Working at the Source: An Interview with David Zierler, Historian, U.S. Department of State

By Silke Zoller (Ph.D. Candidate, Temple University)

This semester, Thomas Davis Fellow Silke Zoller had the pleasure of conducting an email interview with David Zierler, former Thomas Davis fellow, Temple Ph.D., and currently a historian working at the U.S. Department of State.

What does your job entail as a historian for the U.S. Department of State?

I work on our country’s official diplomatic history, a documentary series called Foreign Relations of the United States, or FRUS, in the Office of the Historian. In continuous publication since 1861, FRUS is organized by presidential administration, and within that administration, by region or topic. Historians who edit FRUS volumes have security clearances allowing them access to a wide range of U.S. documentary archives. Our job is to find the best documents on a given subject, organize them into a coherent narrative, and annotate them in ways that enhance the reader’s understanding of the issues. The manuscript then goes through a two-step review process after which it is submitted for declassification clearance from the various government agencies with an interest (or “equity”) in the documents. Although there is no such thing as “objective history,” I like to think of FRUS as raw, unedited history. Unlike memoirs or journalistic history, with their inherent biases, these documents provide the best lens to understand the most important foreign policy decisions made by U.S. officials in real time. FRUS volumes are frequently the foundation from which academic historians draw for their scholarly work. They are also a primary source for citizens who live in undemocratic countries to learn about their own government.

What is your current project?


How long do you expect to be working on these projects? How many documents will you look at, and how many of those will (on average) find their way into the FRUS volume?

An average FRUS volume is between 1,000-1,500 pages, distilled from the best documents among upwards of 20,000 pages that we collect from the various archives. Because of the complexity various classification issues relating to both of these topics, the Afghanistan and Iran-Contra volumes will be my main work for at least the next two or three years. It’s like a doctoral dissertation all over again!

What are the sources that you are currently working with?

FRUS historians generally rely on documentation housed in the following repositories: the National Archives; presidential libraries, CIA archives, Department of Defense Archives, and Department of State archives. Certain specialized volumes include documents from other government entities, such as the Drug Enforcement Agency or the Department of Agriculture. To be eligible for consideration in the very valuable real estate that is a FRUS volume, any given document must demonstrate that it is integral to understanding the process by which U.S. officials, from a desk officer at the State Department, all the way to the president, strategize and implement foreign policy.

What is the most interesting aspect of your work?

The U.S. government clearance system operates on a “need to know basis,” which means that a Top Secret clearance does not automatically grant the person holding it access to any and all documentation at or below that classification level. As a historian for the State Department, I have a “need to know” on a specific topic which grants me access to classified material throughout the U.S. government, which is a very unique privilege and responsibility. Because historians generally work alone on their volumes, over the course of a two or three year period, we become experts on an area or issue that is truly unparalleled. So that’s a thrill. Also, our colleagues in other parts of the State Department will often draw on our expertise so they can learn about a certain historical issue to aid their current work. In my office, the “relevance“ of history is hardly a theoretical concept.

How do issues of censorship affect your work?

People are often incredulous that documents twenty-five or thirty years old actually need to go through a clearance process – what could possibly be in there that is so sensitive it should remain classified? Well, you would be surprised. Thanks to the dedicated work of our declassification team, working in coordination with their counterparts in other agencies, our office is able to declassify and publish the vast majority of documents which we want included in a given volume. But some documents contain information that, if released, really would be harmful to the interests of the U.S. government or its allies. Generally we work to open up as much material as possible, but sometimes there are issues that must remain redacted for the foreseeable future.

What advice would you offer historians, based on your experience?

I would say that most people enrolled in a graduate history program would expect to teach after graduation. I certainly did. But when I was presented with this opportunity – as a diplomatic historian working on the Cold War – I could not pass it up. And my work is even more rewarding and fascinating today than it was when I started six years ago. Given the ongoing
challenges of the academic job market, I would encourage all budding historians to think outside the academy. A historian’s perspective is valuable in a wide range of government, corporate, and institutional entities. And if your scholarship is driven by a research question that you are generally passionate about, the quality of your work will undoubtedly pique the interest of a wide variety of employers.

Many thanks to Dr. Zierler for his valued insights!

Germany, American Studies, and the Cold War
By Sarah Robey (Ph.D. Candidate, Temple University)

In October 2014, I moved to Germany to teach for a year at the University of Tübingen. Tübingen is a hilly medieval town just south of Stuttgart. The oldest parts of city are defined by market squares, narrow cobblestone streets, tiny aqueducts, and Fachwerkhäuser, the iconic half-timbered German building type. From my office window, I can see Tübingen’s Schloss, its castle. For an American Midwesterner who has lived on the East Coast for over a decade, it feels a lot like living in a fairy tale.

But as many expatriates might tell you, living abroad demands flexibility, humility, and patience. I would add to that list a willingness to learn. I am amazed by the complexities of Germany’s regional cultures, learning early on not to mistake Swabian for Bavarian. The idiosyncrasies of the university system here continue to mystify me, but my colleagues generously put up with my endless questions. My language skills improve at a glacial pace. On the bright side, I am now fluent in pantomime. Despite occasional frustrations, living in Germany challenges and inspires me, and there is still a lot to learn. In the best possible way, I feel like a foreigner here.

