The Canadian War Museum's *1812*:

A Question of Perspective

by

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Figure 1: British Army Officer Uniform, Quebec City circa 1812.

Table of Contents

Abstract	3
Acknowledgements	4
Introduction	5
Chapter One: The Exhibit	
American Section	29
British Section	37
Canadian Section	45
Native American Section	57
Chapter Two: Responses and Challenges to the Exhibit	
<i>The Globe and Mail</i>	65
The Centennial and the Bicentennial: A contrast in Federal messaging	66
The Government and the Opposition	70
The Summative Evaluation	80
The Academic Debate	86
Conclusion	97
Bibliography	101

Abstract

This thesis focuses on the *1812* Exhibit produced by the Canadian War Museum (CWM) in Ottawa, open to the general public from 13 June 2012 to 6 January 2013. An investigation of museum documents, academic literature, news media, and viewer feedback, along with interviews with museum staff involved with the project, has been conducted. Examined here are Exhibit development, approach, and content, as well as public responses to the Exhibit, Government policy, museum practice, and a national conversation about war and peace in the context of the Bicentennial of the War of 1812. The thesis concludes that the CWM successfully walked a tightrope, aware of but avoiding politics and controversy while appealing to a wide audience and fulfilling the museum's responsibilities to stakeholders and scholarship.

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Introduction

This thesis focuses on the “Four Wars of 1812,” or simply *1812*, Exhibit produced by the Canadian War Museum (CWM) in Ottawa, Ontario, and open to the general public from 13 June 2012 to 6 January 2013. A survey of museum documents, news, academic and periodical media, and visitor feedback has been conducted. Interviews with museum staff involved with the project have been conducted. Examined here are the process of development, content, and the reaction to the Exhibit after it was opened to the public. The thesis also investigates Government policy, museum practice, and public conversations about war and peace within the context of the Bicentennial of the War of 1812.

There are multiple questions to pose here: First, why the War of 1812? The War of 1812 is an example of a military conflict for which, famously (or perhaps infamously), that usually most concrete of questions (“Who won?”) is impossible to answer. There will be no attempt to do so here. Canadians, Americans, and the British all claim to have won and each has their own subjective but cogent arguments for claiming victory. The only near-universal consensus is that Native Americans suffered the greatest loss as a result of the war. The War of 1812 also provides a interesting topic of study as the continuation of a predominately European war transferred to North American soil.

Second, why study the CWM Exhibit? This Exhibit depicted not one or two but four different perspectives on the same series of events (American, British, Canadian, and Native American), producing a system of interlocking narratives as had never been produced before in Canada. This concept reflected the desire of the CWM staff to allow visitors to “create their own War of 1812.”¹

Third, what does this study of the War of 1812 uncover? It presents the circumstances of the creation of the *1812* Exhibit and what that Exhibit entailed. It examines the perspectives that surrounded the Bicentennial of the war and the Exhibit in light of politics, academic opinion, and public reaction. And it looks into how Canadians perceive the War of 1812.

There is no academic examination of the *1812* Exhibit. This work touches on that of Paul Vladimir Schulmann, who, writing a thesis for the University of Ottawa in the Bicentennial year, theorized that the orientation of the War of 1812 celebration was to move Canadian society from a liberal to a conservative bent, this being an objective of the then ruling Conservative Party.² He also addressed the failure of Conservative Party messaging on the War of 1812 to Québécois and the role 1812 plays in Quebec and Canadian national identity. Schulmann, however, never references the fact that the Canadian War Museum was producing its *1812* Exhibit.

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¹ Canadian War Museum, Corporate Records, “Main Message and Objectives,” in *Four Wars of 1812: Interpretive Scenario-3D version, 140 square metres*, 2014-005.

² Paul Vladimir Schulmann, “No Country for Old Myths: Reconstructing Canadian Identity through the War of 1812,” (MA thesis, University of Ottawa, 2012), 6, 10, 30-31.

The thesis tackles some of the allegations of Ian McKay and Jamie Swift in their book, *Warrior Nation: Rebranding Canada in an Age of Anxiety*. In reaction to the political debates surrounding the Bicentennial, McKay and Swift accused the Conservative Government of Stephen Harper of having twisted historical fact regarding Canada's peacekeeping and military past in order to increase interest in and support for the Canadian military industrial complex.

Warrior Nation presents two conflicting arguments regarding Canadian military history: Is Canada a renowned peacekeeper whose maple leaf flag-pins are welcomed in all airports, unlike the stars and stripes, or is Canada a great military industrial complex, a country whose democracy and liberal freedoms are founded on the blood, sweat, and tears shed by the members of its armed forces and their families? To what extent are these notions are contradictory, or for that matter meaningful, to those who call themselves Canadian? McKay and Swift take the reader through a shape-shifting time machine tour of Canadian history. Laced with tales of heroic warriors, their book serves as a cautionary tale for how history is taught in high schools and universities, focused as it is on “the great men of history” and the dates of military victories.³

Although the War of 1812 is mentioned at the beginning of the book, particularly in reference to Kingston, Ontario, its focus is on Canada's later military endeavours: Africa and South Africa in the late-nineteenth century; Mons, Belgium and Vimy, France in the First World War and Germany in the Second World War; and the Middle East in the

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³ Ian McKay and Jamie Swift, *Warrior Nation: Rebranding Canada in an Age of Anxiety*. (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2012). 7

Suez Crisis. After recounting the peacekeeping role of Ottawa during the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States, it finishes up in the present century with the role of Canada in the American-led war in Afghanistan. Peacekeeping is the backbone of Canadian life, state McKay and Swift, and this narrative is endangered by an alternative narrative that glorifies the Battle of Vimy Ridge and questions the Canadian decision not to be involved in the Vietnam and Iraq wars.⁴ Although it is hard to deny that the Harper Government had a vested interest in utilizing the Bicentennial commemorations as a political weapon, the thesis will prove that the CWM mounted the 1812 Exhibit independently.

A secondary question posed in this thesis concerns whether public opinion or museum plans reflected the “Warrior Nation” narrative within Canadian society, as argued by McKay and Swift. Does public feedback to the CWM correspond to their argument and if not, what did visitors learn from this Exhibit? What did Canadians who visited this Exhibit think of Canada and of their identity as citizens of the country? The authors present Canada as being in a constant struggle between narratives of peacekeeping and war as a formative element in Canadian history, a narrative advanced by so called “New Warriors” in academia and the press, whom McKay and Swift claim have conservative political leanings.⁵

This work will focus on the meaning of the *1812* Exhibit in the following terms. The first chapter will relate the circumstances of the origin, planning, and production of

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⁴ McKay and Swift, *Warrior Nation*, 1-2, 5-6, 48, 67, 76 143, 153, 155, 161, 261-262.

⁵ McKay and Swift, *Warrior Nation*, xi-xii.

the Canadian War Museum *1812* (originally entitled *Four Faces of 1812*) Exhibit, including its four perspectives and the idea of using multiple-interpretations for a single historical conflict. The second chapter will present the perspectives that surrounded the Bicentennial and the Exhibit in light of politics, academic opinion, and public reaction. This is where *Warrior Nation* by McKay and Swift and other academic, political, and public feedback sources play a role. The thesis argues that the CWM's several 1812 perspectives overcome the commonly one-dimensional perspectives of politicians and most academics. The CWM, in short, are the better scholars and keepers of historical perspective.

At its core, then, this is a study of a museum exhibition: how it was developed, what it entailed, how it affected visitors, and what was the context in which it existed. The stated objectives of the CWM regarding its goal for 1812 were to: “communicate the four wars message and multiple perspectives theme of the CWM approach. To create an outreach product as part of the federal Government's 1812 program...after the main show has closed. To create an up to 140 sq. meter easy-to-use, robust installation that can be shipped in two trucks. To reuse modular elements and media from the main CWM presentation without extensive retrofitting.”⁶ The Exhibit was thus designed so that it might eventually go on tour to small and medium sized museums across Canada with a focus on Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritimes.⁷

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⁶ Canadian War Museum, Corporate Records, “Objectives” in *Four Wars of 1812: Interpretive Scenario—3D version, 140 square metres*, 2014-005.

⁷ Canadian War Museum, Corporate Records, “Potential Clients” in *Four Wars of 1812: Interpretive Scenario—3D version, 140 square metres*, 2014-005.

Work on the War of 1812 exhibition started as early as 2005, with ideas proposed by Dr. Peter MacLeod, then Director of Research and now Pre-Confederation Historian at the Canadian War Museum. According to MacLeod, who was interviewed for this project in April 2018, Exhibit planning started off with the question of “who won” the war: was it the Canadians or the Americans? He made it very clear, however, that from the very beginning the idea of four perspectives—British, American, Canadian, and Native American—was central to the conceptual development for the project. MacLeod was frank in admitting that “...[Y]ou could have done more than those perspectives too; there isn’t one single Canadian perspective any more than there is one American perspective.” “What became apparent quickly was that it was impossible to tell the Canadian narrative without telling the American story as well....We realized that the War of 1812 was a contested war.”⁸

Why “1812” in 2012? Glenn Ogden, the Senior Interpretative Planner at the CWM, explained the museum's motivation in a June 2018 interview: we began “seven years before the events, which it might seem like a long time. What we then looked at because of being in a new facility [the new CWM opened in 2005] was planning what new initiatives or educational programs would we need to develop? We knew the 1812 Exhibit would be important. We were very aware that the Bicentennial would be the biggest [opportunity to mark the war] in our lifetime.” Ogden continued to explain that, for museums (and he emphasized in particular *war* museums), development and planning

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⁸ Peter MacLeod. (Pre-Confederation Historian of the Canadian War Museum). Interview with Philip M. Lamancusa. April 2, 2018.

are driven by a schedule of anniversaries (for example, 50th, 100th, 200th), and that these are re-enforced by the Department of Canadian Heritage so as to imprint a concrete sense of connection to a specific place and time. Taking into account the sheer size of the CWM exhibition hall (8000 sq.ft), the project would be the largest in Canada specifically about the War of 1812. Ogden related how the CWM staff “were looking for a thesis: what is the message of the show?”⁹

According to the War Museum’s 1812 *Approach Paper*, written in September 2007, it was already considered time to contemplate the production of an 1812 Bicentennial exhibition: “Both in Canada and in the United States cultural agencies, tourism organizations and governments are planning activities for 2012-2014. This presents an opportunity to re-examine this important conflict and to build upon the success of Clash of Empires, our last colonial Exhibit.” This was a reference to a 2006 Exhibit “Clash of Empires: The War that Made Canada 1754-1763,”¹⁰ produced by the Senator John Heinz Pittsburgh Regional History Centre in affiliation with the Smithsonian Institute and the Canadian War Museum. The Exhibit opened on Memorial Day and closed the day after Veteran’s Day. The “Clash,” although not directly produced by CWM, shares many features with the later Exhibit, including an emphasis on the French, British, and First Nations, artefacts from collections across Canada, the United

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⁹ Glenn Ogden. (Senior Interpretative Planner of the Canadian War Museum). Interview with Philip M. Lamancusa. June 29, 2018.

¹⁰ Canadian War Museum, Corporate Records, “*Clash of Empires: The War that Made Canada 1754-1763*,” Clash of Empires, 2014-005. www.warmuseum.ca/event/clash-of-empires-the-war-that-made-canada-1754-1763/

Kingdom, and the United States, and a statement that a war was definitive in deciding the future of Canada.¹¹

The CWM assumed that “most Canadians” were familiar with the war: “Although not well known, the War of 1812 ranks among the most popular wars in Canadian history. Most other wars are associated with one controversy or another. In the War of 1812, French Canadians and English Canadians, First Peoples and Europeans, blacks and whites, all work together to defend Canada and pretty much everyone today agrees that this was a good thing.”¹² There was a desire to expand the narrative to include American westward expansion and the Napoleonic Wars. The “principal themes” for the Exhibit were to be “the same as those of the Canadian War Museum as a whole: survival, brutality, politics, and geography.” Each side felt that its survival was threatened: Americans, by British control of trade with France; Canadians, by American invasion; the British, by having to wage two wars simultaneously on both sides of the Atlantic; and the First Nations, by having to make a last stand to defend their civilization. Two “levels” were identified in the *Approach Paper*: the first was the brutality of battle and the raiding on combatants and non-combatants alike; the second was the willingness of senior British officers to abandon most of Upper and Lower Canada in order to protect Quebec City and Halifax. The war, according to the *Approach Paper*, was a move by the Americans to fulfill their goals by military means and to prove to the British that the United States would not tolerate interference in its international trade or expansionist policies.

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¹¹ Canadian War Museum, “Clash of Empires: The War That Made Canada 1754-1763,” Ibid.

¹² Canadian War Museum, Corporate Records, *Approach Paper: The Four Wars of 1812*, War of 1812, September 2007, 2014-005, 5.

Geography dictated so much: Canada was the target of the United States because it was the one part of the British Empire that the Americans could easily attack. The fact that most of the border is defined by lakes and rivers meant that amphibious campaigning was a near pre-requisite of every attack. The key messaging of the Exhibit was that “four groups of combatants each fought their own war”. The Exhibit’s messages would “communicate their separate experiences.”¹³

The Objectives of the CWM were to make the museum a source of new knowledge about the War of 1812, presented through the Exhibit, one or more publications, and associated products; to contribute to the museum’s National Outreach Strategy through the creation of an Exhibit of national scope with traveling components for medium to small Canadian museums; and to realize “the benefits of participating in the celebration of a major international Bicentennial anniversary which the Ontario provincial and American federal governments are actively promoting and supporting,” thus building partnerships with other local, national, and international museums. In addition, the CWM wished to expand on historical themes and issues addressed in the permanent galleries so as to enhance the experience of visitors; and, along with it, to enhance the reputation of the museum as a centre for innovative exhibits and scholarship. Finally, this would be an opportunity to raise the profile of CWM as a museum dealing with colonial, as well as modern warfare.¹⁴

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¹³ Canadian War Museum, *Approach Paper*, 1-3.

¹⁴ Canadian War Museum, *Approach Paper*, 3-4.

By 2007, according to Ogden, four main themes had been developed. First, there would be two parts to the American narrative, which were “very clear”: the origin of the United States National Anthem during the Battle of Baltimore in September 1814, and the burning of the President’s Mansion (today the White House) in August of that same year. Second, the border between Canada and the United States was “created” because of the war, although its finalization did not occur until 1871 with the Treaty of Washington.¹⁵ Third, along with the two North American and the British narratives, an Indigenous narrative had to be included. Last, and most important of all, the thematic concept of perspectives in history was being embryonically developed by CWM staff. This last idea was novel in the early 2000s as, according to MacLeod and Ogden, no museum had apparently thought of it before, making the Exhibit, then named the “Four Wars of 1812” (it would later be retitled as *1812: The Exhibition*), an experiment in museum practice of utilizing multiple national and transnational perspectives in the retelling of a single historical conflict. For Ogden, the Exhibit had to be made relevant to a public for whom the War of 1812 might as well have been as distant from 2012 as Ancient Egypt.¹⁶

In order to gain some sense of what the public might want, a Front-End Evaluation was performed. This is a museum process undertaken in pre-production, which canvases public knowledge on the subject that is in development to determine what might or might not work in the finished exhibition.

