices individuals typically make about careers, marriage, and other life decisions. A draft, whether under selective service or a lottery, was inequitable.”¹⁵⁹

The Gates Commission made the assumption that anti-war protest was in direct relation to the effects the draft had on the civilian labor market and individual freedom, or in other words it took an economic perspective. The above passage co-opts the political and social aspects of war protest into the economic domain. However, since national defense is a prerequisite for the neoliberal conception of individual freedom, they could not argue for complete privatization. The neoliberals therefore argued for an AVF. They assumed that those individuals with a “lower conscription tax,” or with little other economic opportunity, would comprise the volunteers in the AVF.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Cowen, 172.

¹⁵⁹ Frederick B. Dent, Milton Friedman, Stephen E. Herbits, and Theodore M. Hesburgh, “Reflections from the Gates Commission,” in The All-Volunteer Force: Thirty Years of Service, ed. Barbara A. Bicksler, Curtis L. Gilroy, and John T. Warner (Dulles, VA: Brassey’s Inc.: 2004), 9.

¹⁶⁰ Cowen, 171, 175.

The creation of an AVF based on neoliberal ideology has largely altered the composition of the United States military as compared to World War II. The AVF military today is not representative of American society.¹⁶¹ This lack of representation falls along social, economic and political lines. Since conscription was abolished, the recruiting bureaucracies have chosen to focus on finding candidates that will stay in the military for a full career.¹⁶² This has resulted in a military increasingly made up of career professionals who are separate from civilian life and culture. The neoliberal system has had a hand in erasing the hyphen between the “citizen-soldier” as it was constructed in the World War II era. The implication of such a trend is that a “warrior class” of career soldiers is replacing the “citizen-soldier.”¹⁶³ This trend is accompanied by one in which contemporary career soldiers are likely to have parents who served in the military, indicating a perpetuating class.¹⁶⁴ Also, there has been a trend since the Vietnam War where fewer key government leaders and representatives in the United States Congress have military experience or proficiency.¹⁶⁵ The “military caste” and the increased separation between those who serve and those who lead represent examples of the displacement of the implied “we” in the “An Army of one” recruitment campaign. The career professionals in the military are the

¹⁶¹ John Lehman, “Degraded into a Trade,” in United We Serve, ed. E.J. Dionne Jr., Kayla Meltzer Drogosz and Robert E. Litan (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), 141.

¹⁶² Lehman, 141; Louis Caldera, “The American Military and the Idea of Service,” in United We Serve, ed. E.J. Dionne Jr., Kayla Meltzer Drogosz and Robert E. Litan (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), 152.

¹⁶³ John Lehman, “An Exchange on Civil Military Relations,” The National Interest 36 (Summer 1994); David R. Segal, Organizational Designs for the Future Army (Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, 1993), 47-48.

¹⁶⁴ David M. Halbfinger and Steven A. Holmes, “A Nation at War: The Troops; Military Mirrors a Working Class America,” The New York Times, 30 March 2003, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/30/us/a-nation-at-war-the-troops-military-mirrors-a-working-class-america.html?scp=1&sq=Halbfinger%20and%20Holmes%202003&st=cse&pagewanted=1>

¹⁶⁵ Gregory D. Foster, “Civil-Military Gap: What are the Ethics?” U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings 126 (April 2000): 82-86; Matthew J. Morgan, “Army Recruiting and the Civil-Military Gap,” Parameters 31, no. 2 (July 2001): 103-105.

“we” that *is* the Army, while the civilians that are so separated from the military constitute the “we” that *has* the army.¹⁶⁶

This phenomenon of the displacement of the “we” that *is* the Army from the “we” that *has* the Army is not new. It has characterized military life between many major American wars. However, prior to the ascendancy of the hegemonic neoliberal system, war often brought on a plethora of “citizen-soldiers” who reinvigorated the military as an institution, and affected what it meant to be part of the American nation.¹⁶⁷ America has not experienced this effect with the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The combination of an AVF and a naturalized neoliberal system has perpetuated the displacement of “we”s during the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. United States military service has taken on more characteristics of an occupation within a state apparatus, which is legitimated in terms of the market place, rather than an institution, which emphasizes shared norms and values with an eye toward a higher good beyond self-interest.¹⁶⁸

The military reflected and continues to reflect the shift from civic nationalism to neoliberalism, which has redefined national citizenship, or what it means to be an American. Whereas the law of Jim Crow helped shape the military in World War II, the percentage of African Americans serving in the Vietnam War as part of integrated combat units surpassed their representation in the American population at large. At the same time, the American white middle class was finding ways to avoid service at all costs. When they served, it was most often

¹⁶⁶ This argument closely aligns with a critique of neoliberalism; that its main goal is to restore class power. Harvey offers such a critique: “But all is not well with the neoliberal state, and it is for this reason that it appears to be either a transitional or an unstable political form. At the heart of the problem lies a burgeoning disparity between declared public aims of neoliberalism—the well-being of all—and its actual consequences—the restoration of class power.” *A Brief History*, 78-79.

¹⁶⁷ Lehman, “Degraded,” 142.

¹⁶⁸ Charles Moskos, “What ails the all-volunteer force: an institutional perspective,” *Parameters* 31 no. 2 (2001): 29.

as part of a “white-collar” military defined by technical and non-combative positions. The military’s perceived role as a crucible for unity, representative of America the nation, had disintegrated by the early 1970s.¹⁶⁹

The United States military thus found itself occupying a position as a state apparatus part of the neoliberal system, rather than being more closely aligned with the characteristics of a national institution. The crumbling of civic nationalism as an ideal of America the nation, largely due to its own deficiencies and aided by the concurrent ascendancy of neoliberalism, helped entrench the neoliberal system and its hegemonic reach. The Reagan administration initiated a vast military buildup as part of its Cold War strategy, but this did little to encourage a more representative participation based on a sense of duty or obligation in the military. This is partly because the Reagan administration simultaneously challenged welfare programs, under the direction of the neoliberal system. Those individuals who could most benefit from the rapidly disappearing welfare programs were the same individuals with a “lower conscription tax.” An AVF influenced and shaped by labor market demands coincided nicely with the neoliberal conception of individual freedom. The United States military thus largely became an employer of last resort for the middle class and a mechanism of upward mobility for the lower class.¹⁷⁰ As an employer, the United States military has increasingly become a career track. The military that was largely constituted by “citizen-soldiers” during World War II has been replaced with a professionalized force.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ Gerstle, 322-327.

¹⁷⁰ Cowen, 176; David R. Segal, Recruiting for Uncle Sam: Citizenship and Military Manpower Policy (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1989), 6.

¹⁷¹ Gerstle, 363.

The United States Military as a Neoliberal Apparatus: Privatization and Professionalization

The debate about the specific ways in which the United States military has become an agent and perpetuator of the neoliberal system is complex, varied, and beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is important to the objectives of this research project to look at how the United States military, as a state apparatus within the neoliberal system, is career oriented and professionalized. The United States Army, the largest branch of the military, in particular provides a unit of analysis for some of these changes. A short pamphlet in the November/December edition of “CareerWorld” in 2009 offers advice about whether or not the military is right for an individual.¹⁷² This approach to spreading information about the military world differs vastly from the experiences of conscripted individuals and volunteers during World War II. The latter men were assigned to duties. They often did not know what to expect. The modern wars in Iraq and Afghanistan do not require the same amount of man-power as did World War II. However, the United States military still sets annual recruitment quotas. The modern AVF relies upon pamphlets and other forms of media to essentially sell the idea of military service to individuals. This specific pamphlet in “CareerWorld” employs voices of experience, such as a Senior Army Instructor at Cretin-Derham Hall, to inform its readers to “explore as many resources as you can to see what’s available to you. Then, decide what you really want to do and try to make the recruiter provide that to you. Dig your heels in a little bit. If they don’t have the opportunity, look around at what the other services are offering.” It further touts the benefits of enlisting, which include “learn[ing] job skills while working full time with benefits.”¹⁷³ However, for those individuals who are more qualified in an educational and

¹⁷² Andrea Hazard, “Honor. Service. Duty. YOU?” *CareerWorld* (November/December, 2009).

¹⁷³ Hazard, 20-21.

leadership sense then there are different tracks for them as well, including Reserve Officer's Training Corp (ROTC) or Military Academies. Whatever track an individual may choose, there is a *brief* warning to understand the commitment involved, and that deployment is a real possibility. This warning is drowned out, however, in the vast majority of the information that focuses on the individual and individual benefits. The same Senior Army Instructor ends the article by saying that "if it feels right, it's going to be a great credential. It's always going to be a positive and never a negative on your resume."¹⁷⁴ This implies that whether these potential recruits stay in the military for life or not, the best thing that comes out of the initial decision to serve is a boost to one's hiring credentials. A further implication is that those who choose to add military service as a boost to their resume are also taking on an identity of belonging within the neoliberal system. They will thus belong to the neoliberal system and can more effectively compete in order to elevate their economic standing within this system by acquiring the skills through military service that will supposedly be perceived as "positives" on a resume.

Though the neoliberal system never supported fully privatizing the military, privatization has played a prominent role in the modern United States AVF. Military privatization and professionalization have both increased in an AVF under the neoliberal system. The increase in both is related. The arguments for the necessity of professionalization and privatization are usually accompanied by a description of the ever increasing and expanding demands on the United States military. This perspective relies upon a necessary change in force structure to align with changes in perceived threats to the nation. Prior to the Cold War, the military's perceived function largely served to protect the nation from invasion. During the Cold War the main perceived threat was nuclear war. The post-Cold War perception of threat turned to one of tension and violence within states, which pushed the military's mission definitions to different

¹⁷⁴ Hazard, 22.

boundaries, including peacekeeping and humanitarian missions.¹⁷⁵ The threat of terrorism is yet a more specific instance of the post-Cold War perception of threat. The assumption that a surge in ethnic, tribal, religious and criminal conflict emerged after the end of the Cold War informs this trajectory in change.¹⁷⁶ The United States government scaled back its military budget at the same time the world experienced a surge in non-traditional military demands, decreasing from 6% of the gross national product in the mid-1980s to a little less than 3% in the mid-1990s.¹⁷⁷ This logic further assumes that since the United States was the lone superpower, it of course had to respond to these demands even if its government reduced the size and budget of the military.

The increased demands on the United States military combined with a neoliberal system have created a situation where the United States Army (and the other branches of the military) increasingly rely on contracting in order to perform nearly every function. This trend continued into the Bush administration's "War On Terror." President Bush outlined a "Competitive Sourcing Initiative" in his 2002 "Presidential Management Agenda." This initiative "was designed to improve the quality and efficiency of government services by opening federal agencies to private competition."¹⁷⁸ The United States Army found its human capital resources stretched. It often lacked the adequate scientists, engineers and managers to run important programs adequately. For instance, it had to contract the roles of lead systems integrator of the Future Combat System to Boeing and the Science Applications International Corporation. A 2007 Congressional Research Service Report claimed this happened because the Army lacked

¹⁷⁵ Charles C. Moskos, "Toward a Postmodern Military: The United States as a Paradigm," in The Postmodern military: Armed Forces After the Cold War, ed. Charles C. Moskos, John Allen Williams, David R. Segal (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 16-18.

¹⁷⁶ Lieutenant Colonel William C. Latham Jr., "Not My Job: Contracting and Professionalism in the U.S. Army," Military Review (March/April, 2009), 41; Colonel Christopher R. Papparone and Colonel George Reed, "The Reflective Military Practitioner: How Military Professionals Think in Action," Military Review (March/April, 2008), 66.

¹⁷⁷ Moskos, "Toward a Postmodern Military," 18.

¹⁷⁸ As quoted in Latham, 41.

the adequate personnel to run this system internally.¹⁷⁹ Most of the individuals capable of running these types of systems are employed in the private sector, where they are compensated at much higher rates than the Army can possibly offer. The Army has therefore begun to increasingly rely on privatization as a means to contract important work out that it needs to accomplish for its missions. In addition to the pressure of privatization, the Army AVF also finds itself competing with the private sector in order to maintain its combat experienced junior officers and sergeants. These individuals are often its most valuable personnel and also its future leaders. They are being lured away by the private sector where they can make up to three times the amount of their active duty pay.¹⁸⁰

The need for privatization ties in directly with the need for professionalism. The reliance on contracting to perform many functions has created a situation where the Army and the other branches of the military need the private sector to fulfill many of their tasks *and* is competing with the private sector for talent. The military must then be composed of professionals and have high rates of retention within the military career track in order to maintain its ability to compete with the private sector and stay viable as a state apparatus. The military functioned with a very small cadre of career soldiers in the officer ranks during World War II. However, increased demands on the military's function and an increase in the fusion of information technologies with weapon systems and military command and control networks creates space for the argument that a professional force across ranks and branches is necessary to meet contemporary threats.¹⁸¹ These elements have helped create a situation where a professional and career force is necessary beyond the officer ranks. The large forces of "citizen-soldiers" that used to complement the

¹⁷⁹ Latham, 43.

