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Public Memory: How Vietnam Veterans are using Technology to Make Private Memory Public

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PUBLIC MEMORY: HOW VIETNAM VETERANS ARE USING TECHNOLOGY TO

MAKE PRIVATE MEMORY PUBLIC

A Dissertation

Submitted to the McAnulty College of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Dennis Stephen Woytek

May 2009

PUBLIC MEMORY: HOW VIETNAM VETERANS ARE USING

TECHNOLOGY TO MAKE PRIVATE MEMORY PUBLIC

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Approved February 27, 2009

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ABSTRACT

PUBLIC MEMORY: HOW VIETNAM VETERANS ARE USING

TECHNOLOGY TO MAKE PRIVATE MEMORY PUBLIC

By

Dennis Stephen Woytek

May 2009

Dissertation supervised by Calvin Troup Ph.D.

The narrative relationship of a group of Americans who served in the Vietnam War is the focus of this dissertation. This group is unique to veteran groups that have returned from serving their country in a time of war or conflict. My research is based on the rhetorical writings of recognized scholars, a knowledge base grounded in the historical tradition of rhetoric. Research is also included from interviews and correspondence with many Vietnam veterans, the writings of novelists and archive material provided by the Department of Defense, the United States Navy, and American Forces Radio and Television. This dissertation addresses questions of memory concerning emerging communities of memory among Vietnam-era veterans and will approach an emerging narrative from a rhetorical foundation in the philosophy and theory of memory. In part, the study will address the relationship between public memory and the challenges of ever-changing technology, a technology that makes possible public memory on several perspectives.

There are driving forces that are motivating narrative stories of Vietnam veterans from across the country to participate in public memory. This conversation and discussion between

veterans propels the textual writings and oral narratives that are created when memory of the veterans is driven by the conversation of a historical moment. These historic moments or reunions are now becoming more frequent and are being attended by larger numbers of Vietnam veterans every year. Interpretive research into these memory forms will produce a knowledge base sufficient to contribute to the scholarly work on memory, public memory and the community of memory. Additionally, the work may enrich the ongoing discussions among Vietnam veterans, their friends, and loved ones as well.

DEDICATION

This dissertation I dedicate to all the Vietnam veterans who gave of their time and memory during the research phase of this work. I also remember those who have died since this process began, in particular, Thomas Deaner who served with me at Armed Forces Vietnam Radio in Quang Tri, Vietnam. I am proud to be one of these veterans who came back after the war and have been offered an opportunity to help others. To my friends who now are remembered in carved black granite on the Vietnam memorial, I will be forever grateful for your ultimate sacrifice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Chapter One

Introduction

"Memories, light the corners of my mind. Misty watercolor memories of the way we were. Scattered pictures of the smiles we left behind, Smiles we gave to one another for the way we were. Can it be that it was all so simple then, or has time rewritten every line? If we had the chance to do it all again, tell me - would we? Could we? Memories may be beautiful and yet, what's too painful to remember we simply choose to forget. So it's the laughter we will remember, whenever we remember the way we were" (Hamlisch).

"To remember the future it is not possible but this is an object of opinion or expectation nor is there a memory of the present but only a sense of perception for by the latter we know not the future nor the past but the present only but memory relates to the past no one would say that he remembers the present when it is present" (Aristotle, On Memory).

The subject of memory has become a leading topic for discussion as validated by the increasing literature on the subject and panel presentations at academic conferences. Memory as a topic for discussion at the third Prato International Community Informatics Conference near Florence, Italy and The Framing Public Memory conference in

Syracuse, New York serve as two examples which prove that public memory is a prime topic of examination. In this dissertation, the examination into memory will be limited to three areas. The first is that memory is a social process. In that form, the study of remembering can be of vital importance to the discipline of rhetoric and an exploration, in which the facts, figures, and practices of a culture are kept. Cultures long ago have known that the keepers of the knowledge base can pool their knowledge and have greater potential to remember than has one single individual alone.

Second, collective, and individual memories are not simply recollection of the facts of the past, ordered in a linear sequence along a time line. Memory is essentially selective and interpretive and therefore rhetorical. Through memory, we give significance to the experience. Memory is about recall of emotions, as well as more substantial historical acts and events. The vehicles used to evoke memory may include not only words and realistic descriptions, but also music, visual images, metaphors, or artifacts. Because memory is the meaning we give to the past from the perspective of the present and future, memory rarely goes unchallenged by those remembering and must be defended if it is to remain viable and credible. Thirdly, memory is the meaning we give to experience. We arrange our own memories, refine them, rework them, and perfect them, not always by making them more faithful to the facts. Who we are today in large measure may be determined by what we choose to remember and how we choose to remember it. We give our past significance by selectively keeping certain memories and stories alive, refreshing them, commemorating them, passing them down to our children, including stories of our failures and disappointments. Meaning comes from fashioning and refashioning our memories into a consistent pattern. We can choose to keep alive only

memories that darken the present with their shadows, although this appears not to be the norm. All three working areas are deeply significant for rhetoric.

The discussion of public memory is not only a catalyst for investigation, but, more importantly, technology is playing an important role in the research of exploration and the results of discovery and analysis. The discussion of public memory is not only a historical moment but also another use of technology for advancement of memory and technology itself. Using technology to reveal memories not only provides a record of an historical moment but also a means of advancing memory and technology itself.

Issues

Today, paying attention to memory in terms of how we craft history, how we invent traditions, and how we come to agree on recollections of past events is the prime basis for public memory studies, namely social memory, collective memory, or public memory. Because the process of defining a memory is always contested by those participants, it becomes rhetorical. Public memory is a present enactment that is basically unsettled and sometimes unsettling, and therefore deeply rhetorical in multiple dimensions. Kendall Phillips writes that the distinction between history and memory is evident by those who saw history and memory as opposing factors to recalling the past (2). History can be described as an account of the past inscribed in written form or remembered in the memories of a culture or community (4). Public Memory is a new area of study that has opened up in recent years. To Phillips, history, with its apparent claims in the direction of accuracy and objectivity, is viewed as a singular and authentic account of the past (5). Objectivity in historiography is detailed in Peter Novick's book

THAT **N**OBLE **D**REAM: **T**HE **O**BJECTIVITY **Q**UESTION **A**ND **T**HE **A**MERICAN **H**ISTORICAL **P**ROFESSION.

Memory can be an elusive site of inquiry because it is so dynamic. Memory is visualized in terms of several dissimilar, changeable, and competing accounts of past events, according to Phillips (3). The past remains in permanent evolution, open to forgetting and to the dialectic of remembering. Memory can be a fixed point that never changes or a constant state of flux affected by daily interactions, rituals, and exchanges all constituting memories (2). Phillips goes on to say that the study of memory is largely the study of the rhetoric of memories (2). Memories are themselves contested, destabilized, and replaced by other memories. Therefore, because memories can be contested and replaced by other memories, memory itself is essentially rhetorical. The individual memory, the community of memory, and public memory each can be contested and debated and may be responsible for generation of new ideas and narratives.

Noteworthy Response

For memory to be in the public sphere, the narrative of the memory needs to be presented to a gathering or collection of people. The majority of the time the group has a relationship: a sewing club, fraternity members, or veterans who served together. Edward Casey, in his study of public memory, delineates public memory as memory that occurs in the open, in front of others, and consists of those memories, which one can interact about, deliberate over, and share. Edward Casey's 1987 book **R**EMEMBERING, details memory, including a chapter on collective memory.

According to Paul Connerton in his book **HOW SOCIETIES REMEMBER**, memory is a personal reflection; however, there is something to be said for memory that is shared in a social or collective context. Connerton's work suggests the wisdom of referring to this social-collective aspect as "Community of Memory" (45). Research into the term has revealed a few artifacts including a book by Jeff Gundy, a professor of English at Bluffton College, Ohio. "Community of Memory" also originates with Robert Bellah, who uses a similar phrase in **HABITS OF THE HEART** (333) In Gundy's book **A COMMUNITY OF MEMORY: MY DAYS WITH GEORGE AND CLARA**, Amish and Mennonite forbears trace their paths and chronicle their lives. Women and men tell their stories and link themselves to each other, the past, and the present. The closeness of those communities provides a vehicle for this storytelling. As the group expands, the links and ties can become strained and, many times, even broken (23).

Public memory binds the community together as a living entity rather than simply storing information about it. The ancients relied on memory, the memory of past pleasures, in situations of acute painfulness, and to convince themselves of their happiness (Arendt 320). Emmanuel Levinas argues that by grounding oneself in memory after an event, one would assume today that in the absolute past of the memory, the memory had no subject to receive it (56). Therefore, the memory as originally experienced in the past can never be remembered to the same degree in the future. Nevertheless, Levinas agrees with Arendt when he says memory realizes impossibility, assumes passivity of the past, and masters it (56). The mastering of the past follows the Aristotelian tradition and bases itself in rhetoric.

Before the invention of writing, human language and thought were shaped only by oral tradition. The memory of oral culture is a holistic experience, combining mind, sight, and situational relevance as they relate to the whole. A speaker creates an image so immediate and significant to the audience that separating oneself from the experience is impossible. The images contained within consist of a sequence of scenes or situations that serve to map the action of the narrative, explains Ong (65). These sequences are linked together to form patterns that serve as the foundation for memory (Ong 66). In antiquity, memory was derived to incorporate much more than our modern understanding of memory as memorizing. Memory was critical to invention, arrangement, style, and delivery of cultural experience because memory was the combined knowledge of the culture or group.

The Ancient Past

The shift from a primary oral culture to a literate one in ancient Greece came about because of the invention of Greek vowels in the 4th century (Ong 36). The significance of the invention of Greek vowels is that they more closely represented the sounds of the spoken language. With the Greek alphabet, texts could be made that matched spoken speech. This development encouraged writing, and the standardization of the Greek alphabet led to widespread literacy, the beginnings of what can be called a manuscript culture and the permanent loss of primary orality in western cultures (Ong 37). The manuscript culture and the limitations inherent in the distribution of manuscripts over time and space continued to the fifteenth century. In the 15th century, Gutenberg invented the printing press and revolutionized possibilities for the dissemination of

written text. The manuscript culture became a print culture. New means of transmissions of cultural memories because possible through the mass dissemination of the printed word.

Enlightenment and Modern Times

Classical conceptions of memory, particularly metaphors, have held into the 20th century. A prime example is the widespread use of the printing press many centuries after its invention. This emergent technology made possible the availability of textbooks and the spread of education to areas that may have had no access to lectures. Lectures began to be based on printed text, and these texts were now available to those in remote locations, just as the internet, today, enables distance learning. The lecture became less important as emphasis was placed on the written word, and those words were consistent across regions and even time, leading to modern forms of standardized education (Newman 96). The words imprinting and impressions are still today distinct descriptions for preservation of information in one's memory and have, ironically, come to be connected with print media as well as traditions become altered and adopted by today's culture. However, the skill of memory rapidly declined following medieval culture, with the failure of the memory practice often being linked to the rise of writing and other literacy technologies, many of which would emerge as technologies began to appear (Borgmann 352).

Post Modern

In post-modernity, memory is aided with the use of electronic devices. Computers, PDA (Personal Digital Assistant), data terminals, and devices still in development store the memory of individuals and communities, public and private. Today, individuals need not possess vast personal memories as did ancient or medieval peoples, but can retrieve knowledge from electronic memory banks. Search capabilities offer the user a vast knowledge base of data. The Vietnam Memorial, for example, contains over 58,000 names; at one time, the search required paging through a thick book with names listed alphabetically, a time-intensive task. Today that data is available for electronic searches and is not limited to alphabetical listings by name, but can searched by state, city, date of death, or by other user-defined criteria. Users need not go to the site in Washington D.C. but can access the data from home computers and have results in less than 15 seconds. The availability of this data affects public memory in a more individual way by allowing a private moment of recollection.

In the contemporary historical moment, the written word takes on a new form of display, the text displayed in pixels on the screen of a computer monitor. Unlike the written word stored permanently on paper, this group of pixel words requires the use of an electro-magnetic device, a computer, to save the words. The co-evolution of media and memory forms of differentiation makes the concept of social memory growing ever more abstract.

Although modern western society is based largely on literacy, the oral and the literate intermingle. In popular culture, widespread television viewing and use of video tapes, DVDs and other recording methods for instruction and information draw people

away from text-based entertainment and learning. These technologies have the possibilities that enable large numbers of people to skip learning how to read, write, and still participate in communication. A decline in the ability to read and write makes oral means of communication, videos, sound recordings, more accessible and powerful. Certainly, entertainment such as television, films, videos, sound recordings, computer games, are far more popular than the reading of novels, plays, or poetry. We are entering a new era when the oral is more valued than literacy (Lakoff 259).

Connecting the Past with the Present

Memory presents a likeness of our past perceptions. Storytelling is a process that tells of an event using time as a benchmark with a past and a future. A rich and productive memory can give perspective to the stories in relation to a time and place. The photographic image now could capture a two-dimensional image. Before photography, history was reproduced in the memory of speech and writing across a full spectrum of human existence, but suddenly history as memory seemed to become contained two-dimensionally. There no longer seemed to be a need to look back through a disciplined personal memory, because the promise created by instantaneous reproduction of reality and history was created by an irresistibly easy to produce photograph of reality. Indeed, the idea that images are more than just a reproduction or reality became a focus of a technology and an industry represented by companies such as Kodak, Polaroid, and Fuji that aided in memory and reminiscence and became, and still is, a common memory tool. If we accept that photography replaced the process of history making, the story telling of the oral culture, then the need for memory is diminished. However, the photograph is

non-contextualized. Why do yearbooks sell as quickly as graduation nears, only to be left on a shelf or in a box until the first ten-year reunion of the group is near? The books are opened for the first time in ten or more years, dusted, and then, page by page, memory comes to remembrance as images and text describing the image or persons in the photograph are revealed. This transference of memory to remembrance of the past when in conversation with another from the same community or group triggers the reminiscence. This private memory has the possibility to become public at the reunion of the group or community. Conversation among the community becomes a shared or community memory. The reminiscence brings back the sense of time, place, and even social status first rooted in the experience of high school, college or other community experience.

"We will experience our present differently in accordance with the different pasts we are able to connect with that present" (Connerton 2). I believe the ways societies remember and recall past events are as varied as the political views of Vietnam veterans and the politicians that sent them into war. In other words, there can be more than one "Community of Memory," and such communities can be public or private or emergent through an intersection of public and private memory connected through artifacts in those communities; however, the basis is still memory.

ON MEMORY AND REMINISCENCE, as translated by J.I. Beare, contends that Aristotle believed what one actually remembers having seen or heard is not something one includes in this act of remembering (1). The consciousness of and the distinction of remembering is a dissimilarity. The consciousness of time is when one remembers. When one actually processes a movement or sensory stimulus, one is reminiscing (1).

Reminiscence stamps a specific impression into memory, just as if one were to make an impression on a photographic plate where the impression is secure but needs a chemical process to invoke the image. A photographer can remember times through dates and recall meetings or events, but only when the film is processed and an actual image is printed does the reminiscence connect with the remembering. Aristotle likens it to a similar but well-known process of ancient times, the wax seal. Before the stamp is pressed into the wax, the wax is without a definitive form, a pool of semi-hard liquid. Once stamped with the seal, it now has a form that is remembered in hardened wax (126). The mind behaves in a similar way in that one can consciously remember a time; reminiscence follows with specific images from memory and is brought on by sensory stimuli, smell, sight, or sound. It is my contention that technology of today is aiding in the connection of remembering and reminiscence.

Aristotle, in **THE RHETORIC AND THE POETICS OF ARISTOTLE**, believed that very young and very old persons are defective in memory; they are in a state of flux, the young because of their growth and the old because of deterioration (122). Aristotle described the ages of man as having three distinct divisions. The first is youth, the second the prime of life, and the third is old age (122). The younger men have stronger passions and are changeable and fickle with keen but not deep-rooted impulses. "Their lives are spent not in memory but in expectation; for expectation refers to the future, memory to the past" (122).

The old (Aristotle calls them "elderly"), on the other hand, are men who are past their prime, according to Aristotle; they have lived many years and often made mistakes. "They live by memory rather than hope; for what is left to them of life is but little as

compared to the long past; and hope is of the future, memory of the past" (126). The elderly talk of the past because they enjoy remembering it, Aristotle writes (126). Not bringing into conversation, the memory leaves the past just a memory, with no wax seal or photograph to provide reminiscence. The talk or verbalization is then the conversation that engages the reminiscence.

I believe the remembrance and recollection is triggered by one or more of the five senses; most of the time experts discovered it triggered by the sense of smell, but it can also be triggered by sight and hearing. The least likely triggers come from taste and touch. Engen and Ross support this claim, "Olfactory information, we tentatively conclude that there is a subsystem in working memory dedicated to temporary maintenance of olfactory information" (Ross 363). Therefore, recollection is memory remembered by the sound of helicopter blades, the aroma of fresh baked apple pie, or the pictorial image of a friend or loved one. Every war, it appears, has its own characteristic trigger, some small event, usually associated with hearing or smell, which ignites in its veterans a set of emotions and memories, a kind of flashback. McBride in **REFLECTIONS, MEMORIES, AND IMAGES OF VIETNAM PAST**, says that after WWI, the smell of decay brought back the trench war to its survivors (Hopkins). For Normandy veterans, the smell of apples from the French orchards always brought back D-Day. For Vietnam veterans, the smell of every gas station with a diesel pump plays a mental Vietnam tape in memories, but the sound of whirling helicopter blades is the worst. In Vietnam (Hopkins), one could identify the helicopters from miles away, the Huey medivac, the Cobra gunships, the Chinooks. "After 30 years as the veterans have grown older, the chopper has evolved, and I can't tell 'em apart anymore. But I can still hear 'em

before I can see 'em and there's always that Oh, Jesus! feeling in the pit of my stomach. Standing in a crowd, you can tell who's been there by watching their eyes when a chopper flies over" (Hopkins).

Like distinctive characteristic sound of the helicopters for the Vietnam veteran, the photograph defines the space between image and object, between thoughts and reality, between space and time, between fact and fiction, language and silence. This space is indeterminable, conceptual space, the space of metaphor. If we remember that when we see photographs we are seeing metaphors, we regard them far more seriously, than we would as if they remained images in individual memories (Whamond). News, documentary, advertising, and other photographs in the public domain become exposed as a metaphor for our collective memory. The photograph is the ideal mode of representation for a society obsessed with its past, because the photograph is totally and always about the past. A DVD presentation shown at a recent reunion of U.S. Navy Seabees which I attended was just that, a look at the past through photographic images (Woytek, May 2004). These pictures and slides sometimes contained text references but many did not, leaving them open for interpretation. That interpretation came in the form of shouts from the viewers of the images. Someone would stand up and shout, "That's Deaner!" and those gathered would agree (Woytek, May 2006). That moment of recognition without text reference would bring from remembering to reminiscence and facts about the moment that images were first captured would be vocalized in public. The transference of private memory to community and now to public memory brings about the reason why this dissertation is important rhetorically to the community to which the memories originally belong specifically, the Vietnam veterans.

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The photograph surpasses the keepsake, the coin, and the museum object on the level of image: the most we expect of objects is at best a mental image, hopefully a memory. The photograph, however, provides that image; the role of the imagination is considerably diminished as it now has a visual reference. The structure or form of the mental image is provided; it is to locate the meaning of the image for which we do not retrench imagination totally (Whamond). One member of one reunion group spent at least an hour trying to determine from what angle the photograph was taken (Woytek, May 2004). There even was discussion as to the physical location—was it Dong Ha or Quang Tri? As the photographer having taken many pictures in the area I know it was Dong Ha; however, the actual image is not marked in any way with text to prove that it was Dong Ha. To persons outside the community at the reunion which I attended, this exercise might have seemed like a trivial matter and not worthy of such lengthy and sometime heated discussion. To the community, the discussion or reminiscence was vitally important to re-establish the memory by determining the actual photographer's location when the picture was taken in 1968.

Remembrance

Remembrance that has not been exercised can possess little of the accuracy of that remembrance which has been exercised. Our recollection or remembering is searching for any image. The image could be a feeling of discomfort or could be a smell; it may be the physical representation of the person or a place. Those triggers take the remembrance out of memory and bring it into the present. That remembrance at the given moment is

private memory. Taking it to community and then to the public is the process that will be examined in this dissertation.

When memory becomes reminiscence, it involves the process of the 'time stamp' or calendar dating of events. This process separates in two very diverse directions. One involves the accuracy that can be accrued from worldwide databases such as the Library of Congress, a source that can be trusted as accurate, and the other from possible erroneous or imprecise personal recollections published in newspapers, journals and on the Internet. One assumes that information in printed form is accurate; however, one only needs to look into the history of technology to find misuse of the tools, leading to inaccuracy.

