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## **Military landscapes: agendas and approaches for future research**

### **Abstract**

This paper reviews existing approaches to military landscapes, establishing the field's breadth and variety. It suggests areas for future military landscape research around virtual military landscapes; the landscape effects of military privatisation and outsourcing; landscape issues pertaining to non-state military actors; the endurance and effects of post-military landscapes; and the role of landscapes of peace and reconciliation. The paper discusses practices of military landscape exploration, and the contributions they bring to emergent critical approaches in military studies. The paper argues for the continued validity and specificity of terminologies associated with the category of 'military' in the study of such landscapes.

**Key words:** landscape, military, militarism, militarisation, war, armed conflict

### **[A] I Introduction**

This paper considers emergent research agendas in the critical analysis of military landscapes. It reviews how military landscapes have hitherto been defined and examined, and on the basis of this identifies significant future research directions for

military landscape studies, and for the wider conceptualisation of militarism and its consequences. Reflecting a century of global armed conflict, along with evolving debates within landscape studies, the examination of the relationships between military activities and landscapes has long constituted a fruitful focus for inquiry (see Brunn, 1987; Woodward, 2004; Pearson, 2012). Yet military power and its effects are not static; recent developments include over a decade of active military operations by NATO and US-led coalition forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, broader changes in the nature and practice of military operations at a range of scales, and a collection of political, social and cultural shifts in civilian relationships with armed forces particularly in advanced capitalist economies. It is appropriate at this point in time to consider emergent areas for inquiry consequent on these developments, and to consider how landscape studies might make a distinctive contribution to conceptual understandings of militarism and military activities, subjects which are becoming more entrenched as key concerns for social scientific inquiry.

This paper proceeds through three stages. First, it provides a selective overview of key themes in existing literatures on military landscapes, and identifies new areas for future landscape study consequent on contemporary developments in military powers, capabilities and effects. Second, it explores the specificity of landscape-focused approaches to understanding military issues and the contribution this perspective makes to emergent debates within critical military studies. Third, it considers how the focus on landscapes takes forward debates on understanding militarism and militarisation in the context of questions concerning the continued validity of these concepts and terminologies.

This paper uses the following definitions. 'Landscape' suggests multiple conceptualizations which, within and beyond human geography, have informed and enriched our collective understandings of the world (see Wylie, 2007). In this exploration of military landscapes, three broad conceptualisations of landscape take prominence. First, landscape can be the material patterning and morphology of land (regardless of its 'natural' or 'human' origins), requiring description in order to establish the facts of and explanations for location and distribution. Second, landscape can be understood with reference to the representational qualities of landscapes, an approach which understands landscapes as texts to be read for what they tell us about the exercise of power over space. Third, landscapes are also experiential, engaged with through our bodies, senses, movements and emotions, and brought into being through our being. The intention here is not to map studies of military landscapes onto this schema, but rather to explore military landscape studies across the range of possibilities suggested by these approaches. The other key terms for this paper are 'military', 'militarism' and 'militarisation'. The terms 'military' and 'military activity' refer to material and other resources pertaining to the prosecution of potentially lethal armed force organised and executed on the authority of the state for its political purposes. Following Kuus (Flusty et al., 2008: 625), we can also distinguish between 'militarism' as an ideology that prioritises military force as a necessary resolver of conflict, and 'militarisation' as that multifaceted set of social, cultural, economic and political processes by which military approaches to social problems and issues gain both elite and popular acceptance.

## **[A] II Military landscapes: existing approaches and future directions**

What precisely constitutes a military landscape remains open to debate (see Pearson et al., 2010a, for an introduction). In the overview which follows, the range of possibilities is discussed, but it should be noted that the parameters of the category defined here – landscapes which reflect in their constitution and expression the imprint of military activities, militarism and militarisation – is not the only approach. Alternatives include a process-derived typology organised around different military and related activities (Pearson, 2012), or different types of military features (Osborne, 2004), or a broader functional idea of landscapes of conflict (Muir, 1999) or landscapes of defence (Gold and Revill, 2000; see also Philo, 2012) which includes landscapes of armed conflict but also any other types of conflict, and excludes military-related activities in non-conflict contexts. Defining the parameters of the category around the constitution and expression of military activities, militarism and militarisation is further complicated in the present by the growth of securitisation and associated debates (and this point is returned to below).

The long-established, traditional way of understanding military landscapes, as the interplay between military strategy and landscapes or the ‘terrain and tactics’ approach (Carman and Carman, 2006; Doyle and Bennett, 2002), continues. Recent examples include the study of the relic Second World War landscapes of the Battle of the Bulge in the Ardennes, Belgium (Harrison and Passmore, 2008; Passmore and Harrison, 2008), the reinterpretation of the course of the Battle of Culloden (1746) in Scotland (Pollard, 2009), and a re-reading of a South Carolina civil war coastal