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¹⁵ Canadian War Museum, Corporate Records, *Text Data Sheet: Canada: ‘Canada and the Treaty of Washington,’* War of 1812, 2014-005, D5.1-D, 33.

¹⁶ Glenn Ogden. Interview with Philip Lamancusa, June 29, 2018.

The Front-End Evaluation was finished on 16 November 2011 and consisted of forty interviews evenly divided between women and men. Twenty-eight percent each were aged 18-29 and 30-49. Thirty-four percent were aged 49-65 and ten percent were over 65. Linguistically, there was a disproportionate number of Anglophones to Francophones (ninety/ten), and fifty-eight percent stated that they thought Canada won the War of 1812.¹⁷ Quoted feedback was mostly from Anglophones. The French comments consisted mostly of brief answers such as “Je pense que ça va être intéressant,” although some English-language comments also included such uninformative sentences such as “Great idea. I think it sounds pretty good.” Ninety percent of respondents said they first heard of the War of 1812 in school and many brought up interest in “Native” studies.¹⁸

There was concern over the separation of the Indigenous narrative from the “Canadian,” with some of the respondents asking if Indigenous peoples were not, in fact, Canadian (the Native American section of the Exhibit, as we will see, mostly concerns the Indigenous peoples of the United States). In the American section, one Francophone commenter praised the plans for their “objectivité,” but overall there was a desire to understand how the material was directly important to Canadian culture and nationality.

Some respondents did not find a “Canadian” perspective at all and one said that there was no concept or perspective that could be “Canadian” in any sense.¹⁹ In terms of

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¹⁷ Canadian War Museum, *Front-End Evaluation*, 1-2.

¹⁸ Canadian War Museum, *Front-End Evaluation*, 3, 5.

¹⁹ Canadian War Museum, *Front-End Evaluation*, 6-7.

format ordering (as in which of the perspectives should go first), there was a strong bias toward the Canadian, although twenty percent wanted the British perspective first, then the United States, Indigenous, and finally Canadian. The majority, seventy percent, wanted Canadian information to dominate, while eighteen percent took an interest in Indigenous peoples, five percent the United States, and two percent the British. Some did not understand why the British and the Canadians were separated. One French commenter said of the “Amerindienne” perspective “ce n'est pas le sujet intéresse et qui a le plus de fait.” There was a tendency among the Anglophones to use the term “native” for First Nations Peoples, although most had no qualms about having a “First Nations” section.²⁰ Ten percent of respondents wanted to have the US first, one stating that this was because the United States started the war. Eight percent said the Canadian perspective should go first, with one stating: “Canadian first because I am Canadian.”²¹

When asked about media activities to include in the Exhibit (film, re-enactments, learning sessions, music/performance, or comment kiosks and/or smart phone apps for comments), the least popular were kiosks/smart phone apps (twenty-eight percent against). At sixty-three percent the preferred title for the Exhibit was “One Conflict, Four Perspectives.” Two other suggestions were for toy replica uniforms for children to try on and a focus on local history.²² This desire for interactive involvement and instilling a sense of locality was obviously an attempt at engaging with the material and making it

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²⁰ Canadian War Museum, *Front-End Evaluation*, 8.

²¹ Canadian War Museum, *Front-End Evaluation*, 9.

²² Canadian War Museum, *Front-End Evaluation*, 14-15, 17.

more relatable and meaningful for visitors. As the interpretive planner, this information was vital for Ogden in his preparation. Planners envisaged four national perspective sections surrounding an “Orientation Hub,” which would act as a mini-Exhibit that would later form the larger part of the travelling exhibition. Although these sections surrounded the Hub in a circle, and could be visited in any order, they were positioned in a specific order (counterclockwise from the right: American, British, Canadian, and Native American).²³ In Canada, the term “First Nations” is used to denote Indigenous peoples, who are termed “Native American(s)” in the United States. This American term was used in the CWM’s Exhibit, the American Indigenous peoples having their own section. There were references to Indigenous Canadians in the Canadian section of the Exhibit, and these were given the Canadian nomenclature.

An Introduction section would familiarize the visitor with the idea of a multiple-perspective story. A Conclusion section would be an “Activity Zone,” to include a dress-up clothing section and the imposing image of General Isaac Brock, in 1812 the acting Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, pointing at visitors like General Kitchener in the celebrated Great War-era military recruitment poster demanding: “What’s your perspective?/Quelle est votre perspective?”²⁴ A five question quiz would ask: 1) What does the War of 1812 mean to you? 2) Whose story do you most identify with? 3) Which

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²³ Glenn Ogden. Interview with Philip Lamancusa. June 29, 2018.

²⁴ Canadian War Museum, Corporate Records, *Activity Zone, 1812* (photograph 5 of 12 under) “1812 Special Exhibit, Ottawa,” War of 1812, 2014-005: www.warmuseum.ca/war-of-1812/1812cwm/.

War of 1812 personality do you relate to the most? 4) What is the legacy of the War of 1812 for you? 5) For you, who is the most iconic figure of the War of 1812? ²⁵

Figure 2: Floor Plan showing the circular layout of the War of 1812 Exhibit.

²⁵ Canadian War Museum, Corporate Records, *Perspectives and You Results*, War of 1812, August 1, 2018, 2014-005: www.warmuseum.ca/war-of-1812/your-perspective/share-your-perspective/perspectives-and-you/perspectives-and-you-results/.

The Exhibit went on a cross-Canada tour in January 2013. Since the tour has ended, it is necessary to reconstruct it for the reader, which is the task of Chapter 1. A very large number of photographs were taken of the Exhibit and included in the still active Exhibit web site.²⁶ They are used throughout this thesis. A four segment report was also produced by CTV News taking the viewer through the Exhibit. It was hosted by Sarah Freemark, anchor and reporter for CTV Ottawa Morning Live, in which she interviewed Avra Gibbs-Lamey, project manager Myriam Proulx, and MacLeod. In it the viewer gets a feel for the layout of the Exhibit. One would enter from the main doors of Exhibition Hall and would be taken aback by a light effect of “1812,” in what might appear to be a cloud bubble projected onto the floor immediately in front of the entrance. This would be essentially the same as the large “1812” in the middle of a scorched hole sign that visitors would encounter from the east side of the War Museum. It would be to the left as visitors entered, while Library and Archives Canada’s Exhibit, “Faces of 1812,” was to the right down a long passage at the front, which visitors could see before going into the War Museum’s Exhibit. In a video produced by Library and Archives (link in the citation below), an overview of this supplemental Exhibit can be gained. It consisted of a series of portraits and other artefacts from the collections of Library and Archives Canada.²⁷

Visitors would then go through glass doors into the “Perspectives” section of the Exhibit, which would orientate them to the idea of looking at history from multiple

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²⁶ Canadian War Museum, *Perspectives and You Results*, Ibid.

²⁷ Library and Archives Canada, “Faces of 1812,” October 29, 2012. www.youtube.com/watch?v=nZ1af2v14AI.

perspectives.²⁸ The section included four television screens (two in English and two in French) under the heading of “1812: One War, Four Perspectives/1812: Une Guerre, Quatre Perspectives” on the right and one large screen on the left. Watching the presentation from the four screens would familiarize visitors with the methodology utilized by the Exhibit. The videos included visuals, on screen text, as well as spoken dialogue alternating between an English speaker and a French speaker. The large screen on the left (more like a computer monitor than a television) was under the heading “Perspectives and You,” next to a repeat of the image of General Brock. On this screen were presented the results of the five question survey. On another wall were four screens, the outer two playing national perspectives interviews from dignitaries. These were Andrew Pocock, then the British High Commissioner to Canada, Chief Darcy Bear of the Whitecap Dakota First Nation, John Irving, the Chair of the New Brunswick Museum, and the then American Ambassador David Jacobson. The inner two screens presented the bilingual methodological production video, entitled “Points of View/Points de Vues.” This video used the example of a wedding, as explained by MacLeod: “We had an introductory section, where we showed a series of images and sound bites of people looking at the events and what sticks in my mind is when people talk about a wedding where someone is saying ‘Oh! How sweet! What a wonderful couple!’ And another is saying ‘The marriage will last six months.’”²⁹

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²⁸ CTV.ca, “Canadian War Museum 1,” CTV Ottawa Morning Live, July 25, 2012. www.youtube.com/watch?v=UyhyA-OM8T0&t=17s.

²⁹ Peter MacLeod. Interview with Philip Lamancusa. April 2, 2018.

Figure 3: Through the Glass Doors: The “Perspectives and You” statistics board and four screens explaining situation perspective.

In Appendix A of the *Project Brief Detailed Scenario*, the Exhibit was described as consisting of six components or “clusters” which together make up the whole. These were the Introduction, the American, British, Canadian, and Native American sections, and the Conclusion. The desired effect of both the Introduction and the Conclusion was to have them obviously set in a present-day or even futuristic setting, so that when entering any of the four section perspectives the visitor would distinctly feel as if they were going back in time to the nineteenth century. The Introduction hub would communicate the main themes and organizational principle of the exhibition, multiple perspectives, with the stated objective being for visitors to think about the War of 1812 from their own perspective.³⁰ Entering the main gallery, the first thing a visitor might notice would be the large light effect projecting “1812” on the floor. The visitor would continue walking towards the Orientation Hub on a “prescribed path,”³¹ resembling a 19th century city street. The visitor would be engulfed by a global soundscape of battles, destruction, military activity.³² Mark Yost of *The Wall Street Journal* noted that at this point in the Exhibit there was a grave marker, reminding visitors of the 35,000 men, women, and children killed in the War of 1812.³³

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³⁰ Canadian War Museum, Corporate Records, *1812 Project Brief Detailed Scenario*, War of 1812, January 10, 2012, 2014-005, 48-49.

³¹ Canadian War Museum, *1812 Project Brief*, 20.

³² Canadian War Museum, *1812 Project Brief*, 50.

³³ Mark Yost. “Four Ways to Look at a War.” *The Wall Street Journal*, June 21, 2012.

Figure 4: The entrance of the Exhibition hall included a light effect projecting “1812” onto the floor beyond the main doors. The Library and Arts Exhibit “Faces of 1812” was off to the front-right side of where this photo cuts off.

The Orientation Hub itself was like a mini-Exhibit, according to Myriam Proulx, who was the Exhibit's project manager: "a mini-summary of what you need to know about the War of 1812."³⁴ All four perspectives were summarized here and a colour coded scenario was introduced: navy blue for Americans, crimson red for the British, olive green for the Canadians, and burnt orange for the Native Americans. In the centre of the Hub was a sundial-shaped orientation station with a map of the North Atlantic, emphasizing the Napoleonic Wars in Europe and the theatres of the North American war, including American territory and Upper and Lower Canada. This same map is used by the Government of Canada on its War of 1812 page.³⁵ The colour scheme for this feature was aquamarine and gold.

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³⁴ CTV.ca, "Canadian War Museum 2," CTV Ottawa Morning Live, July 25, 2012. www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDcMqHMQOR4. (quotation from Myriam Proulx).

³⁵ Government of Canada, "War of 1812," www.canada.ca/en/services/defence/caf/militaryhistory/wars-operations/1812.html. (Last modified June 12, 2018.)

Figure 5: The centre of the Orientation Hub included a circular map of the North Atlantic theatre of the War of 1812, delineating American, British, and French territories. Included are the Canadian and Native American hub sections.

Encountering the introduction to the four perspectives, visitors would then choose the order in which they wanted to proceed using a provided floor-plan showing destinations and information pertaining to the related activities. Circular in design, MacLeod specified that the order was not random. According to the Approach Paper, “Visitors will have the choice of passing through each of the four principal clusters vertically, examining the war from the perspective of each of the four combatants in turn, or laterally, comparing first the goals and strategies of each combatant, then their separate wartime experiences, and finally the outcomes for the war for each of them.”³⁶ The Americans were first because they declared war on the British (second section), with the Canadian section acting as the heart of the Exhibit followed by the Native American section. Each side consisted of a mixture of traits, moods, aspects, and outcomes.

With a clear sense of what CWM planners wished to achieve in their Exhibit, we now proceed to the Exhibit itself.

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³⁶ Canadian War Museum, *Approach Paper*, 4.

Figure 6: Acknowledgements of Museums that provided assistance and Sponsors, including TD Bank and ancestry.ca.

Chapter One

The Exhibit

The Canadian War Museum (CWM) Exhibit *1812* confronted its visitors with a new concept of multiple perspectives to interpret history, something which constituted a methodology which intrigued most visitors. It did this by presenting not just one national perspective but four narratives of one conflict. What follows is a tour of these narratives, as presented by the CWM.

I. The American Section

According to the project brief, the American cluster was initially dark in tone with “powerful images of impressment of American sailors by the British and alleged Native American atrocities on the American frontier.”³⁷ The sense of desperation and determination was amplified by striking visuals, with audio-visuals of greater importance here than in any of the other three national narratives. According to both the Project Brief³⁸ and the exhibition text, there were four Key Aspects of the cluster with an overarching theme of the War of 1812 being a Second American War of Independence. The Key Aspects were: the forgotten failed invasion of Canada; the much celebrated frigate victories over the British Navy; the contrast between shock over the burning of Washington and the successful defence of Baltimore; and the well-remembered victory at New Orleans. A special emphasis was placed on the role of the American national

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³⁷ Canadian War Museum, Corporate Records, *1812 Project Brief*, War of 1812, 2014-005, 51.

³⁸ Canadian War Museum, *1812 Project Brief*, 51-55.

anthem, “The Star-Spangled Banner,” originally a poem written by Francis Scott Key (the subject of the mannequin for the section), around dawn on 14 September, 1814, after the unsuccessful bombardment of Fort McHenry in Baltimore Harbor by the Royal Navy. The outcome for the Americans at war’s end was a confirmation of their “right” to exist and a strengthening of the concept of manifest destiny through westward expansion, which would influence relations between Canada and the United States for the rest of the 19th century.

Figure 7: Mannequin of Francis Scott Key writing “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

One of the first texts the visitor would read in the cluster indicated that the United States declared war against Great Britain on 18 June 1812. This was because of three British policies, which American “war hawks” (those politicians who advocated for military intervention) saw as a threat to the United States. The first was Britain’s relationship with Native Americans, which hampered full-scale westward American expansion; the second was the regulation by Britain of American trade with continental Europe; and the third was the boarding of American vessels by members of the Royal Navy in search of British subjects who could be impressed into service. To underline the message, a pitcher from the Smithsonian National Museum of American History was included with the slogan, “Free Trade and Sailor’s Rights.” It was manufactured in Britain and then exported to the United States, making the Anglo-American link plain to the observer.³⁹ A print by William Charles from 1812 illustrated the Indigenous point. Titled “A scene on the Frontiers as Practiced by the ‘Humane’ British and Their ‘Worthy’ Allies,” it depicted a British officer encouraging a Native American to scalp an American soldier. In reality, the British paid Native Americans to hand over live prisoners to them.⁴⁰

The United States failed to conquer Canada, but was victorious on both Lake Erie and in the Atlantic. The Exhibit states that the reason for their lack of land success was the mistake of attacking Upper Canada from the southwest, far away from Quebec City,

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³⁹ Canadian War Museum, Corporate Records, *Test Data Sheet: War of 1812: The American War*, War of 1812, 2014-005, B3. TXT03, Pod B3.TXT02, B3.1.TXT03, B3.1-TXT05/08, 1-2.

