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Paying with Their Bodies

AMERICAN WAR AND THE PROBLEM OF THE DISABLED VETERAN

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Forget-Me-Not Day

On the morning of Saturday, December 17, 1921, an army of high school girls, society women, and recently disabled veterans assembled for one of the largest fund-raising campaigns since the end of World War I. The group's mission was to sell millions of handcrafted, crepe-paper forget-me-nots to be worn in remembrance of disabled veterans. Where the artificial blooms were unavailable, volunteers peddled sketches of the pale blue flowers or cardboard tags with the phrase "I Did Not Forget" printed on the front. The sales drive was the brainchild of the Disabled American Veterans of the World War (DAV), and proceeds went toward funding assorted relief programs for permanently injured doughboys. Event supporters hoped high turnout would put to rest any doubt about the nation's appreciation of disabled veterans and their families. As governor Albert C. Ritchie told his Maryland residents on the eve of the flower drive: "Let us organize our gratitude so that in a year's time there will not be a single disabled soldier who can point an accusing finger at us."[1]

Over the next decade, National Forget-Me-Not Day became a minor holiday in the United States. In 1922, patients from Washington, DC, hospitals presented a bouquet of forget-me-nots to first lady Florence Kling Harding, at the time recovering from a major illness. Her husband wore one of the little flowers pinned to his lapel, as did the entire White House staff.[2] That same year, Broadway impresario George M. Cohan orchestrated massive Forget-Me-Not Day concerts in New York City. As bands played patriotic tunes, stage actresses worked the crowds, smiling, flirting, and raking in coins by the bucketful.[3] According to press reports at the time, the flower sales were meant to perform a double duty for disabled vets. Pinned to a suit jacket or dress, a forget-me-not bloom provided a "visible tribute" to the bodily sacrifices of the nation's fighting men.[4] As the manufacture of remembrance flowers evolved into a cottage industry for indigent vets, the sales drive acquired an additional motive: to turn a "community liability" into a "community asset."[5]

Although press accounts of Forget-Me-Not Day reassured readers that "Americans Never Forget," many disabled veterans remained skeptical.[6] From the holiday's inception, the DAV tended to frame Forget-Me-Not Day in antagonistic terms, using the occasion to vent its frustration with the federal government, critics of veterans' policies, and a forgetful public. Posters from the first sales drive featured an anonymous amputee on crutches, coupled with the accusation "Did you call it charity when they gave their legs, arms and eyes?" As triumphal memories of the Great War waned, moreover, Forget-Me-Not Day slogans turned increasingly hostile. "They can't believe the nation is grateful if they are allowed to go hungry," sneered one DAV slogan, two years before the start of the Great Depression. Another characterized the relationship between civilians and disabled vets as one of perpetual indebtedness: "You can never give them as much as they gave you."[7]

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"FOR THE MEM'RY OF WARRIORS WRACKED WITH PAIN"
Disabled Doughboys and American Memory

> Little pale blossom of tint sky blue,
> Why are you worn today?
> Why is everyone buying you?
> What do you stand for, pray! . . .
>
> For the mem'ry of warriors wracked with pain,
> Mangled while facing the foe;
> Belgian soil bears a crimson stain
> Where they offered their all, unthinking of gain,
> (They know NOW their sacrifice was not in vain!)
> in their Hospital Beds in a row!
> — William Ellis Resister (c. 1930)[1]

In the aftermath of World War I, disabled veterans and their political allies came to see "memory" as an important part of their social contract with the American people. Having suffered on the nation's behalf, they believed their fellow citizens were duty-bound to remember their sacrifices in both symbolic and material form. Yet, despite a memory boom in the decades following World War I, many vets feared that the Great War's legacy of broken bodies and shattered minds would soon be forgotten, casualties of an amnesiac culture that preferred looking forward to looking back.

In recent decades, numerous scholars have examined how memory structures the identities and experiences of survivors of war and other traumas.[2] Much of this work focuses on the realm of cultural memory, a form of mass remembrance produced through public rituals, mass media representations, and popular culture.[3] Cultural memory is neither arbitrary nor permanent. As historian Jay Winter points out, societies "remember" only inasmuch as specific groups of people actively participate in processes of memorialization; when they "lose interest, or time, or for another other reason cease to act," memories fade away, perhaps to be remembered (or reproduced) at some later date.[4] Put simply, the terrain of memory is invariably contested, with competing factions vying to determine not only how the past is remembered but to what end.

Following World War I, veterans' groups like the DAV, the American Legion, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) attempted to establish themselves as the primary arbiters of disabled veterans' remembrance. Unsatisfied by the symbolic gestures offered up by civic leaders, disabled veterans in particular demanded alternative forms of memorialization, ones that not only honored their military service, but also addressed the long-term physical, economic, and social consequences of war-produced disability. Animating much of their memorial work was a desire to construct what was described as a *purposeful* memory of disabled vets—a voluntary and productive model of public remembrance that paid tangible dividends to disabled veterans and their families.

Maintaining such a memory was more difficult than setting up a few monuments, however. The cultural idioms that dominated postwar memorial culture were better suited to remembering the Great War's dead than its traumatized survivors. More important, vets' impulses toward memorialization clashed with the messages of rehabilitation, which seemed to celebrate forgetting as a cultural ideal. It was against this backdrop that one of the most iconic figures of early twentieth American culture would take shape: the forgotten disabled doughboy. Rooted in the experiences of countless men, the forgotten disabled doughboy quickly hardened into stereotype, a constellation of images and histories that veterans and their cultural allies would use to bludgeon a forgetful public. Ultimately, battles over the memory of disabled veterans reflected deep anxieties about the human legacies of modern warfare and the incorporation of the disabled body into postwar life. They also set the stage for the appropriation of the disabled veteran as a symbol of government indifference in the wake of national trauma.

Memory Boom

Even as disabled veterans began their memorial campaigns, the United States was already in the midst of a national memory boom.[5] Long be-

fore the Armistice was signed, soldiers, ambulance drivers, nurses, and physicians flooded American bookstores with hastily written memoirs and diaries seeking to document—and posthumously memorialize—all aspects of life "over there." Fictional accounts of the Great War were not far behind, with Edith Wharton's *The Marne* (1918), John Dos Passos's *One Man's Initiation* (1920) and *Three Soldiers* (1921), Willa Cather's *One of Ours* (1922), E. E. Cummings's *The Enormous Room* (1922), Thomas Boyd's *Through the Wheat* (1923), and countless others published in the first half decade of the ceasefire. Cinematic memorials of the Great War were fewer and further between, but they included some of the most celebrated films of the 1920s and 1930s.

Of the literally thousands of war-related memoirs, novels, documentaries, and feature films produced in the decades following World War I, the vast majority disappeared from public consciousness almost as soon as they appeared. The exceptions—including Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, both the novel (1929) and its film version (1930)—were *soldiers' tales*, intimate narratives of male combatants under fire. Soldiers' tales condense the vast panorama of war into simple human dramas about an individual's (or a small group's) experiences in wartime. According to literary scholar Samuel Hynes, the popularity of soldiers' tales stems from their claims of authenticity, their promise of the "real" war as told by the men who fought it.[6] Unlike elite memorial productions of the state, soldiers' tales of the Great War era tended to focus on the singular horrors of the battlefront, the brutality of life in the service, and the destructive power (and strange beauty) of modern weaponry. Collectively, they bore retrospective witness to the Great War's rapacious appetite for male bodies and the human detritus the fighting left behind. With few exceptions, however, American soldiers' tales did not address the lives of veterans, disabled or otherwise, upon leaving the military. Consequently, the soldiers' tale failed to produce a cultural memory that disabled veterans might claim as their own.

Few films better illustrate the limitations of the soldiers' tale as a vehicle of disabled veterans' memory than King Vidor's *The Big Parade* (1925), one of the biggest hits of the silent film era. Based partly on amputee-author Laurence Stallings's *Plumes*, it follows the journey of Jim Apperson, an idle rich youth who enlists on a whim and is severely wounded while fighting in France. In a particularly devastating scene,

FIG. 23. King Vidor's *The Big Parade* (1925) shocked audiences with its horrific portrait of trench warfare. In this scene, the film's hero Jim Apperson (played by John Gilbert) is crawling through no man's land after he has been wounded in the leg, an injury that eventually requires its amputation. However, like most Great War soldiers' tales, *The Big Parade* does not address the long-term legacies of war disability. Instead, it concludes shortly after Apperson's tearful reunion with his wartime lover.

the camera holds on the shocked and ashamed faces of his family when they discover he has returned home missing part of his leg. Praised for its verisimilitude, *The Big Parade* offered movie audiences one of the first "realistic" visions of the chaos and mechanized carnage of trench warfare (fig. 23). But unlike Stallings's source novel, Vidor's war epic does not linger on disabled veterans' postwar struggles. Instead, it ends on a sentimental note, with Apperson returning to Europe and rushing into the arms of the French farm girl he loves. As with so many soldiers' tales, *The Big Parade* is far more adept at showing how combatants become disabled than what their lives are like in the wake of traumatic injury.