Memory becomes public reminiscences through newspaper that enhance written stories with photographic images. Capturing those snapshots are the reporters and editors, always looking for good stories. A good story captures the drama of everyday life's successes and failures. It reveals the character of people, from fools, to thieves, to heroes. It gives meaning to the changes that occur around us. It can teach, it entertains us, and it creates a memorable impression. The readers of the newspapers were the instruments of cultural change as a city's merchants encouraged the inauguration of a daily evening paper. Another technology provided a driving force that also helped the status of newspapers as community sources of information with the ability to deliver up-to-the-minute news: the telegraph.

We fast-forward to the 21st century and the widespread use of the Internet, a communication medium designed for researchers, now used by almost every person on the planet who has access to this technology. The publishing of information, once

restricted to researchers and educators, is now available to everyone, with tools for

Internet publishing. The results appear online as online journals, face books, news

groups, and blogs. Blogs are simply writings of anyone who has access to a computer on

the internet. These journals or narrative stories take place in a period in which the

'blogger' writes about what happened today, the world as he sees it on a given day and

sometimes just rambling and voicing his opinion. These are arranged chronologically and

provide a readable narrative of an individual's space in time. They have become part of

public memory and reminiscence.

Measuring Time

Measuring time is essentially another device that one can use to remember events.

The event of remembrance in this manner is a reminiscence that has been exercised

through memory by use of a chronological time element. That measurement of time

makes time and events public. That public element makes memory become more familiar

because it has a stamp of time, relatable to almost everyone. Heidegger goes on to say

that time in which "objectively" present things move or are addressed is not "objective"

(386). However, time is not "subjective" either if we understand the "objective" presence

and occurrence in the subject (386). For Aristotle, time is revealed not as a problem; his

interpretation of time moves in the direction of the natural understanding as Heidegger

explains (386). Time therefore becomes a pointer, it is "what is counted," and time

therefore is understood as a sequence (386). So one can conclude that memory is a device

by which we recall time reminiscence and is recalled through our shared experience both

in time and in memories. Those time and memories come together as a Vietnam veteran approaches the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in the Nation's Capitol.

We live in a world that is perceived with our senses, a world of details and specifics. For Aristotle, as explained above, there are two types of memory, but both are due to recall preservation of sensory experience. For Aristotle, the memory of an item depends on having perceived it through the timeline. The objects of memory, he declares, are those that an individual has perceived through the senses (Beare in **ON MEMORY AND REMINISCENCE** 7). In this approach, memory depends on observation; in a comparable method, thought, theory depends on memory (7). The rhetorical perceptions of memory are the groundwork that has been laid by early philosophers and provides a starting platform in which memory can be dissected and expanded. Now when the first sensory experience has been completed and implanted, such as landing in Vietnam for the first time in 1968, the moment has been established. For a person affected by that sensory moment, to remember is an activity, which is not forthcoming until the original experience has undergone a lapse of time. The most recalled remembrance of Vietnam veterans first stepping off the plane in Vietnam was the horrific stench, heat, and fear of the unknown. One remembers now what was seen or otherwise experienced. The moment of the experience and now of memory is never identical though they may have similar characteristics, according to Beare in **ON MEMORY AND REMINISCENCE** (7). Aristotle goes on to say that, even when time has elapsed we need to have acquired memory. It is not necessarily recollection; it is obviously possible without any present active recollection to remember a continued sequence of original perception of events according to J. I. Beare in **ON MEMORY AND REMINISCENCE** (5). In that experience, one recovers

some knowledge, which one had before, a knowledge not limited to or conditioned with acquired memory and which can be some perception or some other experience (7). This data or knowledge is declared memory; it is then and only then that this recovery may amount to a recollection of some of the things that have been (6). Reminiscence can bring back a smile, a tear, or memories too painful to remember, so one can choose to not remember and suppress the memory event or moment. This appears to be the case of many Vietnam veterans.

Memory Experience

In its many overtones, the word "memory" suggests mourning, remainder, solicitude, and mentation (Wood 244). The basic meanings of memory in this context are those of presencing with a loss of original presence, continuation with absence of guaranteed continuity, and return to beginnings with absence of a primary origin (Scott 150). When something happens in memory, it is presented in the absence of its original presence (150).

Memory has a rhetorical tradition as seen by a culture that holds collective knowledge in the form of histories in the highest regard. One needs only to read the history of world cultures to see that this is true. This discussion, however, cannot stay in the past with verification of these concepts but must move forward to use the past building blocks for grounding this current dissertation in solid structures of memory. Our experience of the present for the most part depends on our knowledge of the past or memory of the experience we encountered. We experience our present world in a context, which is connected with past events, objects, people, encounters. The experience of the

present, though it appears to have a direct connection with the past, has no direct connection to the past other than through memory of a past encounter and therefore one will experience the present differently from the past (Connerton, 2).

Past experiences in memory can distort the present while at the same time influencing the experiences of the present, providing in essence a lens through which one can view the past and evaluate the present. A memory that is hidden away, stored, and not exercised may become distorted over time, much like a photographic lens. Memory can also become lost simply from lack of use. Again tying in a historical metaphor, the wax seal on documents when first impressed is fresh, crisp, and holds the seal image. Over time, wax weathers, distorts, and loses much of its detail. Memory experience is a cognizant, come to mind state. Memory experiences can contain certain images, thoughts about the past. The presence of thought is the driving force that brings on the memory of a past event, a trigger to recall that experience. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between one's memories of events that one has personally experienced, more specifically the memories of one's individual experience. This memory of fact can be inconsistent but also may not be coupled with experiences, or experienced events.

Memory and Rhetoric

The term "memory" evokes the image of a thing, a container for information, or the content of that container. In the world before writing, as explained earlier, memory was the social act of remembering (Hobart, 15). Memory was the traditional way the story of an event was told, spoken as if being told to the audience for the first time, every detail, nuance, relatable events all memorized by a group to be repeated when called

upon. To understand where current studies of memory are and why research is focused on memory, one needs to examine the past, for the past can reveal how and why memory has become a hot research subject, particularly public memory.

Memory has been a cornerstone in the rhetorical tradition, with importance in a culture being always already linked with epistemologies or studies, which hold in the highest regard collective knowledge making. "Thinking, because it can be remembered, can crystallize into thought, and thoughts, like all other things that owe their existence to remembrance, can be transformed into tangible objects which, like the written page or the printed book, become part of the human artifice" (Arendt, 76).

How We Remember

There is an area of the unconscious in addition, where memories of traumatic experiences are stored. Though an individual is unconscious of them, such memories are a significant factor in shaping conscious thought and behavior. The more traumatic an experience, the more likely one is to remember it (McNally 23). Visual images, which would frequently accompany traumas, stimulate the brain and become part of long-term memory (24). The examination of how we remember includes four major areas.

Sensory Memory

The sensory memories act as buffers for stimuli received through the senses, as Neggers explains in **UNDERSTANDING HUMAN BEHAVIOR**. A sensory memory exists for each sensory channel: visual stimuli, aural, smell, and for touch. Information is passed from sensory memory into short-term memory by concentration, in so doing filtering the

stimuli to only those memories that are of interest at a given time (Neggers). Sensory

memory retains the brief impression of a sensory stimulus after the stimulus itself has

ended. If one sees an object, when the object has disappeared, it may still be vivid in

one's memory. Sensory memory, then, is the remembrance that is written to memory and

also triggered to remember by sight, sound, smell, touch (Neggers). Much of what we

remember is based in the senses. For the veterans of the Vietnam War, those memory

pockets can be re-started with the slightest hint of a sound, smell (JP-4 jet fuel, charred

flesh, gunpowder, and grease), or temperature. Sensory memories allow us to take a

'snapshot' of our environment, and to store this information for a short period. Only

information that is transferred to another level of memory will be preserved for more than

a few seconds. A reason why a person may not remember a sensory event is that he may

not have processed the memory further. This could come from loss of consciousness or a

deliberate attempt not to remember at the sensory moment (Neggers). The sensory

memory corresponds approximately to the initial moment that an item is perceived and a

large part of the remembrances that are brought to community memory by the Vietnam

veterans are triggered from sensory memory images. Some of this information in the

sensory area proceeds to the "sensory store," which is referred to as short-term memory

(Neggers).

Short Term (working) Memory

Another form of memory is short-term memory. It is also called working memory

and relates to what we are thinking about at any given moment in time. The memory is

manifest and created by paying attention to an external stimulus, an internal thought, or

both. It is the workbench of our consciousness, and includes our awareness of the sensations, feelings, and thoughts that are experienced. Short-term memory differs from sensory memory in several ways (Neath 273). First, the capacity of the sensory memory is almost unlimited, whereas the capacity of the short-term memory is limited. It can hold only a small amount of information at one time. Second, the information in the sensory memory is unprocessed, while the information in the short-term memory has been encoded (273). The information in the short-term memory does not fade away as quickly as information in the sensory memory. The information in the short-term memory will be lost in about twenty to thirty seconds, unless it is processed further (Neggers).

The processing of that information was accomplished by the written word. Where many today keep on-line journals or blogs, the tradition by travelers was to keep a written journal of events. History has revealed a treasure trove of personal accounts of events in the past that would have effect on the community. Some hidden inside walls of old houses, stored in libraries both public and private, some lost to history through decay. One way the memory was preserved for the Vietnam veteran was the letters to home. Here is one example of how short term memory processed further from private memory to become part of the community of memory. This is a small part of a letter written home shortly after an event happened. Many soldiers were encouraged to write home often, at times given a direct order by their leaders to write (Woytek, June 2005). It served as a therapeutic element and maintained the connection to the community back home in the United States.

We started out on line, keeping low and moving slow. It was a clear, open field we were going across. We were halfway across when fire opened up from our right.

Everyone got down, and the St/Sgt started yelling at us to keep moving; so, we being young, brave Marines got back on line and kept moving. Then the bullets started zipping around our legs and raising dust. We knew for sure they were shooting at us then. We weren't about to stay on line after that. We bolted to the right, ran about 25 meters, and took cover behind dirt piled up all along this road (Driscoll).

Long Term Memory

Long-term memory is at the opposite end of the spectrum to short-term memory and is reinforced by the exercise of using short-term memory, Neggers explains in **UNDERSTANDING HUMAN BEHAVIOR**. Long-term memory differs from sensory and short-term memory in three ways: The capacity is extremely large and for practical purposes, unlike the sensory and the short-term memory, is considered unlimited according to Neggers. Once information is stored in the long-term memory, it is more resistant to forgetting than information in sensory or short-term memory. A person would probably not remember all the details of an experience, which has happened before unless there was a written reference that was performed during the sensory or short-term memory phase.

Items in the long-term memory are richly interconnected, much like a well-woven fabric. When new information is added to the long-term memory, it is associated with a lot of existing information that bears a relationship with it. It would be incorrect to consider the long-term memory as a big archive, in which of all kinds of information are separated and properly ordered. The long-term memory has its own dynamic system, in which the information is modified and transformed (Neggers).

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If one seems to have forgotten something, his lapse may be the result of simply not being able to recover it. Information may not be recalled but may be recognized, or may be recalled only with prompting. The deletion factor may account for what I believe is a small part of the way for veterans are not able to remember specific events. However, deletion cannot be eliminated in the study of how this group of young men and women recall events that they experienced thirty or more years ago. A portion of these veterans experienced Vietnam more than once. The standard tour for Vietnam Era service members and women was twelve months. After serving that time most had no desire to be put in harm's way again; however, career classification types may have served two or more tours of Vietnam. Those are in danger of memory deletion because with each tour (12 month service in Vietnam) came the same but different situations and the possibility of interference in memory between the first or second tour.

There are two types of information retrieval: recall and recognition according to Karin Strid in **RECALL MEMORY, RECOGNITION MEMORY AND SOCIAL COMMUNICATION IN INFANCY: THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO LANGUAGE AND COGNITION** . In recall, the information is reproduced from memory and relies on long-term memory for content. Recall can involve members of a community; however this memory retrieval is found more in an individual, isolated from the community (Strid). In recognition, the presentation of the information provides the knowledge that the information has been seen before. Recognition is of lesser complexity, as the information is provided as a cue (Haist 692). Reunions often provide the setting for the community, a community that has been apart for twenty or more years, to come together and offer a chance for members of the group of people to remember as individuals and to start

conversation. Conversations that evolve from the private to public and that are initiated by the phenomenon of community of memory then become the focus of public conversation.

The conversation can begin from copies of newsletters, cruise books. A cruise book is similar to a high school or college yearbook. A typical cruise book would contain details of each company, camp life, battalion roster, pictures along with text served as ignition for long-term memory. Monuments such as the Vietnam memorial or the traveling wall and even from personal diaries and items brought back from Vietnam specifically. For example, one army lieutenant who served with me in Vietnam opened a yellowed and worn manila envelope and poured onto the table ration cards, his immunization or shot record, a few pictures, his military orders for Vietnam, and the Bronze Star (Woytek, May 2005). The conversations and reminiscences that began as the men passed around the memorabilia were doubly enhanced with the aid of those items.

Community of Memory

Paul Connerton agrees that memory is not only an individually based phenomenon but also a communal or societal-shared subject matter. Community of memory is the basis and title of this dissertation, one that is propelled by a search for truth, knowledge, and historical fact. The community of memory has begun to unfold and reveal itself through symbols and speech with the help of rhetorically based writers such as Aristotle, Edward Casey, and now into post-modernity with Paul Connerton.

Memory is used to remember people, places, and events by giving accounts, by believing or disbelieving stories about each other's past and identities (MacIntyre 190).

By coding in striking images, an individual can reliably code both information and the structure of information. He can then easily recall these later. The use of positive, pleasant images makes this coding easier because the brain often blocks out unpleasant images or memories. The use of vivid, colorful, and sense-laden images are easier to remember than drab ones. At reunions or meetings of communities, the group can give images three dimensions, movement, and space to make memory more vivid.

The use humor is often the first place that conversations begin. From my research and interviews with Vietnam veterans, it is the funny stories that first emerge. Funny or peculiar things appear to be easier to remember than common ones, so the first conversations often begin with laughter and end up in tears as the remembrances turn to the horrors of war. The narrative that is set identifies the place and people and event-taking place at that time; this begins the set-up of several narrative histories according to Connerton (21).

We orient the other's behavior in our memories according to the place of their life in history. We situate that behavior with reference to its place in the history of the shared setting to which they belong. Connerton refers to this as a social memory (7). The story of one's life is part of an interconnecting set of narratives embedded in the story of those from which individuals originate their identity. Traditionally, human memory has been seen as an archive from which specific items can be retrieved in the process of remembering. In order not to forget, people would create mnemonics. Augustine in **CONFESSIONS** described this perspective on part of the technique of memoria:

"And so I come to the fields and vast palaces of memory, where are stored the innumerable images of material things brought to it by the senses. Further there is stored

in the memory the thoughts we think, by adding to or taking from or otherwise modifying

the things that sense has made contact with, and all other things that have been entrusted

to and laid up in memory, save such as forgetfulness has swallowed in its grave. When I

turn to memory, I ask it to bring forth what I want: and some things are produced

immediately, some take longer as if they had to be brought out from some more secret

place of storage; some pour out in a heap, and while we are actually wanting and looking

for something quite different, they hurl themselves upon us in masses" (X viii 178).

Augustine agrees with many rhetoricians that memory is best remembered when

the senses are involved and in the memory the mixture of things are kept separate and in

categories; however, each sense came into the memory by its own. For example, light and

all the colors and shapes of objects come in visually (179). The memories are stored,

sometimes in unsearchable areas of the brain with the intent to be available and brought

to light when they are recalled.

"In my memory are sky and earth and sea, ready at hand along with all the things

that I have ever been able to perceive in them and have not forgotten. And in my memory

too I meet myself, I recall myself, what I have done, when and where and in what state of

mind I was. In my memory are all the things I remember to have experienced myself or to

have been told by others. From the same store I can weave into the past endless new

likenesses of things either experienced by me or believed on the strength of things

experienced; and from these again I can picture actions and events and hopes for the

future; and upon them all I can meditate as if they were present" (X viii 179).

It has, however, long been recognized that, in fact, human memory does not

behave like the hard disk of one's computer; it is not always accurate and reliable.

Human memory can fail completely, or it can be influenced by a variety of different factors, and the past can thus be altered.

A community is a group of individuals who are bound together by natural will and a set of shared ideas and ideals. In his work titled **NICOMACHEAN ETHICS**, Aristotle explains that community is not so much about unity as it is about harmony (6). Groups of people who share a commonality are frequently described by social, religious, political, scientific, and moral philosophers and scientists as groups within organizational, political, or moral frames (6).

Memory can be described as an account of the past inscribed in written form or remembered in the memories of a culture or community. Kendall Phillips writes that the distinction between history and memory is evident by those who saw history and memory as opposing factors to recalling the past (2). To Phillips, history, with its apparent claims in the direction of accuracy and objectivity, is viewed as a singular and authentic account of the past, Objectivity in historiography is detailed in Peter Novick's book **THAT NOBLE DREAM: THE OBJECTIVITY QUESTION AND THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL PROFESSION**. Memory is visualized in terms of several dissimilar, changeable and competing accounts of past events, according to Phillips. Pierre Nora writes that memory is life that is borne out of societies founded in its name (Phillips in Framing 8). It remains in permanent evolution, open to forgetting and to the dialectic of remembering. Memory can be a fixed point that never changes or in a constant state of flux affected by daily interactions, rituals and exchanges all constituting memories. Phillips goes on to say that, the study of memory is largely the study of the rhetoric of memories (2). The ways

memories achieve meaning induce others to acknowledge them and are themselves contested, destabilized, and replaced by other memories and are essentially rhetorical.

Edward Casey and his study of public memory delineates public memory as memory that occurs in the open, in front of others, and consists of those which one can interact about, deliberate over, and share (19). A fundamental rhetorical question lies at the heart of the phenomenon of memory: "To whom should memory be attributed? To the individual or to the group?"

Individual

The first form of memory as established by Edward Casey is that of the individual. This tradition is based on the belief, already expressed by Aristotle, which is in the very depths of his soul that an individual expresses what he has heard, felt, or thought in the past. According to this long-standing tradition, maintained by various philosophers and psychologists, memory is an individual experience and memories belong to the person, helping to construct identity by distinguishing this individual from others (Lavenne). Casey believes that individual memory belongs to the individual who is "engaged in memory" on any particular occasion (21). That person, the always unique rememberer, remembers in a number of ways, not just recollecting that something happened, but also remembering how to do things. The same person remembers different kinds of things, not just the whole environmental complexes and worlds. "We remember by way of being reminded, by recognizing something, and by reminiscences with others" (21).

Societal

The second form according to Casey is social memory, held commonly by kinship of geographical proximity in neighborhoods and shared by others who are already related to one another in some way (21). An example comes from a website developed by a Vietnam veteran's son, and tells the story of Cary James Voss.

> *My father then set up his 90 recoilless rifle and shot a sheath round which sent out a bunch of little arrows. These were used, in this case, to clear debris and to defoliate so there was easier access to the bunker. After he fired the sheath round he had the ends open up again to allow to see if it was clear, and it was not. He then proceeded to shoot another sheath round and then had the ends fire once more. This time it was clear, so he loaded his 90 recoilless rifle with an H-E round. This round consisted of high explosives. Once shot it cleared out the enemy and their bunker, so the wounded and the dead could now get out. It sounded like it took a long time to complete, so I asked him about how long this did take. "This all happened in about 5 minutes so I did not realize I was hit. The shot went through my arm. The man next to me told me about it and then the medic came over to bandage me. They wanted to carry my gun out but I told them that I carried it in so I will carry it out." He said that about the time the medic was bandaging him is when the adrenaline stopped and he could start feeling the pain. (Voss)*

This social memory, through the website, is now transmitted to the Voss family, connected genetically, but also through the Internet, to the world. Some may consider the

world as one very large society and in some instances; they are right, thereby blurring the lines of societal memory even further.

Social memory, I believe, can also extend to the next group, collective in the fact that a group may not be related genetically. If they are in community for a long period of time they have social memory. Though Casey may disagree, some social bond exists between the Vietnam veterans who many times greet each other with the phrase, "welcome home my brother," a welcome phrase that has developed over the years and stemming from the treatment many received after return from Vietnam (Woytek June 2005). Some men spoke of being spat upon by an anonymous greeter at the airport when they returned, an experience referred to so often by veterans as to become a kind of mythic representation of a feeling shared by the American people. The Vietnam veterans spoke of "sneaking back" into society just as they were "sneaked" into Vietnam by higher authorities (Lifton 99).

Collective

The collective memory of a nation is represented in the memorials. This collective memory is enshrined in memorials like the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC. Whatever a nation chooses to commit to physical, or more significantly, what not to memorialize, is an indicator of the collective memory. The collective memories (memorials) evoke public memories or more accurately, remembering. Collective memory is a term credited to Maurice Halbwachs in the book **ON COLLECTIVE MEMORY**.