⁴⁰ Wesley B. Turner. *The War of 1812: The War That Both Sides Won*. (Toronto: The Dundurn Group, 2000), 18, 20-21.

which if captured would have spelled British defeat. At the Battle of the Thames in 1813, however, the death of Tecumseh, the Shawnee war leader, meant the end of British support for the creation of a Native American free state in North America.⁴¹

We then come upon military personnel. These artefacts include the militia coat of Lieutenant-Colonel William Prendergast from New York, the *chapeau bras* of an officer of the 1st U.S. Regiment of Artillery, a Model 1795 Musket, and portraits of Brigadier General William Hull and Major-General Winfield Scott. Hull is portrayed as a politician who captured the village of Sandwich, Ontario, and later surrendered Detroit to Isaac Brock. Scott, on the other hand, was in the words of the Exhibit “One of the most dynamic American officers of the War of 1812...[t]he relentless training and firm discipline imposed by officers like Scott helped to turn the United States Army into a more effective, professional force.”⁴² To illustrate American naval power during the war, the Museum included a model of the USS *Constitution* at this point in the Exhibit. One of the six frigates built in 1797 by the US Navy, according to the CWM its heavier design and superior sailing qualities helped it and its sister ships achieve victories over the Royal Navy. It still exists, in active commission as a memorial and museum in Boston. The importance of the ship was its battle with His Majesty’s Ship *Guerrière*. The naval victories boosted American pride and formed a basis for the American naval tradition.

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⁴¹ Canadian War Museum, *Text Data Sheet: American War: Invading Canada*, B4.1.TXT02-03, 4-5.

⁴² Canadian War Museum, *Text Data Sheet: American War*, B4.TXT02, B4.1.TXT02/03/06/08/14/17/21, 4-6.

The United States was unable, however, to break the British blockade on the eastern seaboard or assault Halifax from the sea.⁴³

Figure 8: The York City Hall Lion which was taken as a spoil of war by American forces when they attacked York (then the capital of Upper Canada). In retaliation, the British army burned Washington, D.C.

⁴³ Canadian War Museum, *Text Data Sheet: American War*, B4.2TXT02/03/05/06/08/13, 7-8.

Possibly the most interesting artifact in this section is the carved wooden lion that formed part of the decorations of the Legislature of Upper Canada in York. Balanced on its right upper paw is a red ball and it stands on a green marble base. It was painted a tinny golden, although its red mouth is open to expose white teeth. Its eyes look sad and the legs appear to be cut from right to left at a 90 degree angle. It is normally housed at the US Navy Academy Museum in Annapolis, Maryland. This lion was taken by American forces as a trophy following their siege of York.⁴⁴ Another spoil of war is a British army blanket. Next to it is a medallion struck by the Government of Pennsylvania to commemorate Commodore Oliver Perry's victory on Lake Erie in September 1813; it features a bust of Perry on one side and a depiction of the battle on the other. In front and to the side of the Lion is the full dress coat of Commodore Thomas Macdonough, who defeated the British at the Battle of Plattsburgh on Lake Champlain on 11 September 1814. Paintings of Macdonough by Gilbert Stuart and of the Battle on Lake Champlain by Benjamin Tanner are included.⁴⁵

The Exhibit highlights the fact that, as far as the Americans were concerned, they believed themselves to be under siege from the British, who were blockading them in the Atlantic. This blockade crippled the economy and isolated the country. The British raided American ports, captured Washington, and rather famously burnt down what is now called the White House. What happened in Washington would form part of a patriotic epic which climaxed in the American defence of Fort McHenry in Baltimore Harbor. The

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⁴⁴ CTV.ca, "Canadian War Museum 3," CTV Ottawa Morning Live, July 25, 2012. www.youtube.com/watch?v=UyhyA-OM8T0&t=17s.

⁴⁵ Canadian War Museum, *Text Data Sheet: American War*, B4.2-TXT15//16/18/19/23/25/26, 9-10.

Exhibit relates how the British attacked Washington in retaliation for what the Americans had done to York and includes a print by William Strickland of the burning of the capitol building in August 1814. The coat of Major-General Robert Ross is included. Ross was the commanding officer who ordered the burning of Washington and who was killed on 12 September 1814 near Baltimore, Maryland, at the Battle of North Point. A piece of timber from the original President's Mansion building still has the scorch marks from the fire. It is normally kept in the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library in Grand Rapids, Michigan. A print by John Bower of the bombardment of Fort McHenry illustrates the unsuccessful attempt by the British to take the city on 13 September 1814.

This successful resistance on the part of the Americans created a cottage industry for commemorative images and verse. The American National Anthem is but the most well known example. A replica congreve rocket which caused the "red glare" celebrated in the anthem is included here.⁴⁶ Francis Scott Key, the author of *The Star-Spangled Banner*, gets pride of place. He was a lawyer who saw the bombardment of Fort McHenry from the deck of a British ship. That he was on board negotiating the release of American prisoners is not mentioned, but it explains why an American was on a British ship in war time. The poem Key wrote was originally entitled "Defence of Fort McHenry," but it was soon set to music and was performed at a tavern in Baltimore the following month. An 1873 photograph of the flag that Key saw is included. There is also a video that illustrates

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⁴⁶ Canadian War Museum, *Text Data Sheet, American War*, B4.3-TXT02,03,05,09,10,11,12,14,17 (AR01 and 02), 18, 26, 10-13.

how the Americans felt under siege from the British; it emphasizes *The Star-Spangled Banner*.⁴⁷

The Americans believe that they won the War of 1812 because they won the last battle of the war at New Orleans in January, 1815, a month after the signing of the Treaty of Ghent on 24 December 1814. A portrait of the Battle of New Orleans along with a Baker infantry rifle from the battle and a British sword recovered by an American soldier at the battle are present. Ultimately, 1815 marked the end of British challenges to American sovereignty. The British did not give up their right to remove British sailors from American ships, but the simultaneous end of the Napoleonic Wars eliminated the need for this. The relationship between Britain and Native Americans collapsed following the end of the conflict. The Americans were now free to settle all the way to the Pacific without fear of British retaliation in defence of Native American interests. As a result of the war, however, the United States became preoccupied with the possibility of future amphibious attacks.⁴⁸

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⁴⁷ Canadian War Museum, *Text Data Sheet: American War*, B4.3TXT22/23/26/34/ and B.4.AV01, 13-14.

⁴⁸ Canadian War Museum, *Text Data Sheet: American Perspective*, B.4.4.TXT02/03/06/10/11/12/13 and B5.1.TXT02/03/08, 14-17.

II. The British Section

The British cluster is described in the Appendix of the Project Brief Scenario as marked by a central preoccupation with the sea. The British were more concerned with France, although their good relations with the Native Americans in the first decade of the 19th century was causing antagonism with the United States.⁴⁹ Defeating Napoleon was far more important than a decisive victory over the Americans. The key facts that the Canadian War Museum wished to emphasize in this cluster were a focus on the defence of Quebec City and Halifax, use of the Royal Navy to blockade American trade and attacking the Atlantic coast, and securing victory through peace with the Treaty of Ghent. In keeping with the section's emphasis on the navy, the British mannequin was bellicose: a Royal Navy Sailor brandishing a sabre.⁵⁰

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⁴⁹ Canadian War Museum, Corporate Records, *Appendix A*, War of 1812, 2014-005, 53.

⁵⁰ Canadian War Museum, Corporate Records, *Project Brief*, War of 1812, 2014-005, 52-53.

Figure 9: Photograph of the British Royal Navy Sailor mannequin with sabre, next to a captured American flag.

The goal of the British Empire, according to the Exhibit, was to defend Canada without at the same time diverting attention and resources from the conflict with Napoleonic France. Meanwhile, it was exactly British attempts at countering Napoleon that caused the conflict with the United States. They abducted British subjects who were working on American ships as sailors, but also set up an economic blockade to strangle France. They dictated conditions to the Americans regarding trade with the Continent. Given the British preoccupation with the Napoleonic Wars during this period, it is fitting that Jacques-Louis David's portrait of Napoleon in his study at the Tuileries is the focal point in this section. Bringing in some ancient history references, the Exhibit features the French Imperial Eagle, modelled as it was on the insignia of the Imperial Roman legions. The French Imperial Eagle was that of the 26th Régiment de ligne, and was captured by British forces on Martinique in 1809 and is presently housed in the Royal Chelsea Hospital Museum in Chelsea, England. Artefacts from the Battle of Waterloo included in the cluster are a French breastplate, a British medical chest, a French battle drum, and Sir Thomas Lawrence's 1814 portrait of the Duke of Wellington.⁵¹

British contacts with Native Americans and the accusations made by Americans that the British Empire was waging a proxy war against American frontier settlements are important components of the Exhibit. Ironically, it was fear of war with the US that led the British to maintain relations with Native American allies in the first place as they resisted American westward expansion. There was the possibility that Native allies might

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⁵¹ Canadian War Museum, Corporate Records, *Text Data Sheet: British Perspective*, War of 1812, 2014-005, C.1.TXT02, C3-TXT02, C.3.1.TXT02/03/05/06/08/09/12/13/15/16/18, 1-4.

help defend Canada in the event of an American invasion. Alliance Medals were produced by the British as symbols of their alliances and friendship with Native American tribes. The one in the Exhibit is from 1783 and bears the likeness of King George III.⁵²

In defending Canada, the British waged a successful defensive war against the United States. The only way to victory lay in retaining Halifax and Quebec City. Both cities were supply points, and Halifax was the main British naval base in North America.⁵³ Two paintings, a watercolour by Millicent Mary Chaplin from 1840 and a portrait by Henry Thomas Davies from around 1814, suggested how strong and imposing the fortifications and landscape surrounding Quebec City were. The British Government made posters demanding the expulsion of American citizens from Canada; the one included in the Exhibit was from Montreal in June of 1812 and is from the McCord Museum.⁵⁴

It is here that visitors are presented with an artifacts case of Quebec City militia uniform articles. These include a coatee, full-dress cross belt, sash, gorget, and sword belonging to an officer of the 3rd Battalion. The year 1775 on the buttons are a reference to the battalion's service to the city during the American Revolution, during the attack by the Americans on 31 December 1775. However, Halifax was the main prize, because it was home to the primary British garrison on the continent. Two pictures of Halifax, an

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⁵² Canadian War Museum, *Text Data Sheet: British Perspective*, C.3.2.TXT02/03/06, 4-5.

⁵³ Canadian War Museum, *Text Data Sheet: British Perspective*, C.4.1.TXT01/02/02B.6, 5-6.

⁵⁴ Canadian War Museum, *Text Data Sheet: British Perspective*, C.4.TXT06/07/08/09/10, 6-7

etching by George Parkyns from 1801 and a painting by George Lennox from 1797, give the visitor a look at what Halifax looked like in the years between the American Revolution and the War of 1812. A portrait of the Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia, Sir John Coape Sherbrooke, is included to emphasize British rule in Halifax.

A Halifax artifacts case includes a Royal Navy Officer's sword with a pattern from 1805 and an India Pattern Musket. The British Army defended Canada, but it was the Royal Navy which went on the offensive against the United States through coastal blockade and amphibious raids. This crippled American trade and essentially shut down legal overseas trade. The British targeted ports from which Americans engaged in blockade running or privateering. Americans who did not resist were left alone and paid for requisitioned supplies. Those who did resist generally had their properties looted and burned. A major British victory was the taking of the USS *Chesapeake* by HMS *Shannon* on 1 June 1813 off Boston. The Naval Ensign of the *Chesapeake*, included in the Exhibit, exists now only in a fragment that was handed over to the British as a war trophy. It bears stains and holes from the battle. We see a naval boarding pike, which was once a common weapon used by sailors in close combat to repel boarders from the sides of ships. Sailors also used cheap muskets, with the steel parts blackened with lacquer to resist salt water. An American propaganda piece shows their perspective of the raid in a print by an unknown artist of British forces vandalizing a village on the Chesapeake.⁵⁵

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⁵⁵ Canadian War Museum, *Text Data Sheet: British Perspective*, C.4.1.TXT06/07/08/09/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21/22/24, C.4.2.TXT02/03/05/10/12/14, C4.2-AR07/12 and C4.2-DC02, 6-12

The British Section mannequin depicts a typical Royal Navy sailor. There is a plaque that commemorates the British sailor and chalks up most of the success of Britain to its sailors. They were very highly skilled and hard working, adept at steering and adjusting sails in bad weather. They would have to operate artillery when called upon, fight in hand-to-hand combat on deck, and even serve as infantry when on shore.⁵⁶ A segment describes the harsh and cramped living conditions on ship, although these were often an improvement on those that the sailors had experienced as merchant sailors or on land.⁵⁷

The British succeeded in defending their North American colonies while also defeating Napoleonic France. The war ended for the British with the signing of the Treaty of Ghent.⁵⁸ This was signed because the two sides realized that they could not reasonably defeat each other. The signing occurred on 24 December 1814;⁵⁹ however, the war did not technically end until 11 pm on 17 February 1815, when the US Senate ratified the Treaty of Ghent in a late-night session. The treaty ended aggression between the two belligerents, but left Indigenous peoples vulnerable to whatever the United States decided to do in the future, such as the expansion of white settlements to the Mississippi River and into the lands sold to the United States by Napoleon as a result of the Louisiana Purchase.

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⁵⁶ Canadian War Museum, *Text Data Sheet: British Perspective*, C.4.2.TXT20/21, 12-13.

⁵⁷ Canadian War Museum, *Text Data Sheet: British Perspective*, C.4.2-TXT23, 14.

⁵⁸ Canadian War Museum, *Text Data Sheet: British Perspective*, C4.3.TXT02, 14.

⁵⁹ "Christmas Eve" is specifically referenced in C4.3-TXT03, not the numerical date as given here.

The remainder of the British cluster is about Canada and its role in the British Empire and its transcontinental expansion. The War of 1812 is seen as a British investment which paid off with Canadian trade, Canada as a destination for immigration, and Canada as a source for military and economic support to Britain during the 20th century global wars. The section ends with an American-made commemorative medallion struck in honour of the 100th anniversary of the Treaty of Ghent and two aptly titled “Propaganda Posters” from the Second World War featuring patriotic symbols, including the British Lion (taken by the Americans during the sacking of Yorktown, Upper Canada), the Union Jack, and the ubiquitous Canadian Beaver.⁶⁰ This ending is important as it ties in 20th century usage of the War of 1812 in later Canadian wartime propaganda.