battery landscape through the use of environmental reconstruction techniques (Hippensteel, 2008). This approach tends to focus at the scale of the battlefield and is less concerned (like traditional military geography – see Palka et al., 2005) with political questions of violence and its effects and spatialities. More critical approaches examine how a wider politics around armed conflict events are written on battlefields in the aftermath of war. Battlefields can be read as places of national identity construction, as Herman (2008) explains through an analysis of the dominant US war narrative in the construction of meanings around the War in the Pacific National Historical Park on Guam. Interpretations and presentational strategies of battlefields shift over time, reflecting the interplay between shifting forms of knowledge about sites and changing public perceptions and sensibilities about war in general and specific conflicts or incidents. So, for example, changing interpretative frameworks have been charted at sites such as the Washita Battlefield National Historic Site (the place of an attack on a Cheyenne camp by Custer's forces in 1868 – see Hurt, 2010), the Culloden battlefield site (Masson and Harden, 2009), the Isandlwana site of battle between British and Zulu forces in South Africa in 1879 (Pollard, 2007), and sites in Delhi associated with the Indian revolt in 1857 (Lahiri, 2003). The politics of battlefields as they become sites of heritage and tourism are both collective (Wilson, 2010) and personal (Dunkely et al., 2010). The interplay between landscape morphology, military utility and landscape representation and interpretation as an analytic focus in studies of military landscapes is evident also at much larger regional and subnational scales. Examples include studies of the Alps during the First World War (Keller, 2009), France during the Second World War (Pearson, 2006, 2008, 2009), and the British defence estate across the 20<sup>th</sup> century

(Dudley, 2012). At this scale, the militarisation of landscape has been used to trace the co-constitutive imagination of both defence and environment in Canada across the Cold War (Lackenbauer and Farish, 2007; Farish and Lackenbauer, 2009), through the ideas of 'militant tropicality' informing understandings of warfare in the Caribbean in the 1940s and 1950s and Vietnam in the 1960s (Clayton, 2012) and the environmental present of 'political forests' in Cold War South East Asia (Peluso and Vandergeest, 2011). The projection of military power is dependent on the legitimisation of spaces through which this can happen (see Williams, 2011).

Landscape matters are inevitably bound up with practices of legitimisation, particularly so when military landscape modifications have negative environmental and geomorphological consequences. The environmental contamination of landscapes following war, and the politics of the management of the residue of armed action have been studied at Bikini atoll (Davis, 2005, 2007), Vieques, Puerto Rico (Davis et al, 2007) and Fiji (Bennett, 2001). Contamination in turn raises questions about the interplay between environmental and national identity politics, as examples from the US (Beck, 2009; Havlick, 2007, 2011; Hourdequin and Havlick, 2010), the UK (Cole, 2010) and Australia (Instone, 2010) all show.

The most significant progression in military landscape debates in recent years comes from a critical mass of studies exploring the sheer range of effects of military action and militarisation more generally in the production of landscapes of human settlement. Examples include accounts of the militarised landscapes of Nicosia and Cyprus as a consequence of the histories of peacekeeping and border stabilisation in

this divided island (Lisle, 2007; Higate and Henry, 2011), the multi-faceted militarisation of space in Okinawa, Japan, dominated by US defence forces since the end of the Second World War because of US military ambitions in the region (Yamazaki, 2011), and the complex architecture of military occupation in Israel/Palestine (Weizman, 2007). Military landscaping can be strange and uncanny, shown in the complex, interconnected military landscapes parallel to those of the civilian world, reflecting military demands for land appropriation, space for weapons testing, and alternative visualisations of airspace (Flintham, 2011). The strange character of military landscaping is seen too in the decaying, haunting histories of scientific and technological military power caught in the landscapes of the UK's East Anglia and the Orford Ness ballistics and radar testing site (Davis, 2012a and b), and the concealed or liminal spaces of the bunker (Beck, 2011; Bennett, 2011a and b). Military landscapes can normalize military presences and priorities, seen through the configuration of domestic, civilian spaces according to military norms, as Lutz (2001) describes with reference to the US Fort Bragg / Fayetteville area and as Bernazzoli and Flint (2010) describe with reference to Fort Campbell, Kentucky (see also Tivers, 1999, for an analysis of civilian Aldershot, UK). Civilian urban landscapes are in turn vulnerable to militarised reconfiguration through deliberated targeting, what Bevan (2006) terms cultural cleansing with architecture as its medium (see also Boyd and Linehan, 2012, for a wider discussion of warfare and the built environment). Military landscapes are also landscapes of construction where military priorities shape emergent urban forms, visible in spatial configurations of military domesticity (Gillem, 2007) and urban morphologies (Farish, 2003), and less visibly through state-military articulations of threat and appropriate response evident in what Graham



terms the 'new military urbanism' (Graham, 2009, 2010, 2012, see also Coward, 2009). The blending of infrastructures of social domination and control into spaces that are not directly associated with the military raises the question as to whether the materialities and controls of the new military urbanism evident in border zones, transport nodes and networks, public spaces and buildings and the general infrastructure of cities could be identified as military landscapes. Primarily, they are not read in those terms, and the 'urban military imperative' (Evans, 2009) is more usually explored as a manifestation of securitisation (and I return to the issue of terminologies below). Yet work on the militarisation / securitisation of urban space is instructive for the degree to which it reveals the growth of ostensibly civilian infrastructures and architectures as military in origin and purpose (see also Coaffee et al., 2009). We should also recognise the tenacity in urban forms and lives of a military inheritance into a civilian present, and the possibilities or otherwise of conversion of post-military landscapes (Bagaeen, 2006).

The landscapes constituted by military objectives and power are also experienced at much more personal scales, and the co-constitution of soldier and landscape has provided a distinct contribution to more recent sociological accounts of military identities. We can consider, for example, the ways in which the domestic and interior spaces of British Army institutions such as barracks provide the context for the constitution and expression of modes of military masculinities (Atherton, 2009), or the spaces of a US military charter school as the context for the development of adolescent militarized identities (Johnson, 2010). The construction and articulation of military masculinities are processes contingent on a particular use and

imagination of specific types of landscape (Woodward, 2006; Hoegaerts, 2010).