¹⁸⁰ Latham, 45.

¹⁸¹ Charles C. Moskos, John Allen Williams and David R. Segal, eds., "Armed Forces after the Cold War, in The Postmodern Military: Armed Forces After the Cold War (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 5; Morgan, "Army Recruiting," 106-108.

small career officers, as in World War II, are replaced by the necessity of professionalized career soldiers.¹⁸²

The contemporary military feels pressure from two forces, defined by a tension within neoliberal ideology. The first pressure is that defense is a prerequisite for the individualism neoliberalism promotes. Defense is therefore one sector where neoliberalism still generally advocates a large role for the state.¹⁸³ It feels pressure to expand the military's agenda to accommodate the global demands beyond conventional warfare. Increasingly complex technology and a smaller number of bodies in service coincide with this pressure, all of which necessitate a professionalized force. It also feels a second pressure to compete as one career track among many within a neoliberal system, all with the budget of a state apparatus. It must compete with other potential careers in the more lucrative private sector. It is thus doubly constrained within a neoliberal system. The neoliberal system requires the state to provide defense, and it also requires that the military compete with the private sector in fulfilling this role. With increased contracting, the military has a difficult time keeping individuals within its career track, especially its mid-level officers. The arguments for professionalism and privatization are both a result of the tension within neoliberal ideology concerning the necessity of defense for individual freedom and perceived global changes that demand more from the United States military as a neoliberal state apparatus.

While the United States military is limited in the breadth of economic incentives it can offer its military personnel, it also must contend with its perceived need to continue to construct and maintain professionalism. This is an internal area where it has more control, as opposed to larger labor market demands in the neoliberal system that dictate competition with the private

¹⁸² Andrew J. Bacevich, "Tradition Abandoned: America's Military in a New Era," The National Interest 48 (1997): 16-25.

¹⁸³ Cowen.

sector. The military is necessarily a part of the state and subject to state control even within a neoliberal system, which obviously includes the budgetary limitations of the state as compared to the private sector. However, it struggles with the neoliberal tension mentioned above. It necessitates a professional force to supply the defense neoliberalism requires, which means it must compete and work with the private sector. However, it also must balance this with the bureaucratic hierarchy of which it is a part. Dr. Don Snider, professor at the United States Military Academy and project director of the Army Professionalism Project at West Point, worries about bureaucratic hierarchy supplanting professionalism.¹⁸⁴ This worry is based on the idea that professionalism requires the accumulation and maintenance of a specialized body of abstract knowledge, and hierarchical bureaucracy threatens to interrupt the effective accumulation and dissemination of this knowledge.¹⁸⁵ When Ambrose wrote about the “citizen-soldiers” in World War II he also made the point that strict hierarchy is not efficient in war. General Patton’s requirements that men on the front line must shave everyday and wear neck-ties neither contributed to the war effort nor aided these soldiers in performing their duties while trying to stay alive. However, Ambrose’s point was made in reference to a state of definite war. The argument for professionalism today is framed in the context of a standing military regardless of whether or not the United States is in a state of war, or how that war is defined. The vague character of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, coupled with the expansive role of the United States military create a situation where victory and the end to war becomes difficult to define. In this context the career soldier is almost a self-fulfilling prophecy, since the position is becoming so specialized in a specific body of abstract knowledge that no one *could* do it part time. Add the necessary and changing technological skills required to be a soldier in the modern United States

¹⁸⁴ Martin L. Cook, “Revolt of the Generals: A Case Study in Professional Ethics,” Parameters (Spring 2008), 5; Paparone and Reed, 66.

¹⁸⁵ Paparone and Reed, 75.

military and it becomes clear that the position is one of many specialized careers within a neoliberal system.

Though Dr. Snider's views are widely held there are also divergent views within the military community about the state of military professionalism. One of these divergent views takes the stance that the United States is not at war in Iraq and Afghanistan; its military is.¹⁸⁶ This view confronts the displaced "we"s that stand on either side of the civilian/military border. However, it does not challenge the idea that the United States military should be in Iraq and Afghanistan, nor anywhere else in the world American troops are stationed. Rather, it laments the situation where the burdens of war fall on the small, professionalized armed forces, which comprise less than 1% of the entire United States population.¹⁸⁷ The type of sophisticated technology, which has added value to the military as part of a neoliberal system, fosters Americans' love affair with high-priced, sophisticated weapon systems. This is a result of the neoliberal theory of technological change, which depends on competition to provide a technological fix for everything.¹⁸⁸ A love affair with this type of problem-solving technology only furthers the idea that a small and well-trained professional force can wage war effectively.¹⁸⁹ This perspective argues that the United States military consistently lacked adequate numbers and was usually unprepared for war, but that it supplemented this state of affairs with conscription.¹⁹⁰ Today, the argument for increased professionalization overwhelms the voice crying out for a reversion to conscription. They both recognize the need for a high level of technical skill that cannot be met by short-term service members. This places those in

¹⁸⁶ Adrian R. Lewis, "Conscription, the Republic, and America's Future," Military Review (November/December, 2009), 16.

¹⁸⁷ Lewis, 16.

¹⁸⁸ Harvey, Brief History, 68-69.

¹⁸⁹ Lewis, 18.

¹⁹⁰ Lewis, 21.

favor of a renewed conscription at the mercy of neoliberal ideology. They argue for increased compensation at the higher ranks, especially the sergeants, the same talent pool that comprise the future leaders of the military and are leaving the military for the private sector where they are compensated at much higher rates.¹⁹¹ The difference is that this argument offers conscription as an answer for how to create the necessary budget for this compensation. With conscription the military would not have to expend such vast resources on recruits as it does today.¹⁹² The argument for conscription is unpopular because “[t]he truth is that the four-star generals and admirals view citizen-soldiers as more trouble than they are worth.”¹⁹³ The “citizen-soldier,” of which conscription would supply more, does not comfortably fit into a military that has become increasingly professionalized over the past four decades and that must compete with the private sector in a neoliberal system.

Neoliberalism and Civic Nationalism: Tools for United States Army Recruitment

Recruitment material for the United States Army uses selling points derived from both the neoliberal system and a civic nationalism system. It weaves these two together in a way that blurs the line between the “citizen-soldier” and the professionalized career soldier. I argue that the demands of the Army, potential sacrifice in terms of life and limb, are beyond any economic benefit the military as a neoliberal apparatus can provide. While the Army expends resources on

¹⁹¹ Charles Moskos, “Should the United States Reinstate the Draft?” *Retired Officer Magazine* lvi, no. 7 (2000).

¹⁹² According to Moskos, “Should the United States,” during the draft period the pay ratio between a master sergeant and a private was 6:1; today it is 3:1.

¹⁹³ Andrew J. Bacevich, *The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2008), 153.

touting its position as a neoliberal apparatus, exemplified by the CareerWorld ad, it must also rely on the resonance of civic nationalism and its ties to the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier as a first step in getting enough numbers to create a professional military.

Recruitment ads must then walk a fine line in balancing the two subject positions of a neoliberal state apparatus and a national institution that requires sacrifice. For the latter it relies upon traces of civic nationalism in order to encourage people to join. In particular, it invokes the ideal of universal equality and freedom so prominent in civic nationalism. Sacrifice is necessarily seen as simultaneous and homogenous in the Army. If one is willing to sacrifice him or herself for his or her nation by joining the Army, then he or she must believe that others in the same position are also willing to make the same sacrifice. This unity of purpose, and homogenous perspective requires the sublation of difference to a certain degree. Civic nationalism, as an ideal, also relies upon a certain amount of sublation of difference in order to achieve universal equality and freedom. Differences of ideology or distrust in ability based on race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or any other socio-cultural marker has the potential to shatter the homogeneity required to perpetuate a feeling of national cohesiveness, which begins or is strengthened within the Army for the soldier. Sublation of difference through the Army training/molding process thus becomes necessary in order to actualize the myth of homogeneity.

The sublation of difference is represented through some of the Army's recruitment materials, and it is depicted as uniform for everyone. The materials use diverse categories of difference already recognized in American society in order to highlight the sublation process. The Army, the largest and oldest branch of the United States military, expends many resources on filmed recruitment ads to encourage individuals to sign up as members. These recruitment ads highlight the importance granted to the process of sublation within the military. The

recruitment video “Nine Weeks” offers the potential recruit a glimpse of what he or she can expect during basic training. The introduction highlights the diverse backgrounds of each recruit, particularly in terms of location. One army member lists a number of United States cities from which each member of his platoon comes. In this instance, not only does the nation exist in homogenous empty time, but also in homogenous empty space, regardless of how large the geographical United States actually is or how far apart these individuals were previously. The discourse then quickly turns to one of unity.

“We’re all different, and after being here for a few weeks we become one.” (male voice)

“Stereotypes don’t really happen here. It’s not really a gender thing. We’re all soldiers.

We all wear the same uniform.” (female voice)¹⁹⁴

These statements frame the existence of difference as something that must be sublated under the broader identity as a soldier in the United States Army. Differences are referred to as “stereotypes,” implying a negative and oversimplified conception of what separates these soldiers-in-the-making. The message conveyed is that basic training in the Army allows exaggerated and false differences to be dismissed through sublation in order to create an identity that can be subsumed by the identity of the United States Army soldier. It is this totalizing identity that moves through homogenous empty time.

Another clip of the video, “Red Phase I: Falling In,” shows the physical transformation of the recruit. They have their heads shaved, dress in uniform, and adjust to life dictated by a drill sergeant whose sole job is to ensure conformity and sublation. The drill sergeant is with them at all times, behind them at all times. It is during the Red Phase when recruits learn the rules of their new community and become one within it. The emphasis on unity is immense in this

¹⁹⁴ Courtesy of the U.S. Army, Copyright U.S. Army. United States Army. *Nine Weeks. Introduction: Choosing to Serve*. 2 min. 14 sec. 2009. Website Video. <http://www.goarmy.com/home/9weeks/index.jsp#/?video=basicintro&page=0&=>

phase. “If one soldier goes down then we all hurt because of that situation.”¹⁹⁵ The different phases in basic training culminate in graduation. In this clip we see the final product of nine weeks of conditioning and subject positioning. This results in “an amazing transition. From civilian to warrior. We are warriors.”¹⁹⁶

The transition from civilian to a unit of warriors is accomplished through the sublation of difference and also through conditioning through discursive practices. The recruits are constantly conditioned to act and think as one unit, with a goal larger than their individual selves. They speak as one, through numerous collective chants, and act as one, through collective physical activity. The individual recruits physical differences are silently highlighted in the video. The camera focuses on female, Asian, Hispanic, Black and others carrying visual marginal social indicators on their physical selves. In the graduation clip, an “ethnic” looking and sounding father tells the camera how proud he is of his son. This is the same son who told the camera that he was able to put honor at the end of his last name by successfully becoming a member of the United States Army. We can only assume that his last name is accent laden. He takes on the identity of belonging as a soldier that exists in homogenous empty time. These differences are only highlighted to show the United States Army’s power in sublating them. All of the ethnic, gender and racial differences that we see on the recruits’ physical selves are supposed to become sublating through the process of becoming a United States Army soldier.

The “Nine Weeks” recruitment video tells a completely different story than the CareerWorld ad. The CareerWorld ad relies upon a neoliberal perspective, where the Army is

¹⁹⁵ Courtesy of the U.S. Army, Copyright U.S. Army. United States Army. *Nine Weeks, Red Phase I: Falling In*. 1 min. 23 sec., 2009. Website Video.

<http://www.goarmy.com/home/9weeks/index.jsp#/?video=basicintro&page=0&=>

¹⁹⁶ Courtesy of the U.S. Army, Copyright U.S. Army. United States Army. *Nine Weeks, Graduation: The Big Day*. 1 min. 22 sec. 2009. Website Video.