Objects of Great War memory were not limited to bookstores and the big screen. Spared the devastation of the actual fighting, American city-

scapes were soon festooned with statues, remembrance gardens, and other permanent monuments to the Great War. Architectural memorials to the United States' participation in World War I ranged from modest grave markers and decorative tablets to gleaming white marble temples erected at the taxpayer's expense. The nation's largest war monument was built in downtown Indianapolis, just outside the American Legion's national headquarters. Covering five city blocks, Indiana's War Memorial Plaza included not one but three massive memorials: Cenotaph Square, a sunken garden surrounding an empty tomb; Obelisk Square, an open-air plaza centered around a fountain and a magnificent obelisk; and the Memorial Shrine, an opulent stone fortress complete with Ionic columns, classical statuary, and a four-story shrine room. Like other monuments of its kind, Indiana's War Memorial Plaza was funded by the state in lieu of veterans' bonuses, a decision that angered many former soldiers who would have preferred cash payments to statues and shrines.[7]

Although some cities adopted similar designs, many eschewed traditional monuments in favor of what became known as *living memorials*, commemorative structures and spaces more easily incorporated into everyday life.[8] Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Americans dedicated thousands of swimming pools, drinking fountains, "liberty buildings," arboretums, and civic auditoriums to the memory of the Great War. (Birmingham's Legion Field and the University of Nebraska's Memorial Stadium both date from this era.) By May 1936, California alone boasted over one hundred memorial buildings, including Los Angeles' Patriotic Hall, home to more than thirty local posts of the American Legion.[9] Over time, several states passed laws dictating how and where Great War memory should be inscribed into the built environment. Florida required all state bridges be named after a fatal war casualty; the Pennsylvania state legislature went further, authorizing its counties, cities, and boroughs to plant memorial trees, decorate soldiers' graves on Memorial Day, and erect battle monuments both at home and overseas.[10] Within a few years of the ceasefire, it would have been difficult to travel to any part of the United States, no matter how remote, without encountering some reminder of the Great War.[11]

In his study of US war memory, G. Kurt Piehler argues that the proliferation of Great War monuments reflected a shared desire to "camouflage the division caused by the war." National leaders and patriotic groups in particular had a vested interest in remembering the nation's first European land war as an "idealistic struggle for liberty and democracy waged by a united people."[12] Racial and class divisions, inter-Allied rivalries, the war's ambiguous outcome, the mechanized slaughter on the modern battlefield—these had little place in the monumental memory of the Great War sanctified in city squares and Legion halls across the country. Where readers of Thomas Boyd or John Dos Passos might expect blood-and-guts realism, visitors to War Memorial Plaza would have been hard-pressed to imagine the random carnage of a World War I battlefield. For all their claim to historical truth, the nation's built memorials offered little insight into that most common of Great War dramas: the meeting of chemically propelled metal and human flesh.

American architects and politicians did not ignore the Great War's vast legacies of injury and death altogether. Like the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, which was dedicated in Arlington Cemetery in 1921, the vast majority of American built memorials were decidedly funereal in tone, constructed to pay homage to US servicemen in "eternal bivouac." America's war dead came to occupy a privileged place in the nation's memory of the Great War, as was the case in all of the belligerent countries.[13] For the friends and relatives of fatal casualties, memorials to "fallen" doughboys served as important sites of emotional refuge and spiritual reaffirmation. In the early 1920s, the aptly named Bring Home the Soldier Dead League successfully lobbied the War Department to repatriate thousands of corpses to US cemeteries (eventually 70 percent of American servicemen buried in France were disinterred and reburied in the States).[14] While the nation's cult of the fallen dissipated over time, it never disappeared entirely. During the 1930s, after much of the public had become disillusioned with the "war to end all wars," communities across the United States continued to erect statues and monuments to local doughboys killed in action. Ultimately it did not matter whether US citizens viewed the Great War as a glorious crusade or a tragic mistake. All agreed, at least publicly, that the nation's dead deserved to be remembered.

But what about the memory of America's living casualties? How would disabled doughboys be "remembered" in the public imagination? And to what end would their memory be put? In many respects,

the traditional modes of war memory—the soldiers' tales, the marble shrines, the "living" memorials—were inadequate to memorialize the experiences of disabled veterans.

Disabled Veterans and the Embodiment of Memory

To understand why, we need to step back from the Great War generation and consider disabled veterans' complex relationship to cultural memory in general. To begin with, there is the obvious, albeit deeply complicating, fact that disabled veterans are *survivors* of warfare. Unlike the dead, who rely upon others for commemoration, disabled vets have the capacity, at least in theory, to memorialize themselves. This is not to say that disabled veterans, even when collectively organized, have access to the economic capital or political clout necessary to cultivate remembrance on a mass scale. Nor is it to suggest that disabled veterans have always played a dominant role in determining how they are remembered in American culture. Still, disabled veterans can—and often do—serve as agents of their own remembrance, shaping the way their individual and collective experiences are perceived in the broader culture. In this respect alone, disabled veterans pose a far more unsettling threat to idealized commemorations of war than their dead comrades. While the dead "rest" in silence, mute witnesses of past conflicts, disabled veterans invariably "carry on"—their voices, their stories, even their bodies, all reminders of the lasting effects of war's violence.

In addition, when it comes to public remembrance, the stakes are much higher for disabled veterans than soldiers who die in battle. Public platitudes aside, even the most elaborate remembrance rituals offer nothing to those killed in combat. Dead soldiers are corpses, putrefying matter, carbon. It does not matter whether they are remembered as heroes, vilified as monsters, or forgotten altogether—the dead remain dead, and no amount of flag-waving can bring them back. For disabled veterans, on the other hand, memory's benefits are much more tangible. Most memorial practices are aimed at either raising money for disabled veterans or publicizing their poor treatment at the hands of government agencies. Others fulfill a more therapeutic role: they remind disabled veterans that they are appreciated, that their bodily injuries have meaning and value to someone besides themselves. Disabled veterans' own remembrance practices typically serve a third purpose as well, binding disabled vets together in a shared social identity. In short, disabled veterans have much to gain when they are remembered and much to lose when they are forgotten.

Even so, not all forms of war remembrance are equally advantageous to disabled vets. As historian Seth Koven has shown, traditional forms of memorialization, such as monuments or statuary, tend to inhibit public recognition of disabled veterans' ongoing struggles.[15] When relegated to a cenotaph or marble statue, war's memory might provide a sense of comfort to the families of the dead; it might even serve as a locus of community bereavement.[16] However, traditional war memorials provide little material benefit—no pension check, no summer camp, no disabled man's clubhouse—for war's disabled survivors. For this reason, disabled vets have historically eschewed monuments and memorials in favor of public legislation, veteran-themed holidays, and other modes of remembrance more likely to pay concrete dividends to themselves and their families.

Complicating matters further, many veterans struggle to come to terms with the memorial function of their own bodies. War amnesia is a luxury of noncombatants or the dead. Disabled veterans might learn to accept their injuries—they might even look upon them with pride—but they are not likely to forget them. With every twinge of pain, every glance into the mirror, war-injured veterans are reminded that they are different, that their lives will never be the same.[17] Moreover, because disabled veterans' bodies often serve as *public* repositories of war's violence, the memorial function of veterans' injuries is not limited to the psychic lives of individual vets. The blackened scar of a mustard gas burn, the wheeze of tubercular lungs, the bandaged stump of a missing leg—all, in media scholar Marita Sturken's words, "provide a perceptible site for a continual remembering of . . . war's effects."[18] More than any treaty or commemorative plaque, the damaged bodies of veterans preserve the record of war for future generations. Occupational therapists might rehabilitate a damaged limb; plastic surgeons might reconstruct a face mangled by shrapnel; but no scientific advancement can ever completely erase war's violent inscription in the flesh.