As a historian teaching in an American Studies department, I am also a disciplinary foreigner. American Studies, or Amerikanistik, is a hybrid discipline, blending cultural studies, literary analysis, history, and theory, generally united under the study of the United States. But even this simple explanation is contested. I participated in a workshop at the Heidelberg Center for American Studies in March 2015, where a room full of advanced doctoral students and faculty had trouble arriving at a concise definition, even after hours of deliberation. Was American Studies the sum of its parts or an entity unto itself?

It is a question that stuck with me long after leaving the workshop. Like any good historian, I looked to the discipline’s past to try to understand its present. I was surprised to find that the Cold War undergirds this whole story.

In the United States, American Studies grew in tandem with a massive postwar expansion of the university system. The influx of college students in the 1950s and 1960s created a need for more professors, programs of study, and classroom space. American universities thrived on Cold War federal funding through the G. I. Bill, defense contracts, and other research programs.

In Europe, American Studies came of age in a Cold War context as well. As Richard Pells explained in 1997’s Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture Since World War II, European American Studies programs grew out of the United States’ influence in Europe after World War II. In West Germany, in particular, the physical presence of thousands of American troops created a demand for English-language programs of study. Likewise, occupation promoted an increased scholarly interest in American history and culture, one that Pells argued did not exist in mainstream European academia before the war.

By the late 1940s, the State Department recognized American Studies as an opportunity to promote American values throughout the world. In addition to providing Marshall Plan dollars, the U.S. state funded the Fulbright Program, designed to facilitate international academic exchange. Private grants from the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations and scholarly interest from American universities also enabled hundreds of American scholars to teach in Europe in the postwar years. This bolstered existing American Studies programs in Europe and encouraged the establishment of many more. In its formative years, American Studies was a product of complex transnational exchange, long before transnational became an academic buzzword.

Decades later, American Studies no longer bears the ideological weight of the Cold War. The Americanists’ arsenal of critical theoretical tools quickly revealed the conflict between the needs of the state and intellectual freedom. Although American Studies grew in Europe under the veil of American celebratory nationalism, much of its scholarship now constitutes thoughtful critiques of American culture.

The Cold War roots of Amerikanistik touch on my own research, if only tangentially. However, I am now aware that my position as an instructor in Germany is deeply rooted in them. Teaching Amerikanistik in Germany demands that I acknowledge its intellectual lineage and address it critically. It is a topic that I enjoy discussing with my students, many of whom routinely field the question, “why study Amerikanistik in Germany?”

And what can this short history teach us about the disciplinary ambiguity that my colleagues and I struggled with in Heidelberg? As disciplines, history and Amerikanistik come from different pasts, the former embedded in an older model of university education, the latter a product of the changing dynamics of a globalizing world. As young scholars, my peers and I are required to define ourselves by our discipline. Among other things, it gives us methodological guidelines for our research and helps us position ourselves for the job market. But there are clear benefits to working between the lines. Since embarking on my dissertation project, I have repeatedly found myself in the liminal space between fields, making a balancing act out of cultural history and political history, public history and “academic” history, American history and Amerikanistik. It is not easy: sometimes it pushes me into foreign places. But like living in Germany, it challenges and stretches me, and ultimately, my work is better for it.

1 A robust literature has emerged on these topics over the last few years. See, for example, Andrew Jewett, Science, Democracy, and the American University: From the Civil War to the Cold War (New York, Oxford University Press, 2012); Christopher Loss, Between Citizens and the State: The Politics of Higher Education in the Twentieth Century (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); Mark Solovey, Shaky Foundations: The Politics-Patronage-Social Science Nexus in Cold War America (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2013).
Barnato put an end, as far as was possible, to the chaotic and monopoly under Cecil Rhodes and Barney Barnato. Rhodes and life and labor in the mines with the narrative of De Beers. possible. He artfully intersperses details about the conditions of foreign laborers who made the early diamond mining operations ties to European colonial states. While Cleveland is primarily by the establishment of a systematic mining monopoly with close appropriation of land and exploitation of native labor, followed throughout the continent with successive discoveries of diamond deposits: a chaotic rush characterized by rampant, often violent appropriation of land and exploitation of native labor, followed by the establishment of a systematic mining monopoly with close ties to European colonial states. While Cleveland is primarily concerned with documenting the emergence of the De Beers monopoly, he does not neglect the thousands of native and foreign laborers who made the early diamond mining operations possible. He artfully intersperses details about the conditions of life and labor in the mines with the narrative of De Beers.

Chapter four documents the growth of the De Beers monopoly under Cecil Rhodes and Barney Barnato. Rhodes and Barnato put an end, as far as was possible, to the chaotic and informal conditions that prevailed in the early Kimberley mines. Cleveland might have done more here to document the brutal labor control regime established by De Beers in its South African facilities, but by making this chapter so brief he successfully avoids rendering his book too South Africa-centric. Chapters four and five concern the discovery of diamonds beyond South Africa, with particular attention paid to the Belgian Congo, Angola, and Gold Coast. Cleveland reveals struggles over the control of labor and resources that are similar to those that had unfolded earlier in South Africa. Diamond mining proceeded from an initial period of “Wild West” chaos, to a systematically brutal period of consolidation under a colonial monopoly, to a milder period with regard to labor control as colonial monopolies reckoned with the demands of laborers and their own desire for an efficient and tractable workforce. Chapter 5 provides a particularly strong assessment of African laborers’ motivations for seeking mine work and their strategies for improving the quality of life in the mining camps.