British soldiers in the First World War, argues Wilson (2011), constructed a sense of place on the Western Front through the observation, identification and naming of landscape features, part of a process of asserting personal agency in reaction to the passivity demanded by war. Military landscapes are therefore a constituent for the production and articulation of military identities. Civilian experience too is shaped by military landscapes, seen for example in negotiations by the civilian spouses of military personnel (particularly wives) to lives lived in proximity to military bases (Murphy, in preparation), or the responses of civilian visitors to the spectacle and space of the military airshow (Rech, 2012).

Landscapes of mourning and remembrance for past military events can also be understood as military landscapes. Although not without precedent (see Clarke (2008) on late 18<sup>th</sup> century memorials to the French revolutionary wars), the aftermath of the First World War ushered in an extraordinary period of symbolic landscape creation (Bushaway, 1992; Heffernan, 1995; Morris, 1997), and fascination with these landscapes endures, symptomatic perhaps of the late 20th century memory boom around that conflict (Winter, 2006). The former Western Front dominates, and sites such as Passchendaele on the Somme stand for the whole of the Great War, despite that conflict's wider territorial reach (Iles, 2003), and multiple sites of remembrance seal places across Belgium and northern France as perpetual landscapes of military aftermath. Identified for their significance as places of national identity construction and reconstruction, site-specific studies include assessments of the Newfoundland memorial at Beaumont Hamel on the Somme

(Gough, 2004a), the Canadian national memorial on Vimy ridge (Hucker, 2009), the South African memorial at Delville Wood (Foster, 2004), and the Ulster Memorial Tower also on the Somme (Switzer and Graham, 2010). The constant interplay around these sites of remembrance and forgetting produces 'a palimpsest of overlapping, multi-vocal landscapes', landscapes of on-going processes (Saunders, 2001, p.37) with changing meanings to subsequent generations of visitors (Winter, 2009).

Studies of the rescaling and reinterpretations of sites with changing political contexts emphasise the contingency of landscapes of military memorialisation. This has been explored in great detail with reference to Singapore (Muzaini, 2006; Muzaini and Yeoh, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2007; Muzaini et al., 2007) where the emergent post-colonial nation has demanded national and humanitarian readings in replacement for older personal and imperial interpretations of the Second World War.

Contextual change is both political/discursive, and material, so we see changes to cemeteries (see Fuchs (2004) on British war graves in Jerusalem) and domestic memorials (see Stephens (2007) on the First World War Victoria Park memorial, Perth, Western Australia). Shifting modes of commemoration promoted by the state and its actors play out through landscapes such as those of Bulgarian memorialisation to the Great War (Dimitrova, 2005), and Finnish state memorialisation practices to the dead of the Second World War (Raivo, 2004).

Debate continues to revolve around the development of landscapes of varying degrees of permanency through the interplay of private grief, personal reflection, public expressions of militarism and national narratives of identity (Moriarty, 1997;

Inglis, 1998; Johnson, 1999, 2003; Tarlow, 1999; Lomsky-Feder, 2005; Walklate et al., 2011; Jenkins et al., 2012; Managhan, 2012). The reconfiguration of the National Mall in Washington DC through the military-security apparatus of urban control and surveillance, and the military-memory apparatus of the new(ish) Second World War memorial monument both illustrate this well (see Benton-Short, 2006, 2007; Doss, 2008). Analysis of the ways in which dissent against dominant narratives of remembrance and their gendered, classed politics, explores how dissent coheres around these sites too (Gulley, 1993; Gough, 2000; Rainbird, 2003). These landscapes can be small and domestic (Oushakine, 2006), temporary and unofficial (Sidaway and Mayell, 2007), invisible to those without the requisite cultural and political knowledge to read them, as Steinberg and Taylor (2003) illustrate around memorial practices associated with the lost of the Guatemalan civil war. The question of what, exactly, constitutes a military memorial space, and how scale and temporality shape the constitution and expression of military landscapes is raised (implicitly) in Jenks' (2008) exploration of military pasts and presents in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo district. The politics of military memorial landscapes extends to the possibility of such sites escaping established, standard and utterly pervasive ideas about nationhood and memory, as Gough (2002) explores with reference to the possibility of military memorial forms' advocacy of peace. The politics of memorialisation extends also to sites bearing witness to militarized or paramilitary violence, as Johnson (2011) explores with reference to memorials to the Omagh bombing in Northern Ireland.

This overview, then, gives an indication of the range of approaches to the analysis of military landscapes. It is notable how much of this work explores interpretations and practices in the present of landscapes constituted by past military activities (and there is nothing inherently problematic with that, in terms of the scope of landscape studies). Yet looking at contemporary activities, processes and issues, and the progression of military influence in social and cultural life suggests a number of emergent agendas for future research around the intersections between 'military' and 'landscape' which are instructive about the evolving co-constitution and expression of both. These are: the emergence of virtual military landscapes; the landscaping effects of military privatisation and outsourcing; the landscapes of paramilitary and non-state military actors; the idea of post-military landscapes; and landscapes of peace and reconciliation, and it is to these I now turn.