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⁶⁰ Canadian War Museum, Corporate Records, *Text Data Sheet: British Perspective*, War of 1812, C.4.3.TXT03/04/05, C.5.TXT02, C.5.1.TXT02/03/06/08, 14-16.

Figure 10: Entrance of the Canadian cluster. Strong emphasis in this cluster was on Laura Second, here pictured in old age.

III. The Canadian Section

The Canada cluster emphasizes the danger and destructiveness caused by the Americans, along with a sense of the considerable effort needed to repel their invasion. For Canadians, the War of 1812 was very much about Canadian civilians as much as soldiers fighting to protect their own soil and defending their lives and livelihoods. Canada wanted to avoid war, but was geographically doomed to be a part of the conflict. The key elements in the cluster are the successive waves of attacks and all out invasions of Canada; the diversity of the defenders of Canada, consisting of British and Canadian regulars, militia, First Nations warriors, and women; and the devastating experience of war shown through civilian experience.

Figure 11: The mannequin for the Canadian section was in the image of a young Laura Secord.

The outcome for Canada was that it survived to become a transcontinental country, although it was not fully secure until the signing of the Treaty of Washington in 1871.⁶¹ There is also the rather intriguing fact that the text for the Canadian section is almost twice as long as any of the other sections. This meant that strikingly more text material was included in the Canadian section than in any of the other sections, no doubt befitting a Canadian museum.⁶²

The tone of the Canadian section avoids a critique of the invading force. Instead of calling Americans “the enemy,” the Canadian section describes the War of 1812 as “the successful defence of a small colony against attack by a much larger neighbour.” Under the introductory title for this section, “Getting into the war,” the caption read: “Canada’s location, next to the United States, made it the principal theatre of a war fought for issues that did not concern Canadians.” The text is correct in stating that Canada was attacked because it was the only British territory that the US could attack. The Canadians had no grievance against the United States worth going to war, and Upper Canada had a large population of American immigrants with many families having relatives on both sides of the border. This information is accompanied by a gallery of picturesque watercolours of the Canadian countryside at the time with subjects such as the building of a road from Kingston to York, a farm near Chatham, and a Mohawk

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⁶¹ Canadian War Museum, Corporate Records, *Project Brief*, War of 1812, 2014-005, 53-54.

⁶² The Text Data Sheets for the Canadian section spanned some 33 pages, in contrast to 17 each for the American and British sections and 15 for the Native American section.

village. Apart from the Mohawk village, which was dated to 1805, the other pictures are from the 1830s.⁶³

These pictures are followed by quotations from the *Kingston Gazette* regarding war fears and this brings visitors to the title "Canada Under Attack," with the text relating the eight attempted invasions of Canada by the United States. America attacked Canada from what is now Windsor, Ontario, and then attempted to capture Montreal, but the most intense fighting occurred in the Niagara Peninsula. There is another gallery of paintings depicting the eight battles fought during the war on Canadian soil: Queenston Heights, York, Stoney Creek, Beaver Dams, the Thames, Chateaugay, Chippewa, and Lundy's Lane. The British Army and Royal Navy formed the core forces fighting and defending Canada in these and other battles. They made possible the defence of Canada by "securing the sea lanes," which were vital for supplies and reinforcements and provided specialist "gunners, engineers, medical personnel, and staff officers."

Major-General Sir Isaac Brock served as the civil administrator and commander of Upper Canada until he was killed in October 1812, at the Battle of Queenston Heights. Brock's tunic is a part of the collection of the Canadian War Museum; it is also the one item from the Exhibit that is on permanent display in the CWM. The hole made by the musket ball which killed him is visible in the coat, just below the left lapel.

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⁶³ Canadian War Museum, Corporate Records, *Text Data Sheet: Canadian Perspective*, War of 1812, 2014-005, D.1.TXT02, D3-TXT02, D3.1.TXT02/03/05, 1-3.

Figure: 12: Perhaps the most famous, certainly the most popular, artifact in the Canadian cluster was the tunic General Brock wore when he died at the Battle of Queenston Heights. This is the one part of the Exhibit that is part of the Canadian War Museum collection and is on permanent display there.

This coat was used by sculptor Christian Cardall Corbet to create a bust of Brock.⁶⁴ A painting depicting the battle by John David Kelly shows Brock leading a charge against American troops at Queenston Heights. The painting was chosen as the cover image for the Exhibit commemorative book produced by the museum.

⁶⁴ Ginabeth Roberts. "Canadian war hero's face recreated." *Times & Transcript* (Moncton, NB), June 7, 2012, A5.

To the left of the tunic and Kelly's painting is a modern drawing of Brock by Gertrude Kearns, one of Canada's most important war artists known for her paintings of American Afghan War soldiers.^{65 66}

The Exhibit reinforces that Canadian regulars were drawn from Britain and British subjects in Canada, and that they were vital in repelling American forces. The Maritimes and Newfoundland are specifically referenced as colonies from which regimental recruits were drawn. The Royal Newfoundland Regiment, the Canadian Voltigeurs, and the Glengarry Light Infantry are named as regiments that fought alongside British regulars. A series of regiments are acknowledged. The New Brunswick 104th Regiment, originally the New Brunswick Fencibles, was raised in 1803 for local defence. In the War Museum's planning phase, the regiment was noted as having volunteered for general service in 1810 and being transferred into the British Army under its new name. In 1812, the regiment undertook an epic winter march of 2,000 kilometres overland from New Brunswick to reinforce Upper and Lower Canada.⁶⁷ Another regiment, the Canadian Fencibles, was originally raised in Scotland in 1803 for service in Canada, but its Scottish recruits mutinied, and they were replaced with Francophones from Lower Canada. Its thistle emblem recalls its Scottish origin. The Glengarry Light Infantry was another Scottish dominated militia, although its members were recruited from settlers from the Maritimes and eastern Ontario. Their dark green uniforms caused

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⁶⁵ Ms. Kearns is specifically mentioned as being a painter of Afghan War soldiers in the video "Canadian War Museum 3" at points 3:21-3:29. www.youtube.com/watch?v=UyhyA-OM8T0.

⁶⁶ Canadian War Museum, *Text Data Sheet: Canadian Perspective*, D3.1.TXT09, D4.1-TXT02/04, D4.2-TXT02/03/05/07/08/09/20/22/26, 3-8.

⁶⁷ Canadian War Museum, *Text Data Sheet: Canadian Perspective*, D4.3-TXT02/03/04, 9.

them to be named *The Black Stumps* by the Americans. A cross-belt plate from this regiment is part of the permanent collection of the Canadian War Museum. The Exhibit is peopled by figures thought by the planners to tell stories small and large. Richard Pierpoint was a former slave of Senegalese origin. He had escaped by enlisting with Butler's Rangers, an elite Loyalist unit, during the American Revolutionary War. In 1812, Pierpoint served with the Coloured Corps, an Black Canadian unit. They fought at Queenston Heights, Fort George, and even served as engineers. After the war, in 1821, Pierpoint asked to be returned to either The Gambia or to the Senegal river, so that he could return to his people as he had no land and no way of earning a living. This story is an example of Black Canadian contribution to the War of 1812, and the policies and services provided by the British that helped veterans of African origin.⁶⁸.

First Nations warriors served in the War of 1812 as independent allies of the Crown. They decided when and how they defended Canada. They were decisive as skirmishers, sharpshooters, and scouts during such battles as Queenston Heights, Chateauguay, and Beaver Dams. The Exhibit mentions several Indigenous warriors, including Tekarihogen John Brant, and Mookomanish Little Knife, an Odawa war chief who received a presentation sword from the British for his humanity toward wounded American prisoners. The Exhibit includes a miniature model canoe. This is The Assiginac Canoe, a model created in 1821 by the Odawa veteran, Jean-Baptiste Assiginac. There are

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⁶⁸ Canadian War Museum, *Text Data Sheet: Canadian Perspective*, D4.3-TXT02/03/04/07/09/14, E4.3-AR08, 9-12.

other Indigenous artefacts, including a ball-headed club that was carried by a member of the Assiginac family and a presentation rifle owned by the Mohawk chief John Norton.⁶⁹

The visitor would then see a sobering text: “Most Canadians were not directly affected by the war. For those who were, it could be a devastating experience.” The fighting was concentrated in the Niagara and Detroit areas. This did not simply entail American attacks and looting of Upper Canada communities, but some Canadian allies of the Americans engaged in violence against their own countrymen. In other parts of Upper and Lower Canada, however, the threat was usually much more distant, with an emphasis on the usually. At this point in the Canadian narrative, we arrive at the story of Laura Secord, an icon of public narratives in Canada’s 1812 history, whom the exhibition team selected as the Canadian section’s mannequin. A resident of Queenston, Upper Canada, her house was occupied by American troops. She overheard their planning of a surprise attack on a British outpost. She made a 32-kilometre journey across wild terrain to warn the outpost, meeting up with a combined Mohawk and Anishinaabe force along the way. This led to the British victory at the Battle of Beaver Dams. At first things did not go so smoothly for Secord, a unilingual anglophone, who had to go to the Mohawk chief John Norton in order to have her warning translated for the warriors.⁷⁰ Colonel James Fitzgibbon, the officer who received Secord’s warning, is also featured. Then we shift attention to cannon, explosions, and how war devastated ordinary life. Hundreds of farms

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⁶⁹ Canadian War Museum, *Text Data Sheet: Canadian Perspective*, D4.5-TXT02/03/04/06/12/13/17, 17-21.

⁷⁰ Canadian War Museum, *Text Data Sheet: Canadian Perspective*, D4.5TXT13/17, D4.6-TXT02/03/04/07, 21-23.

and homes were destroyed; Laura Secord got her information as the result of a home invasion.

The Canadian cluster brings war to the visitor with brief life stories of victims of the War of 1812. Few of them are happy, or have positive outcomes. Thomas Silverthorn, for instance, was given \$100 as a result of a war wound that made him unable to support himself. There are, too, war widows without any outside means of support, or men such as Michael Breninger, whose farms were burned down by Americans, or sometimes by neighbours who decided to side with the Americans. George Nicol's house and barn were destroyed because he alerted his town to an American approach. Jacob Miller loses at least one of his four sons, the family becomes seriously ill, and Miller's wife and youngest children are reduced to impoverishment.

In the "Outcomes" section, the text points out that the successful defeat of the Americans by the British in Canada resulted in the British North American colonies becoming a transcontinental country. Although the war ended with the last American soldier leaving Canadian soil, the frontier was not secure for decades afterwards. The Rideau Canal was built specifically in order to avoid a possible American blockade of the St. Lawrence from 1827 until 1832. The American Civil War sparked tensions, and British troops did not leave Canada (excluding the Halifax garrison) until 1871. The Canadian section ends with a painting depicting the signing of that year's Treaty of Washington by Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald.⁷¹ Following the War of 1812, this

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⁷¹ Canadian War Museum, *Text Data Sheet: Canadian Perspective*, D4.6-TXT11/12/13/17/29/21/23, D5.1-TXT02/03/04/D, 24-33.

visitor is grandly told, "an alternate form of democracy grew" in the northern half of the North American continent.⁷²

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⁷² Mark Yost, "Four Ways to Look at a War," *The Wall Street Journal*, June 21, 2012, D4.

Figure 13: Sketch of Tecumseh by Gertrude Kearns for the CWM.

IV. The Native American Section

The tone of the Native American section, devoted to those fighting against Washington D.C., is one of desperate struggle for freedom and independence. The period just before 1812 was a critical point in history for Native Americans, driven to fight the United States in order to secure British help in the struggle to keep their land. The elements in the section include an emphasis on early Native American successes, but also on the defeat at the Battle of the Thames, when Tecumseh was killed; and the failure of the Red Stick Creeks against the United States forces commanded by Andrew Jackson, the future President of the United States, a tragic turning point in the cause to preserve Native American identity and sovereignty.⁷³

The conflicts starting with the Seven Years' War and ending in the War of 1812 were a single long campaign in defence of saving their Native American cultures, first against the British, then against the Americans. When Britain and the United States went to war with each other, Native Americans seized the opportunity to ally with Britain. According to the Exhibit, the greatest problem faced by the Native Americans was white settlement coming west from across the Appalachians.⁷⁴ Ever since the end of the American Revolution, white settlers had been pouring into what is now Kentucky and Tennessee. The response to this was the formation of Native American coalitions

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⁷³ Canadian War Museum, Corporate Records, *Project Brief*, War of 1812, 2014-005, 55.

⁷⁴ This is specifically referenced in TEXT DATA SHEET E3.1-TXT03, 2: "In return, they hoped that British weapons, munitions, artillery, and regular troops would give them the means to halt American colonization to the west."

combining spiritual and cultural renewal with military resistance. One religious leader was Shawnee Tenskwatawa, whose followers included Potawatomis, Anishinaabes, Shawnees, Odawas, Winnebagos, Sauks, Foxes, Kickapoos, Delawares, Wyandots, Menominees, Maimis, Piankeshaws, and Dakotas. These were involved in a pre-1812 battle at Tippecanoe on 7 November 1811 against the United States, which was trying to acquire Indigenous land. This Indigenous confederation was defeated by William Henry Harrison, the governor of Indiana, and his men.⁷⁵

Tecumseh, who believed that the British could defeat the Americans and was the primary supporter of an alliance with them, became the best known leader of Tenskwatawa's coalition. There is a portrait of Tecumseh included in the Native American cluster as well as a medal, which the British presented to an unspecified Indigenous leader in 1814. It has the image of King George III on one side and the British coat of arms on the other. Next there is a one minute video, entitled "A Call to Arms," in which actors portray Native American leaders gathering their followers to fight against the United States. This includes Tenskwatawa in 1805 appealing to the Great Spirit, claiming that He made the English, French, and Spanish along with the Indians, but not the Americans, who are the spawn of an evil spirit. Tecumseh says that this is their chance, one that "will never occur again," and that their rights would be respected by King George III if they can regain mastery of North America again.⁷⁶

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⁷⁵ J.C.A. Stagg, *The War of 1812* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 20-21.

⁷⁶ Canadian War Museum, Corporate Records, *Text Data Sheet: Native American Perspective*, War of 1812, 2014-005, E-TXT02, E3-TXT02, E3.1-TXT02/03/04, 1-2.

This hope was futile, as the Native Americans did support the British, but the British were not victorious over the Americans. The Native Americans were inspired by Tenskwatawa and led by Tecumseh. In 1812, Native Americans captured a supply train, which compelled the Americans to abandon their initial invasion of Canada. Weeks later, they aided the British in taking Detroit, with around a thousand Native American warriors joining in, but attacks on American forts south of Lake Erie were met with less success. One that was initially successful was Fort Mackinac, which was taken at the start of the war and was used as a British base of support for Native Americans in removing Americans from the Upper Mississippi.⁷⁷ The Exhibit displays were a series of artifacts connected to Tecumseh, including a powder horn, stone clubs⁷⁸, white wampum strings signifying peace and friendship given to Lieutenant-Colonel Matthew Elliott of the British Indian Department by Tecumseh as a gift, a silver trade gorget (apparently a British military artifact) featuring a fox chasing a deer, a hunting musket, and a spiked war club.