Next, Cleveland proceeds to the postcolonial era, where he unpacks the prevailing narrative of African failure and chaos in the period of national independence. Postcolonial conditions, Cleveland concedes, did in some places give rise to the phenomenon of the conflict, or “blood,” diamond, but this development was not universal. Why and how did diamonds become such a potent factor in political turmoil in African nations such as Angola and Sierra Leone? Environmental factors played a role. Regions with more easily accessible alluvial diamond deposits, and therefore lower barriers of entry to the diamond business, were more prone to diamond-funded conflict. Political factors also played a part. Mining in Sierra Leone and Angola commenced in the early twentieth century and fell under the sway of colonial monopolies prior to independence. With decolonization these stable monopolies came to an end, and security and labor control often vanished along with them. Cleveland is careful to stress, however, that diamonds did not inexorably fuel conflict, and Chapter eight documents the diamond success stories of Namibia and Botswana. In these nations, diamond mining remained under tight control of democratic states, which distributed mining wealth more equitably than in other parts of Africa.

Cleveland’s final chapters on diamond mining after decolonization are likely to give rise to heated debate. The brevity of Stones of Contention does not allow for a more thorough discussion of the problems of postcolonial states. Still, it would have been fruitful had Cleveland paid more attention to deeper trends in African history and their effects on contemporary diamond mining. For example, many of the countries Cleveland identifies as sources of conflict diamonds, Angola and Sierra Leone, in particular, were deeply affected by the Atlantic Slave Trade. Unfree labor and ill-gotten wealth are central to modern African history, not just its most recent sixty years. Still, these deficiencies are minor in comparison with Cleveland’s larger success in rendering African history relevant to contemporary global affairs.

Taking its title from a Colin Powell analogy about his time in West Germany in the late 1950s, Maria Höhn and Martin Klimke’s *A Breath of Freedom* is a transnational history of the African-American civil rights movement, emphasizing the impact of African-American soldiers stationed in Germany on that movement. Many African-American soldiers echoed Powell’s sentiment that life in West Germany felt like a “breath of freedom” because of the ability, when off base, to experience a society without legal or informal color lines. Additionally, Höhn and Klimke argue that the experiences of African-American soldiers in Germany and the American military presence there were fundamentally important to the civil rights movement. Using oral histories, military records, newspapers, photographs, and speeches, Höhn and Klimke show that life in Germany inspired many African-American GIs to more forcefully demand their rights as Americans when they returned home. The authors also demonstrate how the use of a segregated army to denazify Germany and educate its people about democracy awoke many Americans to the hypocrisy inherent in America’s treatment of African Americans.

Höhn and Klimke open with a brief overview of W. E. B. Du Bois’ experiences in Germany in the 1890s and African American soldiers’ experiences in Europe during World War I. The meat of their book, however, focuses on post-World War II interactions between Germans and African Americans, and how those interactions shaped the civil rights movement. Returning World War II veterans spoke of having a taste of freedom in Europe, of finally being treated like men there, and of realizing that the fight against Nazism only made them more certain that fighting against racism at home was the right thing to do.

As Höhn and Klimke state at the beginning of chapter three, “America’s occupation and reeducation of Germany (1945-1949) would prove to be a tremendous boost to the civil rights movement. During these years, activists were able to enunciate and clarify their message as never before.” In many ways, the occupation of Germany exposed the limits of American democracy, as the military’s use of segregated units and the poor treatment of African-American soldiers in the army were hard to miss. These limits were illuminated in African-American press articles on soldiers’ lives in Germany, eventually influencing racially progressive whites who at last realized that racism was a national, not exclusively southern, problem. Although Germany was not void of racism, either homegrown or imported from America, press reports revealed how much more freedom African-American GIs had in Germany than at home. Höhn and Klimke also show that the Cold War forced American policymakers to support the civil rights movement in order to limit Soviet propaganda about America’s mistreatment of its racial minorities. Höhn and Klimke conclude the first phase of their book with an examination of the role Germany played in President Truman’s decision to desegregate the military, and how and when desegregation actually came to the almost 300,000 American troops stationed in West Germany.

Beginning in chapter five, Höhn and Klimke move into their second phase as they shift away from interactions between African-American GIs and Germans, into an examination of the interactions between African-American civil rights leaders, Germans, and their governments. Chapter five examines Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s 1964 visit to Germany. While there, King preached in churches on both sides of the Berlin Wall. Höhn and Klimke use King’s visit to demonstrate how closely citizens of both Germanys followed the civil rights movement. This flows well into chapter six, exploring how America, the Black Power Movement, and American student radicalism influenced German student radicals of the 1960s. Chapter seven focuses on how the civil rights movement was interpreted in East Germany as part of a global class struggle, and how the East German government spearheaded solidarity efforts with indicted Black Power activist Angela Davis. It also examines how, in West Germany, student radicals were responsible for solidarity campaigns with Black Power leaders.

In many ways, chapter eight brings together the two phases of *A Breath of Freedom* by examining the interactions between German student radicals and African-American soldiers in the 1960s and 1970s. The cost of the Vietnam War in terms of men and materials on the U.S. Army in Germany led to tension within the ranks. That tension, along with many African-American soldiers’ refusal to accept the indignities of a racist army, led to an alliance between those soldiers and German radicals. That alliance ultimately forced both the government in Bonn and the U.S. Army to enact policies to ensure that a more just and less racist career and life could be led by African-American soldiers in Germany.