Collective memory takes place in a group that remembers based on past-shared events; however, the group is not related to one another by blood (Casey 23). Collective memory is the set of memories or knowledge derived from the past, verbal and or written. Recall improves when two or more people are asked to recall together a particular memory. A single person attempting to recall an event will be able to retrieve less information less accurately than two or more persons working on the same retrieval task. With the passing of time the details of specific events fade as they are taken from the forefront of our mind and placed into the mainstream of our memory; however, collective memory will fade. One of the major reasons that collective memory will fade is that successive generations will not attach the same meaning and significance to the event as the generations that were in their formative stages at the time. Most people between thirty and sixty now will attach more meaning to the events during the Vietnam War than anyone who will come later or have lived before. Those over sixty and those just born yet have their own events that will hold the focus of their collective memories. It is not that they will not or do not care about what happened on during the Vietnam War, but it will not be for them as it is for others. Since the collective memories do not play a vital role in their lives, the memory will gradually deteriorate. The event will be remembered, but the details and causes will blur.

Public

The fourth is public memory, a memory that is contributed to by individual's remembrance of the different levels of memory and not held privately. The term "public" signifies that the memory is taking place in open view of others, such as visiting the

Vietnam Veterans Memorial. "We all have different reasons, Sir, for coming to this place. I was just a little girl when you were over there and could never hope to understand the pain that you still bear. Well none of us were left untouched by all that you went through and you'd be helping me, Sir, by letting me help you (Santany)." These words were spoken by Tracy Santany as she helped a weary soldier reach out his hands and touch a name on the Wall. Three people come with different memories, placed in public by chance meeting at the Wall: an onlooker just visiting, a young woman, and a veteran. Each bears memory that becomes public as they interact, communicate, and remember. Public memory is the driving force behind the remembrances that have come from the hiding place of private memory for most Vietnam veterans.

History of War vs. Memory of Veterans

> *All of a sudden, I was awakened by the most hellish sound I'd ever heard in my life. It was mortar fire, cannon fire, and rockets. We were basically being overrun. It was the TET Offensive of 1968, and the bunkmate who was sleeping below reached up and grabbed me and threw me down on the floor. He told me to grab a weapon, look out after him, hold off fire, and follow him. So I grabbed a weapon and took out after him and ran to the far edge of the compound and jumped into a bunker. There were people running all over the place, and screaming, and dead bodies lying all over the ground. The dead bodies, I realized, were Americans. They were not the enemy (Sanderson).*

There is a rhetorical side to memory, and it begins in the distant past and continues to the present day. One chooses to bring into conversation familiar use of memory in everyday life, whether in a joke, in recalling an acquaintance, in reflecting about deep seeded memory. Memory can also be forgotten when one chooses not to remember. This study will examine not the medical or scientific theory of memory and the brain. Rather I believe discovering the behavior of memory is necessary for the understanding of how it is used for remembering and the triggering of even more moments in time. Those moments that have deteriorated may not be clarified with the use of technology but may be, at the very least, remembered. Aristotle's treatment of memory and the sensory experience further advances my theory on why memories of the past that have been repressed can be triggered to become a recollection with both sensory operations and the recall of moments in time. That moment in time could also include images or revisits of the area that was inhabited or experienced by an individual.

The problems and how memory and conversation work together, form human attitude, behaviors, and personalities, or changing them through memory, recalled by a current sensory experience reflected from past occurrences is the focus of this study. This study will concentrate on community of memory among American veterans of the Vietnam War during the years 1965 through 1971. Remembering the day many Vietnam veterans came back to an unwelcome greeting, the shouting of "baby killers," was painful at the time, but when remembered individually in today's time and place, it may not be as painful. Two communities are in place in the years 1965-1971 in this historical moment, the veterans, and those who did not serve in the military, either by choice or because of

circumstance. Each carries memories dependant on the community, which helped in the recollection and remembrance, and for that, memory in varying displays is rhetorical.

Summary

Memory is, as many ancient and medieval scholars perceived, a technique that facilitates retention and retrieval of knowledge, or history. The sum of all wisdom of a culture would be carried in the minds of revered scholars. The technology used to facilitate that process changes with time and forms a foundation for the move to preserve the histories of a culture. A culture of men and women who served in Vietnam, a community of memory, is now becoming a public memory, though sometimes shaded and colored.

The different interpretations of memory cause it to be rhetorical. How can private memory be accurate if there is no verification of the accuracy? Does private memory become distorted as time passes between recall and the memory identifier, such as location, time, or significant event? It has been proven that a significant event is a trigger to remembrances. The generations growing up in the sixties would say, "Remember what you were doing when John F. Kennedy was shot?" or "when man first set foot on the moon?" Each decade has some significant event or events that trigger a public remembrance, rooted in private memory, but becoming public and collective in the remembrances. Today many say, "Do you remember where you were when the attack on American came to New York on September 11?"

In this first chapter, I have examined three working definitions of memory. The first is that memory is a social process. In that form the study of remembering can be of

vital importance to the discipline of rhetoric and one, in which the facts, figures, and practices of a culture are kept. Second, memory is essentially selective and interpretive and therefore rhetorical. Collective and individual memories are not simply recollection of the facts of the past, ordered in a linear sequence along a time line. Through memory, we give significance to the experience. Thirdly, memory is the meaning we give to experience. We arrange our own memories, refine them, rework them, and perfect them, not always by making them more faithful to the facts. Who we are today in large measure may be determined by what we choose to remember and how we choose to remember it. We give our past significance by selectively keeping certain memories and stories alive, refreshing them, commemorating them, passing them down to our children, including stories of our failures and disappointments.

Chapter Two will center on the time and many of the first experiences, almost all triggered by sensory recollections. This chapter will detail many recollections of Vietnam veterans, nurses who served in the medical units, and personal recollections that were the original driving force for this work. A further examination of private memory and I will show how the transference of private memory to community and now to public memory brings the importance of this research and details how it is important to the rhetorical community and also to the community to which the memories originally belong.

Chapter Two

Public Memory

What is public memory and how can this be applied to our current study? The driving question here is how can public memory be validated when much of private memory remains private? Public memory is a special kind of discourse, deeply rooted rhetorically and especially important in how it frames our understanding of our lives and of significant public events. Because so many events are (the memory) disputable and sometimes controversial, they must be therefore rhetorical. The study of memory and in particular public memory places it in the public sphere and has become prominent in rhetorical scholarship. Some of those current writing on the subject include: Stephen H. Browne, Kendall R. Phillips, Barry Schwartz, Charles E. Scott, Bradford Vivian, Barbie Zelizer, and Edward S. Casey. Public memory used in public and by the public, addresses how individuals are bringing private memory back to the community and eventually to public exposition or display of those memories. Those displays can range from high school or other group shared events to communities recording of private memory (oral history) for the National Archives and other history preserving organizations. The use of technology, other than pen and paper, is moving and enabling many into sharing memory, sometimes when it has become difficult if not physically impossible to write.

Structure Of Public Memory

Different emphases are being placed in public memory. The prominence includes individual, community; however I intend to speak about what seems to be most pertinent to me and my research about public memory. Memory structures our perceptive viewpoint, poses questions to our lives, and provides inquiries as to the memory's validity. To the questions, problems and opportunities of public memory, this dissertation examines how public memory is structured and how it is relevant to today's research. The retrievable experience that is public memory is private without communication or putting past experiences into words, even if the sharing of information and then gaining access to that information, whether in the form of listening, seeing, or reading becomes a function of memory or a perception of memory. If the past is not put into words, then the communication remains private. The restriction of public memory may remain private under certain government groups that prevent access to communication and public memory. In some countries, restriction of public memory is policy; in others it is a way of life. These accesses to communication and public memory may be culturally selective or may be initiated by literacy depravation due to economics and technology barriers.

In public memory there is a kind of archive of memory through which we remember events that could be public, but more often, they are private memories that reside deep in the inner recesses of the human brain. Events and situation may not be remembered directly, but the memories rely on artifacts of the event that are like the chapter listings of a book. The analogy here is the chapter listings are in a printed form, a key to communication; however, the actual memories of events not listed in print have much fuzzier details. This recall of the event and the memory of the event can change

over time, even if written at the moment of the event. Letters from children at summer camp or from soldiers when written and sent home are prime examples of how memory can be preserved at the moment of the event; however, for the events to be of imbedded significance, the public memory is enhanced if those memories are current and relatable by the audience. These letters, written, often as the events were occurring, sometimes those may even have "tinted" details. It can be said even when one relies on survivor testimony, as he gets further away from the event, the overriding question is whether in fact the detail is survivor testimony of the event or survivor testimony of memory of the event that contains the factual details.

Memory is, as many ancient and medieval scholars perceived, a technique that facilitates retention and retrieval of knowledge or history. The sum of all wisdom of a culture would be carried in the minds of revered scholars, then passed on verbally to the community through story telling and cultural practices, rituals, and customs. The technology used to facilitate that process changed with time, from verbal to cryptographic to written and now to graphic visualizations. Those "memories" form a foundation for the move to preserve the histories of a culture and change as the technology or modes of communication change. Chapter 4 will detail more on the effects of technology on public memory. The narration of history is always already an interpretation (Gadamer 263). The world we live in is encased in memory projects, undertakings designed to reconstruct versions of the past. The cohesive narratives and glorious monuments that punctuate the culture and politics of countries now appear as mere options on a lengthy list of books, films, sites, and images of public memory. The rise of memory, with its links to individual and group subjectivity, has increased because technology enables us with

means to publish, communicate, and display. According to Jacques Derrida in "White Mythology," whether narrated by the "professional" scholar or by "amateur" eyewitnesses, historical discourse is always situated within the metaphysical, cultural, and political understandings of the narrator. Maurice Halbwachs observed that memory is not the product of individuals acting in isolation but is socially constructed. Commemoration and the politics of national identity are closely linked; so are memory and community. If a community creates and sustains memory, the reverse is also true: memory creates and sustains the community. The creation of a common past is a means of defining what and who belong; many reunion groups define with each meeting the changing dynamics of that particular group.

Technology

As we are witness to revolutionary technology, changing societal values, or a rise in prosperity, we should expect an emerging consumer trend to be around the corner. This development is preserving private memory and takes on a new technology, but one based in traditional writing. Human beings love to collect and store possessions, memories, experiences, in order to create personal histories, mementoes of their lives, or just to keep track for practical reasons, a cultural vantage. Thanks to the onslaught of new technologies and tools, from blogging software to memory sticks to high definition camera phones with lots of storage space and other "life capturing and storing devices," an almost biblical flood of 'personal content' is being collected, and waiting to be stored to allow for ongoing trips into private memory, some but not all accessible to the public. Collecting, storing, and displaying one's entire life, for private use, or for friends, family,

even the entire world to examine is being called "life caching" (Trendwatching.com). The trend owes much to bloggers: ever since writing and publishing one's diary for public viewing on the Internet has become as easy as typing in www.blogger.com, millions of people have taken to digitally indexing their thoughts and everything else all online, disclosing the virtual caches of their daily lives, exciting or boring, truthful or misleading, accurate or flawed.

Exposition of Public Memory

The larger and sometime overpowering inquisition of public memory that casts a rhetorical question is why have some individuals taken so long to begin this conversation? Factors include a desire to present memories that have been held private and to share with individuals who also share those memories. High school class reunions are one form in which private memories, once community but also public, are brought out in reminiscences as classmates open their yearbook and page through pictures, messages, and facts. Often this is the only time those treasured books have been opened since the last reunion. Just listening to the conversations that are started by a picture and the stories that ensue, one cannot help to understand why images are an important part of the act of remembering. Other vehicles for an exposition of public memory may be groups that share a common period of time in their lives, such as cancer survivors, servicemen, or co-workers. The key factor to public memory is that it is, or was experienced, by more than one person, though the private memory may differ from person to person and so private memory is rhetorical.

Literature

The majority writing on the rhetorical qualities of public memory believe it can be thought of as allegorical. Kendall Phillips narrows it down to three broad senses (31). The hesitant, shifting, configuration of traditions that is public memory affects a collective sense of identity, according to Michael Kammen in **MYSTIC CHORDS OF MEMORY: THE TRANSFORMATION OF TRADITION IN AMERICAN CULTURE**, telling us who we are and where we fit within the larger context of the world (13). In a second sense, public memory is rhetorical in an Aristotelian sense in that the images, events, and culturally accepted arguments contained in public memory serve as the basis for rhetorical appeals. Finally, public memory is rhetorical in that it is the site of much dispute and controversy. As Michael Kammen contends: "Memory is more likely to be activated by contestation, and amnesia is more likely to be induced by the desire for reconciliation"(13). Thus, we should expect to find evidence of public memories, where we find controversies and controversy where we find efforts to develop public memories according to Phillips (Rhetorical "Rivers of Blood" 2).

In "Public Memory in Place and Time," Edward Casey indicates that "reminiscing with others" may play a more important role than once thought—whether formally or informally, with others or alone (21). Groups have their own forms of remembering, which will be explored as I weave through the rhetorical implications of public memory; individual memory forms a secluded and isolated remembrance, one that may contrast with group remembrance. Contrast may be a softer description of the remembrances; conflict of remembrances is many times the driving force that propels the conversation and public memory. Group memory relies on personal memory, whether self-apparent

remembrance or triggered by participation in a community of memory as it emerges from the group (Diaz 309).

Memory is the capability to retrieve one or more impressions of some experience or a past occurrence that has had some impact on our mind. The capability to retrieve revolves around the ability to recover information, impressions, expressions or some past event that we experience, as an individual or as a group. In order for this memory to be public, it would have to be a retrievable shared experience, like the Challenger Shuttle explosion some 20 years ago, or the events of September 11, 2001.

Use of Memory

We use memory to remember people, places, and events by giving accounts, by believing or disbelieving stories about each other's past and identities (McIntyre 190). One cue that gives identification and authority to a remembrance is a trust that is assumed in the persona of the individuals. Family members are given that identification and authority unless the member has become estranged or identified as untrustworthy by the group. This group trustworthiness can also be seen in other groups; however, they are much more difficult to verify as to accuracy if the group is a loosely based organization. High school and college reunion groups fall into the loosely based category. A group that is the focus of this study is that of Vietnam veterans, tightly grouped for a short time, the one-year tour of duty, and then loosely based for 20 or more years. Because this group is unlike any other veteran based group from prior wars and conflicts are the reason for this study.

The narrative that is set identifies the place and people and what event was going on at the time; this original narrative begins the set-up of several narrative histories according to Connerton (21). Each of the narratives assumes the viewpoint of the individual but is relatable to the group. Each narrative at the moment of execution is exactly the same from the overall viewpoint, but like any remembrance can change over time, even as short as one minute. We orient the other's behavior according to the place of his/her life in history. We situate that behavior with reference to its place in the history of the shared setting to which he belongs. Connerton refers to this as a social memory (22). The story of one life is part of an interconnecting set of narratives embedded in the story of those from which individuals originate their identity, much like the Communication Institute for Online Scholarship (CIOS) and the "Visual Communication Concept Explorer" (VCCE) where researchers use the narrative to explore related concepts from the communication literature. This unique search system can help to gain a deep appreciation of the structure of communication knowledge and displays links in a real-time based universe like structure.

Remembering Events

Events are remembered through a mixture of representation: be it art, song, oral tradition, ritual, material relics or possessions, the news media, and the landscape itself. Much has been written about the Holocaust by writers like Maurice Halbwachs, regarded as first modern theorist of collective memory in his 1950 publication **THE COLLECTIVE MEMORY**. Very few books have addressed the Vietnam War and the effects of the collective memory. Marita Sturken in her 1997 book **TANGLED MEMORIES: THE**

VIETNAM WAR, THE AIDS EPIDEMIC, AND THE POLITICS OF REMEMBERING is one of the few writers attempting to take that segment of history and put it in perspective. Her discussion encompasses an assessment of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the AIDS Quilt; her philosophical interpretation of the Memorial as a national wailing wall is one whose emphasis is on the veterans and war dead which continues the conversation that is often buried in private memory: the memory of heroes, sacrifice, and honor. The book also includes discussions of the Kennedy assassination, the Persian Gulf War, the Challenger explosion, and the Rodney King beating, all events that have a part of the public memory of many Americans.

Public memory is possibly not just a simple shared record of the past, but an organization of values about the past. These values help the community to understand the past and as memories often do, shape the future. History books are full of rich textures of societies and their behaviors. From how the Revolutionary War helped shape the United States to the successes and failures of the space program, all have produced a bearing on how society reflects on public memory and how it is used to guide changes. In addition, the collective memory reflects the community models as a reflection of the past events, those in relation to needs, fears, interests, and hopes of the present. The memory frames the society in which it is embedded; it helps the society find meaning and provides vague, yet interpretable direction, direction that rhetorically can be examined in the present, or the subject of history books.

Vietnam War

There have been only a dozen or so books written on the Vietnam War and less than that in the number of movies. It is sometimes difficult to classify the content. Some pure history derived facts and figures, others pure fiction, and still others with a mixture of fact and fiction. A smaller body of work exists, that of private memory, much of it self-published. In hardback, paperback, and on the Internet, all tell of memories of places, events and often of people. Michael Archer, author of **A PATCH OF GROUND; KHE SAHN REMEMBERED**, tried to write his memories in 1970 but found himself agitated and unfocused. He claims the reason was the events were too recent and some too painful. "I packed up all the notes, letters, logs, and other reference materials I had collected from my time at Khe Sanh, put them in a cardboard box, and stored them away at the back of a closet" (vii). In 1977 Archer opened a box containing a long-forgotten audio tape sent by a friend (vii). Audio tape replaced the traditional letter writing as technology become more compact and available. The use of technology as a device for remembering will be discussed in a later chapter of this study. The tape was recorded during an attack on the outpost and contains graphic language and frightening sounds of shells exploding (vii). It was at that moment he realized the preciousness of what they risked, something that was not evident when Archer had first attempted to write in 1970 (vii). The events described are the best of Archer's recollections, though in his book he has changed some names to protect the privacy of individuals and their families, proving the theory that memory, in particular public memory is highly rhetorical.

Sensory Experience

The recollection of a public memory is not a recovery or the acquisition of a particular individual memory; it is a sense of the time when a society or community first experiences an event with any of the senses. The sensory experience can be best described as an action occurring during an event that involves one of the five senses: sight, sound, smell, touch, taste. The remembrance of memory as recollection corresponds to a time: yesterday, last week, or yesterday. The touch of a familiar texture, a musty smell of a wet forest still damp from early morning rain, the sight of a once familiar face all are triggers or keys to a remembrance. Many of those are private but can be public if they are a shared experience, and that shared experience may not have occurred at the same time or place.

One can choose to ignore the recall, slightly glancing through it lightly or decide to explore the event with detail brought into the private memory sphere. The events in memory that are painful such as the loss of a parent, spouse, or child are often ignored, as time from the event grows more distant. That is not to say that all of the painful memories are forgotten over time, but the recall of the memories changes over time from painful to fond remembrances. The casual momentary look though memory provides a fleeting glance at a moment in time. The reason for the slight attention to them may be time pressure, logistical pressure (riding in a public subway), or a conscious attempt to forget that memory (Titchener 68).

Remembering Events

The different interpretations of memory or history cause it to be rhetorical. How can private memory be accurate, if there is no verification of the accuracy? Does private memory become distorted as time passes between recall and the memory identifier, such as location, time, or significant event? It has been proven that a significant event is a trigger to remembrances. The generations growing up in the sixties would say, "Remember what you were doing when John F. Kennedy was shot?" or "when man first set foot on the moon?" Each decade has some significant event or events that trigger a public remembrance, rooted in private memory, but becoming public and collective in the remembrances. Today many say "Do you remember where you were when the attack on America came to New York on September 11, 2001?" Despite the existence of competing narratives, it is usually the case that one narrative tends to dominate. The dominate narrative or memory here is the killing of innocent lives in an event so horrific to this day many will not look at the footage of the event of 9-11.

Kendall Phillips believes the distinction between memory and history has been identified as far back as 1992 in a book **ON COLLECTIVE MEMORY** by Maurice Haldwachs. Haldwachs saw history and memory as opposing ways of recalling the past (Phillips 2). History as viewed through the lens of an historical account of notable accuracy is far different from diverse, multiple, and mutable accounts of past events (3). The difference is in the experience and procedures that historians would use to document an event. Official historians will document every event, no matter how insignificant and make the notations so as to keep a determination of the accuracy of the account. Once again, rhetorically it can be argued the accuracy of the account may be faulty.

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History is more than arbitrary construction contingent on time. The deep-seated cognitive principles of perception and translation into stories have permeated traditional societies. The interpretation of the past is by means of alternative narratives, according to Lewis and Sandra Hinchman (xxi). These alternative narratives can be heard in the re-telling of stories, those whose narrative depends on memory and not a written text.

Shared memory

Public memory can be characterized in many ways. Public memory makes accessible to and through public discourse a collection of stories or narratives that share a common base. In this collection the complexity of memory is both shared but also discursive. In other words, shared memory is not the same as collective public memory because it's bigger and more accessible and many times more documented than a collective public memory. In computer programming, shared memory is a method by which program processes can exchange data more quickly than by reading and writing using the regular operating system services. Using a designated area of shared memory, the data can be made directly accessible to both processes without having to use the system services.