We come to the main feature of the section: the Battle of the Thames. This battle was the end of Tenskwatawa's alliance both with the British and his coalition. The American naval victory on Lake Erie in 1813 had severed British supply lines and forced the British from Detroit and southwestern Upper Canada up to the Thames River near present day Burlington, Ontario. Their Native American allies went with them. At Moraviantown, they were engaged by the Americans, and Tecumseh was shot to death.

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⁷⁷ Canadian War Museum, *Text Data Sheet: Native American Perspective*, E3.1-TXT05/07/09/10/11/12, E4-TXT02, E4.1-TXT02/03/04, 2-5.

⁷⁸ The term "head crushers" is specifically used in the Exhibit text: E4-1-TXT10.

Although some Native Americans continued to fight even after this, most tribes negotiated peace with the United States. There is an engraving by Ralph Rawdon depicting the battle of the Thames. The future President of the United States, William Henry Harrison, commanded the Americans, as we have seen, at Tippecanoe and the Thames. A portrait of Harrison by Rembrandt Peale from the year of the battle is included, on loan from the Smithsonian.

Figure 14: Mannequin for the Native American Section: an Anishnaabe warrior named Oshawana (John Nahdee), who would later be chief of the Anishnaabe of Walpole Island, near Windsor, Ontario. At around age 93, he stated that one of his few early memories was fighting under Tecumseh. A photograph of Chief Oshawana is displayed with a model of a battle where British and Native Americans, 500 from ten separate tribes including Shawnees, Anishinaabes, and Odawas, and commanded by Tecumseh force fought a pursuing American army on 5 October 1813. Tecumseh was killed in the battle.

Figure 15: Coat worn by Hillis Hadjo during his mission to Britain with watercolour by Hadjo of himself wearing the coat.

Before coming to the section “Outcomes,” the Native American section features the Muscogee (Creek), who were fighting their own war in Alabama against the United States military at the same time. There were two groups of Muscogee: the Red Sticks, who fought against the Americans and who carried red sticks, and the White Sticks, who were allied or at least neutral to the Americans and who carried white sticks. The Red Sticks captured Fort Mims, north of Mobile, Alabama, in 1813. In 1814 Andrew Jackson defeated them at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, northwest of present day Montgomery. One of their leaders was the mystic Hillis Hadjo (Josiah Francis), whose watercolour self-portrait was painted while he was on a diplomatic mission to Britain in 1815 during which he failed to negotiate a formal alliance with the Crown. The picture is included in the Exhibit on loan from the British Museum, along with the jacket he wore in the watercolour. Next is a James Burton portrait of Andrew Jackson from 1828 on loan from the Brown University Library. The last person of interest in the cluster is Menawa, who was the Red Stick second in command at Horseshoe Bend. He later attacked those Creeks who made land concessions to the Americans and died during the removal of the Creek from Alabama in 1835.⁷⁹

The “Outcomes” section for the Native Americans describes their war as a catastrophic disaster. The War of 1812 marked the last time that Native Americans were able to defend themselves in a war as the ally of a supportive European ally, Britain. The Exhibit states that, to this day, Tecumseh is a hero for Native Americans personifying

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⁷⁹ Canadian War Museum, *Text Data Sheet: Native American Perspective*, E4.2-TXT02/03/05/06/07/08/09/10, 11-12.

inter-tribalism, humanity, and leadership.⁸⁰ The failure of the Native Americans to achieve victory over the Americans resulted in, among many other fates, the Cherokee's forced massive removal from the territory east of the Mississippi River, known as the Trail of Tears—Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal Act of 1838. A Shawnee Trail of Tears coin marks the removals and is included in the Exhibit. Two last figures and a departure end the Native American section. First comes Shingwaukonse, a veteran of the coalition and chief of the Anishnaabe of Garden River near Sault Ste. Marie. He used diplomacy to secure economic and political independence for his communities after the war. The second figure is Wapahaska (Whitecap), who was chief of the Whitecap Dakota First Nation and a devoted British ally. In 1862, Wapahaska was presented the medal, included in the Exhibit at this point, given to him by the British as a reminder of the Whitecap Dakota's relationship with the Crown. A painting of Wapahaska by Italia Eagle of the Whitecap Dakota First Nation of Saskatchewan from 2012 depicts the chief. The last text illustrates a watercolour by Peter Rindisbacher of the abandonment by the British of Fort MacKay on the Wisconsin side of Lake Michigan, following the signing of the Treaty of Ghent in 1815.⁸¹

The final section of the entire Exhibit, Cluster F, is not a "Conclusion" to the narratives the museum was trying to tell. According to MacLeod, it was not the CWM's intention to provide a conclusion, but rather to have visitors draw their own conclusions. Instead the end of the Exhibit is an "Interactive and Programming Area," where visitors

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⁸⁰ Canadian War Museum, *Text Data Sheet: Native American War*, E5.1 B-TXT03, 13.

⁸¹ Canadian War Museum, *Text Date Sheet: Native American Perspective*, E5-TXT02, E5.1.TXT02/03/04/05/08/09/10/11, E5.1-GR01C/E, 13-15.

could leave their answers to the questions posed in the Introduction of the Exhibit. This was where visitor feedback was accepted, as well as providing a quiet seating area for six to eight people. Museum staff provided hands-on activities for museum guests here. The activities included learning to write with ink and quill and a demonstration of the artefacts of a battle surgeon's medical kit, including an amputation saw. There was also an interactive clothing Exhibit, where children could try on clothing representative of the four sections.⁸² The area was surrounded by large scale war graphics on the walls to maintain the connection of this section with the rest of the Exhibit.⁸³

Audio-visuals were used in all but the British and Canadian sections of the Exhibit. In both the introduction and the conclusion, as well as the Canadian section under the heading "Canada: Under Attack," the usage of "new media" (smartphones) was a feature. Models of the *USS Constitution* and the *HMS Princess Charlotte* were features of the American and Canadian sections, while an interactive "living" Exhibit was included in the Native American section, which consisted of a reenactment of the Battle of the Thames.⁸⁴

The Canadian War Museum's War of 1812 Bicentennial Exhibit was not a specific narrative of one event, but four perspectives of a single war leading to multiple consequences and resolutions. Although it had a closing section, the story was not meant to be closed when visitors left the Exhibit. It was expected that visitors would come to

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⁸² CTV.ca, "Canada War Museum 4," CTV Ottawa Morning Live, July 25, 2012. www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ovu4Lc9soc.

⁸³ Canadian War Museum, Corporate Records, *Project Brief*, War of 1812, 56-57.

⁸⁴ Canadian War Museum, *Project Brief*, 58.

their own conclusions for better or worse, and that they would take those conclusions away with them. In this chapter, we explored the four sections of the War of 1812 Exhibit produced by the CWM, a museum attempt to capture the fears and the hopes that each group of people experienced during their involvement in the conflict, and how the war influenced their respective and linked histories. Three of the groups achieved at least some of their goals.

In the second chapter, we will learn about the context in which the Exhibit was mounted and the ways it and the War of 1812 were seen by visitors to the museum. Politicians, commentators, and academics will also give their perspectives in this chapter. This will allow the reader of the thesis to compare the War Museum's interpretations of the past with those of actors who are more certain of the perspective they wish to hold, and the purpose to which they wish to bend that perspective.

Chapter Two

Challenges and Responses to the Exhibit

In the Introduction and first chapter, we discussed how the Canadian War Museum's War of 1812 exhibition was created and what it entailed. We learned that it presented a unique opportunity for visitors to interpret a single war from multiple perspectives. In this chapter, we will examine the perspectives that surrounded the Bicentennial and the Exhibit in light of partisan politics, academic opinion, and public reaction. The chapter will also briefly address the relationship between the Canadian peacekeeping narrative and the thesis of McKay and Swift in *Warrior Nation* that Prime Minister Stephen Harper was attempting to shift the public discussion towards a more military interpretation of Canadian history. By producing an Exhibit that involved four different national perspectives instead of only one or two narratives in a restricted, linear environment, the CWM avoided politics and created a successful exhibition which made its visitors interested in learning more about their national past and the interpretation of complex history.

I: *The Globe and Mail*

John Allemang of *The Globe and Mail* wrote on 10 March, 2012 that he thought that the three years of the Bicentennial would provide a suitable counterpart to the Napoleonic Wars as a Canadian creation myth. The notion resonated with the Conservative Government, which pledged funding for battle reenactments and restoring war-related sites. Allemang said that this was dissimilar from the 1912 Centennial which,

although it had a pro-British side and coincided with a Conservative Government opposed to trade reciprocity with the United States, focused on the century of peace that followed the war. For the Bicentennial, in the opinion of Allemang, history provided the Conservatives with flag-waving patriotism, swagger, old-fashioned loyalties, and “long-gun longings.” Elaine Young of University of Guelph said 1812 was being promoted as part of military heritage and that Canadians had been having a difficulty defining themselves. 1812 had the power to strengthen a reawakening of the past and what it means to be Canadian. Allemang considered that the simplest way to make 1812 meaningful was as a triumph of national character in which Canada repelled the Americans. The commemoration of past glory is a universal phenomenon.⁸⁵

Two days later, *The Globe and Mail* published three letters to the editor in response to this article. The first was by John Moses of the Delaware band, Six Nations of the Grand River, who agreed with a comment Allemang had made that Indigenous warriors were the biggest losers of the War of 1812 and that the great ‘what if’ for both Canadian and American history is what could have been if Tecumseh and his followers had succeeded in forming an independent Indigenous nation state centred on the Great Lakes. He also said that the Bicentennial commemoration gave everyone a chance to reflect on national-identity formulation: what we choose to remember, agree to forget, and end up ignoring.⁸⁶

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⁸⁵John Allemang. “The myth of 1812: How Canadians see the war we want to see.” *The Globe and Mail*. March 10, 2012 (updated April 30, 2018), www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/the-myth-of-1812-how-canadians-see-the-war-we-want-to-see/article553040/.

⁸⁶John Moses, Letter to the Editor, *The Globe and Mail*, March 12, 2012. www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/letters/march-12-letters-to-the-editor/article552893/.

Val Koziol of Toronto criticized Prime Minister Harper for spending \$28 million on the Bicentennial, while the \$1.5 million to maintain operation of the Polar Environment Atmospheric Research Laboratory had been cut from the federal budget.⁸⁷ Peter Boyer of Fergus, Ontario, wrote that there were many myths surrounding the War of 1812, and that this was because historians had done a poor job of providing a compelling narrative for the conflict. He was sure that over the next three years Canadians would develop a much clearer idea about the war because of the commemoration and the hundreds of activities would enrich the nation.⁸⁸ All three of these writers had totally different perspectives on the commemorations, ranging from pleasure, to criticism, to excitement.

II: The Centennial and the Bicentennial: A contrast in Federal messaging

In order to understand what Prime Minister Stephen Harper wanted to do with the 1812 Bicentennial, we must look to his 2012 Canada Day speech. The Prime Minister, whose initial commemoration budget of \$100 million had been scaled down to \$28 million, presented the war of two centuries earlier as “an American invasion of Canada.”⁸⁹ He continued that, for present-day Canadians, their “ancestors, English, French, Aboriginal, people of all backgrounds, joined in the fight for Canada. It was during the War of 1812—the battle for Canada—that the very foundations of this great

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⁸⁷ Val Koziol, Letter to the Editor, *The Globe and Mail*, March 12, 2012.
<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/letters/march-12-letters-to-the-editor/article552893/>

⁸⁸ Peter Boyer, Letter to the Editor, *The Globe and Mail*, March 12, 2012.
<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/letters/march-12-letters-to-the-editor/article552893/>

⁸⁹ Internet Archive, “Text of Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s Canada Day Address,” Ottawa Citizen, July 1, 2012, [web.archive.org/web/20120708201142/http://www.ottawacitizen.com/life+text+prime+minister+stephen+harper+canada+address/6870149/story.html](http://www.ottawacitizen.com/life+text+prime+minister+stephen+harper+canada+address/6870149/story.html).

country of ours were laid...[A] country proud of its cultural diversity, stability and prosperity, a country, Canada, that stands apart in North America. In fighting together, our ancestors in 1812 laid the basis for a common sense of Canadian nationality based on diversity. And they laid the basis for the vision of freedom, democracy and justice that is our inheritance, Canada, the best country in the world.”⁹⁰ Here was rhetoric of the kind noted by McKay and Swift in *Warrior Nation*.

Canadian Heritage produced an Evaluation which was published on 3 November 3 2015 in the aftermath of the Bicentennial. This report stated that the event “was a three-year Government of Canada (GoC) initiative that sought both to promote greater awareness, knowledge and understanding of the War of 1812 and also to provide opportunities to engage the Canadian public and target audiences in activities and events related to commemoration of the War of 1812, with a view to strengthening Canadian identity.” Of the \$28 million budgeted for the Bicentennial, most of the money went to the Department of Canadian Heritage (\$17.8 million, none of which was part of the figure spent on advertising) and Parks Canada (\$9.42 million), whereas a small amount went to the Canadian War Museum (\$718,000), or two and a half percent, which was the federal contribution to the production of *1812*.⁹¹ All three entities were to be involved in a working relationship with the federal Government in order to engage a large number of the Canadian public in the Bicentennial.⁹² The War Museum Exhibit, and its touring

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⁹⁰ “Text of Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s Canada Day Address,” July 1, 2012.

⁹¹ Canadian Heritage. *Evaluation of the Commemoration of the Bicentennial of the War of 1812 July 2011 to March 2014*. i, 3, 19.

⁹² Canadian Heritage. *Evaluation of the Commemoration*. iv.

counterpart, is referenced twice in the report, which had national significance and says that the touring Exhibit created opportunities for Canadians to learn about the War of 1812.⁹³ According to the Canadian Heritage evaluation, sixty-three percent of funding went to commemoration projects in Ontario, fifteen percent in Atlantic Canada, fourteen percent in Quebec, and eight percent in Western Canada. There were one hundred projects in Ontario, but only twenty-two in Quebec, and nine of all projects were from Indigenous organizations. The report specified that it was anticipated that commemorations would be most relevant to residents of the Niagara region of Ontario and “to some extent” to residents of southwestern Quebec.⁹⁴

How did Government messaging for the 1912 centennial compare to what Prime Minister Harper said a century later? And what was produced for that commemoration? In 1912, the prime minister was Robert Borden, and his emphasis was on celebrating the near century of *peace* between Canada and United States since the end of the War of 1812. This was partially because much of the commemoration itself was organized by what would be today termed a grass-roots organization, The Canadian Peace Centenary Association was raising money based on donations from individuals and the federal Government for a memorial which would celebrate this century of peace.⁹⁵ Because of the public emphasis on the *enduring peace* resulting from the end of the war, plans for a

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⁹³ Canadian Heritage. *Evaluation of the Commemoration*. 24, 27.