Even so, veterans' bodies represent an unruly terrain of war memorialization. Unlike marble or bronze, whose erosion is measured in decades if not centuries, the human body remains in a state of perpetual

and visible change. Scars rupture, heal, and rupture again; old injuries are overlaid with new ones; diseases emerge and disappear. Moreover, veterans' injuries do not speak for themselves. Without narrative and context, a scar won on the field of battle looks the same as one received on the factory floor. Put another way: wounds might mark the occurrence of a war, but they offer no hint about what the conflict was about, whether it was worth fighting, or even how its survivors are coping in the present.[19]

More than anything else, though, the tension between disabled veterans and traditional modes of memorialization is a reflection of disabled vets' complex relationship to notions of historical closure. Beyond a tendency to venerate former combatants, most war memorials promote a linear or progressive model of history, drawing clear-cut distinctions between past and present. Often constructed years after a conflict's end, they are meant to provide a sense of resolution—a chance to mourn, reflect, heal, and move on. For many vets, however, closure of this sort is impossible. Among the psychologically traumatized, exposure to remembrance ceremonies and war-themed popular culture has been known to trigger disturbing flashbacks and mental breakdowns.[20] Memorials' inherent promise of closure is especially problematic for men and women in the grips of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)—the "shell shock" of the Great War era—for whom the line between past and present, history and memory, breaks down. According to historian Jo Stanley, shell-shocked men are "helpless victims of their memory"; they are, quite literally, possessed—taken over in body and mind—by unassimilated images of the past.[21] Jay Winter has described shell shock as a "theater of memory out of control. The bodies of [traumatized] soldiers hold traces of memory; they are speaking to us, though not in a way we usually encounter."[22] In this sense, veterans with PTSD—and, to some degree, all disabled vets—pose a fundamental challenge to the linear models of history, memory, and temporality upon which traditional forms of war memorialization depend.

Returning to the Great War's aftermath, disabled doughboys' complex, and often antagonistic, relationship to war memory becomes easier to comprehend. On the one hand, disabled veterans and their allies actively embraced a memorial conception of the disabled body. On the other, they recognized that meaningful memory could not be based on scars alone. To the untrained eye, many disabled veterans, including men with severe physical impairments, appeared virtually normal. Moreover, the fierce demands of veteran masculinity seemed to promote a kind of self-imposed amnesia—at least, when it came to the ugly side of life "over there." Male veterans, then as now, were expected to downplay or mask the traumatic effects of military service—to keep quiet, forget the past, and move forward with their lives. This equation of masculinity with silence, of progress with willful forgetting, was echoed by advocates of the rehabilitation movement, who urged disabled veterans to put their war experience behind them. To be rehabilitated was to become "normal," unworthy of public memory. Laden with families, mortgages, and dreams of economic security, disabled vets required—and called for—a purposeful cultural memory, one that promised to make their lives better in tangible ways. In turn, they needed to cultivate a memory of war that resisted closure, forcing their fellow citizens to recognize war's lingering traumas.

Reassurances of Memory

What they got instead was mostly empty rhetoric. Throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, veterans' groups were inundated with letters and telegraphs—often published in the local and national press—promising to "always remember" or "never forget." Given the largely symbolic (and self-serving) nature of such efforts, reassurances of memory were especially prevalent around the winter holidays, a time when Americans were expected to reflect upon the less fortunate members of the body politic. Reprinted on the front page of the *New York Times*, Calvin Coolidge's 1925 Christmas greeting to the DAV offered a characteristic mixture of vacant promises and patriotic treacle:

> At this holiday season, on behalf of a grateful nation, I wish to extend to you best wishes for Christmas cheer and a full measure of happiness in the coming year.
>
> The heart of America will always beat the faster whenever the nation thinks of the sacrifices made by its veterans who fought to uphold its ideals.
>
> To those who, as a result of their devotion to their country, are fighting in hospitals for the restoration to health and for rehabilita-

tion I would say a world of special encouragement. Their bravery and fortitude now is no less than that shown on the field of battle.

This Government will not forget those who are disabled. It will afford the highest measure of relief possible to restore them to health and happiness.[23]

Any other day, the fiscally conservative Coolidge administration was deeply hostile toward the kinds of programs and benefits needed to "restore" disabled veterans to "health and happiness." But such niceties did not prevent Silent Cal and his Democratic counterparts from issuing similar proclamations. For many American leaders, remembrance was little more than a public speech-act: simply declaring one's intention to remember was all that mattered.

Reassurances of memory included more than the pontifications of politicians. Wealthy Americans engaged in a wide range of memorial work, from sponsoring yachting trips for disabled veterans (the choice of J. P. Morgan) to patronizing "Lest We Forget" evenings, upscale entertainments designed to raise money for veteran-related causes. During the early 1920s, the Knights of Columbus took tens of thousands of disabled veterans to professional baseball games and other sporting events, while charity-minded arts groups, such as the Stage Women's War Relief and the National Association for Music in Hospitals, entertained convalescing veterans with theater productions and musical revues. Ordinary Americans were asked to invite disabled veterans into their homes on holidays and to contribute gifts to disabled veterans' children at Christmas. In a 1921 published statement, the Lest We Forget Committee, a charitable organization devoted to the care of New York City's disabled veterans, offered the public a number of options for aiding the war-wounded. Interested citizens could take disabled vets on picnics, send them postcards in the hospital, or purchase magazine subscriptions for ex-servicemen's clubhouses.[24]

Over time, the federal government instituted its own memorial rituals for disabled veterans (though most helped Great War vets more in spirit than in the pocketbook). Among the most visible was a series of well-publicized garden parties held every spring on the White House lawn (fig. 24). The tradition of fêting disabled vets began with the Harding administration and soon became a de rigueur part of every president's

FIG. 24. Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt at a White House garden party for disabled veterans on May 21, 1936. Although critical of disabled veterans' claims of preferential status, FDR nonetheless held up the annual spring tradition of entertaining disabled veterans from DC-area hospitals. Note how Roosevelt masks his own physical disability (standing upright and holding his cane in his hand) even as he greets the man in the wheelchair. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-DIG-hec-47238.

social calendar. Typical of such affairs was a party hosted by the Hoover White House on June 11, 1931. That day's guests of honor included eight hundred World War I veterans from DC-area hospitals, along with a contingent of hospital attendants, Gold Star Mothers, and veterans of the Civil War. As the Marine Band belted out patriotic airs, Red Cross nurses and "pretty girls" from the Veterans' Bureau offices served ice cream, cake, and punch to the crowd. Individual doughboys could not expect much face time with the president. Pressed into a long receiving line upon their arrival, most disabled vets got little more than handshake from their commander-in-chief. By the time Hoover was free to mingle with his guests of honor (stopping first to chat with a group of "wheelchair cases" arranged in a semicircle on the south lawn), the affair was nearly over.[25]

Although portrayed as cozy get-togethers, White House garden parties were, at their heart, acts of political theater, photographed and filmed for audiences across the United States. Their primary purpose was to demonstrate the president's devotion to the nation's wounded warriors; to show that on this day, disabled vets came first. In addition, they functioned as a form of civic training, teaching both disabled veterans and the nondisabled public how, when, and why disabled vets should be honored. In this sense, the White House's tendency to treat war memorialization as a special event or media spectacle had a significant impact on the official memory of disabled veterans for years to come. Namely, it transformed all instances of remembrance into instances of *commemoration*. To remember disabled veterans was to celebrate their sacrifices, to honor their commitment to their nation—not to grapple with the long-term effects of war's destruction of soldiers' bodies. This tendency also meant that disabled vets were "remembered" intensely for short bursts of time (a day, a few hours, the length of a medal ceremony) before inevitably lapsing from public consciousness.

Veteran-related holidays encouraged a similarly intermittent pattern of commemoration. According to historian Matthew Dennis, Americans have used holidays to "define themselves and their place in a collective national past," particularly following times of social crisis.[26] In the decades after World War I, the United States saw an upsurge of holidays and festivals expressly dedicated to commemorating veterans and their service. Largely forgotten today, these "invented traditions" included Army Day (April 6), a tribute to the US entrance into World War I; Hospital Day (May 12), a holiday dedicated to disabled veterans' hospital experiences; and Argonne Day (September 24), a commemoration of the Great War's final—and, for Americans, bloodiest—campaign.[27] Backed by government leaders, conservative groups, and often veterans themselves, such holidays tended to promote a hyperpatriotic vision of martial masculinity and national valor, positioning disabled veterans as uncritical spokesmen for American military adventures, past and future. In 1930, for instance, the highlight of New York City's Army Day celebration was a long military parade on Fifth Avenue capped by busloads of disabled veterans (the message "Preparedness Is the Best Insurance against War" was affixed in large bunting to the buses' sides).[28] Like their predecessor Memorial Day, a product of the Civil War, Great War holidays served as occasions for disabled veterans to grab the national spotlight and insist upon their public remembrance.[29] (Indeed, the DAV typically scheduled Forget-Me-Not drives to overlap with Argonne Day, with the hope of generating extra publicity and boosting flower sales.) Nevertheless, the memory of disabled veterans generated by such events tended to be uncritical and backward-looking, more focused on the glories of sacrifices past than the pressing hardships of the present.