Höhn and Klimke consciously lay out a roadmap for future research and call on other scholars to examine the impact of the African-American Civil Rights Movement in other countries, particularly ones with a significant U.S. Army presence. The authors also want *A Breath of Freedom* to be a part of a larger analysis of the ways in which having military bases abroad during the Cold War impacted America domestically. *A Breath of Freedom* is an excellent first step in this mission and along with its accompanying website (www.breatheoffreedom.org), and the documentary based on the book (“Breath of Freedom” [2014]) should have a place in many graduate and undergraduate classrooms.

* Dr. Höhn presented a viewing of the documentary based on this book at a CENFAD colloquium on February 18, 2015.


By Larry Kessler (Ph.D. Candidate, Temple University)

In 1864, a Union Army colonel named John M. Chivington led two Colorado volunteer regiments in an attack on a group of peaceful Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians who were encamped along Sand Creek and under the protection of the United States. Chivington’s men killed more than 150 Native people at Sand Creek, mostly women and children. The contest to define what happened at Sand Creek began almost immediately after the fighting. Chivington, ambitious and proud, insisted the regiments fought valorously against hostile and savage Natives. Captain Silas Soule of the First Colorado Cavalry, who refused to order the men under his command to fire on the fleeing Indians, successfully requested a federal investigation into the incident. George Bent, a survivor of the Sand Creek massacre, not only decried Chivington’s actions as criminal, but blamed the massacre as a catalyst for the transformation of the Cheyenne
from a peaceful and prosperous tribe to a violent and impoverished one. The struggle over remembering what happened at Sand Creek continued through the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, and is the subject of Ari Kelman’s *A Misplaced Massacre*. In 1997, the National Park Service (NPS) launched an effort to establish a National Historic Site at the massacre site, but, according to Kelman, the creation of the historic site was “as likely to tear scabs from old wounds as to heal them.”

Using “the historic site’s creation as the book’s spine,” Kelman defies chronology and intermittently bounces to an examination of the massacre itself or episodes of later struggles over the massacre’s memory. Kelman documents the opposing perspectives and interests and the deep-seated distrust that have caused contention among descendants of victims and survivors, local white residents, and the federal government as they negotiated the memorialization of the Sand Creek massacre. Accordingly, Kelman has departed from his interest in nineteenth-century history and turned from the archives to oral histories. Transcripts of these oral histories are now housed in the Western Archaeological and Conservation Center in Tucson. Hopefully these transcripts will provide a useful resource for others interested in Native American history, the history and memory of violence, and the history of the West.

One of the book’s most compelling aspects is the way it repositions the Civil War in the context of American expansion and the struggle for an American continental empire. Kelman argues, “for the Native people gazing east from the banks of Sand Creek, the Civil War, looked like a war of empire, a contest to control expansion into the West, rather than a war of liberation. The massacre, then, should be recalled as part of both the Civil War and the Indian Wars, a bloody link between interrelated chapters of the nation’s history.” Anglo-American conquest of the West and its Indigenous peoples did not stop for the Civil War. Westward expansion was both an antecedent to the Civil War (as Amy Greenberg argued in *A Wicked War*) and result of that conflict (as Heather Cox Richardson argued in *West from Appomattox*). Kelman effectively demonstrates how memory of the Civil War and the Indian Wars informed each other, and how both have shaped the modern West.

In weaving together the recent history of the Sand Creek Massacre Historic Site with the history of the massacre itself, Kelman illustrates the fact that the past is subject to perpetual reinterpretation. The Civil War Era has provided much fodder for historians of memory, and in this regard Kelman’s work can join books such as David Blight’s *Race and Reunion* and Tony Horwitz’s *Confederates in the Attic*. *A Misplaced Massacre* also adds to works on violence in the nineteenth century such as Drew Gilpin Faust’s *This Republic of Suffering* and Karl Jacoby’s *Shadows at Dawn*. Most significantly, Kelman adds greater substance and nuance to Patricia Nelson Limerick’s *The Legacy of Conquest*. The struggle over the memory of Sand Creek, Kelman suggests, is the true legacy of conquest: “Time and again, the process [of memorializing the Sand Creek massacre] nearly blew up because the United States is a nation of nations; because the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes are sovereign political entities, distinct cultures with unique understandings of the past; and because residents of Kiowa County have their own perspectives on history, shaped by their own political interests and by features of their own community, which often diverge from the federal government’s or from Native peoples.”

*A Misplaced Massacre*—or parts of it, at least—can find a place in several undergraduate and graduate classrooms. This book provides an instructive study of the intersection of memory and history, and can help students learn the fundamental lesson that creating a narrative of history from the mayhem of past events is a process of careful analysis and negotiation. Classes on Civil War history can benefit from the way Kelman exposes the blurry line between the conflict between Union and Confederacy, and the Indian Wars that took place in the West. Placing this book in conversation with one of the many works on memory and the Civil War might also help students examine the process of nation building in the wake of that conflict. Military historians more generally might be interested in using this book to teach how memory is notoriously unreliable in warfare, and that interpretations of violence require close scrutiny. Courses on the American West will find this book to be a useful resource for examining power and conflict in the settler-colonial paradigm of American westward expansion. Finally, courses on public history can gain much through this book’s detailed account of the creation of a contentious National Historic Site.