National history and public memory, where the past is collectively constructed, disputed, and continued as remembrances is part of the discussion and examination of public memory scholars like Phillips and Haldwachs. Some refer to it as popular historical consciousness (Long, 30), while other historians like French philosopher and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs are known for developing the concept of collective memory. Maurice Halbwachs speaks of collective or public memory. All are various

versions of national history created by historians, officials, schools, mass media, filmmakers, museums and monuments, public ceremonies, and personal recollections. With such diverse views, we are all keepers of the past and produce different interpretations of the way things were and why. They represent their individual interests and view events from their own perspectives, their private memory displayed as public memory. They therefore do not agree and are rhetorical, nor is there a previous collective product that constitutes a singular "thing" called public memory.

Collective Memory

Collective memory is what governments want their constituents, or one of the parts that make up group like voting citizens, to have because it forms a kind of unity of being. One can collectivize memory on particular holidays, national days, and therefore nationalize disparate events and assign them particular meaning, a meaning that everybody can share. However I began looking at the ways that in fact we don't ever, any of us as individuals, share a particular memory of events, since we all have very different experiences. Perhaps these areas of collective memorialization might be regarded not as areas to collective memory but the sites whereby thousands of individuals will come bringing their own memories. The collective whole of these private memories, along with these sites, might now be seen as collecting these disparate and competing memories within them.

Collective memory has people bring all kinds of artifacts, pictures, and remembrance items, and maybe it's simply the act of coming together and struggling with whatever it is at the site or at the memorial or at the museum. Collective memory is what

brings people together. They're bringing their private collected memories to a place and there is the possibility that those memories may become public again through conversation, communication, and with the help of the electronic media.

Historical Memory

Memory is a recollection that can be shared by those at the event, or a shared memory such as how governments can commemorate a shared memory for unity. Both are an example of public memory. Memorial Day, once known as Decoration Day, traces its origin back to the Civil War (Schauffler 23). There are many stories as to its actual beginnings, with over two dozen cities and towns laying claim to being the birthplace of Memorial Day. There is also evidence that organized women's groups in the South were decorating graves before the end of the Civil War. It's difficult to prove conclusively the origins of the day, partly because of the many public memories and text writings of the day. This reaffirms my statements earlier that the factual text of public memory may be flawed. It is more likely that Memorial Day had many separate beginnings. Each of those towns and every planned or spontaneous gathering of people to honor the war dead in the 1860's was the beginnings of the remembrances. They tapped into the general human need to honor our dead. It seemed such a fitting and proper way of remembering those who had passed. On that, the custom became an annual event for communities as they adopted a plan of observing "Decoration Day" each spring. When we participate in Memorial Day celebrations, there is a way in which all are participating in public memory and the public memory has been expanded beyond the Civil War.

The notion of shared memory is what governments want their country's people to have because it forms kind of a unity of community. Memorial Day, Veteran's Day, and others nationalize events and assign them particular meaning that everybody can share, though it may not be understood by every person in that community. To witness "Rolling Thunder" in Washington D.C. as a veteran or current member of the American forces gives a feeling of community. It is quite a different public memory from those who accidentally crossed paths with these thousand or more motorcyclists driving down Pennsylvania Avenue. Each of the public memories is from different, but diverse groups, two different views on the event, and one more memorable than the other. Any of us as individuals, share a particular memory of events, since we all have very different experiences, and when together, thousands of individuals will come bringing their own memories. The actual event, the public memory event, remains clear to all; it is the personal memories of that public event that are collected together in the public memory. The focus of many reunion groups of Armed Forces, high school, and even college classes is the sharing of community memories. Reunion attendees often struggle and work to keep the public memory alive; many of these reunions can result in changes to their personal, social, and familial lives. Some make immediate, life-changing decisions on returning home. Many of these do find positive personal transformation in the re-telling of memory. Time is an important factor, and for some, time is or has run out. Realizations of how the reunion affects daily life and how integration is possible often require reflection, retelling, interaction with others of the same group, and repetition (Woytek May 2001).

Those who want to keep processing the events and struggle to keep the spark alive can join reunion associations, maintain contact with their former associates through letters and reunions, or repeat the experience. Repetition always exists as a possibility to recharge the batteries, to renew the feelings, to search for new openings. Those who tend to compartmentalize the reunions may return to the gatherings and play at this other reality again, enjoying their special status as "veterans." Often they take pride in the number of times they have made the reunion, as if somehow their authenticity is increased through repetition (Woytek May 2001).

Virtual Communities

Virtual communities may spring from the result of the reunions and may precede or help to create communities of people (for example, those who share the experience of a relationship with a former classmate or co-worker) who would otherwise have little chance of meeting in person or communicating with one another, since they are geographically highly dispersed and since they come from vastly different socio-cultural backgrounds. The virtual communities have leaders, organizers, marginal members, and active participants (Constable 33). Members shared certain interests with one another and lent practical and moral support. They circulated highly specialized knowledge and experience such as the effects of Agent Orange and how to get treatment. Some members were more vocal and popular than others; many communicated regularly, sometimes exchanging several messages a day. These Internet communities at times actively recruited new members from bulletin boards and other chat rooms or through personal networks. The result from the face-to-face meetings, regional gatherings, or group

reunions often turn into shared online websites and message boards, with photographs and captions for the rest of the group. More on this will be related in chapter 4 of this work. I bring it to the front now, because the reunion is the catalyst for the sharing of public memory as a community. First beginning as private memory, then at the reunion or meetings, that private memory becomes community and from those conversations, writings and documentation comes to public memory. That public memory that emerges from those gatherings and conversations often has a richer and more robust view that shared by the general public memory (33).

Poetry

Aristotle told us that poetry had as much or more to teach us about history than history writing itself, because it would teach us about not just what happened but what might have happened as well. So that there's always been a part of the historian which would take into account the flaws of history writing, and the discontinuities.

Much of the poetry written during times of intensity often bares the truth to factual observations. Most of the poets showed no grasp of power politics, the relentless pressure of the war, or military action and propaganda, no understanding of causes or cures for the war. They spoke simply as human beings caught up in bewildering and shocking events. As human beings they recorded their experiences and moral responses. They spoke of the problems of modern warfare conducted by "advanced" and "civilized" nations. The war poets, as all poets, brought, to everything they wrote, their education, their life experience, their character. They wrote in the context of momentous events and

intense national feelings, but more importantly, poets wrote mainly in response to

personal experiences, private memory made public (Van Mahen 185).

MEDEVAC

Through the rain and mist

Came the sounds of the helicopter.

Its tired blades

Heavily stoking through

The thick solid clouds,

Which had covered the land for days.

It drifted easily from the overcast,

Banked into a half circle,

Swept around the camp

And into the landing zone.

There it settled gently

On top of the red spitting smoke grenade.

Grabbing one end of the stretcher,

I hustled out with a wounded.

Willing hands helped him aboard

And I followed him up

For the quick, free trip to nearby Danang.

With a roar of power

The land dropped away

Where symmetrical square rice paddies

Flashed the gray like shiny mirrors

As the buildings and roads,

Dwindled to miniatures.

      The roar of the engine settled down

Putting us all away to private worlds

My distant thoughts were interrupted

By a loud, barking, rattle and cough

As the kid with the clear blue eyes

Spasmed, trembled, and died.

      The crew chief glanced down at him,

The Marine by the window just stared away.

The black kid leaned back and covered his eyes,

While the countryside reeled off below.

Danang was but 10 clicks away,…It took a forever to get there.

    (Bennett)

Bennett's poem is a private memory but can be shared as public memory by anyone who was at or near the shared experience. The viewpoint from which it is read makes public memory so rhetorical. Rhetoric is perspective-susceptible, tied to the possibility of audience and situation (99). It is coupled to what audiences know and believe and have come to expect in particular circumstances. A reader who has not experienced the event, in this case a medevac from a war battlefield, will have a differing public memory from one who has private memory of such an event. If the reader received

experiences from say a televisions news film, the reader is experiencing a different event

that will be stored as a public memory, a public memory that may be far removed from

the memory shared by the writer who actually experienced the event. The reader who is

not sharing the public memory derived from shared private memory, sometimes referred

to as community of memory, will examine certain words and not know the meaning of

them. Take for example "10 clicks away." To anyone who was born after 1980 this might

translate to "Entire World is only 10 clicks away!" if that person is using an Internet web

page to gather information. However to the private memory of a veteran who was in

Vietnam, "10 clicks away" is 10 kilometers away. The rhetorical nature of public

memory is what makes this discussion so relevant and worthy of study.

False Memory

A private memory made public may also take on elements of fraud, which can

raise questions of memory ethics, or in this case, how the ethics of memory can be

exploited. Memory can play tricks on individuals. Some of the legitimacy of false

memory can be attributed to neurological disorders and some may be created by the

individual. The creation of a false memory may arise from the need to feel important, to

have people feel sorry for the individual. The creation of this false memory was at one

time individual among a community or group of people (Loftus 725). I am sure in grade

school or high school, a person would boast about an event in his live, and to make it

more "over the top" embellishments would be attached. As the story received the

attention intended by the teller, more embellishments would be added. All the while, the

private memory is becoming more public. Public memory must have a vehicle of

communication, written, recorded or preserved in a method that can be communicated to others. Parental people in responsible position (mothers and fathers) called these memories "little white lies." The person creating these public memories may have many reasons for doing this; however, it begins to free-fall in content and often takes on a believable, though false, memory. The memory becomes true to the person, memory so true that only an expert in truthful memory, or someone who was with the individual can bring the truth to public memory (Kenny 423).

The public memory of these events does not take place until the communication to others occurs. That communication may be encouraged, as in younger children trying to jockey for hierarchical positioning in the group. In such instances, the group, hears the memory, and then it becomes public to the group. When communicated outside of the group it then becomes public memory, though not in the same way national events have become public memory. One might say this public memory is in a closed community. Adults may also use hierarchical positioning in their groups. The embellishments of private memory becoming public have a greater chance of being related to global public events (Myers 23). The value of community of memory to the memory of the community is a preservative factor in the memories shared by that community.

Accountability

The speculative interpretation of memory, especially public memory is that it is not one hundred percent accurate. Grounding in the accountability of the memory is given by the accountability of the person who writes or publicly displays this memory, keeping in mind that memory is rhetorical. Private individuals, especially those who have

served in the military have a code of honor that is sometimes broken. Truthfulness is part of the code of honor. Here is one example of a private memory as witnessed by myself at the Vietnam Memorial in 2006, proclaimed in public at a national monument and completely false. The man in blue jeans, Pittsburgh Steelers shirt, and a ball cap perched on his head was near the Vietnam Memorial. Lettering on the hat indicated he was a veteran of the Vietnam War. Beginning conversation was a simple "welcome home brother," a phrase common as a greeting to men and women who served in the war. The conversation usually starts asking where one served, what unit or branch of the service, and then what year or years. The data at this point is researchable; it is from here with the narrative that private memory can disagree with public memory. There are certain public memory details that are shared and not questioned; however, there are some public memories that can be false. The veteran described his tour including being captured by the Viet Cong, tortured, and then finally released. The Prisoner of War status could be later checked but not at first meeting. Listening to the stories, showing the scars from alleged POW torture are one way of discovering the private memory. The public memory that is accurate is only researchable if one was with the vet in the community of memory or a part of a national archive.

The details of the capture and torture of many were gruesome but believable, and the physical scars developed a picture of authenticity. From the city of Da Nang, 15 clicks west is where he spent 3 years in a POW camp. Anyone who shared the public memory of that part of the country would have sent a warning flag up indicating false memory. There was no POW camp there. That's public memory and can be proven as true. The other parts of his story seemed factual to me, however, a week later in a

conversation with a relative it was revealed this man was living a false private memory but proclaiming in fact the memory was true and public. The physical scars were caused in early childhood when a part of kidney was removed. This man's mother was devastated that her son would be pretending to be someone he is not. How many people has he communicated with and told of his heroic adventures and escape with death she would ask?

A researcher in private memory would ask, "How much of the man's story can become part of public memory?" One can see why memory, especially public memory, can be examined in a rhetorical perspective. Another part of the story is that he was going into Reed Memorial Army Hospital and according to him, he was not expected to survive the operation, this the reason why he was in Washington, D.C. A check with the hospital a week later indicated he was not a patient and no one could find him on the surgical floors (Woytek May 2006).

A visit by myself to his last known residence turned up nothing; however an elderly lady in the house across the street remembered the family and had a phone number for this man's mother. That phone call would prove to be painful to both his mother and to this researcher. In tears the mother called her son a fraud and a liar. He was in Vietnam, but never as a POW. He served one and a half tours but deserted his unit and was given a less than honorable discharge. He was still running from authorities, this time for tax evasion. Last heard he was in jail in Virginia. The reaction to these series of events to me was disbelief. How could a fellow soldier deliberately lie? How could one re-arrange private memory to such a degree that he even believed the story to be true?

Saving Private Memory

A memory can be saved, yet, unlike the physicality of a photograph or a physical visit, the saved memory is not real and is therefore open to numerous interpretations. Public memory cannot be unilaterally credited either to a single individual or to a group, but there is always an exchange between the personal memories of an individual and the collective memory of the social group to which he or she belongs. The act of writing or preserving on recordable media such as audio or videotape efficiently supports memory's work: family photo books, the current trend in scrap booking and the hours of 8mm film, videotape and DVD media. Photographic artifacts, assumed to be true may not be as ethically honest or true as letters, the human perspective verses the camera perspective. Jacques Ellul in **THE TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY** argues that images that are constructed or recorded and must be framed by discourse and are therefore limited in trueness (253). There is not a one-to-one on the distinctions of memory between individuals and public memory because individual memory at its best can only be interpersonally dialogic. Moreover, research has shown that private memory is not as authentic to the past as has often been understood, bringing rhetorical implications and questioning the authenticity of those (Tai 21). Imagination does play a major role in the formation of memories, for they are always the products of a reconstruction of the past according to present or in the current moment in time concerns. Fiction, which belongs first and foremost to the realm of fantasy and imagination, is also in constant relation to reality, if only because telling something means telling it as if it had actually happened. The fantasy or imagination memory, mixed with fact but mostly fiction, is public memory characterized by its ability

to preserve individual and collective memories on a larger scale in time and space
(Bruckner 389).

Monuments

The discourse on public memory recognizes the importance of both physical place
and symbolic space. If, however, there is no public place into whose boundaries a
rhetorical memory space is deemed appropriate, then the memory can disappear (Wright
3). This need for such rhetorical memory space explains why so many groups mobilize to
ensure that their memories gain legitimacy. The ways in which those memories are
legitimized include publications, media documentaries or recordings, and monuments.
Monuments are an important space where groups can define themselves and speak to, or
for, the larger group, both for the present and much of the future. Chapter Three will
focus on the effects that monuments have on that memory space, in particular the effects
on Vietnam veterans and civilians of all age groups as they visit the Vietnam Veterans
Memorial, "The Wall."

Written Public Memory

History, like art, changes meaning over time, from person to person, culture to
culture, place to place (Ricoeur 305). The history that is written about the men and
women who served in Vietnam was written in a time and place much different from
today. If those who served in Vietnam had each written a chapter in the history, a much
different view of the conflict would have been seen. Why didn't they write? Writing is
the preservation of memory. Technically, they did write, in the form of letters to home,

poems, and personal journals. Letters for family, girlfriends, spouses and even letters to anonymous individuals who were recruited with newspaper ads asking them to write to a serviceman or woman serving in Vietnam served as a written account of history. These records document personal history, not clouded or shaped by memory, but shaped by the need to inform or hide facts and narratives.

In **LETTERS FROM VIETNAM**, Bill Adler displays a collective personal history of the Vietnam War between 1965 and 1973. The letters, written by those who were in Vietnam, medical personnel, and volunteers, preserve in written form a narrative history of their experiences in southeast Asia and bridge the gap from personal memory to public memory. The book is a fragmented recollection of those memories recreated a quarter of a century later. It is bits and pieces of memory gleaned from the letters and supplemented by recollections edited with the effects of time. There is no particular pattern to the fragments. Reading the letters is more like rummaging though an attic than reading a story with a beginning and an end. Divided into four distinct sections, the letters are written to the parents and friends back home and describe the misery of combat, the harshness of daily living, the often unsure relations between Americans and Vietnamese, and the attitudes of many Vietnam veterans toward both the war and the U.S. government. These serve as a historical perspective, written in a timeframe where memory was not a consideration, but self-censorship was.

11-Sept.-69

Dear Mom and Dad,

Getting short, Mom, coming home pretty soon. Going to quit flying soon, too much for me now. I went in front of a board for sp/5 will know

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soon if i made it. I have now 20 oak leaf clusters and some more paper for

you. I have flown 1500 hours now, and in those hours I could tell you a

lifetime story. I have been put in for a medal again, but this time I have

seen far beyond of what ever you will see. That is why I'm going to quit

flying. I dream of Valerie's hand touching mine telling me to come home;

but I wake up, and it's some sergeant telling me I have to fly. Today I am

21, far away but coming home older.

> *Love,*

> *Larry (Adler)*

Larry Adler died within 24 hours after this letter was written. Many letters written home would be the last message from a soldier to his or her family. Some have been preserved. Many have not been released to the public and may never become part of public memory (Adler 193).

Now almost 40 years later when researching for this dissertation, I have found this historical account thoughtful, humorous, and horror-filled letters from what was then an underappreciated and ill-treated generation of soldiers. The public memory that these create fulfils the communication rhetoric and provides future generations with details that might have forever been kept secret. The styles vary. Historians desiring to preserve public memory did not write these; instead people in a place and time wrote them. Many were written under stress and are flavored with blunt language and strong political and personal views. In Adler's book, comments follow the letters, often explaining the language or providing reflective details of events.

Letter #22

16 Dec 68

Hi everybody!!! Don't mind this letter if it appears dirty, but that is what I'm living in. Well, three days ago we were chopper'd onto Hill 500 where we were met by an NVA battalion. I need not say more except I escaped without a scratch, but I'm still shaking. I hope I never have to see a dead Marine again. I lost my best buddy from Indiana, and my other buddy got medevaced as he lost from his knees down. I guess Christmas will be spent here. The other night when everybody was getting killed, I wished I was back home. Your whole life flies by as every bullet tears into somebody. I think I grew 10 years older in a minute. Well got to go, and thanks for the package again. I'm OK and not even scratched. Love, Paul (Adler 105)

For the Vietnam veteran the significant event was not so much a public event as a private event. The first day "in-country" was significant to a veteran as a remembrance point. In-country refers to the soldier being in the country or in the Republic of Vietnam. It was a common saying to refer to the time spent in Vietnam as "days in-country." Other common slang or phrases used by Vietnam soldiers include: "boo-coo ," bastardized French, from beaucoup, meaning "much" or "many". "Dustoff" missions were medical evacuation missions using helicopters. While the term has been used to apply to all medical evacuation missions, GIs reserved the term for missions flown to pick up wounded soldiers in the field, often under fire. "Short Timers Stick": when a soldier had

approximately two months remaining on his tour in Vietnam, he might take a long stick

and notch it for each of his remaining days in-country. As each day passed, he would cut

the stick off another notch until on his rotation day he was left with only a small stub.

"Puff the Magic Dragon" refers to an aircraft that would deliver a stream of bullets that

would cover every inch of a football sized field laying bullets 1 inch apart. A project to

collect much of the slang can be found at the Institute of Advanced Technology in the

Humanities at the University of Virginia at Charlottesville. The private memory recalls

smells, heat and fear. This memory is both private and collective as I have discovered in

my research. Other private memories both collective and now public include the day each

wounded soldier was hit, the "R&R" rest and recuperation break for one week, and the

last day "in-country" (Woytek June2005).

Much of how private memory has been focused on the Vietnam veteran can be

applied to most community groups. Any group of people who have spent a significant

time together have much the same types of memory and recall triggers. The larger the

group the more accuracy there will be in the memories. A group gathering in 2006

consists of then 8th grade students of St. Ambrose School in Brooklyn (Woytek June

2006). This group, like many of the Vietnam veteran groups has not had much contact in

the last thirty plus years and may prove to be an interesting follow-up study.

Documenting Public Memory

When documenting the memories of these groups it is important to try to be as

accurate as possible, making accuracy the sole aim of testimony or memory. It is difficult

to exclude equally important objectives in memory and testimony because those may

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have become clouded over the years. The un-exercised memory can develop lapses and sometimes fatal losses in accurate facts and details. When allowance is made for inaccurate memory and what that can teach us, then the fulfillment of the rhetorical examination of the artifacts becomes important to the community and to the individual private memory. You know within the nature of normal parameters of historical inquiry, to say: here are a whole series of avenues, questions, or impacts that move out from this event, proving that the use of rhetoric to examine private memory will add to and explore the many facets of the problem. One adds to the private memory the results of the community of memory that is being expanded with each gathering, collecting and becoming part of public memory just as the tangible expressions are resurrected from deep memory (Myers 507).