<http://www.goarmy.com/home/9weeks/index.jsp#/?video=basicintro&page=0&=>

one of many potential employers offering a career track. Individuals must shop around to meet their individual interests in this system, and the ad reflects that mentality. “Nine Weeks,” however, speaks to a completely different perspective. It more closely resonates with the ideals of civic nationalism. It focuses on the sublation of certain differences, mainly based on categories of geographic space, race, ethnicity, gender, and other physical marginalized social indicators. The sublation of class difference, however, is not apparent to the viewer. During World War II, when civic nationalism reigned as an ideal, the sublation of difference based on what were perceived as racial markers at the time happened only to a certain degree. Many men of Eastern and Southern European descent who were not previously considered part of the elite white race before the war became part of this category after the war. However, as mentioned in Chapter 2, the sublation of difference in World War II stopped at race and gender. It thus never fulfilled the ideals of civic nationalism even though it used the rhetoric of those ideals in its war effort against the Axis powers. Since the armed forces were largely representative of the male population in the United States at the time, especially what is now considered white males, it did manage to sublimate socioeconomic differences to a great degree for this group. This happened in a state of war. The training process described in “Nine Weeks” is far removed from the actual demands and constraints of war, and yet it claims that the individuals coming out of the other end of training have become “warriors.” Furthermore, it uses the universalistic discourse of civic nationalism such as equality and cohesiveness based on duty and unity to demonstrate how it accomplishes the sublation of certain differences. The sublation of these specific differences in “Nine Weeks” was never actualized in the military even when civic nationalism was the dominant ideology behind creating national citizenship during World War II. Using the discourse of civic nationalism to demonstrate its effectiveness in constructing cohesiveness

creates a situation where the contemporary Army is relying upon a myth for legitimacy. Furthermore, it completely ignores the idea of the military as an apparatus in a neoliberal system.

The United States military's ambiguous position, and the Army in particular, between existing in a neoliberal system and the necessity of invoking the desire to sacrifice for the nation or state in the individual creates a certain degree of contradiction in the way it portrays itself in recruitment ads. The contrast between the CareerWorld ad and the "Nine Weeks" video demonstrates how the Army in particular uses its position in a neoliberal system in order to economically incentivize people to serve, and the ideals of civic nationalism in order to invoke a deeper sentiment required for sacrifice and a sense of duty. I anticipate that other Army recruitment materials will share the contradictions illustrated above. In particular, I believe that the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier as a component of a society based on the ideals of civic nationalism has traveled through homogenous empty time and provided the United States Army a way to invoke the sentiment of national sacrifice and cohesiveness based on unity and duty that sits so uneasily with neoliberal ideology. This has become especially potent in a post September 11th United States, where national sentiment regained momentum, even if only temporarily and superficially. The next chapter begins an analysis of the current Army recruitment campaign, "Army Strong". I have chosen to focus on the United States Army's current recruitment campaign since the Army is the largest branch of the United States armed forces, though I would anticipate similar findings for other military branch's recruitment efforts. This campaign is still in use today. It began in 2006, replacing "An Army of One," which was used for a short time between 2000 and 2006. I intend to use Critical Discourse Analysis to analyze whether or not neoliberal and/or civic nationalism ideology is portrayed in the discourse used for the "Army Strong" recruitment material.

Chapter 5: “Army Strong”: Traces of Myths? A Critical Discourse Analysis of the “Army Strong” Campaign

The United States military did not have a desperate need for recruitment during World War II due to conscription and the plethora of “citizen-soldier” volunteers at hand. The colorful recruitment posters that proliferated during World War II were mostly used to target particular occupational specialties rather than to increase the overall number of recruits in general.¹⁹⁷ Recruitment efforts intensified in the decades following the war, and for the first time, the different military branches contracted their own civilian ad agencies. A lasting relationship between the Pentagon and Madison Avenue had been established.¹⁹⁸ In a short period of time, and with the help of Madison Avenue, the United States military was using all available media in its recruitment efforts.¹⁹⁹ If we flash-forward to the contemporary United States Army’s recruitment efforts, then we can see the multiple media venues through which the military can accomplish recruitment today. This includes traditional posters, radio ads, and television commercial ads. The Army also has a complex website where visitors can play interactive games to give them a glimpse into what it is like to be a soldier, and can even follow the documented lives of real soldiers via video.

The Pentagon-Madison Avenue relationship is exemplified in the “Army Strong” campaign. The United States Army hired McCann Worldgroup in December of 2005 to develop

¹⁹⁷ Mary Kate Chambers and David Vergun, “Army Recruiting Messages Help Keep Army Rolling Along,” *U.S. Army Military News*, 2006 October 9, <http://www.army.mil/-news/2006/10/09/322-army-recruiting-messages-help-keep-army-rolling-along/>, (1 April 2010).

¹⁹⁸ Peter Barnes, *Pawns: The Plight of the Citizen-Soldier* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, Inc., 1971), 48.

¹⁹⁹ Barnes, 51.

the ads for the “Army Strong” campaign.²⁰⁰ The Army’s contract for the “Army Strong” campaign has paid McCann Worldgroup \$200 million a year for the first two years starting in 2006, with three optional one-year contracts, which have been extended. The Army will have spent over \$1 billion dollars on “Army Strong” by the end of the year.²⁰¹

While there was an initial increase in interest for joining the military immediately after the events of September 11, 2001, the Army has seen an overall decrease in its recruitment numbers since the beginning of the so-called “War on Terrorism.”²⁰² The Army has put a lot of hope in the “Army Strong” campaign to help turn this trend around. Brig. Gen. Michael Fleming, Assistant Adjutant General for the Florida Army National Guard is quoted in a Department of Military Affairs article saying “[t]he Army’s new campaign focuses on the spirit of soldiering. ‘Army Strong’ describes the core attributes of the American Soldier... The commitment, dedication, and sacrifice of these outstanding Citizen-Soldiers to their nation and to their communities continue to help make this country strong.”²⁰³ By tying the “spirit of soldiering” to the “commitment, dedication, and sacrifice of these outstanding Citizen-Soldiers to their nation and to their communities,” Brig. Gen. Michael Fleming’s discourse contains traces of the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier. Commitment, dedication and sacrifice imply that the soldiers in the contemporary Army exhibit and embody a cohesiveness based on unity and duty. These are the very rules of formation that define the World War II citizen-soldier as an individualized discursive formation. The article, through Brig. Gen. Michael Fleming’s quote,

²⁰⁰ Courtesy of the U.S. Army, Copyright U.S. Army. United States Army, “Fact Sheet: The Making of ARMY STRONG,” 22 January 2009, <http://www.usaac.army.mil/sod/index.htm> (6 April 2010). To see an official copy of this Army document see Appendix A.

²⁰¹ Staff Sgt. C. G. Maldonado, “New Army Advertising Focuses on Spirit of Soldiering: ‘Army Strong’ Campaign Hits the Airwaves Nationwide Tonight,” Department of Military Affairs, 9 November 2006, <http://www.dma.state.fl.us/read.asp?did=5475> (1 April 2010).

²⁰² Maldonado

²⁰³ Maldonado

discursively portrays contemporary Army soldiers as “citizen-soldiers.” This portrayal occurs despite the United States military’s position as a state apparatus within a neoliberal system. I expand the above points by using Critical Discourse Analysis as a methodology for explaining the ways in which these traces are portrayed in some of the television commercials of the “Army Strong” campaign. I expand upon the details of this particular methodology and the ways in which I use it to conduct this analysis in the *Site and Population Selection, Data Gathering Methods and Data-analysis Procedures* section.

Overall Approach and Rationale

Discourse theory and Critical Discourse Analysis can be useful in revealing the tension between the use of the rules of formation for the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier as an individualized discursive formation in Army recruitment television commercials *and* the military as a neoliberal state apparatus partially relying on these rules of formation for its recruitment efforts. As drawn out in the last chapter, the contemporary United States military exists in a neoliberal system. This system has propelled the military into a position between a state apparatus and a privatized and professionalized construct. As seen in the CareerWorld ad and the “Nine Weeks” recruitment video, the United States Army utilizes contradictory concepts in order to appeal to potential recruits. The Army uses a career and professional oriented approach in the CareerWorld and other similar ads to satisfy its position as part of a neoliberal state apparatus. It then also uses the ideals of civic nationalism, which help construct the rules of formation for the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier, in “Nine Weeks” in order to focus on a higher calling that goes beyond the individual-oriented career option. This second approach is

important because it allows individuals to imagine themselves sacrificing life and limb for a nation that will continue on in perpetuity through homogenous empty time, in part thanks to their very sacrifice. The military relies upon this second approach in order to create meaning.

Benedict Anderson points out that, “*in themselves*, market-zones...do not create attachments.”²⁰⁴

If the United States military is really partly a career-track in a neoliberal market zone then who will willingly die for it, when a potential soldier could simply obtain another low-paying job where he or she does not have to potentially sacrifice life or limb? The United States military then must rely on a deeper and more important connection to entice individuals to join its ranks.

It must find a way to demonstrate “calendrical coincidence,”²⁰⁵ where recruits can imagine themselves steadily moving forward as part of America the nation through homogenous empty time. I argue that the United State Army uses the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier, and

its rules of formation based in civic nationalism, to demonstrate calendrical coincidence. The Army uses the idea of these “citizen-soldiers” to corroborate that good men, those men who

became “the greatest generation” after their service, fought and died for America the nation.

Their sacrifice, real or potential, helps America the nation continue on in perpetuity and they therefore continue on in perpetuity as well. I anticipate that the recruitment television

commercials of a neoliberal military will promote the idea that the potential recruit, if he or she

joins the Army, can join the legacy of such great men. They too can help strengthen America the nation and allow it and themselves through sacrifice to live on in perpetuity.

²⁰⁴ Anderson, 53.

²⁰⁵ Anderson, 26, 33. For further discussion see Homi K. Bhabha, The Location of Culture, 226-227. Also, Bhabha’s discussion of “social synchronicity” in “Anxious Nations, Nervous States,” 202, lends a similar perspective related to Anderson’s concept of “calendrical coincidence.”

Discourse theory and Critical Discourse Analysis can illuminate a slice of the discursive structure as one of many “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak.”²⁰⁶ In terms of the Army’s usage of the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier to attract recruits, the ‘object’ is the potential recruit. Using discourse theory and Critical Discourse Analysis to view how the United States Army uses the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier in contemporary recruitment television commercials will potentially show how institutional funding supports the discourse that attempts to construct “citizen-soldiers” out of contemporary recruits.²⁰⁷ This discourse can then be compared to the main characteristics of the United States military as a neoliberal state apparatus to draw out tensions between the two.

Site and Population Selection, Data Gathering Methods, and Data-analysis Procedures

I begin the analysis by explaining and analyzing the official United States Army perspectives on and objectives for the “Army Strong” recruitment campaign, based on official Army documents that are downloadable at the Army’s Strategic Outreach Directorate.²⁰⁸ I then begin an analysis of three different recruitment television commercials used as a part of the “Army Strong” campaign.²⁰⁹ “Army Strong” was implemented in November 2006. The Army Secretary at the time of the launch of “Army Strong,” Francis Harvey, said that the Army wanted

²⁰⁶ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 49.

²⁰⁷ Sara Mills, *Discourse: The New Critical Idiom*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2005), 17.

²⁰⁸ Courtesy of the U.S. Army, Copyright U.S. Army. These documents can be downloaded on this website: United States Army, *Strategic Outreach Directorate*, 22 January 2009, <http://www.usaac.army.mil/sod/index.htm> (6 April 2010).

²⁰⁹ Courtesy of the U.S. Army, Copyright U.S. Army. These television commercial ads can be watched on this website: United States Army, *Strategic Outreach Directorate*, 22 January 2009, <http://www.usaac.army.mil/sod/index.htm> (6 April 2010).

to have a “marketing boost” in order to win the hearts and minds of recruitment age Americans. According to Army Secretary Harvey, the marketing boost is necessary because recruitment is difficult in a period of war that is continuing far longer than the Bush Administration ever expected and when the potential sacrifice of joining the military is evident and real.²¹⁰ The Army missed its recruitment goals in 2005 by the largest margin in two decades. As emphasized by Brig. Gen. Fleming above, the “Army Strong” recruitment campaign emphasizes commitment, dedication and sacrifice. All of these characteristics invoke the cohesiveness that helps define national citizenship within a society defined by civic nationalism, as opposed to the individuality that helps define a neoliberal system.