Poppy Day and the Gendered Economics of Remembrance

Not surprisingly, the Great War's best-known and most lucrative ritual of remembrance asked the least of its participants. Preceding its DAV counterpart (Forget-Me-Not Day) by several months, Poppy Day was observed by the sale of artificial "memorial poppies" to pay homage to US war casualties and raise money for disabled veterans' relief. The adoption of handcrafted poppies as emblems of World War I memory is often credited to Moina Belle Michael, a Georgia educator and self-described "old maid" who had volunteered briefly with the YMCA during the war.[30] According to her autobiography, Michael received her inspiration after reading Canadian physician John McCrae's poem "In Flanders Fields" in the November 1918 issue of *Ladies' Home Journal*. First published three years earlier, McCrae's pastoral elegy to the Allied dead was the "most popular poem of the war," and its message from beyond the grave—"We are the dead. Short days ago / We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow"—was made devastatingly poignant following the author's death in January 1918.[31] Today, the poem is best remembered for the haunting imagery of its opening lines—"In Flanders fields the poppies blow, / Between the crosses, row on row"—a reference to the bright scarlet flowers that spontaneously blossomed in the gore-slaked soil of southern Belgium and northern France.[32] Michael had read the poem several times before; yet on this day she was so moved by McCrae's words, she immediately jotted down her own poetic response on the back of a nearby envelope. From that moment on, she later wrote, Michael pledged "*always* to wear a red poppy of Flanders Fields as a sign of remembrance and the emblem of 'keeping the faith with all who died.'"[33]

Within days, Michael had launched a grassroots public relations campaign to spread the gospel of the poppy, "the second Holy Grail, which caught the sacrificial blood of millions."[34] Her hard work paid off in Sep-

tember 1920, when the American Legion voted to adopt the Flanders Field Memorial Poppy as its national emblem of remembrance, leading to the first memorial flower sales on a nationwide scale.[35] Other veterans' organizations and patriotic groups quickly followed suit, including the Veterans of Foreign Wars, which sold millions of its trademarked "Buddy Poppies" throughout the 1920s.[36] In 1924, the Legion alone sold more than four million poppies at its Memorial Day fund drives, and its Poppy Division provided interested parties with motion-picture trailers, sales plans, and a host of "exploitation ideas" to spur poppy sales. By the start of World War II, receipts from the sale of Great War memorial poppies topped $7 million a year. The "Poppy Lady" (as Michael came to be known) was a national celebrity, and the practice of wearing remembrance poppies had been adopted in more than fifty nations around the world.[37]

In her letters to women's clubs and veterans' groups, Moina Michael argued that tangible symbols like the Flanders Field Poppy were necessary if Americans hoped to keep veterans' sacrifices alive in public memory: "Out of every great event of the world has come an emblem. 'Lest we forget.' Into this war went many emblems: The flags of nations, the Red Cross, the Red Triangle, the service flag and pin. Now out of this war should come some symbol perpetually to remind us and unfailingly to teach coming generations the value of the light of liberty and our debt to those who so valiantly saved it for us."[38]

In Michael's mind, red poppies were ideal tokens of veterans' remembrance—not only because of their sanguine color, but also because of their geographical association with the Great War landscape. The significance was apparent when the American Legion, seeking a nationalist icon, briefly changed its remembrance flower to the all-American daisy in 1921. Still outraged twenty years later, Michael recalled, "I saw no meaning, no symbolism, no sentiment, no appropriateness in the DAISY as a Memorial symbol for my Buddies sleeping in Flanders Fields, nor for those returning to our American hospitals, whose wounds testified that their bloom crimsoned the Poppies of 'Flanders Fields' with a deeper and more brilliant red."[39] To Michael and her followers, blood-red poppies signified what traditional memorial practices obscured: the centrality of injury to modern warfare. No other flower would suffice.

In 1923, World War I memorial poppies generated controversy of a different kind. Finding native supplies exhausted, one Indiana flower

wholesaler began importing poppies manufactured in Germany. When women Legionnaires in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, discovered that their poppies had been "tainted" by enemy hands, they burned 10,000 of the obnoxious blooms in a public bonfire. Other groups returned the flowers unsold, declaring them an "insult" to the memory of America's fighting men. Eventually, the Legion's national headquarters intervened, supplying the aggrieved posts with French- and Belgian-produced poppies, and warning the public against accepting German copycats.[40] At first glance, the incident might appear little more than a brief relapse of wartime nativism. Despite national overtures of reconciliation, anti-German sentiment still ran deep, particularly within Legion ranks.

But the indignation expressed in Cedar Rapids takes on even greater resonance if considered through the lens of gender and economics. While hardly the most profitable industry, the manufacture of poppies and other remembrance flowers provided a source of income to the Great War's most victimized populations. During the war's immediate aftermath, poppy production was largely the purview of Allied war widows and other impoverished women. In 1920, Anne E. Guerin, the wife of a French federal court judge, toured the United States promoting the sale of widow-produced poppies to raise money for French and Belgian war orphans. It was not long, however, before the industry came to monopolized by men—namely, disabled veterans. In many respects, the masculinization of remembrance flower production was typical of postwar American industry in general, which witnessed large-scale replacements of female workers with returning war veterans.[41] Disabled vets were especially eager to reestablish their masculinity and economic independence through productive work. Given the failures of government rehabilitation programs, niche operations like artificial poppy construction assumed greater significance, particularly for the most seriously impaired.

By the mid-1920s, America's war-wounded made nearly all of the Buddy Poppies, Flanders Fields Remembrance Poppies, and forget-me-nots sold in the United States. The American Legion, DAV, and VFW established workshops and factories across the country where disabled veterans churned out remembrance flowers year round. (Production was not limited to flowers; at the American Legion's Minneapolis Poppy Shop disabled vets manufactured commemorative trinkets, vases, plaques, "Protect Children" signs, and tire covers.) Veterans were typically paid "a

penny a poppy" and could earn three or four dollars for an entire day's work. The most seriously disabled veterans sometimes formed partnerships (known as Poppy Corporations) when they could not complete the flowers on their own. To many observers, the money earned was less important than the gendered currency of self-esteem. "Three dollars a day—not much," observed one Ohio newspaper, "but for men who have lain for months feeling that they were useless incumbrances [*sic*] on the earth, three crisp one-dollar bills actually earned seem like a fortune."[42] With Poppy Day, Moina Michael and her Legionnaire allies established a model of disabled veterans' remembrance that melded memorialization and remasculinization. In the process, they created a template for purposeful memory that disabled veterans would emulate for generations to come.

"Remembrance as a Principle" and Armistice Day

Looking back, it's no surprise that organizations like the American Legion and the DAV played a major role in shaping and maintaining the cultural memory of Great War disabled vets. The cultivation of wartime memory is essential to all veterans' groups. Memories of warfare—whether genuine or borrowed, rooted in wartime experience or obscured by years of peace—lend veterans' groups an aura of shared experience, identity, and trauma. They are part of what unites veterans as a group and what differentiates them from others.. The American Legion considered its mission to safeguard veterans' collective memories so important that it was enshrined in the group's constitution.[43] Lest the nation forget about World War I, the Legion's National Memorials Committee sponsored Memorial Day parades and built playgrounds, parks, and other "practical memorials to victory and sacrifice."[44]

Although veterans' groups were deeply concerned about preserving the memory of war within their own ranks, much of their memorial effort was directed at noncombatants—civilians with the power to fund extensive recreational and relief projects for disabled vets. Many vets believed that the American public had a decidedly short memory when it came to military affairs. As "memory dims with the passage of time, and events of yesteryear merge with the blur of history," wrote one DAV comrade, "heroes of another day again become but the empty echoes of marching hosts."[45] Faced with such obstacles, veterans' groups increasingly used war remembrance as a weapon in the battle for the hearts and pocketbooks of the American people. Newton D. Baker, who served as US secretary of war during World War I, acknowledged as much in his address to the 1931 American Legion convention. According to Baker, all ex-servicemen's organizations pursued three common goals:

> first, that those who died for the cause may always be reverently and devotedly remembered; and second, that those who were disabled in the service may be constantly and adequately brought to the grateful remembrance of their country in order that their disabilities may be properly cared for; and, third . . . to keep alive the memory of the devotion and faith which was the high point of their experience, and to impress upon those who come after them how great and good a country is and its institutions are for which men are willing to die in battle.[46]

In other words, veterans' groups did not simply remember the Great War for memory's sake. They fostered a dynamic culture of nostalgia aimed at winning devotion for the dead, securing medical benefits for the disabled, and "impressing" upon future generations the values of military service.