---


By Jean-Pierre Beugoms (Ph.D. Candidate, Temple University)

Paul Kennedy, Dilworth Professor of History and director of the International Security Studies Program at Yale University, has written or edited twenty books about global politics and grand strategy. In *Engineers of Victory*, Kennedy presents an operational military history of the Second World War. He sets the scene at the Casablanca Conference (January 14–23, 1943), where President Franklin Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill decided to pursue the unconditional surrender of the Axis powers. He argues that they, together with Joseph Stalin, faced “five separate though interconnected challenges” that had to be overcome if the Allies were to win the war. These challenges included escorting convoys along Atlantic sea-lanes infested with German U-boats; clearing the skies over Europe of Luftwaffe fighters; arresting the advance of the panzer divisions in North Africa and on the Eastern Front; and landing on the well-defended coastlines of Western Europe and the Pacific. The subject of this book is how the middle-level officers and civilians—i.e., the managers, planners, designers, and scientists—found solutions to all of these problems in the short span of eighteen months.

Kennedy analyzes the mechanics of land, naval, aerial, and amphibious warfare in great detail, and argues that the cumulative effect of a series of incremental technological changes was decisive. He suggests that Great Britain and the United States won the race to develop new technology because of their
“military-political culture,” which encouraged innovation, and because both nations produced a lot of men with the mindset of “tweakers.” Kennedy’s argument, fortunately, never lapses into technological determinism. A weapons system can only be effective, he points out, if there is a trained crew to man it, the fuel to run it, and the infrastructure on which to deploy it. Addressing the importance of contingency, Kennedy relates the story of how test pilot Ronnie Harker and mathematician Witold Challier fortuitously saved the P-51 Mustang “from the scrap heap” by recognizing that the Rolls-Royce Company’s Merlin 61 engine would considerably enhance the plane’s capabilities. Kennedy assesses the relative impact that each innovation had on operations and on the wider war. In Chapter one, he concludes that the Allies were able to protect the strategically important Halifax-Liverpool sea-lane once their engineers developed reliable detection equipment and antisubmarine weapons, such as the miniaturized radar and Hedgehog grenades, and the long-range B-24 Liberator, which provided the convoys with daytime cover in the mid-Atlantic air gap. Allied merchantmen could then ship supplies to the bomber groups and invasion forces in Britain in relative safety. Not all innovations, however, played such a significant role in the victory. Kennedy makes it clear that Allied code-breaking systems, such as Ultra, did not have as much of an impact as is commonly assumed.

Eschewing oversimplifications, Kennedy argues in Chapter two that Allied strategic bombing after the invasion of Normandy was effective because they “brought their enemy to his knees and were doing so with directional aids, Pathfinder forces, and bombing accuracy they had not possessed in previous years.” It also compelled the Germans to divert aircraft and air defenses from Russia to their homeland, which redounded to the benefit of the Soviet Red Army. In his discussion of the Pacific War, Kennedy concludes that the Americans were able to operate successfully over vast distances because of “U.S. Marine Corps amphibious warfare, U.S. Navy fast carrier groups, Seabees construction teams, and B-29 bombers.” In Chapter three, he argues that the Soviets were able to defeat the German blitzkrieg at the Battle of Kursk (July 5–16, 1943), in part because of the Red Army’s skillful use of antitank guns and landmines. Kennedy also argues, however, that the sine qua non of the strategic bombing campaign in Europe was the long-range fighter, most notably the P-51, which escorted Allied bombers flying through German-controlled airspace. His case for the decisive impact of this weapon is one of the only exceptions he makes to his overarching thesis.

Kennedy restores agency to the men who actually ran the operations and invented the technology, and he does well to integrate their stories into the larger narrative of the war. In Chapter four, for example, Kennedy shows how the failure of the Dieppe raid caused planners to change their approach to amphibious landings and conceive of new tools to remove beach obstacles. Major General Percy Hobart solved the latter problem by devising imaginative modifications to the Sherman and Churchill tanks, the so-called “Hobart’s Funnies,” that exploded mines, cut wires, bridged ditches, and floated on water. In Chapter five, Kennedy foregrounds the role of Ben Moreell, the founder of the Construction Battalions, in facilitating the movement of men on the beaches and across the Pacific Ocean. He admiringly describes him as “one of those neglected middlemen who made Allied grand strategy work.” In Chapter three, Kennedy includes a regrettably brief discussion of the Soviet designers who built the pontoon bridges and the decoy weaponry that were an essential part of the Red Army’s drive to Berlin. His almost exclusive focus on American and British problem-solvers, a consequence of not using any Russian-language sources, leaves his analysis unbalanced.

The book’s other flaws are minor. Merchant fleet losses should be put in context. In addition to noting the “staggering” losses of 7.8 million tons of shipping in 1942, Kennedy should have included the amount of tonnage needed to sustain the British population and support the military buildup. This inclusion would have made his point more effectively than the vague descriptors “awful” and “colossal.” There is also one instance of presentism when he states, “In the age of Charlemagne, the dependence of rulers and peoples upon command of the sea was negligible.” In this reviewer’s opinion, navies before the Age of Sail were not even capable of achieving “command of the sea” in the modern sense of the term.