Associated Press military writer Robert Burns quotes Eric Keshin, chief operating officer at McCann Worldgroup, saying that “Army Strong” represents “an evolution that is moving with the times” to enable the Army to meet its recruiting goals.²¹¹ This evolution is indicative of the Army’s changed perspective on what works to encourage people to join an AVF. The Army has transitioned its recruiting efforts away from the “An Army of One” campaign, which many soldiers and experts perceived as focusing and promoting too much individualism and career orientation, to “Army Strong,” which emphasizes cohesiveness based on unity and duty.²¹² Or, rather, the Army is using the rules of formation for the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier as an individualized discursive formation as an overarching framework for its recruitment campaign. I believe that this shift in recruitment efforts corresponds with the Army’s perception

²¹⁰ Robert Burns, “Army Launching Ad Campaign With ‘Army Strong’ Slogan Aimed at Youth,” *Associated Press* 9 October 2006. http://nl.newsbank.com/nl-search/we/Archives?p_product=APAB&p_theme=apab&p_action=search&p_maxdocs=200&s_dispstring=Army%20Strong&p_field_advanced-0=&p_text_advanced-0=%28%22Army%20Strong%22%29&xcal_numdocs=20&p_perpage=10&p_sort=YMD_date:D&xcal_useweights=no (1 April 2010).

²¹¹ Burns.

²¹² Burns.

of what military service means in a volatile time of extended war coming out of the events of September 11, 2001.

Arguably, the “Army Strong” campaign is an attempt to ride the proverbial coattails of immediate post-September 11, 2001 sentiment. Robert Putnam conducted a survey to measure this sentiment from mid-October to mid-November 2001.²¹³ Putnam interprets the results of this survey as indications that “[a]s 2001 ended, Americans were more united, readier for collective sacrifice, and more attuned to public purpose than we have been for several decades. Indeed, we have a more capacious sense of “we” than we have had in the adult experience of most Americans now alive.”²¹⁴ Putnam’s discourse is reminiscent of the World War II slogan “We are all in this together.” Putnam’s analysis implies that a focus on collective sacrifice has the potential to reunite the displaced “we”s implied in the “An Army of One” campaign. However, after conducting another survey roughly six months after the first, Putnam found that the sentiments of collective sacrifice had already begun declining. By the spring of 2002, “the sense of connectedness with other Americans...seemed to fade with the passage of months but not (or not yet) to have disappeared.”²¹⁵ It appears as if the sentiments of collective sacrifice, and cohesiveness based on duty and unity, that resulted from the events of September 11, 2001 were only temporary and somewhat superficial in that they did not reconstruct the ideals of national citizenship that are currently rooted in a neoliberal system. However, I assume that the Army’s reliance on these same rules of formation as a market tactic to increase its recruitment numbers

²¹³ Robert Putnam, “Bowling Together,” in *United We Serve*, ed. E.J. Dionne Jr., Kayla Meltzer Drogosz and Robert E. Litan (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), 13-15. This time-frame included the anthrax crisis and the start of the Afghan war. This survey had a sample size of 500 Americans. These same Americans had been surveyed about civic attitudes and behaviors during the summer and fall of 2000. Putnam was thus able to measure a shift in attitude and behavior based on a comparison of the same subjects’ survey answers before and after 9/11.

²¹⁴ Putnam, “Bowling Together,” 17.

²¹⁵ Putnam, “Bowling Together,” 19.

has some correlation with the perception that these sentiments were and perhaps are still somewhat prevalent in American society today.

My analysis of “Army Strong” television recruitment commercials works under the premise, borrowed from discourse theory, that “[d]iscourse is about the production of knowledge through language. But since...all social practices entail *meaning*, and meanings shape and influence what we do—our conduct—all practices have a discursive aspect.”²¹⁶ The success of the Army recruitment commercials’ promotion of the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier as an individualized discursive formation to make meaning for the subject position of potential recruits relies upon the depiction of soldiers in the commercials as conforming to the myth’s rules of formation. If the commercials indeed depict the soldiers as conforming to the myth’s rules of formation, then that depiction is the practice, and this practice has a discursive aspect because it produces knowledge and meaning. The potential recruits and soldiers “will not be able to take meaning until they have identified with those positions which the discourse constructs (which I anticipate to contain traces of the myths of World War II), *subjected* themselves to its rules (if and when the recruit becomes a soldier), and hence become the subjects of its *power/knowledge*.”²¹⁷ I anticipate that the process of the creation of discursive meaning will be displayed through the soldiers in the commercials fulfilling the rules of formation of the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier.

The actual analysis of the discourse in the “Army Strong” recruitment commercials comes from Critical Discourse Analysis. The hierarchical position of power that the United States Army occupies as part of a neoliberal state apparatus enables it to partner with private ad

²¹⁶ Stuart Hall, “Foucault: Power, Knowledge and Discourse,” in *Discourse Theory and Practice: A Reader*, ed. Margaret Wetherell, Stephanie Taylor and Simeon J. Yates (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications Inc, 2006), 72.

²¹⁷ Hall, “Foucault: Power,” 80.

companies (Madison Avenue/Pentagon relationship) in order to try to influence in terms of action and cognition. I assume that the Army uses recruitment commercials to try to influence potential recruits to act by joining its ranks, and it does so by highlighting the rules of formation for the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier, which enables the potential recruit to imagine (a cognitive act) him or herself as part of this and similar myths. The Army has special access to discourse due to its hierarchical position and also due to its ability to spend millions of dollars on marketing for its recruitment efforts.²¹⁸ The Army recruitment commercial ads are analyzed in terms of:

1. Level of specificity and degree of completeness in relation to the rules of formation for the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier. As explained by Glyn Williams' interpretation of Michel Foucault's work, I look at the interdiscursive relationship between the discursive formation of the rules of formation for the World War II citizen-soldier and the "Army Strong" campaign's discourse. I will specifically analyze whether or not the "Army Strong" campaign's discourse belongs to a "field of memory," which "relates to statements as traces being 'no longer accepted or discussed,' but which lead to establishing 'relations of filiation, genesis, transformation, continuity and historical discontinuity.'"²¹⁹ I am specifically interested in statements as traces that lead to continuity through homogenous empty time. Williams quotes Foucault's elaboration of the concept of a "field of memory": "This link to the past involves the claim that 'there can be no statement that does not reactualize others' (1969:180), leading to an

²¹⁸ Teun Van Dijk, "Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis," *Discourse and Society* 4 (1993): 251-252.

²¹⁹ Williams, 88. Williams is quoting Michel Foucault's work from *L'archeologie du savoir* (1969).

understanding of how prior discourse helps constitute the present.”²²⁰ I analyze how the rules of formation of the World War II citizen-soldier as an individualized discursive formation helps constitute the present discourse used in the “Army Strong” commercial ads.

2. Other tools that help me with the above analysis include the use of metaphors that are presented as common sense,²²¹ rhetorical questions that strive to illustrate these metaphors, and categorizations (especially ones that rely on “prototype-based reasoning” that attempt to represent the category as a whole).²²²

In addition to an analysis of the textual discourse used in these commercials, I also analyze their visual discourse. This method of discourse analysis is known as multimodal discourse analysis. Gill Abousnoug and David Machin have used this type of Critical Discourse Analysis, derived mainly from the work of Kress and Van Leeuwen and O’Toole, to analyze the visual discourse of war monuments in Great Britain.²²³ Many texts communicate not only through the linguistic mode, but also on a visual level. In the first three chapters I have attempted to provide “the social and cultural [and historical] goings on” of which the “Army Strong” recruitment commercials as modes of discourse are a part.²²⁴ I specifically look for the rules of formation that are a part of the cultural and historical context of the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier to analyze the visual discourse signs within the “Army Strong”

²²⁰ Williams, 89.

²²¹ George Lakoff, Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think, 2nd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 6-7.

²²² Lakoff, 9, 370-371.

²²³ Gill Abousnoug and David Machin, “Defence discourse I: the visual institutionalization of discourses in war monuments,” in Language and Power: An Introduction to Institutional Discourse ed. Andrea Mayr (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2008). She refers specifically to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996/2006), and O’Toole (1994), 117-118.

²²⁴ Abousnoug and Machin, quoting Fairclough (1995a: 57), 119.

commercials. I look for associations of the signs within the commercials with the rules of formation for the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier.

Abousnnouga and Machin use concepts derived from the work of Roland Barthes that allow me to elaborate on how the possible associations between the signs within the “Army Strong” commercials and the rules of formation for the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier are made, and how meaning is constructed through these associations. Barthes’ concept of iconography is particularly useful. This analysis looks at the denotation and the connotation of the visual signs within the commercials. Denotation provides a description of what and/or who is depicted within the commercial.²²⁵ Analyzing the signs for connotation, however, adds depth to the visual analysis. It provides a means through which I can analyze if and how elements that carry meaning from other domains are present in the commercials.²²⁶ I particularly look for the presence of the rules of formation for the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier in order to ascertain whether or not traces of this myth are represented in the images and signs presented in the commercials.

By using Critical Discourse Analysis, my focus and objective is not to reveal truth. Rather, my focus and objectives revolve around the issue of meaning. Methodological issues in Critical Discourse Analysis “relate to the resolution of ambiguity in the construction of meaning, to the possibilities of meaning, and to the effects of meaning.”²²⁷ I am interested to see the effect of the operation of the rules of formation for the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier in the context of Army recruitment commercials when the Army resides as one part of a military that functions as a neoliberal state apparatus.

²²⁵ Abousnnouga and Machin, 124-125.

²²⁶ Abousnnouga and Machin, 125.

²²⁷ Williams, 251.

Official United States Army Perspectives on and Objectives for “Army Strong”

Before I begin an analysis of some of the “Army Strong” recruitment commercials, I offer an explanation and analysis of the official United States Army perspectives on and objectives for its current recruitment campaign. The United States Army provides information about the “Army Strong” campaign at its “Strategic Outreach Directorate.”²²⁸ The campaign ethos statement resonates with the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier. It states:

Being Army Strong is about much more than being physically fit. It is mental and emotional strength. It is the confidence to lead. It is the courage to stand up for your beliefs. It is the compassion to help others. It is the desire for lifelong learning. It is the intelligence to make the right decision. It is making a difference for yourself, your family, your community and our nation...

Army Strong is also the kind of strength that endures. It is the strength that comes from challenging training, teamwork, shared values and personal experience. A Soldier’s time in the Army may come to an end, but he or she will always be Army Strong because the lessons learned and values gained are timeless. They will serve as a springboard to life beyond the Army and will last long after physical strength fades.²²⁹

The “strength” of which the campaign speaks alludes to Machiavelli’s concept of *virtu*. Though this ethos statement does not directly state that the recruit must have the qualities of Army strength prior to becoming a soldier, it certainly indicates that these qualities are inculcated and strengthened by serving in the Army. The soldiers who develop Army strength have the ability to look beyond their individual selves. They have “compassion to help others,” and they make a difference for not only themselves, but also their “family,” “community,” and “nation.” *Virtu*

²²⁸ Courtesy of the U.S. Army, Copyright U.S. Army. The website for the United States Army Strategic Outreach Directorate is <http://www.usaac.army.mil/sod/index.htm>.

²²⁹ Courtesy of the U.S. Army, Copyright U.S. Army. United States Army, “Campaign Ethos Statement: Army Strong,” 22 January 2009, <http://www.usaac.army.mil/sod/index.htm> (6 April 2010). For an official copy of the “Army Strong” ethos statement see Appendix B.

could easily substitute for “Army Strong” in the statement: “A Soldier’s time in the Army may come to an end, but he or she will always be Army Strong [have *virtu*] because the lessons learned and values gained are timeless.” These attributes that resonate with *virtu* are also reminiscent of the rules of formation for the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier as an individualized discursive formation. Allusions of a commitment to “community,” “nation,” and *virtu* require a sense of cohesiveness based on duty and unity. A soldier who embodies a sense of duty beyond individualism will have the “compassion to help others.” He or she will also want to make a difference for cohesive units such as “family,” “community,” and “nation.” In making this difference the soldier is promoting unity. The soldiers who embody “Army Strong” are constructed as “citizen-soldiers” in this ethos statement. More specifically, their official construction relies upon the same rules of formation and characteristics that have been used to construct the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier.