Perhaps the clearest articulation of veterans' commitment to purposeful remembrance can be found in a memorial address by Gill Robb Wilson, an American Legion chaplain, at the Legion's tenth annual convention in 1928. Wilson used the address not only to memorialize Legionnaires who had died since the last meeting but also to distinguish the mechanics of human memory from what he called "remembrance as a principle." While memory was a trait common to everyone, Wilson told the crowd, "Strong men remember and determine! The American Legion is founded not upon remembrance as a human attribute, but upon remembrance as a vessel in the temple of history, which has been brewed in the soul of the nation."[47] For veterans like Wilson, remembrance was an active force for political and social change. To remember the Great War and the men who fought it was the first step in redrawing US society along more patriotic and veteran-friendly lines.

For disabled veterans of World War I, the most important date on the remembrance calendar was November 11, the anniversary of the Great War's ceasefire. Long before Congress decreed it an official holiday in 1938, Americans adopted Armistice Day as a time to reflect upon the war's legacies. Across the country, cities marked the occasion with pub-

lic pageantry, remembrance-themed banquets, and veterans' parades. Given the war's ambiguous outcome, the significance of Armistice Day remained highly contested throughout the postwar decades, both in the United States and around the world.[48] Many Americans viewed Armistice Day as a chance to rekindle the national ideals and martial spirit of the war years.[49] To this end, a cottage industry quickly emerged to outfit memory-hungry celebrants with miniature flags, patriotic chapbooks, and other Armistice Day paraphernalia. Among other observers, however, Armistice Day conjured up feelings of regret and opportunities lost. In his famous Armistice Day radio address of 1923, an ailing Woodrow Wilson characterized the anniversary as a tragic reminder of the United States' failed foreign policy, specifically the nation's withdrawal into "sullen and selfish isolation" in the wake of Allied victory.[50]

Beginning in 1919, the American Legion and other veterans' groups played a key role in transforming Armistice Day from a commemoration of the Great War's end into a *veterans'* day, a tribute to the men who fought.[51] Speaking in 1921, Ferdinand Foch, the former supreme commander of Allied forces in World War I, set the tone for future celebrations: "Armistice Day, the 11th of November, should be made sacred throughout the entire civilized world. It is a day when we think of the noble sacrifices made by the hero dead, of the brilliant records of duty performed left on the field of battle by the wounded, of the spirit of patriotism and bravery shown by those who, fortunately, escaped shot and shell."[52]

Legionnaires viewed Armistice Day as an occasion to spur membership drives, raise money for veteran-related charities, and remind the public of its obligations to the war's "less fortunate" survivors. In the weeks leading up to the big event, the American Legion's public relations department flooded national newspapers with ads asking readers to contribute funds "for those who suffered most" (that is, disabled veterans and war orphans). Like many Legion gatherings, the group's Armistice Day ceremonies mingled solemn reflection and martial bombast, with speakers alternating between lofty paeans to "carrying on" and calls for future military preparedness. Because the Legion strove to foster a unified cultural memory of the war, nothing was left to chance. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the Legion's National Americanism Commission circulated scripted programs for Armistice Day ceremonies, including suggested addresses for local commanders. One of the

group's goals for Armistice Day was to solidify the American Legion's reputation as the principle guardian of disabled veterans' memory and well-being. It was not enough to guarantee that Americans remembered the plight of disabled vets. Legionnaires hoped to memorialize their own role in helping disabled veterans during times of need.[53]

Forgetting the Disabled Doughboy

Despite such efforts, many vets insisted that Americans had forgotten the Great War's wounded warriors, a charge that would be repeated with increasing vitriol throughout the interwar period. Given the tenuous nature of collective memory, veterans were right to be alarmed. As a number of scholars have shown, both individuals and groups rely heavily upon social processes of forgetting to construct stable identities and work through past traumas.[54] Matthew Dennis argues, "Purposeful remembering requires purposeful forgetting, as collective pasts are assembled through an editing process that leaves much on the cutting-room floor."[55] Writing about the post–Vietnam War era, Marita Sturken goes further, declaring: "All memories are 'created' in tandem with forgetting; to remember everything would amount to being overwhelmed by memory."[56] Following World War I, advocates of a "return to normalcy" endorsed the willful forgetting of large chunks of the nation's war experience—the misery of the battlefield, the long-term hardships of survivors, the conflict's legacies of disability and death—in the service of a smooth transition to peacetime life. For Great War veterans, however, forgetting was not the lubricant of postwar prosperity. It was a national pathology, a social contagion that threatened the very lives of disabled veterans and their families.

To read press reports, the guns of the Argonne were hardly cool before Americans began to forget about the Great War's disabled vets. As early as November 11, 1919, the American Legion insisted that the nation's "crippled soldiers" had been "not only forgotten but deluded and defrauded," setting the tone for things to come.[57] By the early 1920s, problems with government-sponsored rehabilitation, Veterans' Bureau bureaucracy, and postwar unemployment left many disabled vets feeling thoroughly abandoned. In 1921, Dr. Thomas W. Salmon, a renowned expert on war neuroses, reported that thousands of shell-shocked doughboys had been discarded in lunatic asylums or state prisons due to a lack of funds. Testifying before a congressional committee, Salmon

explained, "Men so committed as a rule are never visited by Federal officials to see whether they are properly cared for or whether the institutions in which they are confined are even fireproof or fit for human beings."[58] Similar stories—many true, some embellished—circulated widely throughout the 1920s. By mid-decade, there was a common consensus—at least among veterans and their sympathizers—that the Great War's living casualties had been relegated to the human scrap heap: neglected, unwanted, and left to suffer in anonymity.

Of all the Great War's forgotten casualties, the most tragic were those "remembered" too late. Throughout the post–World War I decades, morbid tales detailing the discovery of malnourished, enfeebled, or deceased veterans were common. The story of Oscar Johnson, a highly decorated veteran from South Norwalk, Connecticut, typified the genre. Winner of both the Distinguished Service Cross and the Croix de Guerre, Johnson was severely gassed while serving in France, leaving him incapacitated on and off for years after his return home. "Too proud to beg and too ill to work," according to the *New York Times*, Johnson eventually took up refuge in a coal barn near the South Norwalk waterfront, where local authorities found him semi-conscious from starvation and exposure. Johnson died a few days later, after which the town honored its "outstanding hero of the World War" by staging an elaborate funeral and lowering all city flags to half mast—a noble gesture, but hardly the sort of purposeful remembrance that would have saved Johnson from an early grave.[59]

By the time of Oscar Johnson's death in February 1931, the forgotten disabled doughboy had become something of a stereotype in American popular culture. Although less flashy than other contemporary media caricatures (the gin-guzzling "jazz baby," the gun-toting gangster, etc.), the forgotten disabled doughboy had no less a hold on the public consciousness—popping up in countless films, illustrations, cartoons, and journalistic accounts between the world wars. When rendered in print or projected onto the big screen, he closely resembled his Civil War antecedent, the penniless Yankee amputee who stumped his way through countless GAR speeches and *Harper's Magazine* cartoons. Yet, unlike his nineteenth-century counterpart, he was characterized as much by his surroundings—his spatial and social dislocation from mainstream life—as by his bodily impairments. Sometimes he could be found languishing in a dingy hospital bed; at others, squatting in a deserted amusement park or exiled to a government soldiers' home. Ignored by those who once cheered him, the forgotten disabled doughboy emerged in the 1920s and 1930s as a powerful symbol of the United States' broken promises and unfulfilled obligations. In fact, his very "forgottenness" was the greatest injury of all. Wounds, physical hardship, loss of life and limb—such were to be expected of all military conflicts. But to forget about the nation's disabled warriors as well—for veterans and their allies, there was no greater crime.