Kennedy’s work is an excellent synthesis of the secondary literature and a much-needed corrective to the military historiography of the war, whose typical subjects are either the high leadership or the common soldier. Just as historians of American society have begun writing about the experiences of clerks and brokers, one can hope that the middle-out approach will likewise gain the attention of military historians.

2 Ibid., 369, 371.
3 Ibid., 143.
4 Ibid., 136.
5 Ibid., 41.
6 Ibid., 270.
7 Ibid., 328.
8 Ibid., 7.
9 Ibid., 21–22.
10 Ibid., 11.

By Britnee Smith (M.A. Student, Temple University)

Adding to recent studies on human rights, Barbara Key’s Reclaiming American Virtue examines the discourse of international human rights in American politics during the 1970s. Keys traces the rise of international human rights in American foreign policy to the consequences of the Vietnam War. According to Keys, the promotion of international human rights in the 1970s precipitated a revolutionary shift in American foreign policy. By arguing for the idea of a human rights revolution, Keys identifies the promotion of human rights in the 1970s as distinct from earlier movements that shared similar goals. Keys’ work provides an important addition to human rights scholarship and studies on American foreign policy by showing how politics shaped the promotion of international human rights.

Central to Keys’ argument is the role of the Vietnam War. Keys argues that international human rights only gained
political and popular support after the conclusion of the Vietnam War. As Keys notes, “At its core the human rights revolution of the 1970s was an emotional response to the trauma of the Vietnam War.” Both conservatives and liberals used human rights as a way to move beyond the Vietnam War. First used by Cold Warriors from the conservative wing of the Democratic Party, human rights became a tool to reassert American virtue and will against communist threats. Liberals, on the other hand, used human rights to stress a new American morality in foreign policy that would distance America from repressive allies. While politicians used human rights to advance political agendas, the popularity of international human rights also increased amongst Americans. Keys attributes the increased popularity to the limited cost of supporting human rights, new media technologies, the rise of transnational human rights organizations, and the desire to overcome the trauma and self-criticism of the 1960s and the Vietnam War.

Keys shows how the various interpretations of international human rights by conservatives, liberals, and lobbyists in the aftermath of the Vietnam War caused a revolutionary shift in American foreign policy. The promotion of international human rights served as a break with the older Cold War consensus. Human rights attracted such attention because of its novelty and malleability. As Keys demonstrates throughout her work, “International human rights promotion offered a new calculus, according to which the abuses that deserved the world’s attention were not associated with America’s own mass bombing and napalming of civilians but Soviet totalitarianism that stamped out freedom for its subjects or with Third World dictators who inflicted barbarous tortures on their own people.” Keys notes the Carter administration’s uncertainty in crafting human rights policies as evidence of the novelty of human rights promotion in American foreign policy.

Part of Keys’ argument, that the promotion of international human rights was a revolutionary shift in American foreign policy, evolves from her understanding of the human rights movement in the 1970s as distinct from earlier movements. While acknowledging the connections to older movements, Keys identifies the modern human rights movement by its universalism, deference to the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the importance of international law and opinion. Similarly, she notes the connections between the civil rights movement of the 1960s and the human rights movement of the 1970s. The human rights movement, however, was a separate movement due to its different emphasis. While the civil rights movement focused on problems within the United States, the promotion of human rights shifted attention to problems outside America. The civil rights movement of the 1960s was part of the self-criticism that advocates of the human rights movement of the 1970s wished to overcome.

In Keys’ account of the human rights revolution in the 1970s, she traces the origins of human rights in American foreign policy. Some of the central actors in her narrative are Senator Henry M. “Scoop” Jackson, Congressman Don Fraser, and Amnesty International. Additionally, according to Keys’ interpretation, Jimmy Carter did not so much create international human rights as capitalize on an increasingly popular movement. For Keys, Congress played the primary role in defining the human rights movement of the 1970s in American foreign policy. By focusing on the rise of human rights in American foreign policy during the 1970s, Keys devotes little attention to the Carter administration’s policies, or the complex role of transnational non-government actors beyond Amnesty International.

Reclaiming American Virtue contributed valuably to the growing scholarship on human rights by closely examining the rise of international human rights in American foreign policy during the 1970s. It shows how both conservatives and liberals used the promotion of human rights as a way to move beyond the trauma of the Vietnam War. Keys’ work is recommended for any readers interested in human rights or American foreign policy during the 1970s.

* Dr. Keys presented a colloquium based on this book at CENFAD last fall, on November 4, 2014.


2 Ibid., 10.

### CENFAD News & Updates

#### Faculty

**Beth Bailey** had an American Council of Learned Societies fellowship this year to work on a book about how the US Army tried to manage the “problem of race” during the Vietnam era and the decade that followed. Though on leave, she made it to almost all of the CENFAD talks. She will be leaving Temple to take a position as Foundation Distinguished Professor at the University of Kansas in fall 2015, and will always be grateful for CENFAD’s role in making Temple an exciting intellectual home.