The United States Army has also issued a fact sheet listing its key messages for “Army Strong.” This fact sheet adds greater connection between the “Army Strong” campaign and the “citizen-soldier” and *virtu* than the ethos statement alone. In particular, it states, “A Soldier’s personal decision to serve demonstrates collective strength: strength from within himself/herself, strength from within his/her family and strength from those who influence this important war-time choice for our nation.” This statement implies that the individual who decides to serve must embody a sense of *virtu* prior to making that decision. He or she must have a sense of cohesiveness based on duty and unity, or “collective strength,” before entering the Army; this allows him or her to have a constitutive relationship with the Army where they each work to strengthen the other simultaneously. The soldier’s “collective strength” is only then improved with a special brand of “Army strength.” This strengthening dynamic, combined with the goals

of the ethos statement resonates with the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier. The individual that demonstrates “collective strength” as a citizen surpasses these already exceptional qualities by serving in the Army as a soldier. He or she then takes these qualities and skills, or his or her enhanced sense of *virtu*, out into the civilian world as a citizen. The “citizen-soldier” uses “Army strength” in any and every situation to better not only themselves but also collective units such as “community” and “nation.” The Army’s stated goals thus chart a path that would potentially lead to the construction of a “greatest generation” scenario, where “citizen-soldiers” make their community and nation a better place. The difference in the contemporary Army, of course, is that a very small number of citizens actually serve or want to serve in an AVF. Furthermore, it is not abundantly clear that those who serve do so out of a sense of duty to nation that permeates American citizens’ decision-making in general.

To successfully launch the “Army Strong” campaign, the United States Army has had to hire a global marketing communications agency, McCann Worldgroup. By doing so it is acting as one of many actors in a neoliberal system. It has to use marketing tools in order to sell its image and entice potential recruits, or employees, to join its ranks. McCann Worldgroup “conducted in-depth research among future Soldiers and their influencers, and interacted with hundreds of Soldiers – new recruits, Soldiers in AIT, senior officers, Cadets, Special Missions Soldiers and Army Reserve Soldiers – to identify the defining character of the United States Army and the motivations of the next generation of Soldiers.”²³⁰ The marketing agency saw “communicating the essential truth of the Soldier” as a priority. It thus used actual United States Army soldiers in its ads whenever the viewer sees a uniformed soldier.²³¹ I assume that this

²³⁰ Courtesy of the U.S. Army, Copyright U.S. Army. United States Army, “Fact Sheet: The Making of ARMY STRONG.”

²³¹ Courtesy of the U.S. Army, Copyright U.S. Army. United States Army, “Fact Sheet: The Making of ARMY STRONG.”

implies the individuals in the commercials that are not uniformed soldiers are actors. This implies that the creation of the ad is not really depicting the true “citizen-soldier,” even though the Army’s key statements about “Army Strong” allude to this myth. Recall that Machiavelli’s conception of the citizen-soldier constructs a hyphen that connects both the military and the civic realm. The characteristics that strengthen both realms, in terms of *virtu*, traverse the hyphen between the citizen and the soldier. This means that all citizens embody the sentiment of duty to nation, and are soldiers when they need to be. Likewise, all soldiers, with strengthened *virtu* are citizens when their nation no longer requires their service. To depict the true “citizen-soldier” would require the commercials to use would-be soldiers and retired soldiers as the non-uniformed individuals in the commercials. This would adequately demonstrate the connection the hyphen creates between the citizen and the soldier.

Despite having to rely on marketing tactics to demonstrate meaning, the Army is quick to point out that McCann Worldgroup is not really adding anything new to the depth of what it means to be a soldier. The Army states:

The tagline Army Strong is new, and the creative advertising and communication campaign that supports it is new. But the two insights that have always guided Army recruiting advertising have remained unchanged. The first insight is that the U.S. Army builds lifelong strength in its Soldiers through training, teamwork, personal experience and shared values. The second insight is that American Soldiers themselves – making a difference in their lives, in their communities and for our nation – are the most compelling example of this strength. The creative expression, but not the core truth, has changed over time to capture the interest of new generations of future Soldiers.²³²

²³² Courtesy of the U.S. Army, Copyright U.S. Army. United States Army, “ARMY STRONG: Questions and Answers,” 22 January 2010, <http://www.usaac.army.mil/sod/index.htm> (6 April 2010). To view an official copy of this Army document see Appendix C.

The Army is thus trying to highlight the idea that the ads portray attributes of itself and of the soldier that are not new, but rather, are part of a long and distinct tradition. The Army is attempting to construct continuity by framing the “Army Strong” campaign’s objectives and major insights into a conception of tradition that exists in homogenous empty time.²³³ The ads illustrate the connections between the contemporary soldier and the rules of formation for the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier, as if these attributes have timelessly remained the same. This illustrates the existence of the rules of formation and *virtu* through homogenous empty time. Despite the military’s existence within a neoliberal system, as a neoliberal state apparatus, the Army insists that “two insights” that make up the “core truth” of the soldier and the Army have remained “unchanged;” it does not contextualize “unchanged,” however.

Though the Army states that its core values have remained unchanged, it still relies on a marketing agency to portray and promote these values to the American public at large. This is an indication that these values are not permeated in the type of national citizenship found in a neoliberal system. The Army must therefore rely on neoliberal tactics to demonstrate these values and to compete as one employer amongst many. The Army thus offers McCann Worldgroup’s status as a mechanism to elevate its own status within a neoliberal system. In its fact sheet about the making of “Army Strong,” the Army lists the accolades of those hired by McCann Worldgroup to promote and sell the immutable core Army values that exist in homogenous empty time:

About the Director

- The Army Strong ads are directed by Samuel Bayer, one of the most prolific and sought-after talents in the advertising and music video industries.

²³³ Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions,” in The Invention of Tradition, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 2.

- Bayer is well known for the countless award-winning videos he has produced for artists such as Green Day, The Rolling Stones, Aerosmith, Sheryl Crow and Metallica. His advertising work includes campaigns for Nike, Coke, Pepsi, Nissan, Lexus and Mountain Dew.

About the Composer

- Renowned composer Mark Isham is the artist behind the stirring original musical score for the Army Strong campaign. The music features undertones from the 29-member Soldiers' Chorus of the U.S. Army Field Band in the 30- and 60-second "Army Strong" spots.
- Isham, a top Hollywood film composer, has more than 70 film and TV credits, including memorable scores for such notable films as "Eight Below," "Running Scared," "Crash," "The Cooler," "A River Runs Through It," "Blade," "Nell," "Men of Honor" and "Miracle." He won an Emmy in 1996 for the theme he produced for the television show "EZ Streets."²³⁴

McCann Worldgroup's marketing tools and tactics lump the Army with Hollywood productions and popular consumer products. Below is a discourse analysis of the "Army Strong" campaign's recruitment commercials in action. The Army's Strategic Outreach Directorate website includes three commercials launched in 2009 for the "Army Strong" campaign. I analyze these three national television commercial spots for "Army Strong" based on the above-stated methodologies.

²³⁴ Courtesy of the U.S. Army, Copyright U.S. Army. United States Army, "Fact Sheet: The Making of ARMY STRONG."

“Army Strong” Campaign: Television Recruitment Commercials

1. Commercial number one: “Company”²³⁵

This commercial compares the United States Army to a company, but one “like no other company in the world.” This metaphor recognizes the need for the Army to compete with other employers in a neoliberal system. The implication is that those who work for this unique company will develop skills and have opportunities different and better than those who choose to work for any other company. The soldiers in this commercial fuse their military experience with civilian success and contribution. They become the leaders of tomorrow in the civilian world by becoming “Army Strong” today. There is a neoliberal framework shaping the content of the commercial’s textual discourse. It is intended to appeal to the individual’s career and thus economic opportunities based on the individual decision to join the Army. However, the discourse also resonates with Machiavelli’s conception of the “citizen-soldier” who possesses *virtu*. The soldiers in the commercial are constructed as “dreamers,” which invokes the idea of the *American dream* that “the greatest generation” worked so hard to construct and improve upon. Using the concept of “American” as opposed to “the United States” connotes purity and continuity through homogenous empty time. Using the term “American” connotes not only the technical and geographical construction of the state, which can and has changed over time, but more importantly the spirit and collective memory of the nation that exists through homogenous empty time. “American,” because it relies on borders of inclusion and exclusion, also connotes an inclusiveness that the label of “the United States” does not have.

²³⁵ Courtesy of the U.S. Army, Copyright U.S. Army. United States Army, *Television Ads*, “Company,” 30 seconds, Website Video, http://www.usaac.army.mil/sod/download/tv/company_QYAR8110.mov (11 April 2010).

The commercial goes on to say that today's Army soldiers have "courage, strength, honor. And when they leave this company [the Army] it will be with a thousand opportunities and the respect of millions." The use of the discourse "a thousand opportunities" resonates with a neoliberal system. However, the use of the discourse "the respect of millions" ties these opportunities to a more cohesive relationship with a vague set of others. The company metaphor therefore upholds the role of the Army in a neoliberal system while simultaneously using traces of the role of the "citizen-soldier" in the Army and in the civilian world through a field of memory that includes the rules of formation for the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier.

This commercial does not use rhetorical questions to illustrate the "company" metaphor. However, it does use very certain language. The Army "*is* like no other company in the world," "You see, this company *is* filled with dreamers, but they also *have* courage, strength, honor. And when they leave this company it *will* be with a thousand opportunities and the respect of millions" [my emphasis]. This certain language works to strengthen the metaphor that creates a relationship between a "company" and the Army. The discourse constructs meaning for the Army's ability to provide the opportunities and respect the way a world-class company can.

The commercial also categorizes all soldiers that come out of the Army into the civilian world as possessing the skills and experiences that will provide opportunity and respect. It does this by directly invoking an unclear field of memory. It states, "CEOs got started here. Astronauts and software engineers." This discourse constructs a line of success based on economic value. CEOs, astronauts and software engineers all work in economic sectors that generate high levels of profitability, invention and innovation. They are also respected in a neoliberal system because of these economic contributions. The veterans to which the commercial refers in terms of CEOs, astronauts and software engineers are part of the legacy of

“the greatest generation.” This commercial uses both the economic implications of these examples combined with the added characteristics of “courage,” “strength,” and “honor” gained through service to invoke a field of memory that includes traces of the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier. Using the characteristics of “courage,” “strength,” and “honor” as additives to examples that are important from a neoliberal perspective is contrary to the way these characteristics may have been used in a civic nationalism perspective. The myth of the World War II citizen-soldier would use these characteristics to strengthen cohesiveness based on unity and duty rather than individual career aspiration. The “Army Strong” campaign’s discourse belongs to a “field of memory” that establishes filiation with the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier. It also establishes continuity, historical discontinuity, and transformation. The rules of formation for the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier as an individualized discursive formation help constitute the discourse used in the “Army Strong” “company” commercial. The commercial uses a continuous conception of success, but transforms the substance of this success based on a neoliberal conception of economic success. It thus offers continuity of the rules of formation for the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier while simultaneously breaking with this continuity by transforming these rules of formation to strengthen a neoliberal conception of success rather than one based in civic nationalism. The commercial thus works to recontextualize the rules of formation for the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier within a neoliberal system.

The visual discourse complements the textual discourse of the “company” commercial. The first half of the commercial takes place within a seemingly high-tech and well-financed company. Everyone in this scene is dressed similarly, in dark suiting. The suited workers appear to be going about their daily business as other suited individuals climb a two-sided wall

with ropes placed in the middle of the company's entryway. Another suited woman is shown above the ground on a contraption that connects one end of a room with the other end. She is traversing the room by crawling along a suspended rope on this contraption, all while two other women chat at a water cooler. The commercial transitions to an Army base with soldiers when the narrator²³⁶ says "and when they leave this company..." Like the company scene before it, all of the soldiers are also dressed the same, but this time in Army uniforms. The scene shows officers riding horses, looking at soldiers in formation. It then shows a broad sweep of the soldiers in formation, and transitions to a close-up of one of the soldiers saluting the officers. The scene ends with the soldiers marching in formation while carrying company flags.