Primarily evident in computer or video gaming, virtual military landscapes are a key site for the articulation of military landscape imaginaries. More traditional analytic approaches to landscape focused on representation and deconstruction continue to show their utility through their application to military-themed games (Höglund, 2008; Salter, 2011), whilst more recent critiques attentive to both production practices underpinning these virtual landscapes (Power, 2007), and the affectual and experiential engagement of gamers with these landscapes (Shaw and Warf, 2009; Dittmer, 2010; Shaw, 2010; Bos, in preparation), recognise the significance of gaming as both a social (leisure) practice and as a significant element within the military-industrial-media-entertainment complex. Given the mass appeal of gaming and its market share, the involvement of military advisors and the wealth of militarized

landscape imaginaries conjured up in the virtual, fictitious and not-so-fictitious worlds of wargaming, this would seem to be an area ripe with potential. Furthermore, the less-celebrated virtualities conjured through computer-generated imagery and incorporated within filmic and televisual portrayals of military pasts and presents would, too, seem to be a fruitful area for closer investigation for the functions they perform as representational tools. Consider, for example, the ways in which news media reports and the multiple television documentaries about the on-going war in Afghanistan use Google Earth overlays and graphics packages in combination to explain courses of action around specific encounters which simultaneously simplify and legitimate activities – and render possible such readings – from actions of confused, frightening and bloody violence. The cumulative effect of computer-generated imagery of the landscapes of contemporary warfare is an area for further investigation, less for the insights facilitated by these technologies of illustration and more for the effects and affects such readings enable.

A second area for future research emerges from a wider set of organisational changes within military forces around the outsourcing, privatisation and subcontracted management of military functions and territories. This is possibly the most significant development in the organisation and deployment of military power by advanced capitalist economies (particularly the US and UK) in the past twenty years. Although the emergence of private military and security companies is generating a substantial quantity of critical reflection about the wider geographical, political and economic implications of this shift in the control of militarised power from the state to non-state actors under neo-liberal governance regimes (see for

example Gallaher, 2012; Higate, 2013; Krahan, 2013), there has yet to be any substantial reflection as to what these changes bring to the landscapes in which they are performed and which they in turn constitute. Prosaic, unremarkable but highly necessary functions such as logistics and supply, and the servicing of the bodies of military personnel, are increasingly being outsourced and sub-contracted, changes accommodated within military spaces hitherto unadapted to the demands of the civilian economy (see, for example, Chandrasekaran, 2006). Examples include the visible changes brought to military bases, barracks and training areas by non-military enterprises and employees; the landscape impacts of civilian regimes of defence environment management; and the strange intertwining of civilian heritage management regimes and military operations, training and basing evident in parts of Britain's defence estate. The landscaping effects of these practices are unknown in the present, but given the present dominance of outsourcing models in the organisation of military capabilities, and given what we know about the distinctiveness of military privatisation, it is likely that such changes will be played out with visible landscape effects.

A third area concerns the landscaping practices of non-state military actors, not as outsourced operatives for governments, but as paramilitary actors operating against state-organised military forces in insurgency and revolutionary contexts. The vast majority of existing literature on military landscapes examines those brought about through the activities of state-organised military forces, and reflects both the focus of an Anglophone research community looking primarily back in time, and a focus primarily at activities in the global North by state actors. Yet paramilitary forces, in

terms of their organisation and emergence, fighting strategies and tactics, and geographically-constituted political understandings of the logics for military action are, just like state militaries, agents of landscape change and subjects of landscapes' works. Central questions here include how those effects are played out, how these effects might differ from state military action, and what those differences might mean for understanding paramilitary and non-state military violence. There is also an issue here concerning the possibilities for and limits to researcher engagement with actors who almost by definition work outside the structures of accountability and visibility inherent in the state-legitimated deployment of military force. This is to a very great extent a methodological issue, and I return to this in the next section.

A fourth area for further military landscapes research concerns post-military landscapes. Post-military landscapes are those without a military function in the present, but where the imprint of a former military function remains too pervasive to enable the erasure of their military origins. The redundant structures of Cold War defence across Europe and North America would be a prime example (see for example Havlick, 2007, 2011). Post-military landscapes arguably demand different interpretative frames which take as their starting point the continuity of military imprint despite the removal of military power and control, and require us to look to their present and future particularly when re-use is orientated towards tourism and heritage. In turn, this raises issues beyond the more immediate conclusions these sites enable us to draw concerning the longevity and endurance of military power as a landscaping agent. One concerns the functions of such sites as visitor attractions in contributing to narratives in the present about the meanings of national militarized



pasts. Cold War sites, for example, are increasingly wrapped in interpretative frameworks which portray nuclear weaponry and war as a feature of the past, with nuclear arsenals abandoned for a present of smart weaponry and discourses about the avoidance of collateral damage. It is interesting how many Cold War sites sustain a narrative suggestive of such ideas as part of broader heritage management regimes, although nuclear war has not been made safe by history, and nuclear weapons remain a threat. A second issue raised by post-military landscapes is that they point to the limits of attempts to establish appropriate narratives in sites of violence. Graham and McDowell's (2007) observations about the possibility of heritage management and site rehabilitation as a zero-sum game (made in the context of post-conflict Northern Ireland) are instructive here. Notwithstanding the observations below, there remain questions about the limits to the healing narratives of post-conflict resolution encapsulated in the interpretative frameworks through which many post-military sites are managed as heritage and history.