The success of CENFAD’s series of colloquia was the highlight of Wachman Director **Richard Immerman** academic year. For that he is so very grateful to 2014-15 Thomas Davis Fellow, Silke Zoller, for her many contributions. With Silke’s help he is now putting the final touches on “US Bases and the Construction of Hegemony,” a symposium that CENFAD will sponsor at Temple on October 9 and 10, 2015. Look forward to the announcement; the quality of the list of presenters is exceptional. Immerman’s “The CIA: Its Origin, Transformation, and Crisis of Identity from Harry S. Truman to Barack Obama,” came out this spring in The Origins of the National Security State and the Legacy of Harry S. Truman, edited by Mary Ann Heiss and Michael Hogan. Immerman co-authored the chapter with former Thomas Davis Fellow Tim Sayle. Also, he and Beth Bailey completed the copyediting for their co-edited volume, Understanding the U.S. Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, scheduled for publication in November. This spring, Immerman is again serving as the Francis W. DeSerio Chair of Strategic Intelligence at the U.S. Army War College.

**Jay Lockenour** is just finishing his first year as chair of the department, and he is still happy to be back from Colorado. In addition to the ongoing work on Ludendorff and on the Battle of Liège, Lockenour will begin working on a contribution to Temple alumni Matthew Muehlbauer and David Ulbrich’s new anthology, The Routledge History of War and Society.
Bryant Simon spent much of last year going back and forth between Temple and the University of Erfurt, Germany, where he served as a visiting professor and Humboldt Research Award winner. He taught a class on globalization and McDonald's, and delivered lectures at a number of German, Czech, and British universities. In February, he gave the keynote address at the German American Studies Association annual meeting on his current book project, a study of the high costs of cheap food. He is also working on a reader on food, power, and culture in American history.

Gregory J. W. Urwin, professor of history, completed his two-year term as president of the Society for Military History (SMH) while presiding over that organization’s 82nd annual meeting at Montgomery, Alabama, April 8-12, 2015. The event drew more than 600 registrants. Urwin’s valedictory address, “A Creative and Responsible Art: Some Thoughts on the State of Military History,” which he delivered at the SMH’s traditional Saturday evening banquet, will be published in the coming year.

Urwin devoted his presidency to moving military history further into the academic mainstream. He succeeded in establishing partnerships between the SMH and the National Endowment for the Humanities, Organization of American Historians, New Books in Military History, and Encyclopedia Britannica, while improving relations with the American Historical Association and maintaining ties with the American Council of Learned Societies, George C. Marshall Foundation, and Virginia Military Institute. Urwin also takes pride in commissioning the SMH’s first white paper, The Role of Military History in the Contemporary Academy by Tami Davis Biddle and Robert M. Citino (http://www.smh-hq.org/docs/SMHWhitePaper.pdf), which has been widely distributed by the American Council of Learned Societies, History News Network, Foreign Policy Research Institute, McCormick Foundation Blog, and many other websites. The white paper will also be republished soon by Army History: The Professional Bulletin of Army History. Urwin will continue to participate in the governance of the SMH by sitting on its Long-Range Planning Committee and serving as its delegate to the American Council of Learned Societies.

Free now to devote more time to research, Urwin also will also deliver invited lectures this spring and summer at the Civil War Museum of Kenosha, Wisconsin; North Jersey Civil War Round Table in Morristown; Ann Arbor Civil War Round Table in Michigan; and Freedoms Foundation Medal of Honor Legacy Program at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania.

Graduate Students

Jean-Pierre Beugoms is working on a dissertation about army logistics during the War of 1812. He recently received the ABC-CLIO Research Grant from the Society of Military History. The grant will help to defray the cost of research at the Library of Congress and National Archives, in Washington, D.C.

This semester Carly Goodman wrapped up her time as a Center for the Humanities at Temple Associate Fellow by helping organize a great conference on scholar activism. While waiting for spring to happen, she presented a paper on the U.S. Diversity Visa Lottery in Cameroon at the James A. Barnes Conference, helping her prepare for an upcoming research trip to Cameroon for which she received a grant from the History Project. In addition to getting good feedback on the research, Carly’s paper won first prize in International History. Now that the nice weather has arrived, she is presenting her work at the Organization of American Historians annual meeting in St. Louis, the Association of Centers of the Study of Congress, and the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations annual meeting this spring. She also found out that she was selected as a 2015 Humanity in Action Diplomacy and Diversity Fellow. In June, she will be joining twenty-three other American and European graduate students for a program on international relations and global diversity, in Washington, DC; Berlin; Paris; and The Hague. Other than that, she is eagerly eyeing the new Philly Bike Share stations being installed throughout the city, and preparing to finish her dissertation by May 2016.

Larry Kessler’s article "A Plantation upon a Hill; Or, Sugar Without Rum: Hawai‘i’s Missionaries and the Founding of the Sugarcane Plantation System" was just published in the Spring number of the Pacific Historical Review.

Kaete O’Connell recently defended her dissertation prospectus on food relief in occupied Germany. In March, she presented at the Barnes Conference, where her paper placed second for the Russell F. Weigley Award for Military History. She looks forward to a busy summer of research and presenting her work at the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations annual meeting in June.

Thomas A. Reinstein received the Professor Russell F. Weigley Award in Military History at this year’s James A. Barnes Conference for his paper "The Way a Drunk Uses a Lamp Post: Intelligence and the Bombing of North Vietnam." He is looking forward to presenting his work at this year’s Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations annual meeting as part of a panel he organized on how intelligence influences policy formation.