⁹⁴ Canadian Heritage. *Evaluation of the Commemoration*. 19-20, 22.

⁹⁵ C. P. Champion, “A ‘Year of Peace,’ Interrupted.” *The National Post*, March 3 2014. <https://nationalpost.com/opinion/c-p-champion-a-year-of-peace-interrupted> (Accessed July 25 2019).

great military memorial fell through. It was decided instead that a simple bronze plaque listing all of the *British* victories would be installed at Centre Block on Parliament Hill.⁹⁶

According to Thomas Socknat, a senior lecturer in Canadian studies at Woodsworth College, University of Toronto, in 1912 Canada was celebrating the Anglo-American Peace Centenary. William Lyon Mackenzie King, the future prime minister, encouraged the Canadian Peace Centenary Association to co-ordinate various projects ranging from monuments to education about Canadian-American relations. The First World War put an end to many of these projects, but some that were completed included the twin Peace Arches on the border between Blaine, Washington, and Surrey, British Columbia; Rouses Point, New York, and Quebec; the Peace Garden at the 49th parallel between Manitoba and North Dakota; and the Peace Bridge linking Buffalo, New York, and Fort Erie, Ontario. Socknat, an historian of pacifism, was certain that 200 years of peace between Canada and the United States should assume centre stage during the Bicentennial as it did during the centennial, and he proposed refurbishing the centennial monuments and even a joint Canadian-American holiday.⁹⁷ In 2012, however, Stephen Harper proposed the opposite of a commemoration of peace—rather the commemoration of a united “fight for Canada” against an American invader.

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⁹⁶Dierdre Follett and David Monaghan, “War of 1812-1814 Plaque,” *Our Commons*, March 2010. https://www.ourcommons.ca/About/HistoryArtsArchitecture/collection_profiles/CP_plaque1812-e.htm (Accessed July 25 2019)

⁹⁷ Thomas Socknat. “1812 Bicentennial should celebrate 200 years of peace.” *The Star*: August 6, 2012. https://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorialopinion/2012/08/06/1812_bicentennial_should_celebrate_200_years_of_peace.html. (Accessed July 25 2019).

III: The Government and the Opposition

The year before the Bicentennial (2011) had been an election year, and the New Democratic Party (NDP) formed the Opposition during the the Bicentennial period 2012-2015. Not infrequently, the NDP used the controversy surrounding the celebrations to criticize the Government.

The Canadian Parliamentary Hansard, the record of the Debates held in the House of Commons, includes several instances in which the NDP and Liberals ridiculed Conservative waste and factual manipulation surrounding the Bicentennial. The Hansard relates that the NDP members continuously forwarded the argument that Canadian confidence and trust in the Government had been shattered by the time of the 2011 elections, only further eroded by the years after.

In Hansard, there were three primary issues addressed with respect to and during the Bicentennial period: the politics of historical interpretation, federal budget cuts/allocations, Quebec, and Indigenous peoples.

An attempt to redefine history?

The Opposition repeatedly expressed concerns that the Conservative Government wished to redefine Canadian identity, with NDP and Liberal MPs citing the millions of dollars spent commemorating the War of 1812, and the “completely pointless and costly addition of the adjective royal” to the navy and air force.⁹⁸

The Government justified its efforts with appeals to citizenship and education. The Hon. Jason Kenney, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, was interested in

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⁹⁸ Canada. *House of Commons Debates*, October 30, 2013 (Nycole Turmel, NDP). www.ourcommons.ca.

civic literacy, which he defined not as being fluent in English or French, or having a Ph.D. in Canadian history, but rather as having some basic grasp of knowledge of the country. He claimed that new citizens need to “know about our war dead, about the greatest Canadians.” He referenced how Indigenous,⁹⁹ Francophones, and English Canadian militia groups defended the country from American invaders in 1812. He argued that the War of 1812 used to be a Liberal Party emphasis, but now it was being ridiculed by the Liberals.¹⁰⁰ Marc-Andre Morin, a Quebec NDP MP, replied that the Government celebration of the War of 1812 Bicentennial was a bad thing: it should not be celebrated at all, his reason being that Canada “lost approximately 30% of its territory to the Americans.” This might have been an allusion to the fact that the British army seized what is now Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, the northern half of Indiana, northeastern Minnesota, Maine, and the mouth of the Mississippi River in Louisiana from the Americans during the War of 1812, but this territory was never officially part of Canada and was returned at the Treaty of Ghent.¹⁰¹

There were also accusations that the Government’s plan was not only to eliminate history, but also to control it. Mylene Freeman of the NDP asserted that a Conservative member had even said during a parliamentary session that the party was trying to control history.¹⁰² Pierre Jacob asked: “Do the Conservatives understand the importance of

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⁹⁹ He used the term ‘Aboriginal.’

¹⁰⁰ Canada. *House of Commons Debates*, June 12, 2014 (Hon. Jason Kenney, CPC).

¹⁰¹ Canada. *House of Commons Debates*, May 28, 2013 (Marc-Andre Morin, NDP).

¹⁰² Canada. *House of Commons Debates*, November 6, 2013 (Mylene Freeman, NDP).

research, archives and local initiatives, or are they only interested in celebrations, jubilees, photo ops and ribbon cutting?”¹⁰³

Conservative MPs used a series of talking points like honouring the troops as “the greatest Canadians,” and the “fight for Canada.”¹⁰⁴ This last was a phrase that no one but Conservative MPs ever used, along with the claim that “the War of 1812 was a turning point in our country's history”.¹⁰⁵ While the Government championed the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship, Liberal and especially NDP MPs pleaded for the funding of historical sites in their respective ridings. One group that was singled out were African Canadians, and the Conservatives brought up their contribution to the War of 1812 only in the month of February (Black History Month) during the period from 2012 to 2014.¹⁰⁶ There was also a tendency to connect the War of 1812 with the ongoing war in Afghanistan by Conservative MPs,¹⁰⁷ while this connection was only made by a single NDP member.¹⁰⁸ Whenever questions about how funding for historical sites was being allocated, or accusations that the Government was devaluing some sites in favour of others were raised, the example given was Fort Henry, referencing the Fort Henry National Site in Kingston, Ontario. Sites in Quebec were passed off by Conservative MPs as being something they were unfamiliar with,¹⁰⁹ while Gordon Brown, Leeds-Grenville-

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¹⁰³ Canada. *House of Commons Debates*, November 6, 2013 (Pierre Jacob, NDP).

¹⁰⁴ Canada. *House of Commons Debates*, June 20, 2012 (Hon. James Moore, CPC).

¹⁰⁵ Canada. *House of Commons Debates*, November 28, 2013 (Hon. Shelly Glover, CPC).

¹⁰⁶ Canada. *House of Commons Debates*, February 1, 2012 & 3 February, 2014 (Roxanne James, CPC).

¹⁰⁷ Canada. *House of Commons Debates*, November 4, 2013 (Hon. Laurie Hawn, CPC).

¹⁰⁸ Canada. *House of Commons Debates*, November 3, 2011 (Jack Harris, NDP).

¹⁰⁹ Canada. *House of Commons Debates*, October 30, 2013 (Gordon Brown, CPC).

Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, referenced concern that “only four provinces in Canada currently require a mandatory history course in the high school curriculum” and that spending on the War of 1812 Bicentennial had taught many young people in his eastern Ontario riding about the war. This was evidence that the spending was not wasteful.¹¹⁰

Budget Allocation and Cuts.

To claim that the Conservative Government cared about Canadian history as more than a tool simply did not work for NDP MPs Nycole Turmel or Pierre Nantel, who cited the layoffs of 200 staff at Library and Archives Canada¹¹¹ and eighty percent of archeologists then working for Parks Canada. The MPs condemned over \$341 million in Government advertising spending since 2009, while Veterans Affairs Canada had had to close regional offices in 2014, depriving veterans of entitled services. The Government also spent \$5 million on ads campaigning for the War of 1812 Bicentennial, money which some MPs claimed could have been used to hire rail inspectors (this point being made in the context of the Lac-Mégantic rail disaster in July, 2013).¹¹² The cuts to Veterans Affairs Canada were never mentioned by the Government, but it constantly praised veterans and serving military personnel.

In April of 2014, the NDP protested the sub-contracting by the Government of Library and Archives Canada’s new digital catalogue system, which was being created by

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¹¹⁰ Canada. *House of Commons Debates*, June 17, 2013 (Gordon Brown, CPC).

¹¹¹ Canada. *House of Commons Debates*, May 7, 2012 (Pierre Nantel, NDP).

¹¹² Canada. *House of Commons Debates*, April 27, 2015 (Matthieu Ravignat, NDP).

an American firm.¹¹³ Liberal MP Joyce Murray claimed Conservatives had been keeping the costs of the commemoration secret.¹¹⁴ On 6 November, 2013 Pierre Nantel claimed that the Government spent \$70 million on 1812 ads during for the Super Bowl while cutting staff and archeologists from historical sites.¹¹⁵ His colleague Anne Mihn-Thu Quach reenforced this argument. As a result of \$30 million in budget cuts for Parks Canada, visitors and tourists were greeted by signs instead of tour guides, and some 600 jobs for guides, archeologists, and scientists had been cut.¹¹⁶

On 9 December, 2013 Liberal Sean Casey referred to the Conservatives' refusal to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, stating that: "[t]here was no year-long celebration of the charter, unlike the effort to worship the War of 1812, an exercise in propaganda that wasted millions of dollars in doing so." Casey condemned the Bicentennial commemorations, saying: "There was not a chance they would honour a document like the charter that actually makes a difference to Canadians, but for any 200-year-old wars used for propaganda purposes they would give \$12 million."¹¹⁷

Ignoring Quebec? And Indigenous Peoples?

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¹¹³ Canada. *House of Commons Debates*, November 28, 2013 (Alexandre Boulerice & Irene Mathyssen, NDP).

¹¹⁴ Canada. *House of Commons Debates*, December 2, 2011 (Joyce Murray, Liberal.).

¹¹⁵ Canada. *House of Commons Debates*, November 6, 2013 (Pierre Nantel, NDP).

¹¹⁶ Canada. *House of Commons Debates*, September 28, 2012 (Anne Mihn-Thu Quach, NDP).

¹¹⁷ Canada. *House of Commons Debates*, December 9, 2013 (Sean Casey, Liberal.).

In October, 2014, the NDP's Matthew Dubé brought up Government mismanagement of Fort Chambly, a War of 1812 Parks Canada historical site in southeastern Quebec, which he said had received no federal funding at all. Chambly had been the base of Charles de Salaberry before the Battle of Chateauguay. Dubé claimed that the reason for the lack of funding was that the site was Francophone (and thus by implication of no political advantage to the Government).¹¹⁸ The NDP asserted that the Conservatives were completely ignoring the role of Quebec in the War of 1812. Robert Aubin maintained that in his own riding the Forges du Saint-Maurice, where the first cannonballs used in the War of 1812 might well have been produced, was falling into disrepair.¹¹⁹ The Conservatives, said the Opposition, were providing absolutely no money for Quebec to work with for commemorations, while they continued to bring up the importance of sites in Ontario and the role of citizenship.¹²⁰

Conservative MPs did mention Francophone Canadians in passing, along with Indigenous and British Canadians, and said that the British victory in the war guaranteed “the French factor in Canada,”¹²¹ but, said the NDP, they never addressed the issue of not sufficiently funding Quebec for the Bicentennial. As Mylene Freeman said on 4 February 2014: “Although they have no qualms about using the War of 1812 for publicity for their members and their Government, the Conservatives do not seem to want to take a stand on

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¹¹⁸ Canada. *House of Commons Debates*, October 2 2014 (Matthew Dubé, NDP).

¹¹⁹ Canada. *House of Commons Debates*, October 30, 2013 (Robert Aubin, NDP).

¹²⁰ Canada. *House of Commons Debates*, February 27, 2014 (Hon. Chris Alexander, CPC).

¹²¹ Canada. *House of Commons Debates*, May 28, 2013 (Paul Calandra, CPC).

protecting the heritage of that historical era.”¹²² Conservative MP Colin Carrie did list a series of sites apparently receiving federal funding in rebuttal, but apart from Fort Chambly and St. Andrews Blockhouse (in New Brunswick), all of these were in Ontario, and the reference to Fort Chambly might have been only because it was brought up so frequently. Fort Chambly does have a page on the Parks Canada site, but it was created on 3 April, 2017. It also does not have its own web domain, unlike Fort Henry in Ontario (www.forthenry.com).

NDP member Niki Ashton was quick to point out that the Conservative Government loved talking about the War of 1812 and about the role of Indigenous peoples in fighting the war. But it ignored the third-world living conditions under which First Nations continued to live and cut the budget of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF), an Ottawa-based non-profit centred on the legacy of Residential Schools, which was founded in 1998 but eventually eliminated in 2014.¹²³ The Hon. Peter Kent, the Minister of the Environment, countered that, through Canada’s Economic Action Plan, \$16 million had been invested by Parks Canada in updating and improving War of 1812 sites.¹²⁴ He said nothing of the AHF budget cuts.

The Harper Government’s spending for the Bicentennial included the minting of a silver dollar coin (sold at \$60), a new national monument, funding for historical re-enactments, upgrades to historical sites, museum exhibits, and even a mobile phone app,

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¹²² Canada. *House of Commons Debates*, February 4, 2014 (Mylene Freeman, NDP).

¹²³ Canada. *House of Commons Debates*, June 20, 2012 (Niki Ashton, NDP).

¹²⁴ Canada. *House of Commons Debates*, May 15, 2012 (Hon. Peter Kent, CPC).

all invested over the course of three years.¹²⁵ Questioning in the House of Commons revolved around not so much the amount being spent as on the amount of budget slashing and lay-offs of public servants which occurred at the same time. The Minister of Canadian Heritage, James Moore, emphasized the spending: “It’s been very interesting to see how people have reacted so positively to this,” and “it’s an essential role for Government to remind Canadians what unites us.” Moore pointed out that the Conservatives had commemorated the 40th anniversary of the Official Languages Act in 2009, and brushed off the criticism that nothing had been done to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Charter of Rights and Freedom. Historian J.L. Granatstein came into the fray, defending the Conservatives and their spending, saying that it was an investment in local tourism for the Niagara region of Ontario, where every town would have protested had the Government not spent money on the Bicentennial. He did mention that, while the Government was spending lavishly in one area, they were cutting away at others. These others included the Library and Archives Canada, which lost \$9.6 million in funding that year.¹²⁶

The town of Stouffville was caught off-guard when its MP, Conservative Paul Calandra, proposed a “Freedom of the Town” event, honouring the community’s military history. The local Mennonite Church, along with other peace church communities such as the Brethren in Christ and Quakers that founded the town, declared that the event did not reflect the pacifist and war-resisting history of the town. Mennonite minister Arnold

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¹²⁵ Meagan Fitzpatrick, “Conservatives draw fire for War of 1812 spending,” *CBC News*, June 15, 2012, www.cbc.ca/news/politics/conservatives-draw-fire-for-war-of-1812-spending-1.1265851.