The fifth area for future research concerns the possibilities within military landscapes for resisting and countering hegemonic narratives about military power and authority. Edensor's (2005) observations about the potential of affective memory for countering hegemonic narratives around ruins and heritage are interesting to consider with reference to the potential for counter-hegemonic narratives in military heritage and ruins. Rose's (2006) arguments about landscape as 'a presence whose object-like appearance needs to be thought' (p.538) raises interesting possibilities for thinking through the understanding of military landscapes embodied and experienced by military personnel on active operations. Personnel

engage with landscape, but not necessarily in ways supportive of dominant military modes of understanding, and we should be alert to their small acts of resistance and the enactment of community and solidarity in the face of the power and authority of military institutions as this is played out across landscapes (Woodward and Jenkins, 2012). We can consider also the opportunities that the study of military landscapes offers for thinking through the moral ideologies expressed in these places and for considering how they might contribute to an ethics of peace, as Ahn (2010) suggests with reference to the Demilitarized Zone separating North and South Korea. Koopman's (2008) advocacy of the role of the scholar-activist in bearing witness to violence and violation at militarised sites is also pertinent. Following Williams and McConnell (2011) and Megoran (2011), how might landscapes be constitutive and expressive of peace?

### **[A] III Explorations of military landscapes and their contributions to military studies**

The study of military landscapes proceeds, then, through attention to a very great range of topics. Yet evident from the review above is the prevalence of certain foci in terms of the materialities and temporalities through which researchers engage with the topic, evident for example in the dominance of studies of memorial landscapes and of landscape reconstruction within the field. This is not explained solely by the disciplinary backgrounds of those engaged with military landscape research, although the field is informed significantly by those writing within the disciplinary traditions of environmental and military history, archaeology, historical and cultural geography and heritage studies.<sup>1</sup> There are two further issues at play.

The first of these concerns the possibilities for investigation of military landscape topics, in terms of access to sites, materials and people as research subjects; there are significant and serious access issues which shape the possibilities for research and which go some way to explaining why the body of military landscape research looks the way it does. The second concerns the intention and orientation of military landscape studies, many of which are concerned less with systemic understandings of militarism and militarisation and more with 'military' as a given, functional category. It is to these two issues that I now turn.

The exploration of landscapes is primarily an exercise in looking, in visual engagement and interaction (although this is not absolute – military landscapes are also soundscapes, as Cocroft and Wilson (2006) explain). The most commonly-used methods and techniques for looking at military landscapes are of course those deployed by military personnel themselves, to assess terrain in order to ascertain appropriate strategies and tactics for the deployment of military force (Woodward, 2004: 104-8). Yet there is scant literature on how, exactly, military readings of the landscape inform military practice, particularly fieldcraft. That said, some interesting observations drawing on contemporary military experience to understand Roman military strategies and tactics have been made with regards to a reading of the military landscape of Hadrian's Wall, in the north of present-day England (Corby, 2010). See also Robinson and Mills' (2012) examination of the observational practices of the Home Guard in Second World War Britain. We can also look to other disciplinary engagements with military praxis, such as Stanton's ethnographic study of how soldiers encounter, and are socialised by, the spaces of social activity

(Stanton, 1996), or Hockey's ethnography of young infantry personnel as they read and negotiate the landscapes of the training area, the barracks and operations (Hockey, 1986). In terms of military personnel's practices of looking at landscapes, we can also include interpretative practices of meaning-making through which personnel make sense of the landscapes in which they operate, in terms of the imaginations of home the war experience prompts (Hoffenberg, 2001; see also Farish, 2001, on the parallel experiences of war correspondents), and the ways in which these resonate in both personal memory and in shared regimental narratives (Brighton, 2004). But sustained analysis of how military personnel actually look at and interact with landscapes of operations is notable in its absence. This is primarily an access and experience issue – getting access to serving military personnel sufficient to draw conclusions about their landscape readings is difficult because of the nature of the work and the closed nature of military organisations. It is worth noting the military backgrounds of those who have written on this issue – Corby and Hockey both write as former soldiers, hence their insights into experiential engagements with landscape.

Because of the availability of archive sources, we know much more about how in organisational terms both military techniques and geographical methods for surveying landscapes developed through an intertwined history, and the mobilisation of geographers and geography for war efforts has been well documented (see Clout and Gosme, 2003; Farish, 2005; Barnes, 2006; Barnes and Farish, 2006; Rose and Clatworthy, 2007; Maddrell, 2008; Oldfield et al., 2011). The origins of the systematic mapping of Britain begin with military objectives following

the 1745 Jacobite uprising and state objectives of subduing internal dissent and establishing territorial control (Anderson, 2009; Hewitt, 2010). Aerial photography as a tool of landscape surveying was pioneered initially for military use during the First World War; O.G.S.Crawford learnt the technique whilst mobilised as a navigator in the Royal Flying Corps during the First World War (Hauser, 2008), and the techniques of camouflage which enabled fighting forces to blend into the landscape and elude visibility from above started to be developed during this time (Forsyth, 2012). J.K.St Joseph, the curator of the Cambridge University air photography collection, served during the Second World War as an air reconnaissance analyst (Muir, 1999). J.B.Jackson served as an intelligence officer with the US armed forces, making use of maps, aerial photographs and other sources of information about Europe ahead of the Allied advance. Jackson also recognised the environmental awareness developed by soldiers in the field in terms of their receptivity to the landscape (Jackson, 1980, in Pearson et al., 2010b). Techniques of air photo interpretation continue to be important for landscape investigation, as one of a number of remote sensing techniques, not least for the investigation of military sites (Masters and Stichelbaut, 2009; Crutchley, 2009). We can also consider mapping, to which a more critical gaze has been applied. The military applications of cartographic knowledge and techniques have been instrumental in facilitating war; see, for example, Fedman and Karacas' (2012) exploration of the utility of cartography and cartographers in the aerial bombing of Japan by US forces during the Second World War. The military origins of Geographical Information Systems are well known (Cloud, 2002). Technological developments in geospatial intelligence and mapping systems have been assessed through the lens of critical geopolitical