Sarah Robey has been awarded the Ambrose Monell Foundation Funded Fellowship in Technology and Democracy at the University of Virginia’s Miller Center. Thanks to this generous funding, she will spend the 2015-2016 academic year completing her dissertation, “The Atomic American: Citizenship in a Nuclear State, 1945-1963.” Sarah was also recently awarded a Rockefeller Archive Center Grant-in-Aid, which will take her to Sleepy Hollow, New York to conduct research for an article related to her dissertation. Sarah will return from her one-year stint in Tübingen, Germany in August.

Britnee Smith is finishing her first year in the M.A. program. She presented her paper, “Disorganized Government, Organized Crime: An Examination of Philadelphia during National Prohibition (1920-1933),” at the James A. Barnes Conference on March 28, 2015. She will also present the paper at the Dean Hopper New Scholars Conference on June 5-6, 2015, at Drew University in New Jersey. She plans to use this summer to work on her papers and to research Ph.D. programs for Fall 2016.

Silke Zoller defended her dissertation prospectus on international counterterrorism this April. In May, she is going to Geneva, Switzerland, to present a paper at a conference on states and terrorism organized by the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva. She has greatly enjoyed being the
Thomas Davis fellow at CENFAD this year, and is looking forward to many more discussions with all of the amazing people she worked with in this time.

Friends & Alumni

Matt Fay (M.A., 2014) was accepted to the Political Science Ph.D. program at George Mason University, where he will be beginning this fall.

J. Britt McCarley (Ph.D., 1989), who is the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command’s Chief Historian and Director of its Military History and Heritage Program, was involved in several Civil War Sesquicentennial activities during 2014. On June 27, he led one of several National Park Service-sponsored tour groups to walk and study the ground of the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain at the national battlefield, which is near Marietta, Georgia. The tours began in the Cheatham Hill/Dead Angle area, at the same time and place as Union Major General William T. Sherman’s numerous attacks on General Joseph E. Johnston’s entrenched Confederates. McCarley was also the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center’s July 2014 Perspectives in Military History Lecture Series speaker. His topic was "Sherman’s ‘Flying Column’ at Kennesaw Mountain: Major General John M. Schofield and the XXIII Army Corps, 10 June-10 July 1864." McCarley’s lecture is available on YouTube at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2I_BB1f_eA. Finally, in December 2014, just in time for the 150th commemoration of the fall of Savannah, Georgia, to General Sherman, the U.S. Army Center of Military History published McCarley’s monograph, The Atlanta and Savannah Campaigns, 1864, as part of its U.S. Army Campaigns of the Civil War series, one of the Army’s numerous Civil War Sesquicentennial endeavors. McCarley’s publication is available online in PDF at http://www.history.army.mil/html/books/075/75-13/index.html. Overall, it was a good year.

Jason W. Smith (Ph.D., 2012) is completing his first year as the Class of 1957 Post-doctoral Fellow in Naval History at the US Naval Academy where his duties include teaching American Naval History to first year (plebe) midshipmen. The post-doc has been renewed for a second year. He has given a lecture in the Shifely Lecture Series at the USNA Museum and presented papers at the History of Science Society, American Society for Environmental History, and the North Atlantic Society for Oceanic History annual meetings. In the April 2014 issue of The Journal of Military History, Jason published "'Twixt the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea': Hydrography, Sea Power, and the Marine Environment, 1898-1901."

David J. Ulbrich (Ph.D., 2007) is an assistant professor at Rogers State University, where he continues to teach in the bachelors in military history program. He is also a senior instructor in the online masters in military history program at Norwich University. Ulbrich is collaborating together with fellow Temple alumnus, Matthew Muehlbauer, on another joint project titled the The Routledge History of Global War and Society. Their co-edited anthology will include thirty chapters with regional or thematic focuses. It is due out in 2018. Ulbrich delivered lectures at the National Maritime Historical Society, the First Division Museum at Cantigny, and the Army War College. He organized the Second Annual Military History Day at Rogers State and hosted Dr. Paul Herbert of the First Division Museum as the guest of honor. Ulbrich was interviewed regarding the seventieth anniversaries of the Battle of the Bulge and the flag raising on Iwo Jima for the live television program Midpoint on NewsMax. He has been invited to be keynote speaker for the 2015 Memorial Day ceremony at the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial in New York City. He also edited the book review section in the newly published U.S. Military History Review, www.usmhg.org. This peer-reviewed journal will include 2-3 issues per year, beginning in 2015. Lastly, Ulbrich chaired the selection committee for the 2015 General Wallace Green Prize for the outstanding book on Marine Corps history, which is sponsored by the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation.


David Zierler (Ph.D., 2008), US State Department historian, will be a visiting scholar at the University of Colorado, Department of International Affairs this summer, teaching an honors course - "Climate Change and International Society." He is also working on a new book manuscript: “Nature’s Purple Gift: An International History of Iodine.”
Strategic Visions

Editorial Staff:
Silke V. Zoller
Carly Beth Goodman
Kaete M. O’Connell
Thomas A. Reinstein

Faculty Adviser: Gregory J. W. Urwin
CENFAD Director: Richard H. Immerman

For questions, comments, or to offer your support, contact:
The Center for the Study of Force and Diplomacy
Department of History
Temple University
Gladfelter Hall (025-24)
1115 W. Berks St.
Philadelphia, PA 19122

STRATEGIC VISIONS
Newsletter for the Center for the Study of Force and Diplomacy at Temple University