What we see in the monuments and memorials, a very tangible expression of this collected memory is only one part in which we sustain these memories. The fact that memories are being moved to another generation means that in the future, people come back and debate them. Monuments and memorials can trigger deep memory just as gathering of community (Hansen).

Chapter Three

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: The Wall

The rhetorical activity involved in one of the most controversial symbols and public monuments is the focus on this study on public memory. What was once described as 'the black gash of shame"(Johnson 258) by some and a healing place by others, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, "The Wall," is a meeting place, a memorial and a trigger that evokes private memory, a private memory that for more than 30 years has been kept from the public by many men and women who served in Vietnam.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D. C. has been proven to be a healing place for veterans searching for a connection to memory of friends and fellow soldiers killed in action. This location and its design has become a place for public remembrance and for private reflection, not just for Vietnam veterans, but also for generations born long after the last helicopter lifted troops from the hotel rooftop in Saigon.

This section will show how the symbolic rhetorical edifices that are called monuments, especially the Vietnam Memorial, have become a major force in the revealing of private memory and permitting that to become public in a personal and individually interpretive arena. Setting the platform from which I frame public memory is not entirely without analysis.

Public Memory

In the ever expanding literature on memory, Kendall Phillips explores the key term "public memory" (2). In the introduction to his book, **FRAMING PUBLIC MEMORY**, he declares the term not to be exclusive to the humanities but expanding into reference to monuments, television programs, and even into the city streets (5). In offering a viewpoint and analysis, this author has chosen monuments as a factor of public memory to examine because I believe the monument dedicated to the Vietnam veteran is a prime reason for the investigation of public memory. Television, , and the written word also use these monuments as a starting point in the telling of a story. The movie "Flags of Our Fathers," based on the bestselling book by James Bradley (adapted by writers William Broyles Jr., Paul Haggis and Ron Powers), this film chronicles the battle of Iwo Jima and the fates of the soldiers who raised the American flag on Mount Suribachi in the iconic photo which is now a monument in Washington D.C.

To one of the most visited cities in the United States, Washington D.C. is a city of monuments, large and small. Since 1852, over 150 memorials have been erected in the nation's capital, which amounts to approximately one dedication per year (NCPC 2000). Just since the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in 1982, 13 memorials have been dedicated and they are working on 16 active memorial projects. Two of these are under construction, 10 are authorized and in various stages of approval, and four are seeking congressional authorization (2000).

To understand the value of monuments to public memory, one must examine the study of memory, a study largely based on the rhetoric of memories (Phillips 2). To speak of memory as open to challenge, modification, and possibly elimination of something

never to be recovered designates the study of memory as an exceedingly rhetorical process. Public monuments embody the Janusian trait of being radically bivalent in their temporality, attaching to a past and ensuring future remembrance of the same event (Casey 17).

The District of Columbia has included sites for future monuments and memorials in its long range planning (NCPC 2000). The memorials and museums that define Washington's Monumental Core express America's connections to its past and its direction for the future. From the Washington Monument and the Holocaust Museum to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, these cultural and commemorative public spaces are physical reminders of a collective past and repositories for artifacts. The Memorials and Museums Master Plan identified 100 potential sites for future memorials and museums; the master plan provides general guidelines for where and how these facilities should be accommodated (NCPC).

Forms

Edward Casey and his study of public memory delineates public memory as memory that occurs in the open, in front of others, and consists of those which one can interact about, deliberate over, and share (Public Memory in Place and Time 20). Monuments are a place where that public memory occurs. Casey writes on four major forms of human memory and is an important starting point for analysis. The first of those starting points is individual memory. This individual memory is a product of a person who is engaged in memory, they remember in several different ways, not just recalling that something happened, but also remembering certain details and complete

environmental complexes (20). Edward Casey's book **REMEMBERING** details memory including a chapter on collective memory; it was published in the late 1980's.

The second form, according to Casey, is "social memory," held commonly by kinship or geographical proximity in neighborhoods and shared by others who are already related to one another in some way (21). Third is "collective memory" which takes place in a group that remembers based on past shared events like Vietnam veterans; however the group is not related to one another by birth (23). One example of collective memory surfaced in research conducted at a recent Vietnam veteran Navy Seabee reunion (Woytek May 2004). When asked in a group the things they can remember carrying, this list emerged. They carried P-38 can openers and heat tabs, watches and dog tags, insect repellent, gum, cigarettes, Zippo lighters, salt tablets, compress bandages, ponchos, Kool-Aid, two or three canteens of water, iodine tablets, sterno, LRRP- rations, and C-rations stuffed in socks (Woytek May 2004). They carried standard fatigues, jungle boots, bush hats, flak jackets and steel pots. They carried the M-16 assault rifle, trip flares and Claymore mines, M-60 machine guns, the M-70 grenade launcher, M-14's, CAR-15's, Stoners, Swedish K's, 66mm Laws, shotguns, .45 caliber pistols, and silencers (Woytek). They carried C-4 plastic explosives, an assortment of hand grenades, PRC-25 radios, knives, and machetes. Some carried napalm, CBU's, and large bombs (Woytek May 2004). To many reading this, all those names are just that, names and symbols. To those who shared a community of memory, the understanding of those symbols and names has a much deeper and memory charging effect. Not only the mention of those devices and processes can trigger memory but sound has a similar effect. The veteran heard the sound of bullets, rockets, and choppers, and sometimes the sound of silence; some risked their

lives to rescue others. Some escaped the fear but dealt with the death and damage. Some made very hard decisions, and some just tried to survive (Woytek November 2006).

The fourth form according to Casey is public memory. Public memory is a recollection that is contributed by an individual's remembrance of different levels of memory (22). This memory is not held privately. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the effect it has on the public is an example of how a public memory can surface with the viewing of a public memorial.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial

The Memorial stands as a unique opportunity for the rhetorical, for it reveals the symbolic strategies that survivors use as they attempt to complete the process of healing that has eluded the nation for many years. The war was arguably the most significant event in United States history in the last forty years (Carlson 204). Prior to Vietnam, American soldiers were seen as heroes who fought for noble causes. Vietnam was poles apart from previous wars and conflicts. The power of guilt about American participation, the pullout of forces, and the lives that were lost, took generations to heal. The war has become a metaphor for a generation of Americans who still struggle to find a significance of the war, and to find some form of peace.

The essential purpose of a war memorial, although not necessarily the only one, expresses the attitude and values of a community toward those persons and deeds are memorialized (Barber 65). Because the memorials are rhetorical, misunderstanding may result, and the sentiments and values given are in danger of not giving significance to the form that was chosen to embody those values (65). The memorial is a symbol of feelings

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of the community group, the community of memory. The Vietnam Memorial began in just such a rhetorical way. The year was 1979 when Jan Scruggs, Tom Carhart, and other Washington, D.C. veterans were planning to build a memorial to the casualties to the Vietnam War, a war referred to by the Vietnamese as "The American War." Though these men were not interested in the political arguments over the deployment and deaths of so many American men and women, they wanted to connect past and present in a memorable way (Bodnar 3).

Much has been written on the Memorial itself. Public memory emerges from the junction of official and cultural language expressions, according to John Bodnar in **THE MAKING OF AMERICA** (13). Civic and group leaders share an interest in ethnic communities and thereby share in the narrative that is the public memory of a community. In the context of the community or group, particularly religious or kinship, individuals are able to acquire, localize, and recall their memories. According to Paul Connerton, they do this equally to recent and to distant memories (36). The binding in time of recent memories does not require their existence on an unbroken timeline. I believe that memories structure whole groups' thoughts common to the group, a group that has a relationship with the present and the past.

Public Memory In The Group

Hannah Arendt describes the "vita activa" as the indispensable core of the public sphere, an active life of talk that would not be possible without the enabling occurrence of public memory, defining the terms and form in which dialogue can happen (Arendt 31). That conversation begins with an idea centered on memory common to the group.

Ron Arnett in **DIALOGIC EDUCATION: CONVERSATION ABOUT IDEAS AND BETWEEN PERSONS**, goes on to name the idea as a starting place for conversation. "Conversation about ideas is equated with a commitment to inquiry, propelled by wanting to find out, to know (19).

Walter Fisher asks in **NARRATION, REASON AND COMMUNITY**, "How do people come to be members of a community, or, how are they induced to recognize that they are, in fact, members of a community?" (322) As one scans the visitors to the Wall one can see members of communities, those dressed in fatigues or uniforms now fitting snugly at best, who comprise the community of Vietnam veterans. However, not all community members may be identifiable by the clothing. Some veterans still are in seclusion and may come in ordinary street clothing. They may not be identifiable as Vietnam veterans until one looks at their age and the actions displayed at the Wall. There are actions that range from silence, uncontrollable sobbing, shouting, and a range of emotions of varying degrees. The rhetorical power that is displayed in public but private citizens is proof that communities can be reformed through memories and monuments.

Rhetorical Power

The reach that is extended to all who visit multiplies the rhetorical power of the Vietnam Memorial. The Vietnam Memorial has enormous power to draw people to the site. It was the first national war memorial that was introduced to the public through the medium of television, much like the war was seen by households in the United States every evening on the 6 o'clock news (Haines 7). The capacity to attract and move visitors will not likely exhaust its rhetorical significance. Visitors to the Memorial leave with

more than they brought with them, because of the memorial's difficulty and complexity in its definition. Veterans who visit the Memorial weigh the private memory against the public memory that represents an engagement of feelings, memories, and guilt (Blair 281). The rhetoric of the Wall does not sanction a consumptive response; it invites a commitment and suggests private memory formed by a community of memory, a memory connecting a group of people. The Memorial both comforts and refuses to comfort. It provides closure and denies it (281). It does not offer a united message but multiple and conflicting ones. Its size, color, shape, placement, and inscriptions do not speak with one voice (281).

Connecting Groups

The Vietnam Memorial connects groups with the past and also connects totally different groups with the present. "I crossed the street; and stepping up to the curb, I saw a sign pointing the way to the Wall. Strange how after all this planning and traveling over 1000 miles, I wanted at that moment to run away. I almost did. For a few moments I felt nothing, smelled nothing, as I watched myself walk down that path to find Bill's name" (Griffis 2). William Griffis was Sally's husband; she was going to the Wall for the first time with her two daughters (2). Sally had a connection to the memory of her husband, and on that black granite wall, panel 14W 62 inscribed with his name, one name of the more than fifty eight thousand Americans that were killed in Vietnam (2). At the panel, Sally made that connection to his memory.

The Story of Vietnam Veterans Memorial

The story of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is well documented: the concept, the construction, the political fighting, and the official unveiling. Little has been written on the way this memorial has touched so many lives from different social, political, and ethnic groups. Marita Sturken writing in **TANGLED MEMORIES; THE VIETNAM WAR, THE AIDS EPIDEMIC AND THE POLITICS OF REMEMBERING** contrasts the memorial and how it functions in opposition to all the codes of remembrance on the Washington Mall. Among all the national memorials and monuments made of white stone and visible from a distance, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is a contrast, cut into the sloping earth, made of black granite and nearly invisible from a distance (46). Even before the dedication in 1982, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial aroused passion and reaction from diverse groups. From the architecture, neither patriotic nor heroic, to the gender and ethnicity of the designer, Maya Lin, of Asian heritage, the road to the dedication was paved with speed bumps (Ehrenhaus 54).

Architects who design monuments and memorials traditionally follow an accepted code. Carol Strickland writes, however, that the new generation of artists and architects has grown skeptical of traditional monumental form (1). In the statement that accompanied Maya Lin's proposal, she wanted to "cut open the earth … and initial violence that in time would heal" (2). Nietzsche claims that every man, every nation, requires, in accordance with its goals, energies and needs, a definite understanding of the past, now in the form of monuments, but does not require it to originate from pure thinkers who only look on at life (77). I believe he is saying that history, translated into symbols, are important to a culture and give direction to that group. Cicero uses symbols

as an imagery that develops in the mind a significance that contains it own arguments and interpretation but becomes a part of a verifiable historic event that leaves on the mind the ability to process the memory and feeling(Kosalka 3). The processes are felt when first approaching the Wall are complex and unique to each person but are played out when the memory is activated or imported into action (3). Charles Griswold disagrees and states that architecture need not memorialize or symbolize anything; or it may symbolize, not in a memorializing way, "let alone in a way that is tied to a nation's history" (689). He goes on to say that to understand the meaning of the Wall requires that one understand, among other things, what the memorial means to those who visit it (689). Donna Jackson in a letter and remembrance of her father, S/Sgt Robert Garling, wrote about "The Day the Wall Hugged Me."

> *"As we stood by the Wall and talked, I changed. Peace came. Mali was right. When I thought of my dad, I didn't want to feel resentment or anger; I wanted only good associations. Later as I laid a certificate at the Wall in memory of my dad, another veteran came up to me. He, too, had served in Vietnam from 1966 to 1967; and he showed me the names of his friends who died there. We chatted and we laughed and we hugged. And I knew that we both belonged. We were standing at panel E13 and I looked up at the Wall towering over my head. But now I didn't feel oppressed. I felt as if the Wall was hugging me; I felt loved. (Jackson, 2)*

When visitors approach the memorial from the Constitution Boulevard side many wonder, where is this memorial? Approaching it from this side visitors find themselves at ground level, which is actually the top of the memorial. Why would this be hidden from

public view? The other memorials in Washington D.C. are brightly lit, stand above the horizon, and are carved from white and grey stone. The memorial from this angle acts like the memories of those who served, hidden from view and, more rhetorically, in the people whose names are carved into the black granite and visible from the other side.

The Setting

The memorial when approached from the Potomac River side, or near the Lincoln Memorial, provides a much different experience, sustaining the rhetorical qualities that are exhibited in this site. One can see from the distance this huge "v" shaped wall built into the excavated earth. The end tips of the structure are short, with each end rising to the highest point in the middle. One would expect as one walks down into the structure that the names would be in order from left to right or arranged by date left to right. They are in order of the date of death or declaration of missing in action but not read from left to right. The beginning of the names, the first person to be killed in the war, is actually in the center of the memorial on the East panel, Dale R. Buis, a military advisor. The last person killed is also listed in the center but on the west panel, Richard Vande Geer. Actually the first and last names are on opposite panels, facing each other. From this vantage point, the names are spread out in tabloid fashion. Taken off-guard by this unconventional method of name placement, visitors are confused until a National Park Service ranger or a vet answers the question, "How are the names arranged?" The names are in chronological order, according to the date of casualty within each day and are alphabetized. For the dead, the date of casualty is the date they were wounded (received

in combat) or injured (received in an accident); for the missing, the date they were

reported to be missing (Vietnam Veterans Memorial, National Park Service leaflet).

Monuments

Public commemorative monuments are rhetorical products of significance to a

group, community, or social memory because they select from history those events,

individuals and places that are important to a culture or nation (Blair 350). One can find

few who would disagree about how the public "memorizing" in post modernity frames

the Vietnam Memorial as a prototype of future symbols. May 2004 saw the official

dedication of a new memorial, that to the veterans of World War II (350). The passage of

this memorial proposal was met with little resistance since first proposed in 1978 and

signed into law by President Clinton in 1993, according to Barbara Biesecker in

RENOVATING THE NATIONAL IMAGINARY: A PROLEGOMENON ON CONTEMPORARY

PAREGORIC RHETORIC (213). The World War II Memorial, situated on the east end

between Constitution Avenue and the Rainbow Pool, is a striking monument in

comparison to the Vietnam Memorial.

The location of the memorial, which stands tall in height compared to the

Vietnam Memorial, which is actually cut into the earth, is south and east of the Vietnam

Veterans Memorial and is easily seen from the street or Constitutional Gardens. The WW

II Memorial remembers historically a war that was supported by those who were on the

home front and the veterans who served and were welcomed back from the war as heroes.

Many Vietnam veterans were subject to misplaced anger and ridicule. Homecoming for

most, dead or alive, was mostly lonely. Few people noticed when you left, and fewer expressed interest when you returned (Scruggs in **THE WALL** 141).

There are objections from time to time in the United States that somehow we can't just go back to just using statues, and we can't just go back to stone and brick and mortar. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial did break conventions. It was saying, "Look. We can't capture the essence of the Vietnam War by simply putting up a couple of soldiers on a pedestal. It wasn't that kind of a war." And that of course led to incredible debate and acrimony over the form of that memorial. But in a sense it was a very powerful place (Friedman 65).

Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial has been recognized one of the greatest of the so called counter-memorials, partly because it does articulate formally the problematic of memory and recall. Who is remembering the Vietnam War to what ends? How would Vietnam vets remember their fallen comrades? How do we remember the Vietnam vets? Her design in fact turned all the memorial conventions upside down, which is why it had drawn so much criticism in the beginning and so much acceptance in the after years.

Lydia Fish authored a guide to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial titled **THE LAST FIREBASE**. Firebase is a term familiar to Vietnam veterans. The term "firebase" originated from a well known fire support strategy developed by the U.S. military during the Vietnam War. Built on hilltops or areas of strategic importance, firebases were entrenchments on which heavy artillery pieces were brought in and secured, providing 360-degree fire support for American and South Vietnamese forces operating beneath the surrounding (often rain cloud-covered) triple canopy jungle. In many cases, the firebase,

a virtual fortress of strength, was the only available support for the ground forces whose objective was to search out and destroy Viet Cong guerrillas and the North Vietnamese Army regulars who were using the thick jungle terrain to their deadly advantage (23). This book is in itself a visit to the Wall and takes the reader to three themes: healing, reflection and inspiration. The healing that takes place at the Wall is documented in the many letters and articles published. The memorial is a place of healing; an ancient ritual, touch, accompanies healing. National Park Service rangers give those who ask a pencil and a piece of paper. The visitors to the Wall makes a trace of the name; many times that tracing is framed and on display in the home of a parent, wife, or children of a soldier who was killed in Vietnam. The scientists, physicians, and those who administer the veterans' program agree that in some sense the memorial does have a healing effect. Dr. Arthus Blank, Veterans Administration's national director, told **U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT**, "We find that visiting the memorial is very helpful to veterans in working out long suppressed feelings, their grief, and anger about events in Vietnam." (Lang 70). Many veterans suffer from what has been recognized as Delayed Stress Syndrome or DSS, and a visit to the Wall has shown healing in coping with the feelings and emotions that are held inside a Vietnam veteran. A reunion of the Navy Seabees held on Memorial Day 2006 gave veterans an opportunity to begin the healing process of privately held memory and emotion.

The reflection of visitor faces in the Wall reflect back from the blackness of the stone, in the fullness of a sunlit day with vibrant colors, or the blackness of night giving reflecting of shadowy darkness. In a rhetorical sense, it helps to see oneself in the reflection of a mirror. That is to place each of the visitors in a time that is reflected in

each memory that is carried. Though each person has a somewhat different perspective of the reflection, there is a constant reminder that the Wall does talk back to some. It was around midnight in May of 2003 when I visited for the first time. after dark. my friends whose names are on the Wall. Staring into the blackness of the wall I could see and hear them talking to me, thanking me for remembering and urging me to do more to help others reach this point of healing. Even though emotion is a strong motivator at this symbol, I can't help feel the actual presence of those whose lives were cut short through no fault of their own (Woytek).

The Memory of Silence

The memory of each visitor is often exhibited in silence. There are no "Silence shows respect" signs like those in Arlington Cemetery. An involuntary silence that for many has been kept for over 20 years is at times overwhelming and brings with it a flood of emotion. That silence, according to Peter Ehrenhaus, in **SILENCE AND SYMBOLIC EXPRESSION** often gives rise to anxiety, which in turn can pull one away from communication (46). The overwhelming expression that is first felt when entering the memorial is that of silence, a reverence, a reaction that most are not prepared for. A Vietnam veteran visiting from Seattle told me he was not prepared for his reaction. When he approached the Wall, he cried; he could not speak; his first 15 minutes at the Wall were of almost total numbness. He told me later in conversation how he felt as he looked at the names of the dead: he was reminded of an experience where a young Marine took his seat on the helicopter and was killed.

Many accounts of the experience of the first visit to the Vietnam Memorial have been published. I have gathered over 20 hours of interviews and an analysis of those the experiences, the emotion and the narrative story of the men and women who served in Vietnam comes to light. The Marine was leaving Khe Sanh as military forces were abandoning the firebase in the Northern "I" Corps. All were prepared to leave the base and many anxious to get on the plane or helicopter that would take them to a safer area. This Navy Seabee told me the story of how a young marine rushed to take the seat on the helicopter, a seat that was to be occupied by the Seabee. As they left the area, a shot rang out and the Marine was shot in the head by a sniper, his head blown off his body. It would take years of therapy and counseling for the Seabee to come to realize he didn't cause the young Marine to be killed, it was just fate (Woytek May 2004). "Confronting our own death is the ultimate individualizing act; it pulls us from our preoccupation with superficial existence" (Heidegger 1962). With many of the Vietnam veterans approaching the average age of 60, the thoughts of mortality are bringing many to discover the Wall for the first time and to begin a dialog of their experiences.