analysis to enable re-conceptualisation of the landscape of the city as 'eventful', as Gregory (2010b) describes with reference to US military activities in Baghdad. A related set of questions about military modes of seeing, of visibility, and of optics are also being addressed as geographers grapple with the complex relationships between visibility and geopolitics (see for example MacDonald, 2006; Campbell, 2007; Hughes, 2007; contributions to MacDonald et al., 2010). Although much of this work lies beyond the core concerns of landscape inquiries (although see Dunlop (2008) on visualities and the administrative and logistics landscapes of airpower), explorations of the co-constitutive nature of geopolitics and visibility extend what we might think of as military landscapes. A military complex of technological systems for surveillance, civilian monitoring and targeting turn otherwise civilian spaces into potential battlespaces through their anticipatory readings and assessment (Graham, 2010). Alongside the critique of the technologically enabled global military panopticon brought into being by the proliferation of high-resolution satellite imagery, there is also the possibility of resistance (Perkins and Dodge, 2009a and b).

Many military landscapes, though, are unseen or unseeable, and this issue of (in)visibility is critical in establishing the possibilities or otherwise of investigation. There is a simple issue of absence. For example, the absence of permanent or enduring marks on the ground from the women's peace camp at Greenham Common, Berkshire, outside the former USAF base means that there is little to indicate this particular facet of the history of the Cold War in Britain, and of feminist anti-nuclear protest in the 1980s (Schofield and Anderton, 2000), and this brings

danger in the form of too-partial accounts of activities when some may leave no trace (Schofield, 2009). There is a more complex issue of the resistances of sites to conformity with common modes of visibility; military sites can be heterotopic, resistant to monolithic readings despite the dominance of prevailing narratives, as Gough (2004b) shows with reference to the Lloyds/TSB memorial relocated to the National Memorial Arboretum in central England, or as Bavidge (2009) shows with reference to the civic war memorials of Newcastle upon Tyne. There is also the fact that some military landscapes, through their scale and substance, defy comprehension in their visibility; the Thiepval memorial to the dead of the First World War, as Gough (2007) notes, resists understanding because no image can capture its weight, its scale, or the sheer quantity of names inscribed upon it. Some sites seem to inoculate us against attention, local war memorials being a case in point because they are just there (Benton-Short, 2008). There is also the simultaneously prosaic and profound issue at the heart of visually-driven explorations of military landscapes, which is their secrecy and inaccessibility from view. In an inversion of military acts of fieldcraft, reconnaissance and surveillance, studying military landscapes through visual means requires dedication, exertion, and the use of the assistive technologies of enhanced seeing (Paglen, 2006) to reveal what is otherwise unseen, and what may not officially exist (Paglen, 2009), an act of probing the limits of what is knowable (Stallabrass, 2011; Flintham, 2012). To be seen to be looking at what may (or may not) be a military landscape can constitute for military authorities a suspicious activity with devastating consequences for the fieldworker (Falah, 2007). Studying military landscapes can be very dangerous.

Fieldwork under fire, anyone?

But researchers of military landscapes persist, and access permits a more-than-visual mode of exploration. 'Walk with me on Orford Ness' invites Davis (2008: 143) as she takes us through the uncanny, otherworldly landscapes of the former ballistics testing range perched on the rim of East Anglia. Sidaway (2009) invites us to share his walk along a section of the South West Coastal Path, through the urban landscapes of militarised Plymouth where 'the repercussions of military violence are folded into the texture of everyday urban life, where we are touched by multiple and overlapping tragedies operating at different scales and intensified in different sites' (Sidaway, 2009: 1094). 'Just observe, engage, and think', recommend Harrison and Schofield (2010: 7), advocating fieldwork of the contemporary past through the experience and encounter with spaces. And although the motivations and demands of soldiering and fieldwalking are very different, just occasionally commonalities emerge. Infantry personnel 'switch on' as they proceed to patrol (Hockey, 2009), an embodied sensory experience, landscape phenomenology in practice. Walking on military landscapes, a popular tourist practice of sensory engagement, has parallels too in the soldiers' deployment and patrol, as Stein (2008) notes with reference to Israeli personnel in the occupied territories making sense of their location through the tourist gaze (see also Woodward et al., 2010). Being in military landscapes is affectual, emotional, and whilst we can be lulled by the safety of civilian passage through military spaces as fieldworkers, this is a privilege accorded to few. Military landscapes can be terrifying for those caught up in bombing and blitz (Sebald, 1999; Woodward, 2007), and anticipatory affects are integral to the politics of fear at the heart of current regimes of war on terror (Anderson, 2010).



How we look at military landscapes provokes interesting questions about the limits of possible knowledge of these landscapes. More phenomenological and post-phenomenological approaches to landscape have established the validity of the singular, individual, personal experience at the core of explorations of the sensual and affective constitution of landscape – but by particular types of visitors. There is an open question as to the possibility of fully understanding something like military personnel’s readings of landscape in the absence (with a couple of notable exceptions) of informed understanding by civilian researchers of what ethnomethodologists would term ‘members’ methods’ and the development of professional vision. Established epistemologies for the reading of landscapes as texts have in turn prompted a wealth of studies – of particular types of military landscapes. There is a question here about how the practicalities and limits of access to a wider range of sites (or information about such sites) in effect shapes what we understand military landscapes to be. The dominance already noted of military memorial landscapes within the literature may be explained (as indicated) by the demands of the landscapes themselves, but it is also entirely possible that the ready accessibility of such sites opens them up for study in ways that other landscapes deny. We know about that which access allows us to know. That access may be granted, to varying degrees, and the boundaries of possibility are pushed by some as acts of resistance to the formal controls over space exerted by military institutions. But more often access is restricted, very limited, or is simply not possible (or possibly even ethical). What we understand military landscapes to be, and how we chose to look at them, are shaped quite fundamentally by the fact that

these landscapes involve engagement with state capacities for the execution of lethal violence; the very nature of military landscapes shapes how they might be investigated.