The connotation of this visual discourse is complex and supports many of the analyses of the textual discourse, articulated above. The scenes are often shot from the perspective of a spectator with a broad view. Whether the scene focuses on an expansive scene; such as the hustle and bustle of the company's entryway, or on an individual; such as the woman climbing the rope across the company's room or the soldier saluting at the end of the commercial, the gaze is always looking away from or beyond the viewer. This gaze allows the viewer to see the focus of the individual. More importantly it represents an "offer image." In an offer image the subject does not look at the viewer.²³⁷ The soldiers in the commercial therefore do not acknowledge the viewer, or potential recruit. The soldiers do not demand a response, which leaves little room for the viewer to question the categorical construction of the soldier through the simultaneous

²³⁶ I find it interesting that Gary Sinise narrates all of the "Army Strong" commercials. This is significant because he is an actor, not a soldier. His voice is recognizable, and this recognition goes beyond the mere fact that he is a well-known actor. Rather, it is important because of the kind of acting for which he is commonly known. He is well known as Lieutenant Dan from "Forrest Gump," who is part of a long line of American Army soldiers who have sacrificed their lives for America the nation. He is currently well known for his character on CSI New York. On this television show he plays detective Mac Taylor, an ex-Marine who is largely seen as good at his job because of his military experiences.

²³⁷ Abousnoug and Machin, 133.

textual discourse. Such an offer image of the soldier allows the viewer to imagine the soldier as part of a world in which joining the Army provides the skills and experiences that *will* lead to “a thousand opportunities and the respect of millions.” The offer image and the textual discourse that accompanies it separate the soldier from the rest of the members of a neoliberal society. The soldier is thus constructed as one part of an inclusive America, but also separate within this inclusiveness. The tension between inclusiveness and separation connotes that the soldier will become part of America the nation that exists through homogenous empty time, and will also become better than those in a neoliberal system who do not have military service as a resume credential. The separation of the soldier from the rest as constructed in this commercial is based in the competition that is necessary to thrive in a neoliberal system.

The commercial also uses the visual perspective of height and elevation to portray greatness and unity.²³⁸ In the second part of the commercial, when the camera pans out over the long shot of the soldiers in formation the shot elevates them. This elevation supports the textual discourse that claims the skills and experiences of being a soldier in the Army will elevate their opportunities and received respect in any other “company.” The individual shot of the saluting soldier is not elevated. Rather, it is face-on. This connotes that unity, being a part of a company in the Army, is above the individual. If the viewer, or potential recruit, decides to join the Army, he or she will be in a company that does not elevate the individual. The same emphasis on unity is not present in the first part of the commercial that focuses on the non-Army company. Here, the elevated individual reigns. This connotes that the use of the concept of cohesiveness based in unity does not directly translate into the civilian world once the soldier decides to leave the Army company to use his or her skills and experiences for personal opportunity. The skills and

²³⁸ Abousnnouga and Machin, 127-128.

experiences from Army service that are based in unity are thus constructed as individual attributes that promote career development once the soldier becomes a citizen again.

The “Army Strong” “company” commercial contains traces of the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier. It constructs the soldier as an individual that can pursue a career outside of the military once he or she has strengthened some of the characteristics associated with *virtu*. However, these characteristics have been recontextualized to provide a competitive edge within a neoliberal system. The soldier becomes the citizen again, but the hyphen has disappeared in this recontextualization. The soldier’s strengthened *virtu* does not exist to strengthen the civic realm. *Virtu* does not traverse the hyphen between citizen and soldier. Instead, without a hyphen, it exists atomistically within the identity of soldier and citizen. The *virtu* that is strengthened during the individual’s time as a soldier does not traverse the hyphen to the realm of citizen in order to strengthen the civic realm. Rather, it exists to strengthen the individual’s position within a neoliberal system. The commercial assumes that the soldier might not choose the military career track that is necessary for the success of a military that functions as a neoliberal state apparatus. It thus directly tries to appeal to the perceived needs of the individual within the neoliberal system in order to entice potential recruits to join the Army. If a recruit took this route, then there is a chance that he or she would go on to be the expert in the private sector after he or she leaves the Army. He or she might then be competing with the military, which must compete at a budgetary disadvantage. The focus in the connotation of this commercial is on the individual soldier’s career in the civilian world rather than a focus on civil society and the soldier’s contribution to national cohesiveness or the competitiveness of the military as one among many employers.

2. Commercial number two: “School”²³⁹

This commercial uses the same type of metaphor as the first, but it compares the Army to “a school like no other school in the world. Avionics in the morning. Training in the afternoon. Computer programming in the evening. And along the way, leadership 101.” Again, like the first commercial, the “school” metaphor uses a neoliberal framework to shape the content of the commercial’s textual discourse. The commercial is intended to appeal to the individual’s career by providing educational incentive that will add value to the individual’s human capital in a neoliberal system. This thus speaks to the economic opportunities available to the soldier based on the individual decision to join the Army. The implication is that the Army will function better than any other school or education option the potential recruit might choose in providing value to his or her human capital.

The “school” commercial also fuses an element of respect with the skills and experiences that will provide increased opportunity in terms of economic value. It goes on to say, “[a]nd on the day that your studies here draw to an end, and the commander looks you in the eye and salutes you, it will be with the knowledge that he is only the first of many who will do so. There’s strong, and there’s Army Strong. To see strength like no other, go to goarmy.com.” This metaphor does not relate to the rules of formation for the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier like the “company” commercial. The discourse focuses solely on the individual’s development through this “school.” The commercial uses the salute to convey the concept of respect, which is not commonly used in the civilian realm. The implication made through this textual discourse then is that the “school” is training that will elevate a soldier’s chances for growth and promotion in the Army. The commercial’s “school” metaphor does not directly

²³⁹ Courtesy of the U.S. Army, Copyright U.S. Army. United States Army, Television Ads, “School,” 30 seconds, Website Video, http://www.usaac.army.mil/sod/download/tv/school_QYAR8109.mov (11 April 2010).

support the field of memory of the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier. Instead, it promotes the idea of a careerist and professionalized military. By successfully developing the skills of avionics, computer programming and leadership through training, the soldier will become a better soldier and will earn respect within the Army.

The “school” commercial does, however, rely on categorizations that attempt to represent all soldiers that choose a career in the Army as a whole. If the soldier simply goes through training, then the commercial’s discourse allows the viewer to assume that respect within the Army is guaranteed. It categorizes all soldiers, or potential recruits, within the same levels of skill and motivation. The success in this “school” and subsequent respect is constructed as a guaranteed end for all soldiers. This attempts to make the Army an appealing competitor to an individual’s other career options within a neoliberal system by guaranteeing success.

The visual discourse complements the textual discourse of the “school” commercial. The first part of the commercial takes place with plain-clothed individuals on a university campus. It transitions from a civilian realm to a military realm. Once you go through this “school” then you become the soldier. Before the visual transition takes place, the viewer sees a sidewalk crossroads with a four-way sign that reads “strength,” “honor,” and “courage” on three of the four arrows. When the narrator says “[o]n the day when your studies here end....,” the camera focuses on individuals walking until one of them is close enough so that his or her dark pants cover nearly the entire screen. As the individual steps out of the way of the camera’s focus, the scene changes to a close up of soldiers marching in formation, and then focuses on a commander saluting the marching soldiers. The commander is saluting the marching soldiers, who are now off to the side of the viewer’s line of vision. The soldiers being saluted appear to look at the viewer, but as the camera pans out the viewer realizes they are intently staring back at the

commander. The commander is slightly elevated above the line of sight of the viewer, and the soldiers are eye-to-eye with the viewer. The elevation of the commander connotes the strength, courage and honor to be found in the Army. The commander's gaze that looks beyond the viewer's line of sight is another "offer image." It allows the potential recruit to imagine him or herself as the recipient of that respect from something and someone great. This visual space for imagination reiterates the textual discourses categorization of all soldiers going through this school and subsequently deserving that kind of respect. The civilian, after going through this "school," thus transitions to the soldier.

The "school" ad is a slight variation of the "company" ad. It seems to try to appeal to the potential recruits that want to pursue an education. It positions the Army as an institute that can provide an education that will garner respect and that will inculcate the values of "strength," "honor," and "courage." This ad seems to track the transition from citizen-to-soldier. The development comes in the form of the type of education the Army can provide through its training programs. However, it leaves the option of career soldier more clearly on the table. The last shot is of the commander saluting the new soldiers. The line says that he is the first of many that will do so. This most obviously implies that many in the realm of the Army will salute you, though the discourse can also imply that a gesture of respect (saluting) can traverse the position of soldier and many outside of the military will gain this respect for the Army soldier as well. The "school" metaphor in this commercial recontextualizes the citizen-soldier within a neoliberal system more completely than the "company" commercial does.

In the "school" commercial, the hyphen between the citizen-soldier is replaced with "to." The relationship between the citizen and the soldier is changed from a constitutive one to one of transition. Once the citizen goes through this "school," he or she will be transformed into the

soldier. The implications of this transformation are that the soldier will not maintain the constitutive relationship with the citizen identity. The “school” commercial thus speaks to the formation of the career soldier, which is a product of the modern Army’s position within the military as a neoliberal state apparatus. This recontextualization connotes the importance of careerist and professionalized soldiers to the success of the Army.

3. Commercial number three: “Team”²⁴⁰

The “team” commercial does not directly try to equate today’s Army soldiers to “citizen-soldiers,” but it does more strongly rely upon the field of memory constructed by the rules of formation for the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier. It focuses solely on the cohesiveness, unity and duty of the soldier in the Army, not how he or she got there or where he or she is going. The commercial begins by saying, “[t]here is a team that is like no other team in the world. They are supermen. They are mythic. They will welcome you; challenge you; cheer for you.” The commercial uses the actual term mythic, which makes an explicit connection between today’s Army soldiers and soldiers in the past that have helped construct the field of memory through which cohesiveness based on unity and duty exists. As illustrated in the first three chapters of this paper, the soldiers of the past that exist in a mythic field of memory include the World War II citizen-soldiers in the context of the United States Army. Discursively constructing today’s soldiers as “supermen” and “mythic” therefore alludes to the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier in a direct metaphor. The metaphor categorizes all Army soldiers, past and present together. The potential recruit can thus imagine him or herself as being welcomed, challenged, and cheered by the Army’s current soldiers, but also by all the Army’s

²⁴⁰ Courtesy of the U.S. Army, Copyright U.S. Army. United States Army, Television Ads, “Team,” 30 seconds, Website Video, http://www.usaac.army.mil/sod/download/tv/team_QYAR8111.mov (11 April 2010).

past and future soldiers. This is something the recruit should want, according to the commercial, because then he or she will have an infinite number of “supermen” on his or her “team.” The commercial also uses the gendered term “supermen.” This is meaningful today because the modern Army is increasingly integrated by gender. However, men literally constitute the field of memory to which this commercial relates. Using the term “supermen” continues to neglect the exclusion of women within the field of memory that includes the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier. It transports this field of memory through homogenous empty time without considering the relationship it has to the gendered individuals it is trying to recruit today. It relies on a myth that simplifies history by including a “majority history” and excluding many “minority histories,” in this case the history of women in war.

The commercial goes on to discursively exclude the idea of failure by using very certain language that assumes success in terms of “victory.” It states, “[a]nd *when* they raise their flag in victory, you *will* know what these men and women are fighting for. And you *will* feel fortunate to be counted among them” (my emphasis). The raising of their flag in victory is framed as inevitable. This success in victory strengthens the cohesiveness and unity that this commercial attempts to highlight. The potential recruit, if he or she joins this “team” of “mythic” “supermen,” *will* feel fortunate to be part of this cohesive unit. He or she will join the ranks of “mythic” “supermen.” He or she will feel the pride and fortune of being a part of the Army. The “team” commercial constructs the soldier as having these feelings through calendrical coincidence with current soldiers, and through homogenous empty time with the World War II citizen-soldier and any other myth that supports this field of memory. The discourse in the commercial thus works to create filiation and continuity with the field of memory that includes and is supported by the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier.