¹²⁶ Meagan Fitzpatrick, “Conservatives draw fire for War of 1812 spending,” *Ibid*.

Neufeldt-Fast said that, if 1812 had to be commemorated, it would be better to focus on the story of the first conscientious objectors in Canada. Major John R. Grodzinski, a Royal Military College professor, replied that the money was “well spent” in part because it is the Government’s mandate to educate Canadians on their national history and heritage.¹²⁷

Bryn Weese of the *The Toronto Sun* wrote of the concerns of The Canadian Taxpayers Federation, which called for restraint and to “not get carried away” after the initial \$100 million federal commemorative budget was announced. Scott Hennig, the Federation’s National Communications director was quoted: “They are going to have to borrow this money, whatever the costs are. The Government needs to be darned sure this spending is absolutely necessary, and we’re not even talking about fighting a real war... we’re talking about reenacting one.” The article listed what the budget was to include: re-enactments, monument repair, commemorative plaques, an essay writing contest, a documentary, a new website, and a visitor’s centre at Fort York in Toronto.¹²⁸ The Government did say that it would ultimately spend “significantly less” and this turned out to be true.¹²⁹

But what of the War Museum and its Exhibit?

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¹²⁷ Meagan Fitzpatrick, “Conservatives draw fire for War of 1812 spending,” *CBC News*, June 15, 2012, www.cbc.ca/news/politics/conservatives-draw-fire-for-war-of-1812-spending-1.1265851.

¹²⁸ Bryn Weese, “Go easy on the gunpowder tax watchdog growls as War of 1812 anniversary nears,” *The Toronto Sun*, March 15, 2011, 30.

¹²⁹ Bryn Weese, “Go easy on the gunpowder tax watchdog growls as War of 1812 anniversary nears,” *The Toronto Sun*, March 15, 2011, 30.

In spite of the near \$1 million budget figure going to the War Museum, there was no demonstrated Government interference in the interpretation of the facts presented. The federal Government did take many of its cues from what the CWM was willing to present to them during the production of the “Four Wars of 1812” exhibition which were included on the canada.ca website and acknowledged as coming from the CWM. As we have seen earlier with Glenn Ogden, the cross pollination was from the Museum to the Federal Government, not the other way around. Ogden said that the War Museum fed into the federal process what they were doing, discussing their message with the Government. “We talked about the website, our messaging and so on. Early on it was fairly clear that our federal partners saw what we were doing and we shared and so there were some elements of collaboration, for example with the traveling exhibition as well.” Ogden also admitted that much of the visual material from the Exhibit was borrowed from Parks Canada. “There was on a communication level a precinct in which we communicated with each other.” But Ogden also claimed that the CWM’s work “was something that was primarily self generated. We had already been at it for a while.”¹³⁰ Although the Harper Government observed and co-operated with the CWM project, it did not influence it, but rather was influenced by it.

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¹³⁰ Glenn Ogden. Interview with Philip Lamancusa. June 29, 2018.

IV: The Summative Evaluation

The Summative Evaluation of 1812 at the Canadian War Museum was written in partnership with the Canadian Museum of Civilization¹³¹ and based on research conducted from 26 June to 2 August 2012. This report is of great importance because it was the only study released by the CWM, which relayed opinion about the Exhibit and the role of the War of 1812 in the lives of the Canadians.

Who contributed?

Of the visitors, eighty-eight percent were Canadian, with twenty-seven percent of them from the National Capital Region. Thirty-two percent were from other parts of Ontario and ten percent from Quebec. Nineteen percent were from other provinces or territories. Most initial reactions were positive. Forty-seven percent came specifically to the War Museum for the War of 1812 Exhibit but only eight percent were students or history/social studies educators. Thirty-four percent had found out about the Exhibit from media coverage, eleven percent had learned about it from talking to someone else who had visited or heard about it earlier, and thirteen percent came on recommendation from a friend or family member. Nineteen percent rated the Exhibit “superior” (the highest category provided) while seventy-one percent rated it “excellent” (second highest category),¹³² and sixty-seven claimed that the Exhibit could not be improved upon.

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¹³¹ Canadian Museum of Civilization, Corporate Records, *Summative Evaluation of 1812 at the Canadian War Museum*, War of 1812, 2014-005, 1.

¹³² Canadian War Museum, *Summative Evaluation*, 1, 5-6.

There were two surveys included in the *Summative Evaluation*: Tracking and Timing and a Questionnaire, which will be explained below. The majority of visitors who consented to one or the other survey were male fifty-two percent compared to forty-eight percent female for Tracking & Timing, while the Questionnaire had a gender gap of fifty-eight percent male to forty-two percent female. Eighty-one percent of visitors were unilingual Anglophones, whereas twelve percent were Francophone, five percent were bilingual and two percent were allophone. The largest single regional demographic was made up of residents of the National Capital Region or other parts of Ontario, twenty-seven and thirty-two percent, respectively. There were fifty-two exhibition elements in total, and the average number of visitor stops was just twenty-eight, and the highest number of stops by any one visitor was forty-two. The typical visitor saw around twenty-three percent to twenty-seven percent of the fifty-two elements in the Exhibit, while thirty-six percent saw at least half of the elements.¹³³

1812 attracted more people over age sixty than the average Exhibit at CWM, although as an Exhibit lasting through to late summer families with children also visited more than usual. Seventy-three percent of all visitors came as a family, and sixty-two percent were first time visitors of CWM. Self-professed “loyal” visitors were more likely to claim that they showed up specifically for the 1812 Exhibit, and over all forty-seven percent of total visitors said that they came only to see the Exhibit. Sixty-seven percent

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¹³³ Canadian Museum of Civilization, *Summative Evaluation*, 6-7, 9-10.

(67%) declared interest in Canadian military and/or social political history, although only eight percent (8%) were students or educators in the discipline of History.¹³⁴

Tracking and Timing

Tracking and Timing is a method of counting the number of points of reference in an Exhibit that a visitor encounters, measuring how often a site is visited (tracking) and for how long (timing). Sixty-four visitors agreed to participate in Tracking and Timing, while four hundred twenty-two filled out the questionnaire.

Fifty-four percent of visitors wanted to learn more about the war as a result of visiting the Exhibit and twenty-nine percent expressed interest in different perspectives being used for other exhibits. The typical visit was thirty-six minutes long and on average fifty-four percent of the fifty-two individual stations were visited. Reading Exhibit texts was the most popular part of the Exhibit, followed by the layout, the artifacts, and in-gallery activities. Many did not notice the activities, although the youngest visitors were most likely to have referenced finding them and trying on the costume uniforms. The Mannequins were the fifth most popular aspect of the Exhibit.¹³⁵

The most popular textual elements in the Exhibit were “The American War” Hub Platform and Overview, the “Canada-Caught Up in War” Platform and Overview, the “Defending Canada” Platform, the “British Regulars” Platform, and the “Britain-Getting

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¹³⁴ Canadian Museum of Civilization, *Summative Evaluation*, 22, 24, 25-26, 28, 30-32.

¹³⁵ Canadian Museum of Civilization, *Summative Evaluation*, 2-4.

into the War” Platform.¹³⁶ This demonstrates interest in the Canadian and British elements of the Exhibit, although this must be weighed against the fact that the most viewed element overall was the “American War.”

Reading was the most common activity, although seventy-five percent of visitors watched at least one of the three Exhibit videos, with thirty-nine percent watching two or all three. Visitors who saw two or all three of the videos had an increased visiting time (forty-seven minutes) in comparison to those visitors who saw none of the videos (and who averaged just twenty-eight minutes, meaning that video watching lengthened visits). Sixty-one percent read the Introduction panels, but only seventeen percent mentioned trying on the clothing provided in the interactive sections. The most popular of the Mannequins was Laura Secord, viewed by fifty-one percent of visitors.¹³⁷

The Questionnaire

The Questionnaire reinforced the results of Tracking and Timing, although the field of those surveyed was significantly larger. Eighty-five and a half percent of visitors were Anglophone, while the remainder were Francophone. A reason for the absence of allophone data was that the questionnaire was provided with only English and French language options.

Respondents by and large encouraged the CWM to produce more exhibits with multiple perspectives, or even to do it for all events from that point on. Visitors who

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¹³⁶ Canadian Museum of Civilization, *Summative Evaluation*, 16-17.

¹³⁷ Canadian Museum of Civilization, *Summative Evaluation*, 19-21.

filled out the Questionnaire were most interested in Canadian and Native American perspectives. The lowest level of interest was for the American perspective. Seventy percent stated that the multi-perspective approach enhanced understanding of the subject matter, with one respondent being quoted as saying “...diverse perspectives enhance our understanding of war and its consequences.” The Exhibit made many of the visitors aware of the different perspectives for the first time. One Francophone visitor wrote: “Aborder cette guerre à partir des différents points de vue est une excellente idée qui permet de comprendre les différents en jeux.” A dual Canadian-American citizen expressed hope that the Exhibit would eventually find its way to the United States on tour. It did tour to Washington D.C., and tourists on an American cruise ship which stopped at Nanaimo, British Columbia saw the touring Exhibit at the Vancouver Island Military Museum (VIMM). These tourists were “most intrigued by the Exhibit,” according to the VIMM employee who wrote up an evaluation for the CWM.¹³⁸

As with the Tracking and Timing survey, questionnaire takers had a tendency to mark the Exhibit as either “superior” or “excellent.” Thirty-two percent of visitors wanted more information in the Exhibit. Some visitors stated that they wanted more videos, although up to thirty percent of visitors never noticed that there was a computer game or survey. Few noticed the In-Gallery activities; those without children were more likely to have missed them.¹³⁹ Twenty-seven percent claimed “feeling proud of my ancestry” after going to the Exhibit, although some expressed interest or even confusion because of the

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¹³⁸ Canadian Museum of Civilization, *Summative Evaluation*, 34-36.

¹³⁹ Canadian Museum of Civilization, *Summative Evaluation*, 38, 41-42, 48, 66-67.

usage of the terms “Canadian” and “Native American.”¹⁴⁰ One commenter did not know that the burning of Washington, D.C., was in retaliation for the burning of Yorktown. Fifty-four percent wanted to learn more about the War of 1812, and twenty-nine percent wanted to find out about different perspectives on other historical events. Seventy-three percent said that they would discuss the exhibition with others.¹⁴¹

Complaints included that the Exhibit was too small or that it felt like it had been completed too quickly. This is in keeping with the fact that nearly a third of visitors surveyed wanted the Exhibit to include even more information. More maps or battle site models were some of the items for which an increase in number was seen as a positive addition. There was also the issue of having to explain just what “Canada” was in 1812 as it was over fifty years before Confederation, and this was amplified by the lack of a start-to-finish chronology for the Exhibit.¹⁴²

One positive outcome was that the circular floor-plan was praised for permitting visitors to seek out linkages more easily. Rather than forcing a linear trip through the prospectives, the circle allowed for the four sides to be seen as part of a whole. The Orientation Hub helped to clarify the four perspectives concepts. The most interest was expressed for the Canadian (ninety percent) and the Native American (eighty-one

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¹⁴⁰ Canadian Museum of Civilization, *Summative Evaluation*, 43-44.

¹⁴¹ Canadian Museum of Civilization, *Summative Evaluation*, 45-46.

¹⁴² Canadian Museum of Civilization, *Summative Evaluation*, 49-51.

percent) perspectives, while the lowest interest was in the American (seventy-six percent).¹⁴³

Twenty-seven percent sought what they called a “Canadian cultural experience.” One French commenter suggested one other addition (from European museums) that might have enhanced the experience. “Un guide audio comme l’on trouve en Europe qui nous explique l’exposition.”¹⁴⁴

V: The Academic Debate

The thesis of McKay and Swift in *Warrior Nation* was not much discussed in the public sphere beyond a small number of predominately Francophone journalists. The esoteric tug-of-war between Canada as Peacekeeper or Warrior it proposed was beyond the interest or knowledge of the average person. Rather, it fell to academics to debate this issue.

Claire Turenne Sjolander of the School of Political Studies at University of Ottawa wrote that Prime Minister Stephen Harper was attempting to forge an “emergent national identity” in 2012 with his support for the Bicentennial of the War of 1812 commemoration. Minister of Canadian Heritage James Moore declared that “it falls upon all of us who have a passionate belief in Canadian history, who have a deep feeling that we should be doing a better job of educating our kids, to take advantage of moments like this.” Sjolander claimed that the Canadian Government was acting like a “history

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¹⁴³ Canadian Museum of Civilization, *Summative Evaluation*, 52, 57.

¹⁴⁴ Canadian Museum of Civilization, *Summative Evaluation*, 57, 59, 70.

teacher,” in a way harkening back to accusations by NDP parliamentarians claiming fact manipulation by the CPC.¹⁴⁵ She reported that a comprehensive survey conducted by Phoenix Strategic Perspective Inc for the Department of National Defence revealed that few who took part in the survey knew about the Bicentennial and few could identify the war by name. If the Government had wanted to celebrate something that would involve uniting Canadians, they could have commemorated the 50th anniversary of medicare in Saskatchewan or the 30th anniversary of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The War of 1812, occurring in primordial pre-Confederation times, could be seen as apolitical, unifying, and a means to an end in that it could be used to project the more militant Conservative view of Canadian internationalism.¹⁴⁶ Sjolander saw the celebration of the Bicentennial as a reframing of Canadian identity, different from Liberal internationalism, and in so doing, the Harper Government was promoting it “as a national project before there was a nation.”¹⁴⁷

Michael K. Carroll of the Humanities Department at MacEwan University, Edmonton, Alberta, described the political and identity aspects of the debate. The Conservative Government of Stephen Harper had turned away from the peacekeeping legacy, opting to promote Canada as a “courageous warrior.” Yet the peacekeeping legacy is supported across broad demographic groups, including Quebecers, and historically both Liberals and Conservatives have supported the endeavour. Carroll claimed that the

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¹⁴⁵ Claire Turenne Sjolander. “Through the Looking Glass: Canadian identity and the War of 1812,” *International Journal*, Vol. 69, No.2 (June 2014): 153, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24709498>.

¹⁴⁶ Sjolander, “Through the Looking Glass,” 155.