These practices associated with the exploration of military landscapes are of wider significance, not just for the knowledge they generate about what military landscapes are and for the insights they bring to wider debates about methods in military and landscape research. In prioritising the visual and the experiential, and in focusing so directly on 'military' as a social rather than just a functional category, there is much indicated in current military landscape studies which indicates their utility (and the utility of conceptualisations of landscape more broadly) in unpacking the category of 'military'. This contribution is of great potential significance to wider military studies within social science. 'Critical military studies' is a term being used, increasingly, to describe scholarship on military, defence and security issues (the terms are not conflated) which prioritises an understanding of military processes and practices as the outcome of social life and political contestation, rather than as a given, functional category. Drawing to a significant degree on a conceptualisation of militarism as simultaneously discursive, ideological and material (Lutz, 2002; Woodward, 2004, 2005; Gusterson, 2007; Higate and Henry, 2009; Basham, 2013), critical military studies is necessarily interdisciplinary, examining military practices and institutions within their political, social, economic and cultural contexts, informed by a range of methodological approaches and underpinned by conceptual and analytic frameworks which question the nature, effects and significance of military organisation and armed force, and of militarism and militarisation. It has

emerged in response to the limitations (conceptual, empirical, political) of more traditional scholarship of the military with its focus on the efficiencies of military actors and actions and on the possibility of greater democratic oversight of state violence (Basham, 2012; Belkin, 2011, 2012; see also Barkawi and Brighton, 2011). There are clear parallels here with the emergence of a critical military geography as a reaction to the underpinning assumptions marking a more traditional military geography assistive to military power and priorities (Woodward, 2005).

Analyses of landscape issues are starting to make a contribution to the wider critical military studies project – see, for example, the work of Farish or Graham, already cited, exploring how military priorities, objectives and understandings have shaped urban and regional planning. The key insight brought to critical military studies from a perspective of landscape is to show how military power is spatially and temporally constituted. Following Mitchell (2003, 2005), to see military power at work in a landscape requires attention not only to the landscape in and of itself with attention to its symbols and metaphors, but also to the social relations which make possible a military landscape's ability to function in support of a range of exclusionary, oppressive and violent social practices associated with ideologies of militarism. The study of landscape brings to critical military studies an appreciation of the textured, spatialised, placed, experiential and embodied nature of militarism and militarisation, its origins and its consequences made visible and tangible. It grounds – quite literally – the insights of critical military studies about the contradictory nature of militarism and militarisation, and makes visible the endless stabilisation and reinforcement strategies of military power as it seeks to cope with its inherent

contradictions. It raises questions of temporality, of the reach of military power across time (environmental change, memorial practices, and the celebration of redundant sites as heritage are examples), and of the repetition of militarising practices across space and time.<sup>2</sup> It also raises questions of scale and connectivity between local individual sites, sub-national or regional practices of defence, and national military and defence policies, all within the context of global geopolitical relations (Strange and Walley, 2007). As Davis (2011) notes with reference to Bikini Atoll in the Pacific, the global geography of the US military cannot be understood without looking more closely at the local sites where the global apparatus of military power 'touches the ground' (p.215), and studying phenomena at one scale necessarily requires that attention is given to processes at other scales. The potential force of emergent agendas for military landscape studies outlined above lies with their abilities to capture the experiential, spatial and scalar phenomena and relations through which such landscapes are constituted, and a wider contribution to the development of a more critical approach to studies of the military.

#### **[A] IV The specificity of military in military landscape studies**

Why do we have to look at *military* landscapes? Earlier and in passing, it was noted that the terminologies of 'military' and 'security' are increasingly used interchangeably. The issue of terminological and conceptual utility has been prompted by doubts about the analytic purchase of the terminologies of militarism and militarisation, and the advocacy of their replacement with the terminologies and concepts of security, securitism and securitisation on grounds of overlap, extension, scale and analytic potential (Bernazolli and Flint, 2009). At first sight, there is a

certain appeal to this argument that securitization 'allows for a broader range of actors and arenas, as it does not limit the scholar to exclusive consideration of the formal military institution' (p.450). The terminologies of security and securitisation are certainly pervasive and popular within both public and academic discourse to denote the ever-expanding efforts of certain states to exert control, materially, virtually and biopolitically.

But we should be cautious about abandoning too hastily the terminologies of militarism with reference to the types of landscape under consideration here. The language of security and securitization is the language of fear and threat beyond the visibility of the military, and the definition of issues as security problems can conflate issues and legitimise reactions in ways that are problematic for public accountability (Mawdsley, 2012). We should be alert to the efficiency of the neoliberal state in effecting new methods for deploying armed force internally and externally, and the associated practices which legitimize such actions in order to secure neoliberal state interests (Giroux, 2004), and the renaming of 'military' as 'security' is part of this. Bernazzoli and Flint argue that 'militarization stresses the military as a primary actor and thus poses the danger of obscuring the larger, more overarching upheavals ... of which it is but one part' (2009: 450), drawing on Cowen and Smith's (2009) arguments about the replacement of the geopolitical social with the geoeconomic as an organising principle for understanding the broader effects of the neoliberal state. Evidence for this new way of thinking and its effects is found in the case of the private security industry as a source of armed power ostensibly external to the state. Yet as Leander (2005) argues, what the private security industry does above all else

is empower a more military understanding of security. The geoeconomic 21<sup>st</sup> century rests just as firmly on state-sanctioned military capability as did the older geopolitical orders of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The military remains a primary actor.