The visual discourse of the “team” commercial really highlights unity. It begins with one man entering a room through double doors. He pushes both of them open and he is dressed in a red sleeveless t-shirt and black shorts. The viewer only sees his back. The camera then shows individuals working out on gym equipment and moving across the viewer’s line of sight. The individuals are all wearing the same clothing (red shirts and black shorts or pants). When the narrator says “supermen” and “mythic” the viewer sees teams of two lifting and lowering what appear to be planks onto a surface. None of the individuals or team members gaze into or address the camera. They are all intently focusing on the task at hand. The next scene is an assembly line of these similarly clad individuals passing bags of grain or sand to one another. Then the camera cuts to a scene behind these assembly lines to a group of three men racing one another. The camera then pans out to more individuals in physical training, including two climbing an indoor rock-climbing wall. This gym scene shows individuals improving their physical self, but the focus is on the teamwork that these improvements enhance. The connotation of this scene is that individual strength is only as important in as much as it contributes to teamwork and unity.

As the individuals progress up the climbing wall an American flag cuts into the camera’s sight from the bottom right corner, covering the viewer’s sight of all of the physical training. The American flag moves across the screen from right to left and simultaneously from bottom to top. When it covers the entire screen the flag tilts inward, and a different background is revealed. The viewer now sees uniformed soldiers raising the flag up a flag-pole. The camera pans out and the viewer sees two lines of uniformed soldiers on either side of the flag-pole. The flag-pole is the center-piece of the screen, and the soldiers are all looking forward; the viewer thus has a profile view of their serious faces. The flag flows from the hands of the soldiers

farthest away from the flag-pole across the hands of every soldier until it is fully raised. They raise the flag as a team.

The first scene has the individual elevated above the viewer's line of sight. As he enters the room where the other individuals are training, the camera moves up until he is in direct line with the viewer's sight. This perspective connotes the equality that is required for teamwork and unity to take place. The camera's view puts the perspective of the individual first entering the room on equal footing with everyone else. The individuals and teams training in the room are also put in line with the viewer's perspective. This allows the potential recruit to imagine him or herself as part of this team and a future builder of this unity. However, once the flag comes across the screen and the background changes to the flag-pole scene, then the two lines of soldiers are elevated above the viewer's line of sight. The "team" of soldiers raising the flag in "victory" are elevated above the individual, both from the literal perspective of the camera and in terms of how the perspective connotes importance. The team and unity are more important than the individual. The camera then focuses on a few of the soldiers' faces. These shots are at the viewer's eye level. However, as the camera pans out to conclude the ad, the perspective of the soldiers is elevated above the viewer's line of sight while the flag is simultaneously elevated above the soldiers. The soldiers become more obscure as the camera pans out, and they salute at the same time (to each other and the flag). This graded elevation, from soldier, to team, to flag connotes the level of importance each component holds. The flag as a symbol of America the nation is more important than the team of soldiers, or the Army, which is more important than the individual soldiers. The soldiers constitute both the Army and America the nation by serving under both. The commercial thus connotes that the Army and America will live on through this service, which requires sacrifice. Since all three exist in a constitutive relationship, any sacrifice

the soldier makes will allow the Army and America the nation to live on in perpetuity, just as all of the past and future soldiers' sacrifices have. This connotation allows the potential recruit to imagine him or herself as part of this "mythic" legacy, and as part of an existence that is greater than his or her individual self.

The "team" commercial more than any of the other commercials speaks directly to the rules of formation for the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier. There is no reference to the Army as part of a neoliberal state apparatus in this commercial. Rather, it focuses on teamwork and cohesiveness. The Army, even if composed of individuals, relies upon the individuals' ability to function as one unit. Army cohesiveness is strengthened by the individuals' perception of unity. Furthermore, the individuals in the commercial not only demonstrate unity, but they also hold a sense of duty to nation. It becomes clear as the commercial progresses that all of the hard work they are doing at the beginning of the commercial is for a higher reason beyond their individual selves. The unity displayed through the acts of teamwork and unity is for America the nation. This becomes clear when the flag sweeps across and up the screen. The visual elevation of the flag, a symbol of America the nation, becomes a metaphor for the elevation of the nation above all else. Cohesiveness based on unity is in service of the nation, and the Army soldiers embody the duty to the nation by serving in the Army. There is no reference to what these soldiers do before or after becoming a soldier. In this sense the commercial is focusing on a much more specific component of the myth of the citizen-soldier rather than the "citizen-soldier" and his or her *virtu*. Instead it focuses solely on duty to nation and the higher calling that would entice an individual to sacrifice life or limb in the name of the nation.

In the "team" commercial the hyphen has disappeared. Unlike the other two commercials, it does not even rely on a recontextualized conception of the "citizen-soldier."

There is only the soldier. There is no reference to the soldier's supposed role as a citizen before or after he or she is the soldier. He or she *is* the soldier, and will remain so in perpetuity because of the service and sacrifice made for the nation. However, this commercial *has* recontextualized the rules of formation for the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier. The cohesiveness based on unity and duty, and the *virtu* that strengthens these rules, traverse the hyphen of the citizen-soldier in the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier. They are present as part of the citizen, are strengthened when the citizen serves as the soldier, and then are used to uphold these rules within the civic realm once again after that service is complete. In the "team" commercial, however, the hyphen does not exist. The rules of formation for the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier exist only to strengthen the soldier as part of the Army. *Virtu* as Machiavelli intended it, as a component of the citizen-soldier connected by the hyphen, does not exist. In the "team" commercial, the characteristics of *virtu* are only important in as much as they strengthen the soldier and the unity and cohesiveness of the soldier's service to the Army and America the nation.

All three commercials combined rely on the field of memory that includes all of the rules of formation of the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier. Soldiers in the commercials, as part of a comprehensive campaign, are constructed as capable of embodying the same values of "the greatest generation." In the "company" and "school" commercials, they are constructed as individuals who must embody a sense of *virtu* prior to serving, only to have these characteristics strengthened through military service. They can choose to take their strengthened *virtu* into the civilian realm, or they can keep it within the Army. Either way, the implication is that it will strengthen whatever environment in which the soldier finds him or herself.

The contemporary Army soldier also must embody a sense of duty to nation, according to the “team” commercial. This commercial is incredibly important as a complement to the “company” and “school” commercials. The “company” and “school” commercials recontextualize the rules of formation for the World War II citizen-soldier, which are based on the military as an institution of civic nationalism, within a neoliberal system. They thus use the rules of formation as a way to strengthen the Army’s ability to entice potential recruits to join its ranks even though it is a part of a military that is a neoliberal state apparatus. These commercials highlight the Army’s subject position within a neoliberal state apparatus, which allows it to offer skills and experiences that will benefit an individual’s career opportunities and personal development. The commercials complement this function with traces of a field of memory that resonate with the idea of the military as an institution of civic nationalism. The references to cohesiveness based on unity and duty, and *virtu* speak to a higher calling beyond an individual’s economic position within a neoliberal system. The Army must rely on this higher calling because it must assume that potential recruits are aware of the probability of being sent to war if they join today.

As a necessary complement to the “company” and “school” commercials, the “team” commercial focuses solely on a higher calling. The military as a neoliberal state apparatus must use the connotations found in the “team” commercial to entice individuals to serve and to face the possibility of sacrifice in terms of life and limb. Without providing the potential recruit with a perspective of the military as a part of something greater than itself and its constitutive parts, it cannot possibly convince individuals to join for potential job or education opportunities alone, especially during a time when the United States is engaged in two ongoing wars. The “team” commercial tries to accomplish this perspective of a higher calling without even remotely

alluding to war, death, or killing. The actual sacrifices, or effects of sacrifice, are never mentioned. Rather, the commercial relies upon the transportation of ideals of cohesiveness based on unity and duty through homogenous empty time. It tries to offer the potential recruit a glimpse of what will live on in perpetuity because of his or her sacrifice. As the camera pans out and the soldiers standing in formation below the American flag become more obscure, the potential recruit can imagine anyone who has or will serve standing in their positions. The decreased visual clarity of the final shot strips any individuality away from the soldier in formation.²⁴¹ This soldier could be any past or future soldier. Using television commercial ads as a medium for recruitment enhances the Army's ability to portray "infinite reproducibility," in which a sense of progression and continuity is made possible.²⁴² The American flag, however, remains crisp and clear. This symbolizes the perpetual existence of America the nation. The implication is that the sacrifice of the soldiers past, present and future are what uphold (as the soldiers literally stand beneath the flag) the greatness of America the nation. This greatness has neither an obvious beginning nor end in this commercial. However, the construction of the myth of the World War II citizen-soldiers and their continued dedication to America the nation as "the greatest generation" can easily be placed in the positions of the obscure soldiers that conclude the "team" commercial.

²⁴¹ Abousnnouga and Machin, 132.

²⁴² Anderson, 182; Arjun Appadurai, "Patriotism and its Futures," *Public Culture* 5 (1993): 414.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Theoretical Implications for America the Nation

The myth of the World War II citizen soldier as a discursive formation is one of many other discursive formations that help construct the grand narrative of America the nation. I have illustrated some of the ways in which this particular myth functions as part of this construction based on its exclusions and its insistence on absolutism and totality. The Army relies upon the rules of formation for the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier in order to accomplish recruitment goals in an AVF that resides as part of a state apparatus in a neoliberal system. This reliance perpetuates a sense of continuity of these rules through homogenous empty time. It allows contemporary Army soldiers to imagine themselves as part of a legacy that spans in infinite direction; past, present, and future. It thus provides today's soldiers with a reason for joining and staying in the Army despite the real and potential sacrifices this commitment entails. The United States military must rely on the rules of formation for the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier as a discursive formation to encourage and entice individuals in a neoliberal system to join its ranks. Without the ability to point to traces of this and other similar myths, the Army would only be able to offer potential recruits and its serving soldiers benefits in terms of the types of skills, experiences and funding that might provide them with increased economic advantage. Economic incentive is unlikely to attract the kinds of numbers needed for the contemporary United States military.

The United States military thus finds itself squeezed between the dictates of its position within a neoliberal system, and the rules of formation from a mythical era of civic nationalism that the modern American society no longer believes in nor privileges. I have shown some of the ways in which the ideals of civic nationalism were myths during the World War II era. I can only assume that the absolutism of a neoliberal system contains dispersions of discontinuity as well. There are many differences to be found within America the nation beyond the differences between civic nationalism and neoliberalism. No common culture can “center” the lives of the vast majority of Americans.²⁴³ This does not mean that the rules of formation for the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier, which are still used today in the Army’s recruitment tactics and are no doubt felt by many in America whether they are serving or not, is some sort of completely false illusion and non-existent (it exists because people believe in and act on its existence, and real repercussions result from this). However, it does mean that an imagined supreme American identity based on any one conception of national citizenship that can eradicate all other forms of identity and difference is an un-reality.

This argument is intended to, as Kwame Anthony Appiah has suggested, open up space for a dialogue that questions the power of any sort of collective identity. As he asserts, “[c]ollective identities have a tendency, if I may coin a phrase, to ‘go imperial,’ dominating not only people of other identities, but the other identities, whose shape is exactly what makes each of us what we individually and distinctively are.”²⁴⁴ The potential effects of perpetuating any number of the myths of America the nation that (re)construct a common-truth are that it can, especially when supported by powerful discursive formations and upheld by the military, subject “others” within and outside of America the nation to new kinds of unquestioned tyrannies.

²⁴³ Appiah, “Cosmopolitan Patriots,” 101.

²⁴⁴ Appiah, “Cosmopolitan Patriots,” 106.

I have attempted to articulate a specific example of how America the nation is written. To borrow the words of Homi K. Bhabha, my discourse analysis attempts to “investigate the nation-space in the *process* of the articulation of elements: where meanings may be partial because they are in *media res*; and history may be half-made because it is in the process of being made; and the image of cultural authority may be ambivalent because it is caught, uncertainly, in the act of ‘composing’ its powerful image.”²⁴⁵ The meaning of national citizenship in the World War II era of civic nationalism was partial because it excluded so many. The Army’s history is half-made because it is engaged in an obscure process of trying to create a hybrid AVF based on the rules of formation of the World War II citizen-soldier and also within a subject position of a neoliberal system. This hybridity represents the Army’s ambivalence, even though it portrays itself through very certain language in its recruitment commercials.