¹⁴⁷ Sjolander, “Through the Looking Glass,” 156-157.

narrative is the product of a specific time and place, “mixed with a dash of wishful thinking.” In fact, it is a construction of soft power. There are elements of truth in the narrative, but it really is not completely true.¹⁴⁸ Peacekeeping is a rational national interest, but so is the idea that peacekeeping is not war, and war, for Canadians, is what Americans do. Peacekeeping is dangerous and involves essentially the same challenges as war, such as snipers, explosives, and military confrontations. Peacekeeping missions are less expensive than war. With the end of the Second World War, Canada was one of the few countries to avoid severe damage and was able to enjoy more international recognition. By the 1960s, as Japan and Germany started to rise again and Canada began to see a slip in its international standing, peacekeeping became a means by which Canada retained an international role. In 1992, Canada reached its peak contribution to the UN peacekeeping effort with 3,300 soldiers, but since then the number has dwindled. After 2001, the Canadian mission in Afghanistan was seen by the public more as a peacekeeping operation, even though it was an all-out war.¹⁴⁹

J.L. Granatstein, in a September, 2012 op-ed for *The Victoria Times Colonist*, reviewed the work of McKay and Swift. For him, Canada being a warrior nation was a given. The question, rather, was if the Government was pushing a militaristic agenda on the public in light of the on-going conflict in Afghanistan and if this was the work of a small band of military historians working for the Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute. He conceded that there was some truth in this. He even stated that, in spite of

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¹⁴⁸ Michael K. Carroll. “Peacekeeping: Canada’s past, but not its present or future?.” *International Journal*, 2016, Vol. 71 (I). 168-169.

¹⁴⁹ Michael K. Carroll. “Peacekeeping: Canada’s past.” 171, 173-174.

his own “best efforts, polls demonstrate Canadians know very little of their military past” and that few universities teach Canadian military history at all. He did not deny nor demean Canada’s peacekeeping past, but stated that both the Liberals and the Conservatives had exploited the peacekeeping narrative by building monuments to it. Both narratives, for Granatstein, were the result of myth-making. He argued that NATO and NORAD commitments absorbed most military budgetary resources.

When Granatstein became director and CEO of the old Canadian War Museum, he found that the entire third floor of the building (described by him as “the cramped museum”) was devoted to a peacekeeping Exhibit. When he asked why this was so, he was told that public polls demonstrated that they wanted more on peacekeeping. This Exhibit totally ignored Canadian involvement in NATO and NORAD, prompting him to massively reduce the peacekeeping Exhibit and create two “big exhibits” about these two alliances. He said that getting history right mattered, and that it was important as an historian to know the difference between history and myth.¹⁵⁰

Granatstein was something of an exception to the general polarity among those who spoke about the Bicentennial as he was critical of the television commercials the Government produced on naval and land victories, which for Granatstein were fought by British navy and regiments. There were Canadian militias at this point (many of which were founded during the War of 1812), but the fact remained that had the British lost the war, Canada would have become one or two American state(s). Granatstein was also in

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¹⁵⁰ J.L. Granatstein, “Canada has always been a warrior nation,” *The Victoria Times Colonist*, September, 2012, www.timescolonist.com/opinion/letters/canada-has-always-been-a-warrior-nation-1.1575.

agreement with Jeffrey Simpson of *The Globe and Mail* that most of the war was fought by British regulars and not Canadians.¹⁵¹ He did ultimately back the Government, claiming that the Harper Government had suffered mean-spirited criticism because what they did was just what any Government would have done, yet his willingness to cross the aisle when necessary was admirable.¹⁵²

Websites

The Government of Canada produced several websites on the War of 1812. Here we will discuss the canada.ca site and that of the Ontario Ministry of Government and Consumer Services.

The Government of Canada website features eight subject headings under a category of “Services and Information.”¹⁵³ The first of these was Canadian Archives of the War of 1812, which linked to the Library and Archives Canada website and their Exhibit. The second, National Historic Sites of the War of 1812, involved a list of “Battlefields and Forts,” including Chateauguay, Coteau-du-Lac, Fort George, Fort St. Joseph, Fort Lennox, Fort Malden, and Fort Wellington. Some of these included war reenactments. Only two, St. Andrews Blockhouse and the Rideau Canal, focused on civilians; only the last was not specifically on a wartime subject and was orientated towards recreational opportunities.¹⁵⁴ The third, the Virtual Exhibit, was the first of

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¹⁵¹ C.P. Champion. “1812 & The Fathers of Confederation.” *The Dorchester Review*. Volume 3 Number 1 Spring/Summer 2013, 4.

¹⁵² J.L. Granatstein. “Harper, History, and the Historians.” *The Dorchester Review*, Vol. 2, No.1 (Spring/Summer 2012), 80-82

¹⁵³ The Government of Canada, “War of 1812,” www.canada.ca/en/services/defence/caf/militaryhistory/wars-operations/1812.html. (Date modified: June 12, 2018.)

¹⁵⁴ Government of Canada, “National historic sites of the War of 1812,” www.canada.ca/en/services/defence/caf/militaryhistory/wars-operations/1812/national-historic-sites.html. (Last modified 05-07-2018.)

several sections which linked directly to the CWM War of 1812 website, and was followed by the War of 1812-1814 Plaque, was linked to an article on the House of Commons website, chronicled the thirty-four battles that occurred in Canada during the three year conflict.¹⁵⁵ Fifth, on Laura Secord, is an article on the official Government website about her and included two testimonials written for her by Lieutenant FitzGibbon in the 1820s, and a photograph of the first letter which dates to 26 February, 1820.¹⁵⁶

The sixth section involved Indigenous contributions to the War of 1812, which linked to what is presently the website of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (now Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada and Indigenous Services Canada). This had three links, all within the site itself, including an Exhibit entitled “Indigenous Contributions to the War of 1812.” It consisted of ten panels and provided a similar background to that of the Native American section of the CWM Exhibit, although Laura Secord was mentioned in the section on the Battle of Beaver Dams. There was a list of battles that was repeated in the link entitled “Indigenous Contributions to the War of 1812: Theatres of War Map” (which did not include a map). There was also the Queen Elizabeth II commemorative medal that was struck in 2012, and dates the National Recognition Ceremony to October 25, 2012 which took place at Rideau Hall in Ottawa. Finally, there were downloadable/printable 1812 commemorative postcards featuring Native American and First Nations warriors and chiefs.¹⁵⁷

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¹⁵⁵ Parliament of Canada, “War of 1812-1814 Plaque,” www.ourcommons.ca/About/HistoryArtsArchitecture/collection_profiles/CP_plaque1812-e.htm.

¹⁵⁶ Government of Canada, “Laura Secord,” www.canada.ca/en/services/defence/caf/militaryhistory/wars-operations/1812/laura-secord.html. (Last modified 06-21-2018.)

¹⁵⁷ Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, “Indigenous contributions to the War of 1812,” www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1338906261900/1338906300039. (Last modified 06-12-2016.)

The seventh section, Canadian Forces War of 1812 Commemorative Banner, was approved by Governor General David Johnston on 20 October 2011. The Badge consists of a Canadian standard of red and white. This is the ensign of the Royal Crown proper, and inscribed with “1812-1815” and “Defence of Canada-Defense du Canada” in Sable letters. The caption below the description read: “Symbolism: The banner honours those who defended British North America during the War of 1812; the Royal Navy and Provincial Marine, the British Army and colonial militias, and their First Nations allies. The three fighting elements are represented by the anchor, the swords and the tomahawks respectively.”¹⁵⁸

The Eighth section included six films about the War of 1812. The first three are films from the National Film Board of Canada website featuring a dramatic short film about the Battle of Chateauguay; a 1958 animated short film about the engagement of the H.M.S. Shannon and the U.S.S. Chesapeake in June, 1813, and “A Question of Identity: War of 1812,” a 1966 short film about the effect of the war on settlements on the Upper St. Lawrence and Niagara regions and the solidification of Canadian identity as a result of American incursions among people who had originally lived in the United States. This last film addresses something that the exhibition did not by presenting a strong case for why Canadian identity was strengthened as a result of American wartime violence against civilians. Another film included an compilation: an interactive graphic novel about the fictional Loxley family and their engagement in the War of 1812; a Heritage Minute on Richard Pierpoint, who is included in the CWM Exhibit. The latter addressed the issue of

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¹⁵⁸ National Defence and Canadian Forces, “Canadian Forces War of 1812 Commemorative Banner,” www.cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca/dhh-dhp/gal/cm-bc/cf-war-1812-eng.asp. (Last modified: 08-24-2015.)

slavery and the fact that many Africans who were taken as slaves attained their freedom by fighting for the British in the American Revolutionary War. The page ends with a second link to the CWM virtual Exhibit.¹⁵⁹

The Ontario Provincial Ministry of Government and Consumer Services website opens with a quote: “Two years war and no conquest? The little province of Upper Canada holds out two years against the whole force of democracy? This is very grating.”¹⁶⁰ It was written by an American named Nathan Ford, a local official in Ogdensburg whose correspondence during the war referenced both civilian life and smuggling on the American-Canadian border. Ford makes no reference at all to Lower Canada (Quebec) and claims that Upper Canada was holding out on its own against the United States.¹⁶¹ This is set against a background painting depicting the dying moments of General Brock at the Battle of Queenston Heights. Most of the information was taken from the Archives of Ontario and essentially repeats battle information found in the CWM Exhibit. One section, entitled “Civilian life”, focused not on civilian experiences of destruction by Americans as the CWM did, but rather the negative relationship between military and civilians within Canada, the most mild being how fence posts were stolen to make fires. A series of letter transcriptions by Thomas G. Ridout to his brother and father make references to military life at the time. There are also sections on

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¹⁵⁹ Government of Canada, “Films about the War of 1812,” www.canada.ca/en/services/defence/caf/militaryhistory/wars-operations/1812/films.html. (Last modified 04-26-2017.)

¹⁶⁰ Ontario Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, “The War of 1812,” www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/explore/online/1812/index.aspx.

¹⁶¹ Ontario Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, “Important Figures,” www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/explore/online/1812/figures.aspx.

Government compensation for looting that occurred on Canadian properties during the war.¹⁶²

A digital gallery of “Important Figures” included multiple portraits and photographs of Canadians but tended to provide only a flag for British and especially American people included on the list. Those who had no flag next to their entry are Canadians of European or First Nations ancestry.¹⁶³ There is a very brief section entitled “After the War” which addressed the development of Upper Canadian nationalism and the Upper Canadian militiamen, with Brock and Laura Secord as the focused images. This strengthened the belief that opposing the Government of Canada was an act of disloyalty and that the legacy of the militiaman in Ontario is still strong among military enthusiasts.¹⁶⁴ There was also a link to a much longer section on “The Saga of Brock’s Monument,” which was vandalized during the 1837 Rebellion and was reconstructed starting in 1852. This monument is barely referenced in the CWM Exhibit.¹⁶⁵

From the Federal Government’s web page for 1812, it can be seen that it took much material from the CWM Exhibit and acknowledged that fact. As we have seen earlier, the cross pollination was from the Museum to the federal government, not the other way around. Although the Harper Government supported the CWM with 1812 funding it did not influence it but rather was influenced by it. There was a heavier

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¹⁶² Ontario Ministry of Government and Consumer Services “Militia and Civilian Life,” www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/explore/online/1812/militia.aspx.

¹⁶³ Ontario Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, “Important Figures,”

¹⁶⁴ Ontario Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, “After the War,” www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/explore/online/1812/after.aspx.

¹⁶⁵ Ontario Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, “The Sage of Brock’s Monument,” www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/explore/online/1812/saga.aspx.

emphasis on the War as a military conflict and less as a civilian tragedy, as was presented by CWM. This would be somewhat in line with McKay and Swift's argument that the federal government was trying to encourage a "Warrior Nation" narrative. The Provincial Government's site takes most of its information from the Archives of Ontario. It directly addresses the existence of Upper Canadian Militiamen, albeit briefly, something neither the CWM nor the Federal Government really mentioned.

In conclusion, the Canadian War Museum produced its 1812 Exhibit during a period of political polarity, and steered clearly away from it in producing an Exhibit which presented the war from four different perspectives, with the ideas of perspective and historical interpretation at the forefront. Although the ideology depicted in *Warrior Nation* played a role in academic discussion, it was a reaction to the political debate going on in Ottawa, and it did not influence public perceptions nor was it a factor in how visitors interpreted the Exhibit produced by the Canadian War Museum.

Conclusion

The War of 1812 means many different things to different people, if it means anything to them at all. To Americans it is a Second War of Independence against the British Empire; to Native Americans it was a final last stand to protect their homeland and way of life from an expanding American nation; to Canadians it was a successful defence of their homeland during an American attempt to eliminate their border; and to the British it is a forgotten conflict, a minor episode in the overarching war against Napoleon. The Canadian War Museum tried to give visitors a pause, to discover their own War of 1812.

Canada's own narrative is contested, just as the War of 1812 is contested. The narrative of Canada as a warrior nation allied with either the United Kingdom or in more modern times the United States against a common threat to national security has found its way into partisan politics. Otherwise, McKay and Swift would never have bothered writing *Warrior Nation*. Prime Minister Stephen Harper promoted this idea before, during, and after the 1812 Bicentennial celebrations. There is nothing unique in the Conservative Party of Canada as supporters of "the troops." This has been a Liberal Party position as well. Both Liberals and Conservatives have engaged in the same support for peacekeeping narratives, although Harper made his warrior preference clear. The goal of staff of the Canadian War Museum is to depict the horrors of war and its destructive effects on both military and civilian life. In no sense is it the goal of the Museum under current management or during the Bicentennial to glorify war.

If any narrative was promoted by the War Museum, it was that of a Canada which only fights when it has no other option, and one which does so by combining the skills, without discrimination, of all those who live within its borders. The Canadian fighting force during the War of 1812, if it can be seen as Canadian, consisted of British regulars, colonists, First Nations, and freed Africans. Although none of them probably had a sense of “fighting for Canada” in the modern sense, they certainly did recognize that they were fighting to avoid becoming part of the United States and to retain British sovereignty in northern North America, which to them meant freedom.

The first chapter of this thesis related the circumstances of the origin and production of the Canadian War Museum *1812* (originally entitled *Four Faces of 1812*) Exhibit, including its four narrative perspectives, and highlighting the idea of using multiple-interpretations for a single historical conflict. In the second chapter, this thesis examined the perspectives that surrounded the Bicentennial and the Exhibit in light of politics, academic opinion, and public reaction. It was determined from the evidence provided here that the Canadian War Museum influenced the Federal commemoration with its Exhibit, not the other way around.

The Canadian War Museum mounted an Exhibit that appealed to the public and presented multiple historical perspectives against the backdrop of a public and political debate where the combatants were apt to be bound not to many perspectives but a single one. The CWM was conscious of the external debate. In fact, it went out of its way to keep aloof from it, while benefiting from the War of 1812 Bicentennial’s increased

funding, which meant that the museum was able to raise the display standards of the Exhibit to a very high level. The CWM walked a tightrope, aware of but avoiding politics and controversy while trying to present as memorable a visitor experience as possible. The four perspectives approach was good scholarship, but it was also a way to present digestible history to an easily-bored modern audience. The public reactions to the Exhibit suggest that it was a success. The CWM's balanced approach was the right way to fulfill its responsibilities to its stakeholders, just as the multiple perspectives approach was a right way to do history.

Figure 16: General Brock asks visitors what their perspective is.

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