In retrospect, few cultural figures better embodied the suspected miseries of the Great War's forgotten casualties than Donald Mahon, the living corpse at the center of William Faulkner's debut novel, *Soldiers' Pay* (1926). The book opens shortly after Mahon, a pilot, is shot down in combat, leaving him severely disfigured and mentally traumatized. Returning to his hometown in rural Georgia, he is initially greeted as both conquering hero and sideshow freak, his "withered" and war-scarred body a curiosity for all see:

> Donald Mahon's homecoming, poor fellow, was hardly a nine days' wonder even. Curious, kindly neighbors came in—men who stood or sat jovially respectable, cheerful: solid business men interested in the war only as a by-product of the rise and fall of Mr. Wilson, and interested in that only as a matter of dollars and cents, while their wives chatted about clothes to each other across Mahon's scarred, oblivious brow; a few of the rector's more casual acquaintances democratically uncravated, hushing their tobacco into a bulged cheek, diffidently but firmly refusing to surrender their hats; girls that he had known, had danced with or courted on summer nights, come now to look once upon his face, and then quickly aside in hushed nausea, not coming any more unless his face happened to be hidden on the first visit (upon which they finally found opportunity to see it).[60]

While the townspeople resume their normal lives, Mahon's war-wracked body remains an anachronism, a terrible "hang-over of warfare" that his former friends and neighbors are all too eager to forget. With the exception of an envious military cadet too young to experience combat for himself, no one is especially interested in contemplating war wounds and the men who bear them. "Once Society drank war, brought [boys] into manhood with a cultivated taste for war," observes Faulkner's narrator near the novel's end, "but now Society seemed to have found

something else for a beverage."[61] Like so much Great War fiction, *Soldiers' Pay* did not dwell upon the banal, everyday realties faced by most disabled veterans, forgotten or otherwise. Rather, in Faulkner's hands, the forgotten disabled doughboy emerges as American memory's unbearable Other—an abject presence so hideous in appearance and terrifying in implication that it defies memorialization.[62]

The forgotten stereotype gained additional symbolic currency after 1932, when Franklin Delano Roosevelt made the Forgotten Man a central theme in his presidential campaign.[63] Introduced in a radio address on April 7, Roosevelt's Forgotten Man was initially conceived as a foot soldier in the "infantry of [the nation's] economic army." Industrious by nature, he longed only to pay his bills and keep the bank from taking his home—goals thwarted by unscrupulous businessmen, government bureaucrats, and the tyrannies of unregulated capitalism.[64] In an early campaign film, FDR's standard-bearer Boston mayor James M. Curley declared that four years of "industrial depression" had produced more than ten million Forgotten Men, among them thousands of veteran Bonus Marchers camped out "in the shadow of the National Capitol."[65]

As the Depression wore on, the term *Forgotten Man* evolved into a catch-all to describe any beleaguered person struggling to make ends meet. Forgotten Men (and Women) drifted through the Dust Bowl ballads of Woody Guthrie and the novels of John Steinbeck; they stalked the city streets of photographers Margaret Bourke-White and Lewis Hine; they rode the rails in films like Mervyn LeRoy's *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang* (1932) and William Wellman's *Heroes for Sale* (1933). And there was the rub: at a time when large swaths of the American public were characterized as "forgotten," where did that leave disabled veterans? Did they constitute an elite cohort of Forgotten Men or were they, at long last, just like everyone else? The answers to such questions would be contested throughout the Great Depression—as they would be in periods of economic adversity to follow. While disabled veterans continued to insist that they deserved special consideration from the state, their struggles were increasingly subsumed within a national narrative of suffering, one that linked all Americans' hardships to the United States' failure to fulfill its wartime promises. Indeed, in popular media, wounded and disabled veterans were often used as stand-ins for the nation as a whole, their injured bodies symbols of failed economic policies and government neglect.

Nowhere was this metaphorical substitution used to greater effect than in Mervyn LeRoy's musical *Gold Diggers of 1933* (1933). Choreographed by Busby Berkeley, with music and lyrics Harry Warren and Al Dubin respectively, the film tells the story of a group out-of-work entertainers attempting to mount a Broadway show about the Great Depression. In the show's final number, "Remember My Forgotten Man," Berkeley and LeRoy artfully combine dance, mise-en-scène, and inventive camerawork to draw explicit links between national forgetfulness, World War I, and the hardships facing out-of-work vets. The sequence opens with what would have been a familiar sight in 1933: a homeless man picking up discarded cigarette butts and wandering the city streets. How did he (and millions like him) wind up in such straits? As if to answer this question, "Remember My Forgotten Man" flashes back to 1917, when happy doughboys marched off to war amidst public fanfare.

As the sequence unfolds, early exuberance turns to sorrow. American soldiers are shown slogging through the rain and limping wearily back from the front. Berkeley uses treadmills to keep the actor-soldiers in perpetual motion and to highlight the circuit of militarized bodies, from manly health to pitiful injury. At one point, two treadmills moving in opposite directions are positioned side by side, sharpening the contrast between the uniformed bodies that enter battle and the limping, bloodied, stretcher-born mass that returns. When the sequence jumps back to 1933, America's wounded warriors are now shivering in breadlines, waiting desperately for a bite to eat.

Accompanying the stage theatrics is a bluesy dirge sung by a cast of war widows, grieving mothers, and lost loves. In the first verse, Carol (Joan Blondell) implores the American public to make good on its social contract of remembrance:

> Remember my forgotten man
> You put a rifle in his hand
> You sent him far away
> You shouted hip-hurray
> But look at him today

The urgency of her demand escalates as "Remember My Forgotten Man" builds to a dizzying crescendo. With silhouettes of soldiers circling overhead, a line of homeless vets trudges painfully (and futilely) toward the

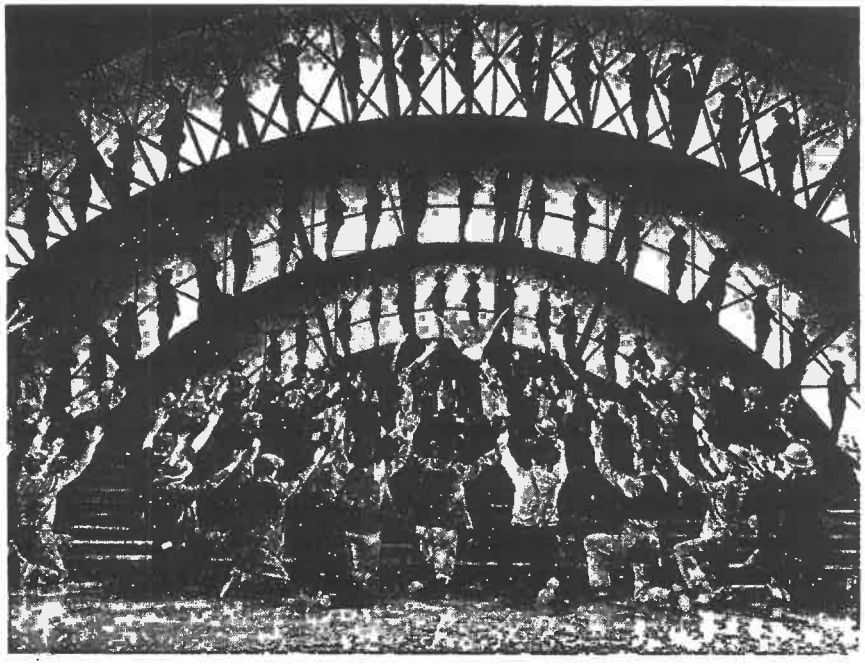

FIG. 25. In the climax of Mervyn Leroy's *Gold Diggers of 1933*, actress Joan Blondell (*center*) exhorts the audience to remember the Great War soldiers who became the Forgotten Men of the Great Depression.

camera (fig. 25). As they begin to sing, what was once a call for remembrance becomes a desperate plea for survival:

> Remember your forgotten man
> You've got to help us live again
> One day we march away
> to fight for USA
> but where are we today?

Through its merging of cinematic spectacle and social commentary, the sequence offered a powerful indictment of American forgetfulness in all its forms—social, economic, and political. Moreover, *Gold Diggers of 1933* provided audiences with a visual and narrative template for understanding what many Depression-era Americans had long suspected: that the United States' economic woes were directly tied to the nation's decision to enter World War I.