Inspiration is a theme experienced by those who visit the Wall. That inspiration is built into the Memorial with one arm of the Wall pointing to the nearest corner of the Washington Monument and the other pointing to the nearest corner of the Lincoln Memorial. Lydia Fish writes many vets are calling the Memorial the last firebase and "it seems a fitting name for the place where the Vietnam veterans have found the strength to fight their last and most difficult battle, the one that has enabled them to come home at last" (43).

The Story of Vietnam Veterans Killed

The volumes of letters and poems left at the Wall will reveal a side of memory that once was private and, with each day, is becoming public. Some of those letters have been published and shared with the public; however, many of the narratives have never been heard or seen. At the end of each day, National Park Service Rangers gather artifacts left at the memorial and place them in storage. Personal letters are not on display, and therefore can only be read only on the day they are left at the Wall. Objects such as medals, pictures, and full cans of beer are put in a rotating display in the museums.

Though the official use of monuments are designed as cultural or artistic expressions, the discourse and symbolic compromise over official cultural expressions, according to Cheryl Jorgenson, began with the leaving of one set of cowboy boots at the memorial (153). A U.S. Navy officer walked up to the trench where the concrete for the foundation of The Wall and the wall meet. He stood over the trench for a moment, then tossed something into it and saluted. He said he was giving his dead brother's Purple Heart to The Wall. That was one of many offerings each day (155).

Many other stories are told in a book about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, **OFFERINGS AT THE WALL**, released by Turner Publishing Inc. The photographs in the book record some of the 30,000 objects and letters that have been placed at The Wall, as if at a shrine, by relatives and comrades of the men and women there memorialized (15). Some of the offerings were left with poems or letters (letters that were sealed will always remain so), but others bear meanings known only to those who offered them: a Bible, a fishing float, service ribbons, a sock for an amputee's stump, a popsicle stick, four

mortarboard tassels, a foil wrapper from a Hershey's Kiss (Woytek 2003). Each one of these objects has a memory belonging privately to an individual but now publicly displayed. The missing pieces are often the private memory that is held by the individual giving the artifact to the Wall.

The stories that are hidden from view and some forever lost are stored in the names carved on the panels. Approaching this memorial one can see the power of memory. It can be seen in the eyes of returning Vietnam veterans, coming back to what they describe as the resting place of their friends. The memorial, however, is not a burial ground, but many soldiers, harboring memories, guilt, and sometimes shame seem to bury those guilt and shame memories at this place.

How is this memorial aiding in the resurgence of memories from Vietnam? Thousands of veterans experience each week a private memory that is shocked into the forefront when visiting the Wall. It is usually a first time visit to the structure that brings from private memory a very strong set of emotions that can break down a tough Navy, Marine, Army or Air Force solder. Why is it so important that each touch the names, tracing them with their fingers? Touch is a basic human instinct each of us is born with. Reaching out and touching another person is a universal action that offers love and caring. Touching is also a potent reminder that in our time of virtual communication, there is something that is essential about looking into another's eyes, about a touch that connects part of another to you, me to the name on the wall. The name could be a grade school friend, a brother or sister, a husband or a wife, or just a member of the squad or company of soldiers.

The public display can be so emotional that there sometimes can shouting be heard. Former soldiers scream at the names on the Wall, some asking for forgiveness, some asking, "Why?" There is a whole other side to this memorial and the people who visit it; those are the stories and memories of family members. These family members trace with a pencil the names onto a sheet of paper provided by the National Park Service. They are moms, dads, siblings, spouses, and children of those killed in action (Woytek November 2006).

The Memorial Space

It is clearly a somber, open memorial, and because of that the brilliance of it and the eloquence of it is that it allows people who feel very differently about the war to inhabit that space as a participant. It doesn't exclude. It procreated a space in which so called deep memory might at least be approached, if not completely articulated. However, things happen within people at the memorial that might not be available to them in a space that was busier, that was more over-determined, that told the visitor what he was supposed to think and feel. Maya Lin's does not really tell the observer what he is supposed to think and feel. It is abstract. Then everybody there ends up having his or her unique experience.

"We can remember but can't pass beyond the realm of the living." Maya Lin told me in an interview conducted in Washington on a gray Memorial Day in 2003 (Woytek May 2003). The texture of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is that of black granite. When you cut into black granite, it turns white, so it becomes highly visible. When it rains, the

names disappear, and then when the granite dries the names reappear. "Almost as if there is a sense of life, a sense of change in relation to the elements." (Lin).

"There is something magical that in our species we can communicate to one another not just thru talking, just thru language, there are other ways in which you can really understand one another. You must create something that still will be understood in later generations. You are talking across time so literally a child 100 years from now who doesn't know anything about the war, will see the immense sacrifice of the over 58 thousand people and think about that time and think and remember those people. It doesn't really tell you what is right, what is wrong, what to think, it allows you a place where you don't necessarily glorify war but you do honestly remember and honor the people" (Lin).

The public memory that is exhibited at memorials is many times accompanied by feelings of guilt. First, the experience of approaching the memorial and for some the first time they approach can be so traumatic as to cause health issues. The initial visit is laced with anticipation, facing an unknown feeling, and realizing the private memory is about to become public.

Chapter Four

The Technology of Remembering

Technology and its acceptance throughout the centuries has been driven partly by those trying to find a way to preserve memory. From the origins of the written word to the instant communication and database research that is available on-line today, people continue to invent and improve technologies finding new and additional ways to reunite people who share the same memories. One example is that of the Vietnam veterans; the usage and application of technology on an almost daily basis makes the path easier to transform private memory into public memory. This chapter focuses on how fifty-plus year-old war veterans have begun to speak publicly after so many years of silence, how technology plays an important role in the rapidity of the growth of a public narrative, and how others have found this technology too painful to use. Veterans are bringing this community of memory of the Vietnam experience into public memory with the exploratory use of technology.

Vietnam veterans faced a number of major problems in the immediate formation of public memory. Those problems include public attitudes about the war and its veterans, personal experience of the war and its aftermath back home in the United States, and technological limitations for rendering and sharing memories during and just after the war. Today veterans face the challenge of using more advanced communication technologies that do allow them to contribute their own memories to the larger public narrative of Vietnam veteran experiences. This study explores the implications of

communication technology advances since the late sixties and how those private

memories are becoming more public. These advances are allowing the recovering of

public memory among Vietnam veterans—memory that appeared to have been lost. The

reasons for how and why Vietnam veterans are using technology to find each other and

bring to the narrative the private memories are detailed in this chapter.

A Unpopular War

For veterans, public attitude about the war as well as veterans experiences upon

returning home presented huge obstacles to their creation of a public memory about the

war and their experiences in it. The Vietnam War was the most publicized war in history

because of coverage by the media. More reporters with more expensive equipment were

sent to cover the Vietnam conflict. In previous wars such as WWII, reports from the

battlefield showed up days later in newspapers and film newsreels. The visuals about an

event were regularly shown in movie theaters at times weeks later. However, news

traveled much faster in the Vietnam era. By the 1960s, the television set was becoming

universal in homes (Arlen 23). For the first time Americans could watch in their living

rooms what was happening a world away. As war casualties mounted and Americans

learned more about the war with nightly casualty reports and film only days old, an

increasing number of people began to oppose the war. Television would now bring to the

public another side of the war to the home screens, and at the same time brand or

stereotype the soldier who went to Vietnam as a killer (Hallin 156). This stigma remains

one that would trouble the soldiers until late in the eighties.

For a long time Vietnam veterans did not want to remember. Nothing in society, upon return to the United States encouraged them to remember something described by many of them as a nightmare. Communities reunion together through dialogue. This was absent for Vietnam veterans for the past 20 to 30 years because of society's attitude towards the war and the veterans lack of opportunity to create dialogue. As ideologies that tend to become structures by opinion, since there was no discourse about the war, opinion in the public's mind was largely formed by views of the vocal majority of the time, the protesters of the war. The protests soon would be logging more airtime in newscasts than the reports from the war (Anderson 45).

Based on what has been learned by veterans, society and through research, this generation of the Vietnam Era Veteran has been fragmented geographically, whereas other past war veterans could communicate easier because of the attachment to Veterans of Foreign War (VFW), American Legion Posts and other fraternal organizations. These organizations did not experience, seek, or even advocate participation from Vietnam veterans and therefore that community did not seem functional for them like for other veteran groups from WWII or Korea. The fault does not rest with the VFW and those fraternal organizations who actively recruited Vietnam veterans; it rests on the shoulders of the Vietnam veterans. How has public memory for the Vietnam veteran been transformed? It has been rhetorically re-configured with technology. Geographic isolations of Vietnam veterans therefore contributed to stifling the development of public memory from veteran's private memories.

Technology Re-configures

The development of technology appears to move forward on a constant basis, driven by the human quest for more efficient ways of performing tasks. The change and adoption of new technology is controllable and limited by the culture in which introduced. Langdon Winner believes that this inertia can resist any limitation or can be a conscious choice in the sequence of change (46). "The irony is that both points of view are entertained simultaneously with little awareness of the contradiction such beliefs contain. There is even a certain pride taken in embracing both positions within a single ideology of technological change" (46). Such an observation may be invalid for the veteran whose view of technology rhetorically may not be included in the options. Vietnam Vets are not struggling to make the transition to today's communication technology; they accepted the technology in the war and are now using technology developed as the result of the war. The reason for delayed communication is not technology, but the war memories that each individual experienced and what happened in the historical moment in society and its unfavorable attitudes about the war. (Lipton 34)

New Technologies- Old Communities

Today dialogue, established and aided by the use of technology and also driven by a large number of people who desire community, was a missing part of many of the lives of these men and women who served during the Vietnam War. A new technology sometimes creates more than it destroys, and the reverse can also be true (Postman 22). Many Vietnam veterans, in their mid fifties, find this technology a tool for finding old buddies who served with them. The communication may be brief. However, when

discussion and length of communication are extended, the private memory of each individual begins to be shared. I believe the keystone of this transformation of private to public remains true only if the veteran desires to use the technologies like the Internet.

Reunions

A specific example may help make the private to public transition clearer. The Construction Battalion Mobile Unit 301, a group of a little more than three hundred Navy Seabees, were sent to Northern "I" Corps in 1965 and returned to their homeport of Port Hueneme, California in 1971 (Woytek May 2004). Until 1996, these men had no organized reunions, and just a few maintained contacts after they left Vietnam. In 1995, members from the unit began to use the Internet to search for names and key phrases and locate former members of the unit (Cruz). They were successful in finding sixty and had leads on one-hundred more (Cruz). The sixty met in Gulfport, Mississippi in 1998 (Cruz). The reunion was structured around sharing memories through pictures and through public and private storytelling. To preserve these memories, veterans participated in videotaped interviews and the tapes were sent to the **VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT AT THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS** (Veterans History Project). The rigid procedure for capturing the memories included specific questions asked in paper documents on the history of each veteran and uninterrupted tape recordings with no editing to ensure truthfulness (Veterans History Project). The design for the interview recordings indicates that almost all are done in private (Veterans History Project). One force difficult to control is a community that desires conversation; once the word spread that war stories were being told, other veterans would bring in chairs and listen (Woytek May 2004). The sharing of

public memory would trigger what can be called instantaneous public memory. This would come from interviews in front of an audience, an audience of veterans, wives, and sometimes children of the veteran being interviewed (Woytek May 2004). The duality of these interviews provided for an exposition of public memory, private memory publicly displayed and at the same time recorded for future research.

The Internet

Veterans are using Internet technology as a tool for searching the vast compiled databases of names and facts to connect persons and groups to communities of memory. Pictures, stories, contact names, and e-mail addresses are available, from simple personal websites to complex database driven mega-sites. Megasites like "Military.Com" (Military.Com) "Vietnam War Helicopter Units" (VHFCN). "Medical Units in Vietnam" (MUV) and "The Seabees of Vietnam"(Seabee Museum) all list links to memorial pages, company rosters, addresses, and e-mail links.

By using these websites, the community of memory becomes transformed into a body of public memory (Kwon 17). Though this timeline and usage paradigm seems simple, it remains as complex as the reasons the United Sates sent over three-million men and women to Vietnam.

Public Statistics

Statistics were a large part of the promotion of the war: how many American were killed each week, how many North Vietnamese were killed and the total number of Americans killed in the war. In the 1960s and 70s, those statistics were not instantly

available, if a true statistic was even released. The time delay between transfers of information could be up to 4 days and the actual numbers of casualties may or may not have been accurate. In a **Speech by General William C. Westmoreland** before the Third Annual Reunion of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA) at the Washington, DC Hilton Hotel on July 5th, 1986 the numbers were made public (Westmoreland 57). When looking at true data, the whole picture is exposed: over 58-thousand Americans were killed, peak troop strength in 1969 was just over 500-thousand, and the numerical calculations are endless (96). The large number figures are a reminder of that time, those places, and those men and women who served in Vietnam and at home in support roles. Numbers and statistics were a large part of the public memory of the Vietnam War years. The public reaction to the numbers was that of alarm, the private reaction by Vietnam veterans was that of skepticism (102).

Problems on the Homefront

In forming public memory for the veterans who served in Vietnam, many did not want to remember, and the public encouraged them not to remember. Even for those whose mission was accomplished and successful, the public memory of these events were not mentioned. Not only did the veterans face danger and death in large numbers of causalities, but the public memory then discouraged these from being mentioned, not only in public, but also in private (National Security Archive Nixon). In Veterans Day remarks by President Jimmy Carter at the Veterans Day National Ceremony in Arlington National Cemetery, November 11, 1978 he said:

It's fitting that we praise especially here today no famous men. We

come instead to honor those who fought and died without recognition,

their names and deeds known only to those who were their fallen

comrades, and of course, known to God. So much that is good in this

Nation depends on the unknown actions of humble men and women who

understand the importance of duty, done without public recognition or the

blare of trumpets. The strength of our Nation lies in our willingness to do

what we must, each of us each day, wherever may lie our particular duty.

These unknown soldiers best symbolize such acts of quiet courage

by ordinary people whose reward is that their Nation and their freedoms

remain secure for future generations. They may not have succeeded in

achieving the permanent peace they sought. But that does not make their

contribution less valuable. They each preserve the dream so that another

generation could try again and for our own generation to have a time of

respite from war in which to seek a peace that might at last endure.

(Carter)

As war casualties increased and Americans at home learned more about the war

with nightly casualty reports and film, an ever-increasing number of people began to take

opposition to the war. (National Archives Statistical). The public memory of the Vietnam

War shifted from the war in Vietnam, to the war at home. Beginning in the mid sixties,

organized protests erupted around the United States; some were violent and destructive.

The antiwar movement was especially strong on college campuses. "Make Love Not

War" was a popular slogan of college students who opposed the war. "America, Love It

or Leave It" however, was a slogan used by pro-war activists. More and more people began to question the reasons for U.S involvement in the war. Young men who were eligible for the military draft became more vocal, protested and some resisted military service. Anti-war protests became common around all parts of the United States. With 1968 being the height of the anti-war movement, society was changing. The veteran returning home after serving in Vietnam would adapt and hide their public memory. (National Archives Statistical).The Baby Boomers grew up in the 1950s, reaching their teenage and adult years in the 1960s (Kronenwetter 22). As they grew into adulthood many became disillusioned with the ideals, values, morals, and lifestyles of their parents. They became vocal and active in social issues (23). They challenged the establishment through their dress and appearance, music, values, and political views (23). It was a time of unrest and shifting values, a time of rapidly changing communication with technology (Lipset 615).

Many Vietnam veterans returning to the job force would not even mention that they were veterans. The mood of the country was reflected in the hiring practices of many, if not all, organizations. The veteran was pictured as fanatical and unstable (Hallin 156). The society was changing, so the traditional ways of public memory were not functional for this group (156).

The Aging Process

Fast forward to today. What has accentuated the problem and the reason for today's feverish searches and discussions traditionally is what happens to people as they approach their fifties and sixties. People starting to age and start to try to understand what

makes their lives meaningful (Kysar 196). People have a need to generate public memory. One of the first stages in that process was the creation and the erection of the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial. This object served as a lightning rod to begin the process of remembering; however I believe it did not solve the problem alone. Therefore, Vietnam veterans, as human beings, being very resourceful in using complex services of technologies have enabled themselves to recover a sense of public memory together.

The Technological Revolution

The radical change that Vietnam veterans experienced when they arrived home after a year or more in Vietnam was in place for this revolution. Cable television, the first personal computers, and other technology brought the veterans to the cusp of that digital revolution. The war was fought with technologies that were much more advanced than those used in WWII; they used advanced technologies in an advanced age (McIntosh 57). They flew faster and had more sophisticated weapons, and the war itself advanced the complexity and contributed to technology. However, as a group, Vietnam veterans were not poised for engaging those advances in technology. That would come decades later. The story is that not all, but many Vietnam veterans did not want to construct public memory. I speak from experience here. The difference is that I did not hold back my private memory; at least I did not hold it back from my family. Every night my children would hear a story about what I did in the Navy. Some stories were funny, others serious. It was therapeutic and at the same time, a way to take that private memory and make it public.

Reconstructing Public Memory

The Vietnam Memorial was a catalyst for taking the first steps in reconstructing public memory (Vietnam Archive). Here is something we learn about public memory that is rhetorical. Public memory is adaptable and meets the needs of the historical moment (Stearns 45). The investigation of how Vietnam veterans used technology teaches more about how rhetorically public memory is constructed and enacted in the historical moment (Zarefsky 339). That almost always involves the technologies that are available at the time. This concept of technology as the driving force of an historical period in human development is found in Karl Marx's concept of Historical Materialism (Rothbard 78).

Unveiling of Public Memory

This declaration or unveiling of public memory is related to both the technologies of the memory and the historical past as events occurred. That interaction between the technologies available, compared to the new technologies available later in history when the memories actually reproduced, defines further the public memory (Marvin 130). The insight to the Vietnam veteran though they waited because of societal pressures to use the technology, has actually been helped in public memory reclamation by the wait. The confusion and chaos that filled many of the minds of veterans has taken a back seat to the needs of a group that fears passing on from this life without trying to remember the past.

The Technology Of The Helicopter

Vietnam veterans remember the events occurring during the Vietnam War every time a medical helicopter flies overhead. This technology of medical evacuation perfected by the helicopter pilots in Vietnam was a way of transporting the wounded back to a medical facility with speed. Though the sound of the helicopter and the public memory of those who were in Vietnam remain, they are not remembered by the generations born after 1975 (Mydans 98). Technology aids veterans in building a public memory for these later generations. Memory is reconstructed individually after being triggered by events, monuments and other outside factors. Public memory is reconstructed when the part, the individual veterans become the whole through gathering and meeting in discussions. Thus, traditional ways of public memory are now being used by the veteran, thirty years later.

Societal Changes

For the past two decades, our society has changed, as stated earlier, and the traditional ways of public memory were not functional for Vietnam veterans. Public memory, also called collective memory by some, is a term used to describe the recollections that are shared in common by a group of people (Halbwachs 45). Communities inherently go through a selective and subjective process of recounting past experiences to help shape their collective identity, this being true for all types of communities and not just Vietnam veterans. The communities that share public memory include, but are not limited to: families, peer groups, neighborhood associations, social

clubs, online gaming communities, religious organizations, ethnic groups, and nation states (Bodnar 13).

Reducing the definition of public memory to a small and narrow definition is not possible. Public memory has a wide, encompassing view and is not the final definitive word. Again, public memory remains extremely rhetorical. As people who cherish democracy, some would rather have the wide view than a false final word. It was Plato that said false words are not only evil in themselves, but they infect the soul with evil (Crowley 214).

Personal memory, the memory of one individual, may be extracted by that individual. It may be the objective of research by oral historians looking for broader knowledge in relation to the past. A complex and indirect relationship between personal memory and the past is what remains. In the case of oral history, such as interviews I conducted with several nurses who served in Vietnam, personal accounts of the past do not necessarily offer direct access to that past. A personal memory's account of the past, fractional or one-sided and the representations of the past are colored by views of the remembered. This is where public memory becomes a collective and may not be an individual representation of the past. (Woytek May 2005).

Personal memory may be silently experienced or be expressed through verbal communication, as well as through any number of written forms, including diary, memoir, autobiography, or poetry. Public memory is rarely silent and often expressed through written forms and less than often expressed verbally (Rosenberg 45). The memories are personal, though lending them more rhetorical; they are in fact not public.

To render these private memories public, even those memories shared by many as something fixed or permanent causes the very act of remembering to become abstract

Most scholars examining public memory agree with Kendall R. Phillips when he speaks of "public memory" in that some entity, a public, holds or contains some memory. Some memory has been made public or visible, and memories of certain groups are made visible in the world. This process takes place through a variety of cultural practices: memorial rituals, monuments, written histories and oral traditions (Phillips 44). When talking to Vietnam veterans, I discovered that these practices of memorials, rituals, and oral and written histories succeed not only making memories visible, but also making the abstract real and tangible. This treating the abstract as an object remains obvious in many practices of making memories public. The dramatic fashioning of stone monuments such as the WWII Memorial in Washington D.C. remains an example. All thinking, or treating the public memory as if it existed as a real tangible object, is not just a conjugation of someone's mind.