There is a danger, too, that the critical insights of scholars of security – whose work has been instrumental in outlining the political consequences of the rise of securitism and the security state – get lost in the subsumation of military within security. Long-running debates about the framing and conceptualisation of ‘security’ (see CASE collective, 2006) involve, for example, questions about the emergence of human security as a focus of inquiry from pre-existing state security debates, and the failures of this paradigm shift to produce the changes advocated by critical scholarship (Christie, 2010). Also, security studies has experienced a splintering and reconfiguration of its analytic gaze when faced with issues such as food security (Shepherd, 2012) and energy security (Cuită, 2010). The categories of ‘military’ and ‘security’, ‘militarism’ and ‘securitism’, ‘militarisation’ and ‘securitisation’ are distinct, and the benefits of marking the distinctions (and thus the pervasive march of securitisation) outweigh the convenience of lumping these terms together.

There is an argument here too about the inadvisability of retro-fitting a contemporary terminology and conceptualisation (security) onto past wars and practices of militarisation, or present wars which are, quite simply, military armed conflicts, because of what we would lose in terms of analysis and understanding. The battlefields of the First World War and the observation sangers of Helmand province in Afghanistan are not security landscapes. They are military landscapes

because they are about the state-sanctioned use of lethal force for political objectives. Furthermore, it is the specificity of military violence, precisely because of its state-sanctioned origins, which leads to particular landscape effects (and indeed affects), and this is a necessary and legitimate central focus of inquiry. We should not temper the analytic tools we have to study these phenomena.

A key argument mobilised in favour of the use of the terminologies of security over military is that raised about a 'false binary', given that 'the language of militarisation problematically implies separate civilian and military spheres' (Bernazzoli and Flint, 2009: 449). This, in their view, neither reflects an observable reality whereby military and civilian activities are intertwined, nor assists with understanding military activities and their effects. Whilst this argument might have initial appeal (the privatisation and sub-contracting of military functions to the extent that they may look civilian is illustrative here), the notion of the binary as false and obfuscatory misses the point about what binaries are, and what they do. Binaries, such as oppositions between military/civilian and military/society, are better understood as discursive constructions used strategically and tactically to bring categories such as 'military' and 'civilian' into being (Woodward and Winter, 2007, see also Loyd, 2011). Such binaries are necessary (organisationally, pragmatically, politically) for those charged by the state with executing lethal violence, and necessary for the imagination of structures of democratic oversight within the liberal state. The really interesting question is not whether such binaries are 'true' or 'false', but rather their effects – how such binaries are constructed by the state and mobilised across time and space. This is a significant issue for the study of military landscapes, because

one of the most intriguing questions about such landscapes is the extent to which they are (or are not) seen, portrayed, understood and experienced as 'military' or 'civilian'. This is an empirical question which lies at the heart of what military landscapes might be. To illustrate, consider the 'militarisation' of the 'civilian' high street of the market town of Royal Wootton Bassett in Wiltshire through the passage of hearses bearing the bodies of British Afghanistan war dead, and the function of this temporary ritual in legitimizing loss of life (see Jenkins et al., 2012). Consider, alternatively, how landscapes bearing the imprint of now-obsolete military infrastructures, such as the 'coastal crust' fortifications of the Second World War around Britain, continue to assert these places as contributors to the war effort and thus militarise these spaces in the present despite their total obsolescence in military terms. The point of looking at landscapes such as this is not only to describe and explain them, but also to use them to ask more abstract questions about how the categories of military and civilian come to be defined in opposition or conjunction with each other, in different times and places, and whether (or not) these conjunctions then raise questions about the legitimacy or otherwise of the state pursuit of armed violence.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that military landscapes invite also the attention of travel writers and journalists, poets and novelists, film-makers and photographers, and visual and sound artists (see Gregory, 2010a; Woodward, 2010; Ingram, 2011; Flintham, 2012).

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<sup>2</sup> Consider, for example, W.G. Hoskins' oft-quoted lament for a certain type of English rurality bearing the imprints of the Cold War: 'What else has happened in the immemorial landscape of the English countryside? Airfields have flayed it bare wherever there are level, well-drained stretches of land, above all in eastern England. Poor devastated Lincolnshire and Suffolk! And those long gentle lines of the dip-slope of the Cotswolds, those misty uplands of the sheep-grey oolite, how they have lent themselves to the villainous requirements of the new age! Over them drones, day after day, the obscene shape of the atom-bomber, laying a trail like a filthy slug upon Constable's and Gainsborough's sky. England of the Nissen hut, the 'pre-fab', and the electric fence, of the high barbed wire around some unmentionable devilment; England of the arterial by-pass, treeless and stinking of diesel oil, murderous with lorries; England of the Otmoor of the marshlands of Lincolnshire; England of battle-training areas on the Breckland heaths, and tanks crashing through empty ruined Wiltshire villages; England of high explosives falling upon the prehistoric monuments of Dartmoor. Barbaric England of the scientists, the military men, and the politicians; let us turn away and contemplate the past before all is lost to the vandals' (Hoskins, 1985: 299). Hoskins' lament could sustain the substitution of England's place-names for those of contemporary war-marked Iraq or Afghanistan.