The Stakes of Memory

The battle over the cultural memory of disabled veterans did not end with the Great Depression, or even with the United States' entrance into World War II. In 1943, the American Legion returned to Congress with stories of the "Forgotten Battalion," the latest generation of war-injured men cast aside by federal bureaucracy. Describing the scene in *American Legion Magazine*, David Cameron complained, "It seems impossible to believe, now, that thousands of disabled men discharged during the war were forced to depend on charity for their very existence for months before the country they had fought to defend got around to caring for them."[66] For all of veterans' memory work—the holidays, the fund-raising drives, the exposés of institutional forgetfulness—many vets believed that Americans were falling back into old habits. Unless the United States acted quickly, it risked creating a new army of Forgotten Men—larger, angrier, and unwilling to settle for pageants and parades.

What was at stake in the public remembrance of disabled veterans? Why was it so important that Americans never forget the men "for whom there was no Armistice"? Despite wounded doughboys' well-known reputation for reticence, many commentators assumed that all veterans wanted to be remembered, whether they said so or not. From this perspective, public forgetfulness came to be viewed as a form of trauma in itself, a secondary wound that compounded veterans' already existing physical and mental anguish.[67] In addition, the American public's participation in memory-themed fund-raisers, holidays, and civic functions had a tangible effect on disabled veterans' lives, if only in a small way. Profits from forget-me-not and poppy sales helped fund summer camps, clubhouses, medical care, and rehabilitation projects for disabled vets.[68] More to the point, veterans' groups like the American Legion understood *purposeful* remembering and forgetting as a key part of their broader project of redrawing American society along more veteran-friendly lines. Indeed, for Great War veterans, the forgotten disabled doughboy fulfilled numerous roles simultaneously: he was a rhetorical sledgehammer for lobbying the state, a tangible symbol of social and governmental indifference, and a stark reminder of why nonveterans could not be trusted to keep the spirit of the war alive.

Ultimately, many interwar Americans believed there was a more significant reason to remember the Great War's disabled vets: future

national security. Vets and their allies argued that America's failure to remember its disabled doughboys set a dangerous precedent for the future, when the United States once again called upon its citizen-soldiers to take up arms. In his 1922 Forget-Me-Not Day proclamation, New York governor Nathan Miller sounded what would become a common refrain among advocates of disabled veterans' remembrance: "A nation that forgets its defenders and withholds its active sympathy from the disabled soldiers invites similar forgetfulness in the day of its perils."[69] And yet, not everyone saw disabled veterans as icons of courage and national sacrifice. As Americans became increasingly disillusioned with the Great War, they came to view disabled veterans as evidence of why martial conflict should be abandoned altogether.

James M. Kirwin

On November 26, 1939, three months after the start of World War II in Europe, James M. Kirwin, pastor of the St. James Catholic Church in Port Arthur, Texas, devoted his weekly newspaper column to one of the most haunting figures of the World War era: the "basket case." Originating as British army slang in World War I, the term referred to quadruple amputees, men so horrifically mangled in combat they had to be carried around in wicker baskets. Campfire stories about basket cases and other "living corpses" had circulated widely during the Great War's immediate aftermath. And Kirwin, a staunch isolationist fearful of US involvement in World War II, was eager to revive them as object lessons in the perils of military adventurism. "The basket case is helpless, but not useless," the preacher explained. "He can tell us what war is. He can tell us that if the United States sends troops to Europe, your son, your brother, father, husband, or sweetheart, may also be a basket case." In Kirwin's mind, mutilated soldiers were not heroes to be venerated; they were monstrosities, hideous reminders of why the United States should avoid overseas war-making at all costs. Facing an upsurge in pro-war sentiment, the reverend implored his readers to take the lessons of the basket case to heart: "We must not add to war's carnage and barbarity by drenching foreign fields with American blood. . . . Looking at the basket case, we know that for civilization's sake, we dare not, MUST NOT."[1]

86. Ernest Angell, "American Legion Versus America," *The Nation* 136 (March 15, 1933): 287.
87. Duffield, 13–24, 18.
88. Mayo, 124, 136, 125, 169, 193.
89. Duffield, 205–22.
90. Frederick Palmer, "A Personal View—Little 'Cootie' Mencken," *American Legion Monthly* (August 1927): 41.
91. Pencak, 174–75.
92. Stanley Frost, "Salvaging the Veterans' Bureau," *The Outlook* 135 (October 3, 1923): 179.
93. Walter Millis, "Bewildered Doughboys," *The Nation* 141 (September 25, 1935): 363.
94. Powell, 253.
95. See Frederick Lewis Allen, *Since Yesterday: The 1930s in America, September 3, 1929-September 3, 1939* (New York: Perennial, 1986); Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1990).
96. See Jennifer D. Keene, *Doughboys, the Great War, and the Remaking of America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); Ortiz, *Beyond the Bonus March and GI Bill*; Paul Dickson and Thomas B. Allen, *The Bonus Army: An American Epic* (New York: Walker and Co., 2004).
97. Quoted in Jacob Armstrong Swisher, *The American Legion in Iowa, 1919–1929* (Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1929), 137.
98. Daniels, 36.
99. "They Should Come First," *New York Times*, January 23, 1922, 8.
100. James, 126.
101. Ortiz, "Rethinking the Bonus March: Federal Bonus Policy, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the Origins of a Protest Movement," *Journal of Policy History* 18:3 (2006): 276.
102. Quoted in ibid., 286.
103. Quoted in Dickson and Allen, 86.
104. Quoted in ibid., 131.
105. Daniels, 85; "Robertson Promises to Picket Mayflower Hotel," *Olean [NY] Times Herald*, July 21, 1932, 1.
106. Quoted in Jack Douglas, *Veterans on the March* (New York: Workers Library, 1934), 194.
107. Dickson and Allen ,146; Douglas, 197.
108. Powell, 234.
109. Franklin D. Roosevelt, "The President Vetoes the Bonus Bill, May 22, 1935," in *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt* (New York: Random House, 1938–50), 4:293.
110. John Thomas Taylor, "There Ought to Be a Law—And There Is," *American Legion Monthly* (November 1928): 72.

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1. Quoted in "Forget-Me-Not Day," *Frederick [MD] Daily News*, December 16, 1921, n.p.; "Plan US Tag Day for Wounded Vets," *Appleton [WI] Post-Crescent*, December 10, 1921, 12; "Forget-Me-Not Day," *Iowa City Press-Citizen*, December 9, 1921, 4; "Legion Post Plans to Help Disabled," *Oakland Tribune*, December 8, 1921, 13.
2. "'Forget-Me-Not Day' to Aid Wounded Veterans," *Fort Wayne [IN] News Sentinel*, November 4, 1922, 21; "Wins Harding's Approval," *New York Times*, November 3, 1922, 23.

3. "Forget-Me-Not Day Aids Soldier Fund," *New York Times*, November 5, 1922, 9.
4. "Forget Me Not Day," *Walnut Grove [MN] Tribune*, September 19, 1929, 1.
5. Clipping of "Forget-Me-Not Sale Saturday," *Dakota County [MN] Tribune*, September 23, 1927, in Argonne Farms file, Dakota County Historical Society, Lakeville, MN.
6. Frances Montgomery, "Little Blue Flower Flourishes as City Shows Remembrance," *Oakland [CA] Tribune* November 6, 1922, A9.
7. "Many Disabled Veterans Ask Aid of Public," *Oakland [CA] Tribune*, December 2, 1927, A7.

CHAPTER SIX

1. "A Forget-Me-Not Answers," reprinted in "Forget-Me-Not to Again Speak for the Dead," *Albert Lea [MN] Evening Tribune*, September 25, 1930, 5.
2. Edward T. Linenthal, *The Unfinished Bombing: Oklahoma City in American Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Theo Farrell, *The Norms of War: Cultural Beliefs and Modern Conflict* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2005); Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); Erika Doss, *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).
3. Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Alison Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004); E. Ann Kaplan, *Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005).
4. Winter, 3. Because remembering is an active practice, Winter prefers the term "remembrance" to "memory." In his words, "To privilege 'remembrance' is to insist on specifying agency, on answering the question who remembers, when, where, and how?" Memory, on the other hand, is best understood in both narrative and economic terms—as a way of structuring collective stories about the past, and as a kind of social resource, a commodity produced through representation and ritual (4). In this chapter, I have tried to use "remembrance" when describing the active process and "memory" to describe the result.
5. On the concept of a "memory boom," see Winter; and Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy, introduction to *The Collective Memory Reader*, ed. Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3–62.
6. Samuel Hynes, *A Soldier's Tale: Bearing Witness to Modern War* (New York: Penguin, 1998).
7. James M. Mayo, *War Memorials as Political Landscape: The American Experience and Beyond* (New York: Praeger, 1988), 80–86.
8. On the international debate between supporters of traditional memorial practices and advocates of utilitarian designs, see G. Kurt Piehler, *Remembering War the American Way* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 105–13.
9. Thomas M. Owen, Jr., "American World War Memorials," *FIDAC: Interallied Review of the Five Continents* 12:5 (May 1936): 6.
10. "Proceedings of the Tenth National Convention of the American Legion" [1928] (hereafter *American Legion 1929*), 70th Cong., 2nd sess. (1929), H. Doc. 388, 195, 225.