Public memory is in essence not completely transitory. Like personal memory, public memory changes, fades, clarifies, is overlaid, and varies from one memory to another. There are some that believe all monuments should be abstract so that memories are not clouded with non-offending interpretation. I believe that monuments like the Vietnam Memorial with the names of all those killed or missing in action carved on the black granite face, cannot remove the rhetorical status of the remembrance. An examination at the many small towns across the United States such as Mount Pleasant, Pennsylvania have small monuments in the center of town that list the names of all killed

during previous wars. The Vietnam Veteran Memorial, though it appears a new concept of memorializing, was not new, but the effect on those who visit it is overwhelming.

The Reason For Remembering The Past

The urge to memorialize is driven by a mixture of fear and guilt (Phillips 3). Fear exists that these memories we have invested with emotional and cultural energy might fade away. The guilt is inherent in knowing that by thinking or treating something abstract as if it existed as a real and tangible object or memory or individuals, we are supplanting the memories of others. Guilt is one of the reasons veterans are looking for the past, searching with technology and the Internet to find and sometimes verify the memories with others of the same community.

For this writer, and I say for a large majority of Vietnam veterans, John F. Kennedy's assassination remains the most notable single most powerful memory. Many Americans can remember and say they know exactly what they were doing when they heard the news of the 35th president's murder. WWII Veterans have other public memories, and again large majorities remember the attack on Pearl Harbor. Public memory is not just about nostalgia, but about how lives are affected today by the memory of the past.

Agreeing with Phillips in the past and future ways public memory acts, Edward Casey also sees "public memory" as transitory. The monument and how people solidify the future with solid rock and guarantee ties with the past and the future takes the transitory stage out and leaves individual interpretation (Casey 17). The rhetorical views of the transitory public memory may give Phillips and Casey leverage in the debate; I

believe the public memory is not just transitory within the affected community, that being the Vietnam veteran. The event this monument reconstructs in the minds of veterans does not become transitory. Public memory may become transpositional. The public memories of the Vietnam veteran when visiting the memorial, can be extended to any conflict in which the United States gets involved.

A Picture Is Worth A Thousand Words

While public memory, thriving on solid stone in memorials is not dependant on those memorials to gain permanence, a mere photograph becomes an icon of public memory. An example, the sailor kissing the woman in Times Square at the end of WWII, or General Nguyen Ngoc Loan executing a Viet Cong Prisoner in Saigon. The latter iconic image is a photograph taken by New Kensington, Pennsylvania native Eddie Adams showing a South Vietnamese National Police Chief executing a Viet Cong officer in Saigon during the Tet Offensive (Spratt 120). The photo won Adams the 1969 Pulitzer Prize, though he was later said to have regretted the impact it had (120). The image became an anti-war icon (120). What began as a transient moment gained its own eternalness in public memory, part of which fueled the changes that society would go though and a part of the reason for the delay in a veteran's desire to remember.

The Memorial Solution

The traditional ways of public memory as mentioned earlier were still not functional for the Vietnam veteran until recently. As people began to age to try to understand what makes their lives meaningful, which is what traditionally happens to

people who are aged 40 to 60, the problem becomes accentuated (Jaffee). They have a

need to generate public memory, and one of the first steps or stages in that process was

the erection of the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C. The

rhetorical relationships of memorials, reunions, and contemporary communication

technologies are stitched together in a varied and sometimes unpredictable quilt (Prelli

11). Take for example the technology that made it possible for the Vietnam Veteran's

Memorial Wall to become portable. This replication of the memorial in Washington, D.C.

tours the country. Though not the actual memorial, I believe it evokes much the same

emotional response as the permanent memorial. What then does a role of a monument

play? How does technology enable the monument and enable the remembrance?

One of the reasons monuments are so powerful is their role of carrying meaning

from generation to generation. They're very important as a way of one generation, one ,

passing something on to the next, a way to make sense of our hopes, our fears, our

convictions, our ethics, and our public memory. A problem may occur when the original

meaning of the memorial becomes lost with the degradation of public memory (Simon).

Though the stone or other sturdy material may slowly deteriorate, the public memory of

that memorial, without continued public memory recall, may dissolve faster than the

structure. Technology in the form of remembrance with Internet sites and personal

memorials may offer a way to keep the public memory intact; however that has the

dissolving factor also.

We remember events through a whole variety of representation: be it art, song,

oral tradition, commemorative ritual, or the landscape itself. Epideictic rhetoric, or

ceremonial rhetoric, is rhetoric of ceremony, declamation, and demonstration. "Epideictic

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rhetoric is one of identification and conformity in an effort to confirm and promote adherence to the commonly held values of a community with the goal of sustaining that community" (Sheard 770). Ceremonies take place at these monuments every Veteran's Day, Memorial Day, and at other holidays. Many of these attended by those who hold private memory; many also share the public memory at each ceremony. Technology enabling replaying of video and other public events offers an opportunity to make public these events and further extend public memory.

This process of how the public remembers and how memory made public takes place through a variety of cultural practices: memorial rituals, monuments, written histories and oral traditions (Phillips 44). Practices, rituals, meetings and gatherings succeed not only in making memories visible but also in thinking of, or treating something abstract as if it existed as real and tangible objects, then crafting memories with an eye towards permanence.

The Historical Moment

Perhaps the main purpose of remembering is shared awareness and understanding of a person's viewpoint or perspective (Erickson 4). In order to evaluate how one should react to another person's suggestive intentions, one must understand what these are. An individual can understand claims without necessarily taking a stand on whether to believe them or not. By his grounding his memory in the "historical moment" then the veterans' examination of the memory in dialogue can assist in moving them in a reflective direction.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D. C. has been proven a healing place for veterans searching to a connection to memory of friends and fellow soldiers killed in action (Scruggs The Wall That Heals 51). This location and design has become a place for public remembrance and for private reflection, not only for Vietnam veterans, but for generations born long after the last helicopter lifted troops the Pittman Apartments which was used as residential quarters for various US diplomatic personnel in Saigon (52).

The technology used at the Memorial has evolved from a series of phonebook like strands where visitors could look up names, either alphabetical or by date of death (Woytek May 2003). Now electronic kiosks offer an electronic search (Woytek May 2003). The search can even be accomplished from any computer on the Internet. The Wall.USA offers a detailed search engine as do other Internet sites (Wall.USA).

The public memory exhibited at memorials is many times accompanied by feelings of guilt (Misztal 39). The experience of approaching the memorial for the first time can be so traumatic for some as to cause health issues (Wolschke-Bulmahn 332). The initial visit is laced with anticipation, with facing an unknown feeling and also with realizing the private memory is about to become public (Scruggs The Wall That Heals 36). The Vietnam Memorial served as a lightening rod to begin conversation, but it did not solve the problem of facing the past singlehandedly. The veterans, using ingenuity, technology and the help of other veterans help overcome the initial trauma for first time visitors.

The Use of Technology

Much like the ingenuity of Vietnam veterans in the adaptation of technology in Vietnam, the same Vietnam veterans were and have been incredibly resourceful in using a complex of new and existing technology (Nicosia 507). This technology enables them to recover a sense of public memory together despite the physical shock mentioned above. This public memory, built upon their private and personal memories is also built on the memories of comrades and others through internet interaction which have led to reunions, and that has led to conversation, which can lead to public memory. However the paths to this technological solution are many and diverse. I rely, much like the veteran, on remembrances securely tied to historical facts.

Technological Advances

Earlier I examined how public memory is affected by the photograph. One photograph shows a South Vietnamese National Police Chief executing a Viet Cong officer in Saigon during the Tet Offensive. The radio transmission of the photograph of the execution took 20 minutes to send out from Saigon to news organizations in the Unites States and other cities (Spratt 125). The single radiotelephone circuit to Paris shared with many press organizations like United Press International would not be able to transmit at times because of curfew and continued fighting. Many times a phone line to Saigon from Quang Tri, a distance of over one-thousand miles, would be cut or even crossed with other lines making communication difficult if not impossible. The historic photographs of the raising of the American flag on Iwo Jima were dispatched by plane and naval radio to San Francisco, where they were distributed on the Wirephoto network

only 17.5 hours after the event (Spratt 125). That was the exception rather than the rule. The ability to extend deadlines with rapid gathering and editing of images brought significant changes to reporting about war and communicating its images. As recently as 15 years ago, nearly 30 minutes were needed to scan and transmit a single color photograph from a remote location to a news office for printing (Faas 1). Now, equipped with a digital camera, a mobile phone, and a laptop computer, a photojournalist can send a high-quality image in minutes, even seconds after an event occurs. Video phones and portable satellite links increasingly allow for the mobile transmission of images from almost any point on the earth. I believe this change in technology also has sped up the time a community can be shown images from events all over the world. It is now possible to instantly obtain visual information and this change determines how rapidly public memory can be examined. The reaction to this event, the shooting of what appeared to be an unarmed civilian, by the public after seeing the photograph was as can be expected, one of horror. Given the advantage of time, further investigation revealed more details as to why the picture became a icon by those opposed to the war. Images like this and others such as the My Lie incident remain in public memory longer because of private memory that becomes part of the larger, public memory.

Technological advances have shaped and are continuing to shape community, and with that advancement of technology, community has adapted and progressed. The advances in technology since the beginning of the 20th century continue to affect how we work, live, and play. Steven Bertman believes that the electronic technology of today bonds the period between need and fulfillment (Bertman 23). The power of that period can be used like the genie in the tale of Aladdin, it can achieve for community

unbelievable and immediate results. When we rub the lamp of technology and wish, fulfillment of the wish can be achieved whether or not the community is ready for the advancement. Human needs and desires are often the outgrowth transcended into technology. However, like human nature itself, it also possesses an inherent potential for good or evil. (23).

The history of technology can be paralleled along many lines; however, one of the most intriguing lines of development is that of photo technology, the technology of light (20). Early cultures used fire to give warmth, create light, and cook food. The same light is being used today by technology in laser beams to heal or burn information to an optical recording medium (CD-DVD), fiber optics to communicate, and even to cook food. The inventions that involve the use of light fall into two categories according to Bertman: the use of light to provide illumination for vision and the use of light for the purposes of communication. (21)

Like the options to use or not use technology to provide illumination for vision or for the purpose of communication, the veteran can choose to reveal the private memory or hold it in hiding. A review of the technology of the late sixties and early seventies will put it in perspective. When history is examined, we have the benefit of looking through the eyes of time and experience. One can discover what events were actually occurring, what led to them, and what decisions were made during and after the historical moment. These decisions are important if the study of any historical era can relate to the larger picture that is being observed (Bruner 264).

How has technology made possible the reuniting of Vietnam veterans? Before my examining the rhetorical patterns that have intersected the communication technologies to

make and enable Vietnam veterans to develop a kind of public memory that was not possible in previous generations, a historical background must be presented.

Technology of the Vietnam Era-Radio

Radio as used by the military in Vietnam served two purposes, to provide communication for the war effort, much like what was done in pervious conflicts, and also to provide the servicemen with a "voice of home" broadcast on AM radio receivers. The official military channels of communication consisted of lighter and more efficient equipment than was carried by radiomen in the field during Korea and WWII (AFIS Mission). The communication consisted of instructions for troop movement, gun placement, and recon reports, not very memorable communications at the time. Looking back to have a record of those communications would provide a repository of knowledge on events that can only be remembered through individual recall, rhetorical remembrance and influenced by time. Those records or memory events were not, for the most part, recorded. There are a few recordings of ground to air communication by fighter jets however the technology for recording was limited if present at all (Wu 4). The technology of today permits recording of all communication and permanent storage on digital devices (4). Thirty years from now veterans will be able to go back in time if they choose, to re-construct events in a more accurate form than those events of the Vietnam era. Today's technology offers easier access and allows better private memory record and a clearer public memory, though it will always remain rhetorical. If one could gauge depth of rhetorical interpretation, it would be less metaphorical using the technology of today (Wright 56).

There were recordings made of conversations of the President of the United States released to researchers in the early 80s. The John F. Kennedy Presidential Library made public 240 minutes of newly declassified tape recordings of White House meetings and conversations that took place in the Cabinet Room in 1962 (Kennedy). The tapes represent raw historical material. The sound quality of the recordings varies widely. Although most of the recorded conversation is understandable, most tapes also include passages of extremely poor sound quality with considerable background noise and periods where the identity of the speakers remains unclear (Kennedy).

President Richard Nixon installed recording devices in the White House in the 1970s (National Security Archive- NSA). Nixon installed the taping system because he wanted his administration the "best chronicled" in history (NSA). He also wanted an accurate record of his meetings without the inhibiting effect of note-takers. Nixon wanted to correct accidental and intentional misrepresentations of what had been said during his meetings (NSA). Nixon, who found the presence of note-takers intrusive, also wanted to ensure accurate translations could later be made of meetings with foreign leaders, and he planned to use the tapes to write his memoirs (Nixon).

Some of the conversations on the Nixon tapes are routine, while others are provocative. The National Archives website provides a brief glimpse into what can be found in the archives. There are conversations on the tapes that change the way one views historical events and the reasons behind them. One example involves an unstated reason why the United States fought the Vietnam War.

On March 9, 1972, President Nixon told Henry Kissinger and Haldeman that the war in Vietnam was not about Vietnam. It had never been about Vietnam, about the right

of people to be independent "and all that crap." The President said that the war in

Vietnam was about the Malacca Straits, the main trade route in Southeast Asia and the

link between the Indian Ocean and Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and the rest of the Pacific

region. Kissinger agreed. Nixon wanted to protect that trade route from Communists who

might seize countries in Southeast Asia (the "domino theory") and control trade in the

region.

The timing of this conversation is interesting because it came just weeks before an

invasion of South Vietnam by North Vietnam. President Nixon's statements following the

U.S. military response to that invasion did not mention the Malacca Straits (Rushay).

Radio also played a technological role in developing memory. The Armed Forces Radio

Network provided soldiers with music and news designed to ease the stress of the war.

This music would later prove a catalyst for private memory of those who served in

Vietnam. The Department of Defense believed that a well-informed military is an

effective and committed military and believed that the Armed Forces need to have the

same access to news and information as their fellow citizens back on United States soil.

"A free flow of general and military information will be made available without

censorship or propaganda, to the men and women of the Armed Forces and their

dependants" (AFIS Mission). The Vietnam War had a rock and roll soundtrack provided

by AFVN (Woytek May 2005). When Vietnam veterans gather to talk about experiences

of the war, most references are to the music playing over Sony transistor radios, Akai

stereos, and Teac reel-to-reel tapes decks. All the songs of the '60s and early '70s were

part of the life in a combat zone. That music provides an opening point for conversation

and remembrance around the Vietnam veterans of today, and based upon the interpretation, a rhetorical standpoint on which to reflect.

One example of how music was a touchstone for opening private memory was a reunion DVD produced to commemorate a reunion of Navy Seabees. The reunion held at the same base they trained, Port Hueneme, California in 1968 (NAVFAC). On the DVD a series of slide shows accompanied by music from the Vietnam years. As the music played, the slides projected, many conversations began with a shout. "Look at old Joe. I wonder whatever happened to him." Then the visitor heard from the back of the room, "I am right here!" The music provided a starting point in which memory was recalled, and then add to that a visual and the memory becomes even more specific, though it remains rhetorical (Woytek May 2004).

In the eyes of many, Vietnam was a rock 'n' roll war, in that rock was the dominant music of American troops. Movies such as "Good Morning Vietnam," "Apocalypse Now," and "Platoon" have portrayed Vietnam in this context, and public memory is reinforced every time a song is heard (Anderegg 45). The role of music in Vietnam is also seen as unique due largely to its content and availability. Portability and availability during previous military operations was just being developed; during Vietnam the transistor was developed making equipment more portable, affordable and more prolific.

Why is the connection between American popular music and the Vietnam War important? Perhaps the easiest and most direct response is that the music was important to American soldiersevident in that musical terms quickly replaced traditional military slang. Lyrics and titles of songs were often used in everyday conversation then but

unknown to someone who did not serve in Vietnam, as in the case of a gun ship that was often seen and heard by American Soldiers. The soldiers, probably due to the ship's giant guns that sounded like a roar of a dragon soon began to refer to the plane named "Spooky" as "Puff the Magic Dragon," in reference to the folk hit sung by Peter, Paul, and Mary (Lipton). Technology on the airplane that had 200,000 candle power flares to light up the night and 3 mini-guns each able to spit out 6,000 rounds per minute (every 4th one a red tracer) was frightening to both friend and enemy (DC-3).

When examining the topic of music in the Vietnam War, one realizes that everybody's story is different (Flynn 72). These differences are not limited to the troops at the front versus those at the rear, or officers versus enlisted men. The story of a soldier in one part of the jungle of Vietnam can differ completely from the story in another part of the jungle, despite the fact that both are at the front. In many places, there were no real lines in Vietnam; it was a country consumed by war. Soldiers at the rear were often separated by unsecured areas which kept them from moving back and forth on a regular basis (73). These characteristics make the Vietnam War unique and the memory of each soldier unique.

Technology of the Vietnam Era-Print

Like radio and television, the print media during the war also had two views: the official sympathetic to the administration and war effort, "The Stars and Stripes" and the "Grunt" an in-country "Playboy" with material submitted by troops including pictures and poems (Fish 7). Another type of print media was the letters home. Soldiers were encouraged to write home often, these letters; many of them combined later in several

books would serve as permanent history of individuals. These letters, unlike the rhetorical interpretations provided by music, were not written for publication to the masses, they were at that time, private (Edelman 5). Sharing them at that time was not an option. Years later, many times even in death these letters would reveal a side of the war not interpretative and since being the written word, much less open to analysis.

DEAR AMERICA: LETTERS HOME FROM VIETNAM is a book by Bernard Edelman is a collection of letters, poems, and petitions from the front, written mostly by infantrymen to their families and friends. From a rhetorical standpoint this collection evokes mingled emotions of an intense longing for home, fear, hope, grief, and anger aroused by the Vietnam War. Originally published in 1985, this collection of over 200 letters provides a private account of the war in Vietnam. In 1988, an HBO film with over two dozen actors reading these letters from soldiers as newsreels, home movies, and music from the era provided a backdrop. There are others in the same genre, specifically LETTERS FROM VIETNAM by Bill Adler, a collection of personal letters sent home and written in the historical moment by authors not intending to preserve history or private memory, but to offer communication to family and friends back home (Adler 6).

Other private memory that becomes public when published are books written as part of a novel and not a collection of letters or fragmentary pieces of private memory. These books are designed specifically for publication. There are first person accounts from journalists, officers, and even some individuals who compiled memories. DISPATCHES, by Michael Herr, is a collection of dispatches, or letters, intended for later publication (Herr 2). Through letters or communication, these are written by journalists with a viewpoint or mission, a purpose other than just private communication like the

letters written home to parents, girlfriends, and sometimes wives. Herr was a war correspondent for Esquire Magazine in Vietnam during the months of the Hill Fights of `67 through the winter to the Tet Offensive and on past the spring months of '68 (Herr 4). Herr's book and others such as **My Detachment** by Tracy Kidder is an outpouring of confused and conflicted memories written at the time, a historical moment in time and now used as reflection of a private memory (Kidder 9).

The Individual

Whether a soldier serving in a supply airbase in Khe Sahn, or a Marine corpsman bandaging a wounded soldier, each has a memory bank filled with untold stories and moments of happiness and terror. The American years in Vietnam are regarded as a unique era, still capable of stirring intense passions and vivid memories. Those memories are preserved in letters sent home, personal diaries, screenplays, films and today in projects like the Veteran's History Project spearheaded by the United States Library of Congress (Veteran's History Project). The project encourages and provides a method of recording individual memories and then of preserving them for research in later years, and then they become private memories that are public, but hidden in the vastness of the United States Library of Congress.

Letters sent home became an informal or non-official record of an individual's view of the war and conditions experienced and viewed by a soldier in Vietnam. These letters home were encouraged (demanded) by company commanders, first to relieve boredom during downtime, and second to assure the family back home that their son or daughter was ok. The letters were written as informal but un-official forms of

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communication. An interesting parallel would be what can and should the Marines say in an official letter to family about a deceased family member who was killed in action? We know that the military and marines are not saying everything about the event, but we also know that we shouldn't have every detail in an official communiqué. When members of the person's squad have conversations with the person's family, if that happens, through a letter or when they get back from serving in Vietnam, the family gets informal information as reliable as the official, which is not completely reliable. One way that it can be viewed is as an either-or, but the letter or information can also be synchronized and viewed as separate. Here is what the official word, given to the news media and then interpreted by television viewers watching the nightly six o'clock news during the war, and the letters tell their own individual stories. Many times both messages give different perspectives. One of them is not more "objective" than the other, but they all provide real pieces that could not obtained from the others.