The process of explaining the writing of America the nation requires recognition on the part of the analyst/writer/artist that he or she is also *engaging* in the process of writing the nation as well. The concept of the nation is highly politicized, and with a political commitment to deconstruct the narrative of the nation it can become increasingly difficult to problematize categories. This is because it becomes incredibly easy to reify the categories in order to try to hold them still for viewing. Furthermore, analysts/writers/artists might fail to see the ways in which the nation and the identities attached to the nation can be problematized if they cease to problematize the categories within which they themselves are positioned. It is an endless process, and it is the venture we must make in an effort to go beyond thought based on absolutism. I can only hope that through this research project I have been able to open up a

²⁴⁵ Homi K. Bhabha, “Introduction: narrating the nation,” ed. Homi K. Bhabha in Nation and Narration, (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 2-3.

space for dialogue and discourse beyond the absolutism of the categories that I have problematized.

Recommendations for Future Research

With that hope, I now offer possibilities and recommendations for future research based on and related to this research project. One could possibly delve further into the literature on nationalism to strengthen some of the arguments made in this project, or to take it into a slightly different direction. I have used concepts from the literature, such as civic nationalism, but I have not focused on this literature extensively. I have used civic nationalism as a myth of America the nation in a specific historical era in order to articulate one way in which America the nation has been written. My intention was never to use civic nationalism as an unproblematized concept for explanation. However, this and other concepts from the literature on nationalism could no doubt strengthen or add to many of the points made in this research project. Furthering an understanding of Benedict Anderson's conception of imagination as a category within social science writings on nationalism is needed.²⁴⁶

I have mentioned how the contemporary United States Army is delineated along class lines, but I have not gone into depth with this argument because my analysis does not address it directly. This argument is in the literature about the military as a neoliberal state apparatus. I thought it worth mentioning in order to highlight one of the perceived differences between a military within a society that uses civic nationalism to construct its conception of national

²⁴⁶ Chakrabarty, 149. Chakrabarty states that "imagination remains a curiously undiscussed category in social science writings on nationalism."

citizenship, and one where neoliberalism is dominant in constructing national citizenship. In the United States, the former was delineated along racial and gender lines, and the latter is arguably delineated along class lines. Both of these arguments are not doubt debatable, and looking into both of these debates more closely in relation to the current research project would be worth study. However, this task is complex, and beyond the scope or focus of this particular project. The neoliberal delineation could be looked at in more depth in relation to the types of individuals who respond to the discourse found in the “Army Strong” recruitment commercials by joining the military. One could possibly use the same data and conduct a set of experiments, interviews, focus groups and/or surveys about how individuals from varying socio-economic backgrounds respond to these commercials to begin an investigation into differences based on class lines.²⁴⁷

The “Army Strong” campaign launches new recruitment commercials at least every year. Along with the three commercials I have analyzed in this project, some of the commercials in “Army Strong” “place heavy emphasis on the career opportunities available to Army-trained people.”²⁴⁸ This trend, especially predominant in the 2008 commercials, should be analyzed in light of the work I have done in this research project. Furthermore, a longitudinal study of the commercials used throughout the “Army Strong” campaign, and a study that compares this with other historical Army recruitment campaigns would add depth to the focus of this research project.

A study of recruitment ads in the “Army Strong” campaign aimed directly at the Army reserves rather than active duty might reveal more connections between the contemporary Army and the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier. Also, a longitudinal study that spans the Cold

²⁴⁷ Peter Barnes conducted a similar study in the 1960s. His work can be read in Pawns: The Plight of the Citizen-Soldier (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1971).

²⁴⁸ Gina Cavallaro, “New Recruiting Ads Focus on Army Careers,” Army Times, 15 January 2008, http://www.armytimes.com/news/2008/01/army_goarmy_080113w/

War era and the post-Cold War era to see if the military's "new" roles have influenced recruitment ads would add depth to an explanation of the way changes in the military's role (real or perceived) are reflected in its recruitment efforts. Looking at recruitment campaigns used for other branches of the military would also be worth study as a complement to this project.

Researching the transportation of the myths of World War II through homogenous empty time in reference to the Korean war, Vietnam war, and Cold War eras would be incredibly useful. In particular, it would be worth study to deconstruct and explain the connections between "the greatest generation" and the Vietnam war.

Future research might also look closely at films and television shows that carry and/or transform the myths of World War II. A comprehensive longitudinal study that includes films from the World War II era all the way through the contemporary era would add substance to the arguments made in this project about the construction of the American imagination.

Also, I have only been able to look at a small discursive slice of the discursive formation of the "citizen-soldier." There is an immense corpus available on the "citizen-soldier" that can be selected for analysis similar to that found in this research project.²⁴⁹ Other perspectives on and additions to the ways in which the myth of the American "citizen-soldier" has been constructed through time would be worth study, and a great addition to what I have tried to achieve here in terms of the myth of the World War II citizen-soldier.

²⁴⁹ Williams, 258.

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ARMY STRONG.™

Fact Sheet

New Campaign Launch

- The U.S. Army is launching a new communication platform and advertising campaign, called Army Strong™, to support Army recruiting efforts. This campaign builds on the successes of past campaigns and captures the unique brand of strength found in the U.S. Army Soldier.
- The campaign was announced on 9 October 2006 by Secretary of the Army Francis J. Harvey at the 2006 AUSA Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. Following the announcement, Army Strong messaging will be shared proactively with internal audiences through a comprehensive communication and education plan.
- The advertising campaign will launch publicly on 9 November 2006 and will initially involve television, radio and online spots and an updated goarmy.com Web site. Print ads are scheduled to begin running in January 2007.
- Every Soldier portrayed in the new Army Strong advertising campaign is an actual U.S. Army Soldier.

Defining Army Strong

- Army Strong is about every U.S. Army Soldier – Active Duty, Army Reserve, National Guard and Cadet. It is about the men and women who have served, are serving today, and about the next generation that chooses to become Army Strong, positively impacting their future and the future of our nation.
- U.S. Army Soldiers are mentally, emotionally and physically strong. Army Strong Soldiers develop enduring strength through challenging training, teamwork, shared values and personal experience.
- The U.S. Army endows a unique brand of strength to its Soldiers, a strength that is mental, emotional and physical, a strength the Army finds, forges and fosters.



How Army Strong Was Developed

- In December 2005 the U.S. Army finalized its contract with a new external agency, the McCann Worldgroup, one of the world's largest marketing communications companies.
- The agency conducted in-depth research and met with hundreds of Soldiers – from new recruits to Soldiers in AIT to senior officers, with Cadets, with Special Missions Soldiers and with Army Reserve Soldiers. Army Strong was informed by research and inspired by interactions with Soldiers.

How Army Strong Supports Current Recruiting Objectives

- Army Strong specifically addresses the interests and motivations of those young men and women considering a career in the U.S. Army. The campaign also speaks to those who understand and support the decision of their loved one, friend or employee to serve our nation and elevate his or her future.
- The U.S. Army is committed to attracting individuals to preserve peace and security at home and around the world. That begins with our recruiting process, and to do this requires Soldiers who are Army Strong. The best method to attract a new generation of young adults to serve is to highlight the American Soldier and offer a call to join them.
- The U.S. Army is looking for men and women who will accept the challenge to become mentally, emotionally and physically stronger. The U.S. Army offers opportunities to develop enduring strength through challenging training, teamwork, shared values and personal experience.

Learn More

For more information on Army Strong and the U.S. Army's recruiting efforts, please visit AKO and goarmy.com.



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Campaign Ethos Statement

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There is strong. And then there's Army StrongSM.

Army strong is a unique brand of strength. Everyone is familiar with the tangible power of the U.S. Army: the Apaches, the Humvees, the weaponry, the push-ups. This campaign highlights the true strength of our Army -- the strength that lies within each and every Soldier. It is harder to see, but it is this strength that makes the U.S. Army the preeminent land power on earth.

Being Army Strong is about much more than being physically fit. It is mental and emotional strength. It is the confidence to lead. It is the courage to stand up for your beliefs. It is the compassion to help others. It is the desire for lifelong learning. It is the intelligence to make the right decision. It is making a difference for yourself, your family, your community and our nation.

Army Strong is also the kind of strength that endures. It is the strength that comes from challenging training, teamwork, shared values and personal experience. A Soldier's time in the Army may come to an end, but he or she will always be Army Strong because the lessons learned and values gained are timeless. They will serve as a springboard to life beyond the Army and will last long after physical strength fades.

The Army is successful in its mission because of the strength of its Soldiers. The Army Strong campaign exists to honor this simple fact.



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Questions & Answers

Q: What is Army StrongSM?

A: It is the tagline, or signature, for the new Army recruiting campaign that will roll out in November 2006. What's important to understand, however, is that this line captures an idea: Army Strong is a unique brand of strength personified by every U.S. Army Soldier – past, current and future; Active Duty, Army Reserve, National Guard and Cadet.

Q. What does Army Strong mean?

A: Army Strong reflects the Soldier. It is about the men and women who have served, who are serving today, and about the next generation who has the opportunity to become Army Strong. Army Strong is a commitment to serve and an opportunity to transform young Americans into powerful individuals who are mentally, emotionally and physically strong.

Q: How does this relate to the Be All You Can Be and An Army of One campaigns?

A: Army Strong builds on the foundation of 30 years of recruiting advertising campaigns for the All Volunteer force. Each Army campaign has been built on the foundation of the core Army values. The tagline Army Strong is new, and the creative advertising and communication campaign that supports it is new. But the two insights that have always guided Army recruiting advertising have remained unchanged. The first insight is that the U.S. Army builds lifelong strength in its Soldiers through training, teamwork, personal experience and shared values. The second insight is that American Soldiers themselves – making a difference in their lives, in their communities and for our nation – are the most compelling example of this strength. The creative expression, but not the core truth, has changed over time to capture the interest of new generations of future Soldiers.

Q: I've heard people talking about these new U.S. Army advertisements. When and where can I see them?

A: Television commercials will begin airing nationally in November 2006. Advertising will be placed on TV shows, radio stations and in magazines. There will be a vigorous online component as well.

Q: Are actual Soldiers being used in the advertising?

A: Yes. No actor could ever authentically convey the power and intensity of an Army Strong Soldier. That's why every Soldier portrayed in the new Army Strong advertising campaign is an actual U.S. Army Soldier.

Q: What do Soldiers think about the campaign?

A: U.S. Army Soldiers have been integrally involved in the development and launch of this campaign. They are proud of it and how it conveys their strength and the Army's strength.

Q: What type of person is the U.S. Army looking to reach with its new campaign?

A: The U.S. Army is looking for men and women interested in becoming mentally, emotionally and physically stronger. The U.S. Army offers opportunities to develop enduring strength through challenging training, teamwork, personal experience and shared values.



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Q: How will this campaign impact parents and other influencers?

A: Army Strong will speak to parents, friends, employers and everyone who understands and supports the decision of their loved one to serve our nation and elevate his or her future. A Soldier's personal decision to serve demonstrates collective strength: strength from within himself/herself, strength from within his/her family and strength from those who influence this important war-time choice for our nation. This campaign recognizes and respects the views of those who influence and care about future Soldiers – parents, friends, family, community and employers – and encourages the kind of dialogue that is needed when making a life-changing decision.

Q: How was this campaign developed?

A: Army Strong was informed by research and inspired by interactions with Soldiers. In December 2005, after a competitive search, the Army awarded its advertising contract to McCann Worldgroup, one of the world's largest communications companies. This new external agency conducted in-depth research and met with hundreds of Soldiers – from new recruits to Soldiers in AIT to senior officers, with Cadets, with Special Missions Soldiers and with Army Reserve Soldiers.

Q: What does the Army hope the new campaign will achieve?

A: The U.S. Army is committed to attracting individuals to preserve peace and security at home and around the world. That begins with our recruiting process, and to do this requires Soldiers who are Army Strong. The best method to attract a new generation of young adults to serve is to highlight American Soldiers and offer a call to join them.

Q: Why does the Army think this campaign will be successful?

A: Army Strong was tested with prospects and influencers – the very kinds of people the Army is working to engage. Army Strong tested extremely well in that research, garnering some of the most positive feedback that the Army has seen in years. Most important of all, the qualitative feedback was that this campaign, this brand of strength, powerfully elevated the image of the Army.

Q: Why would someone choose the U.S. Army?

A: This campaign highlights the strength the Army finds, forges and fosters in young Americans. U.S. Army Soldiers consistently take pride in making a difference for themselves, their families, their communities and our nation. Army Strong conveys the message that there is a career, a challenge and a mission waiting for them in the U.S. Army.

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