11. Not all state-sponsored memorials were made of metal or stone. Vermont appropriated $25,000 for the publication of an official history of the state's participation in the war, providing each Vermont veteran with a bound copy in 1928. Likewise, the Iowa state legislature appropriated $1,000 per year to archive the lives of Iowans in wartime. By 1936, the state's collection included more than 4,000 photographs, war posters, and other wartime artifacts. Owen, Jr., 8, 6.
12. Piehler, 96.
13. On the cult of the "fallen" in European memory, see George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).
14. Piehler, 96–97.
15. Seth Koven, "Remembering and Dismemberment: Crippled Children, Wounded Soldiers, and the Great War in Great Britain," *American Historical Review* 99:4 (October 1994): 1169.
16. On the relationship of war memorials to postwar bereavement, see Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
17. On disabled veterans' inability to forget, see Bob Herbert, "Forget the War? Many Can't," *New York Times*, August 4, 2005, A23.
18. Sturken, 73.
19. Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 113–18.
20. See Jo Stanley, "Involuntary Commemorations: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Its Relationship to War Commemoration," in *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration*, ed. T. G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson, and Michal Roper (London: Routledge, 2000), 240–62.
21. Stanley, 240.
22. Winter, *Remembering War*, 57.
23. "Coolidge Sends a Greeting to All Disabled Veterans," *New York Times*, December 21, 1925, 1.
24. "Disabled Soldiers on Morgan's Yacht," *New York Times*, August 14, 1921, 25; "To Give Dialect Recital," *New York Times*, June 25, 1931, 23.
25. "Disabled Veterans Guests of Hoovers," *New York Times*, June 11, 1931, 27.
26. Matthew Dennis, *Red, White, and Blue Letter Days: An American Calendar* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 1.
27. My use of the term "invented tradition" is, of course, borrowed from Eric Hobsbawm. See "Introduction: Inventing Tradition," in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1–14.
28. "10,000 Parade 5th Ave. in Military Display," *New York Times*, April 6, 1930, 3.
29. On the founding and evolution of Memorial Day, see Ellen M. Litwicki, *American Public Holidays, 1865–1920* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000).
30. The following account of Michael's life is drawn largely from Moina Michael, *The Miracle Flower: The Story of the Flanders Fields Memorial Poppy* (Philadelphia: Dorrance, 1941).

31. Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 248; John McCrae, "In Flanders Fields," in *In Flanders Fields and Other Poems* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1919), 3.
32. McCrae, 3.
33. Michael, 47.
34. Ibid., 65.
35. There is some degree of irony in the fact that Poppy Day sales were not always conducted on a Great War–themed holiday. While the VFW routinely sold its Buddy Poppies on Armistice Day, the American Legion preferred Memorial Day (May 30), a holiday whose observance predated World War I by decades.
36. Bill Bottoms, *The VFW: An Illustrative History of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States* (Rockville, MD: Woodbine House, 1991), 65–66.
37. Michael, 87–88. Other veterans' and charity groups also sold war remembrance flowers. The Jewish War Veterans, the Veterans of Belleau Wood, and the US Marine Brigade mainly participated in Legion-led flower sales. The Children of the American Loyalty League, on the other hand, peddled paper "No-Man's-Land" roses—manufactured by disabled veterans—to fund a mountain home for American war orphans. "Coolidge Gets a Paper Rose," *New York Times*, December 12, 1924, 19; "First Day Poppy Sale Breaks Old Records," *New York Times*, May 26, 1925, 21.
38. Elmo Scott Watson, "The Red Poppy—Symbol of Armistice Day," *Indiana Weekly Messenger*, October 30, 1930, 7.
39. Michael, 84.
40. "Tainted 'Poppies' Will Feed Fire; Legion Hurt at Slur," *Indianapolis Star*, May 23, 1923, 2.
41. It is also notable that flower selling, which promised volunteers no monetary return for their efforts, continued to be dominated by women.
42. "The Story of Poppies," *[Elyria, OH]Chronicle-Telegram*, May 22, 1929, 2.
43. Douglas I. McKay described memory preservation as "the fourth of the fundamental principles of the American Legion." Quoted in *American Legion 1929*, 61.
44. Richard Seelye Jones, *A History of the American Legion* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1946), 242–43.
45. J. L. Monnahan, "What of the War Disabled," *Minnesota DAV Annual* 9:1 (1929): 17.
46. Newton D. Baker quoted in "Proceedings of the Thirteenth National Convention of the American Legion" [1931], 72nd Cong., 1st sess. (1932), H. Doc. 48, 9.
47. Quoted in *American Legion 1929*, 19.
48. On the contested meaning of Armistice Day in Great Britain, see Adrian Gregory, *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day, 1919–1946* (Oxford: Berg, 1994).
49. See A. P. Sanford and Robert Haven Schauffler, eds., *Armistice Day* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1927).
50. Arthur S. Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 68:466–7.
51. Litwicki, 240.
52. "Foch Sees Ingots Rolled into Plates," *New York Times*, November 11, 1921, 3.
53. American Legion, "Suggested Address for Use by Legion Speaker on Armistice Day," in *Armistice Day*, 160.
54. See Adrian Forty and Susanne Kuchler, eds., *The Art of Forgetting* (London: Berg, 2001).

55. Dennis, 7.
56. Sturken, 7.
57. "Has American Abandoned Her Crippled Soldiers?" *The Outlook* 123 (November 12, 1919): 289.
58. Quoted in "'Shameful Neglect' of our Disabled Dough-boys," *Literary Digest* 68:4 (January 22, 1921): 1.
59. "Norwalk Hero of War Dies of Starvation," *New York Times*, February 26, 1931, reprinted in *Disarm!* 1 (Autumn 1931): 16–17.
60. William Faulkner, *Soldiers' Pay* (New York: Liverlight, 1997), 145.
61. Faulkner, 194–95.
62. On the theory of the abject, see Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).
63. Although henceforth associated with the Great Depression, the term *Forgotten Man* did not originate with FDR or his speechwriters, but with a pair of Progressive era intellectuals, William Graham Sumner and Walter H. Page. See William Graham Sumner, "The Forgotten Man," *The Forgotten Man and Other Essays*, ed. Albert Galloway Kellner (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1919), 494–95; Walter H. Page, "The Forgotten Man," *The Rebuilding of Old Commonwealths: Being Essays Towards the Training of the Forgotten Man in the Southern States* (New York: Doubleday, Page, 1902), 22, 31.
64. Franklin D. Roosevelt, "The Forgotten Man," in *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, vol. 1, *1928–1932* (New York: Random House, 1938), 624.
65. Quoted in James H. Guilfoyle, *On the Trail of the Forgotten Man* (Boston: Peabody Masters, 1933), 180–81.
66. Quoted in Aaron Glantz, *The War Comes Home: Washington's Battle against America's Veterans* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 71.
67. Nearly a century a later, this sentiment is echoed in the motto of the Wounded Warrior Project, a disabled veterans' service organization founded in 2003: "The greatest casualty is being forgotten." See http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/.
68. "Disabled American Vets to Have Day," *Fitchburg [MA] Sentinel*, November 7, 1922, 11.
69. Quoted in "Forget-Me-Not Day Proclamation Out," *Syracuse Herald*, November 4, 1922. For similar sentiments, see "Hails 'Forget-Me-Not Day,'" *New York Times*, November 2, 1922, 17.

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1. J. M. Kirwin, "Religious Musings," *Port Arthur News*, November 26, 1939, Sunday editorial page.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. My use of terms like "peace movement," "peace groups," and "peace activists" is intentionally broad, incorporating individuals and organizations sympathetic to such policies and philosophies as US neutrality, nonintervention, the arbitration of international conflicts, anti-militarism, and anti-imperialism.
2. Typical of this trend is Howard Jones's widely adopted survey *Crucible of Power: A History of US Foreign Relations since 1897* (Lanham, MD: SR Books, 2001), which contains only a few fleeting references to the interwar peace movement.