Use of Technology Today

With the ease of technology today, the ability to compose, distribute, and publish web pages and sites, the private memory becomes displayed for all to read, to agree with or to refute. The number of private websites detailing the private memories of those who served in Vietnam approaches the in-calculable.

Much can be said about the relationship of reunions to technology. Reunions have been organized for high school and college classes. Not until 1995 did the Vietnam veterans began an organized reunion system (Woytek May 2001). The cost of traditional postal mailings, and the attempt to locate veterans was prohibitive. Aided by the Internet

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and E-mail, the search could be focused on active veterans with access to e-mail. Search engines on the internet make finding former soldiers easier and more effortless. The traditional way was picking up phone books from every city and paging through by hand. Those who wished a part of the reunion had the option to be included or to continue to remain in the background. The fear of facing the memories drove some to stay behind in the background, silent but troubled. A lot of troubled Vietnam vets, often combat vets with disturbed sleep and nightmares, daily intrusive thoughts of the war, and flashbacks kept the memory from becoming public until a point in their lives when they could not handle the pressure anymore (Dewey 189) Many were involved in intense, deadly combat throughout their time in Vietnam. There were ambushes and being taken prisoner, killing the enemy face to face, and worries and grief about the deaths of fellow soldiers.

In the final chapter of this dissertation, I will bring the past into today. The reason for the study of public memory is "the now" meaning of private memory and how private memory reflects on the rhetorical perspective of this study.

Chapter Five

Public Memory Solutions

The long silence of Vietnam veterans has been broken, not in an instant but evolving over a period of time—which is the pattern of public memory. The sounds of the war that occupied this nation in the 1960's and 70's are beginning to be exposed with public memory unveiled by the same veterans that shielded those moments, and the exposition becomes more rapid with the use of technology. For almost forty years, men and women who served in the Vietnam War have maintained an unofficial code of silence. This community of memory is now becoming a community of narrative remembrance as stories emerge from the silence of memory, a memory that may have become cloudy with age, a memory that may be forgotten if not exercised. This cause is driven by these men and women and their feelings of mortality as they are called to active participation in narrative discussion and remembrance. How many other groups have similar patterns? I believe the Vietnam veterans have the most diverse range that makes my point of public memory.

Driving these discussions and participation is the relationship to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. and the availability of technology. Public memory faces the challenges of today's ever-changing technology, a technology that make possible public memory on several viewpoints.

According to Paul Connerton in his book **HOW SOCIETIES REMEMBER**, memory is a reflection of an individual-based item; however, something can be said for memory

shared in a social or collective content (23). Public memory is a reflection of individuals that have based their beliefs and memory artifacts in the commonality of the community. Based on Connerton's work I extend this reflection referring to social-collective aspect as "Community of Memory" that can be called public memory. Jeff Gundy, a professor of English at Bluffton College, Ohio refers to this "community," a community that follows the narrative Amish and Mennonite as they trace historical paths and chronicle their lives (13). Women and men tell their stories and link themselves to each other, the past, and the present. Today the Vietnam veteran re-tracing paths taken in Vietnam, through narrative discussion on the Internet and through actual visits to the same hills and rice paddies they encountered during their deployment. Several groups including one in Pittsburgh, "The Friends of Da Nang," take Vietnam veterans back to visit the country they once fought in war.

Communities are a group of individuals who are bound together by natural will and a set of shared ideas and ideals. In his work titled NICHOMACHEAN ETHICS, Aristotle explains that community is not so much about unity as about harmony (6). Groups of people who share a commonality are frequently described by social, religious, political, scientific, and moral philosophers and scientists as groups within organizational, political, or moral frames.

The experience of the past shapes our perception of the present. Though this connection with past events and objects causes veterans to experience the present differently, the public memory is also dependent on viewpoints. There can be more than one version of public memory, that of public and also that of private memory whose connection to public memory developed through artifacts in those communities. These

different versions are aided by the interpretations that can be derived from the postings and writing on the technological revolution we now call "The Internet."

We remember by way of being reminded, recognizing something as the Vietnam Memorial, and reminiscing with others in reunions and gatherings. Formal or casual reminiscing, alone or with others is how Edward Casey in **PUBLIC MEMORY IN PLACE AND TIME** indicates "reminiscing with others" receives a more important role than once thought (21). My witnessing of many group reunions, like those held by Vietnam veterans, indicates a growing number of groups and individuals use that form to bring about a narrative many times partly forgotten. Groups have their own form of remembering.

Hanna Arendt in her work **THE HUMAN CONDITION** explores the individuality of a human to speak and to remember and with these actions create an enduring quality of his/her own, because each creates his own remembrance (78). Using of technology to increase the ability of individuals to speak simultaneously, public memory becomes even more prominent. Steven Howard Browne believes that Arendt's idea of the living actions depend on the presence of others who have seen and will remember (Browne 56). For without remembrance and without the reification, which remembrance needs, the living actions remembered would disappear as though they had never been seen (56). The drive by Vietnam veterans to make sure the memories do not disappear spurred the Vietnam movies such as "Full Metal Jacket," "We Were Soldiers Once," and others. Memory invokes the repetition of forgetting as much as the repetition of static memory, a way to preserve memory according to Bradford Vivian (205). The memories surface when the individual is told about historic events from the past. The vehicles memory works

through have been discussed by contemporary scholars from Paul Connerton to Berry

Swartz. Frances Yates addresses how material artifacts of Rome facilitated the capacity

to remember according to Barbie Zelizer in **THE VOICE OF VISUAL IN MEMORY** (157).

The visual representation will catch the memory in the middle of a story where narrative

relates the whole story from start to finish, even if beginning "in the middle of things"

(157). Motion picture film is the closest one can come to the visual preserved in memory

with each frame as an integral part of the verbal narrative, one which can be shared

individually or as a group or community. The technology of film and public exhibition is

not new to Vietnam veterans. This technology was used in previous wars; however,

technology permitted limited use of color over the traditional black and white images.

The past is not just composed of personal memories of the past but has a symbolic

character as placeholders that reside in memory, monument form and in historical

narrative. History as viewed through the lens of an historical account of notable accuracy

is far different from diverse, multiple and mutable accounts of past events (Hinchman

xxi). The deep-seated cognitive principles of perception and translation into stories have

permeated traditional societies, an interpretation of the past by means of alternative

narratives, according to Lewis and Sandra Hinchman (xxi).

We use memory to remember people, places, events, by giving accounts, by

believing or disbelieving stories about each other's past and identities (Macintyre 190).

The narrative that identifies the place and people and what event was going on at the time

begins the set-up of several narrative histories according to Connerton (21). We place the

other's behaviors with orientation to the place in their life history and we situate that

behavior with reference to its place in the history of the shared setting to which they

belong. The story of one life contains part of an interconnecting set of narratives embedded in the story of those from which individuals originate their identity. Technology permits the interconnecting with easier methods used by previous generations and allows interpretation today, with the knowledge of the past.

The proposition that history and memory are intertwined in the practice of narrative is more than a critical link between consciousness and the projects we make for ourselves from the depth of loneliness. That project is now being heard as Vietnam veterans begin to wonder what happened to buddies and friends, and that search has been made efficient and many times instantaneous with the use of the technology of today. The veterans are telling their story, public memory, not just to and among themselves, but presenting the story to those outside the circle of trust. Events that are told among communities require that context is necessary in the exposition of story (Fisher 307).

Public memory emerges from the junction of official and cultural language expressions according to John Bodnar in **THE MAKING OF AMERICA** (13). Leaders share in common an interest in ethnic communities, and they also share in the narrative that is the public memory of a community. In the context of the group, particularly religious or kinship, individuals are able to acquire, localize, and recall their memories. According to Paul Connerton, they do this equally to recent and to distant memories (36). Binding recent memories in time is not on an unbroken timeline, but memories instead structure whole groups of thoughts common to the group, a group that has a relationship with the present and also to the past.

Memory can be described as an account of the past, inscribed in written form, or remembered in the memories of a culture or community. Kendall Phillips writes the

distinction between history and memory is evident by those who saw history and memory as opposing factors to recalling the past (2). "Conversation about ideas is equated with a commitment to inquiry, propelled by wanting to find out, to know (19). Individuals preserve and rediscover memories through conversation, a conversation made even more public through technology like the Internet.

The formation of public memory for Vietnam veterans and the number of major problems in the restoration of both the public and private memory areas has innumerable paths. The condensing of those paths leads to a smaller number of major difficulties, many of which have been overcome by the veteran. The documentary "Inside the Vietnam War" on the National Geographic Channel, in February 2008, interviewed fifty Vietnam veterans. Woven together with testimonials from more than 50 Vietnam veterans, archival audio and video footage, and never-before-seen photos, the special brought to public memory harrowing firsthand accounts of the men and women who lived through the war. Much of the story is in the eyes of those vets as they talk about what they went through then. As one vet put it "we were like flashlight batteries. When they use us up, they replace us" (Towers quoted in **INSIDE THE VIETNAM WAR**).

Society did nothing in the years after the war ended to encourage the veterans to remember. Only since the parades in 1985 that tried to heal the wounds caused by social unrest was the Vietnam veteran recognized as having served the country. Thousands of graying Vietnam veterans, many clad in jungle boots and old fatigues, marched down Constitution Avenue in 2007 to mark the 25th anniversary of the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and to pay tribute to the more than 58,000 war dead remembered in cold stone on the Wall. The veterans' numbers, thinned by age, many

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with canes and wheelchairs, the men and women who served in the war paraded to the

calls of "Thank you!" and "Welcome home!" and "Hoo-Rah!" from the crowds lining the

sidewalk (Woytek May 2005). Unlike the small hometown parades in the eighties, these

veterans came from across the country and from all lines of work. Many now retired, they

carried flags and banners or wore jackets and T-shirts proclaiming where and when they

had served (Woytek May 2006). The names of such battles as Khe Sanh and Ia Drang,

once places of death and horror, were inscribed on signs and jackets (Woytek May 2006).

Many marchers sported the insignia of their old division: the Americal division; white

stars on a blue field; or the 1st Cavalry's black horse's head on a yellow shield, all ways

of remembering (Woytek May 2006).

For a long time, they, the Vietnam veterans did not want to remember, and

nothing in the society encouraged the remembrance. It was for many a nightmare, a

dreadful time for the men and women who served and for the many back in the United

States who tried to help them overcome the feelings of loneliness, the Post Traumatic

Stress (PTSS), and often times horrendous memories of war (Dewey 191).

Through the years, many systems of the government, private industry and the

veterans themselves, as well as the communities of veterans, have come. Come together

through dialogue, which had been absent for Vietnam veterans for the past thirty to forty

years. In examining our ideologies that are structures of opinion we find that there has

been no discourse, opinion was largely formed by views of the vocal majority of the time,

the protesters of the war (Martin 104).

Today, dialogue is now the public memory, established and aided by the use of

technology. While this technology has enabled conversation to a large number of people

who desire community, a missing part of many of the lives of these men and women who served during the Vietnam War still remains missing and in danger of being forever forgotten. Our society has changed; the traditional ways of public memory that were not functional for this group are becoming just a part of the forgotten past, public memory that fades as the generations come after. The stone and the public display of memory will remain, possibly to become mis-interpreted. The memorial may stand, but those who built them become only a dim memory. As people began to age and try to understand what makes their lives meaningful, this is the driving force behind the Vietnam public memory sector. While this bid for immortality is what traditionally happens to people who are aged 40 to 60 years, the technology had made this search for public memory easier (Biggs 306). These people, the veterans, have a need to generate public memory, and one of the first steps or stages in that process, as examined in chapter 3, was the erection of the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C. That served as one and probably the most important factor that began conversation, but it did not solve the problem single handedly.

Public memory is a compelling area of study because it examines how rhetorical theories dealing with narrative theory, the social construction of publics, rhetorical constraints, ideology critique, public memory, political history, and post-national identity all help both to illuminate and to critique emergent patterns of national identification. One example of this national identification might be how public memory structures local economies and how inner-city neighborhoods are shaped through public practices within that political area.

Grounding Public Memory

Public memory is an important process through which the collective identity of a group of people is constructed. This study began with grounding in memory. The subject of memory has become a leading topic for discussion as validated by the increasing literature on the subject and panel presentations at academic conferences. Public memory discussed at the 3rd Prato International Community Informatics Conference near Florence Italy, The Framing Public Memory conference in Syracuse, New York and others. We are reminded that memory is a social process; the study of remembering can be of vital importance to the discipline of rhetoric and one in which the facts, figures, and practices of a culture are kept. Collective and individual memories are not simply recollection of the facts of the past, ordered in a linear sequence along a time line. Memory as I have discovered is essentially selective and interpretive and therefore rhetorical. Memory is also the meaning we give to past experience and which we apply to today. Who we are today in large measure may be determined by what we choose to remember and how we choose to remember it. Public memory can be characterized in many ways and forms, also rhetorical in nature. I chose to focus on a group, a community of Vietnam veterans, and how they have used public memory as a reason for talking about their past, for bringing a private memory to the public. The aging process, a common bond, and sharing of public memory within a community brought them into agreement that this process, now started, must continue.

Public memory makes accessible and through public discourse, a collection of stories or narratives that share a common base, a community. In this collection, the complexity of memory is both shared and discursive. One of the leading researchers in

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public memory and one who has shared discussion with me is Kendall Phillips. Phillips focuses on the scope of public memory, the ways we forget, the relationship between politics and memory, and the material practices of memory. Whether addressing the transitory and mutable nature of collective memories over time or the ways various groups maintain, engender, or resist those memories, Phillips' work constitutes a major contribution to understanding how public memory has been and might continue to be framed. The current project of this dissertation, I believe, offers an additional contribution to the public memory project.

The study of memory and in particular public memory places it in the public sphere and has become prominent in rhetorical scholarship. Some of those current writing on the subject includes: Stephen H. Browne, Kendall R. Phillips, Barry Schwartz, Charles E. Scott, Bradford Vivian, Barbie Zelizer, and Edward S. Casey. Public memory used in public and by the public, addresses how individuals are bringing private memory back to the community and eventually to public exposition or display of those memories. Those displays can range from high school or other group shared events to communities recording of private memory (oral history) for the National Archives and other history preserving organizations. The use of technology, other than pen and paper, is moving and enabling many into sharing memory, sometimes when it has become difficult, if not physically impossible to write.

The discussion of public memory must be centered on other forms of memory because public memory is not just a simple descriptive or exclusively definable form. As I have discussed in chapter 2, collective memory is what governments want their constituents, or one of the parts that make up a group like voting citizens, to have because

it forms kind of a unity of being. One can collectivize memory on particular holidays, national days, and therefore nationalize disparate events and assign them particular meaning, a meaning that everybody can share and collectively remember. Collective memory is a form that can be shared by those at the event, or a shared memory such as how governments commemorate for unity, all forms of public memory and relevant in our examination of public memory.

I have revealed that the discussion of public memory is not only being used as a means for investigation, but more importantly technology is playing an important role in the research and results. This is not only a historical moment but another use of technology for advancement of memory and technology. In chapter three I introduced what I believe is the method for advancement of memory for Vietnam veterans, the Vietnam Memorial. This single entity is responsible for the reflections today on the past. In the beginning of chapter three I revealed that the rhetorical activity involved in one of the most controversial symbols and public monuments is the focus on this study on public memory. What was once described as 'the black gash of shame" by some and a healing place by others, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, "The Wall" is a meeting place, a memorial, and a trigger that evokes private memory, a private memory that for more than 30 years has been kept from the public by many men and women who served in Vietnam.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D. C. has been established to be a healing place for veterans searching for a bond to memory of friends and fellow soldiers killed in action. This location and its design has become a place for public remembrance and for private reflection, not just for Vietnam veterans, but for generations. Chapter Four examined the memories, private, community, and public and

show how the symbolic rhetorical edifices that are called monuments, especially the Vietnam Memorial, have become a major force in the revealing of private memory, a memory that is reflected through the eyes of not only veterans, but school children and young adults.

From the origins of the written word to the instant communication and database research that is available on-line today, people continue to invent and improve , finding new and additional ways to reunite people who share the same memories. One example of the acceptance and usage today of technology is that of the Vietnam veterans; the usage and application of technology on an almost daily basis makes the path easier to transform private memory into public memory in many different forms and theatres. When applied using today's knowledge and experiences, now fifty-plus year-old war veterans have begun to speak publicly after so many years of silence. It is the current assessment of how technology is playing an important role in the rapidity of the growth of a public narrative. This research and study has shown how others have found this technology too painful to use, even after so many years and their approaching mortality. Veterans are bringing this community of memory of the Vietnam experience into public memory with the exploratory use of technology, today's knowledge being used to discover the past.

The core of this work has examined the Vietnam veteran and how their memories are constructed and now being made public and how the veteran is using those memories. A portion of those public memories are brought to the forefront by the mass media. Writing in the **CINEMA JOURNAL**, Olal Hoerschelmann says "Such memories are never univocal or ambiguous, however. Instead public memory is always contingent and always

contested, so that ultimately neither permanent nor stable collective identities exist" (78). Who we are today in large measure may be determined by what we choose to remember and how we choose to remember it. We give our past significance by selectively keeping certain memories and stories alive, refreshing them, commemorating them, passing them down to our children, including stories of our failures and disappointments (Kansteiner 182). There are in this study of public memory many diverse but relevant perspectives and theories. I prefer to align with a belief that it is the present public memory of the past that gives meaning to the present, the "now."

The Relationship Between Then And Now

The public memory does not give Vietnam veterans a more accurate history about "then," it is helping them to navigate "now." Historians examine history in both the "then" and also the "now." This public memory is about the past as seen through the reflective lens of "now." This public memory is about people and communities of people navigating their lives now. The rhetoric is in a certain way about discussions and conversations about what happened in the past, but it is really the conversation about what that all means for now. This healing, recognition, and renewed friendship through public memory is unique to this group of Vietnam veterans. It is difficult to express in word what effects these discussions have had on that community.

What can be considered a common form of understanding of public memory must be segmented into three basic areas. The first is that memory is a social process (Prus 378). In that form the study of remembering can be of vital importance to the discipline of rhetoric and one in which the facts, figures, and practices of a culture are kept. Second,

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memory is essentially selective and interpretive and therefore rhetorical (Dryden 255). Collective and individual memories are not simply recollection of the facts of the past, ordered in a linear sequence along a time line. Through memory we give significance to the experience. Thirdly, memory is the meaning we give to experience (Wilson 453). We arrange our own memories, refine them, rework them, and perfect them, not always by making them more faithful to the facts. Who we are today in large measure may be determined by what we choose to remember and how we choose to remember it. We give our past significance by selectively keeping certain memories and stories alive, refreshing them, commemorating them, passing them down to our children, including stories of our failures and disappointments (Kansteiner 182).

The study of public memory opens a path to examine public memory as the public negotiation of the past for political purposes in the present; simply put the "then" is reflected in the "now". Examination of public memory can explore how different cultures have remembered and rhetorically constructed historical events such as the Holocaust or past wars. The study can examine the political principles of public memory and ask questions such as, "Who gets to be remembered?" "How are they remembered?" and "Who gets to do the remembering?"

History, by contrast, is often but not always presented and received as settled; history, however, functions less in public than in private. When public memory is investigated we can trace historically the major developments in any era from antiquity up to the present. One example might be to focus on political acts of persuasion that people confront, regularly especially in election years.

Persuasive Messages

In our daily lives, we are increasingly exposed to countless persuasive messages in various forms, including the Internet, advertising, politics, music, film, and television. By investigating these technologically savvy messages and exploring how these persuasive texts are constructed, how they influence us, and how they shape our culture we discover a rhetorical approach to public memory. The study of public memory can also explore the issues of race and rhetorical strategies of resistance with a reflective lens of the past and how it shaped that past and how that past influences our present and future. This is why public memory uniquely helps us to understand the dynamic public presence of Vietnam veterans and how the Vietnam veteran's phenomenon helps us to understand rhetorical dimensions of public memory more clearly. Public memory is worth expanding because it helps us understand real things in the world and helps us interpret and understand things in a new way.

In Conclusion

Through this dissertation I have suggested that public memory provides insights through which one can begin to understand why and how the silence is now being broken by Vietnam veterans. Distant memories are at times disturbing to Vietnam veterans, many of those remembrances have been buried in the sub-consciousness of a now aging population of men and women. I have examined memory and its forms, the men and women who are the community of Vietnam veterans and the public memory that affects the narrative of these communities. Moreover how the technology of this century enables the transmission of thought and memory, but more importantly, the ability of these

veterans to find others who share the same memory, the men and women they fought alongside in the jungles and highlands of Vietnam.

Vietnam veterans were and have been incredibly resourceful in using a complex of new and existing technology that have enabled them to recover a sense of public memory together, built upon their private and personal memories, and built on the memories of comrades and others through internet interaction that has led to reunions. That has led to conversation which can and does lead to public memory. The reflection is based on many influences. It is difficult to pinpoint the origins, the past and those remembrances, or the past as seen through the remembrances of today. Either way, rhetorically, the reflections have continued to be beneficial to the collective public memory of a time and place many had forgotten.

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