War Stories Fall 2012

Center for the Study of War & Society

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DIRECTOR’S NOTE

The Center for the Study of War and Society has had a wonderful year, made even more special because of three events. First, the center hosted major, nationally known speakers, noted author and journalist Bing West and prominent blogger Walter Russell Mead. Second, we were delighted to learn this spring that the center had once again received research start-up funding through the UT Office of Research. The center was the only applicant in the humanities to receive such funding, which will help us build our online digital archive, Friends and Foes: Images of Allies and Enemies in World War II. Third, Michael McConnell—a graduate student who works with the center and currently holds a fellowship at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC—received a prestigious dissertation research grant for archival research in Germany on his dissertation, which focuses on World War II. Thanks to all our friends and donors for your help in making these successes possible!

—Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, Director

Digital Makeover

CSWS says farewell to analog

The Center for the Study of War and Society has undergone a makeover recently. Thanks to funds awarded by the Office of Research, we were able to purchase new computers, scanners, and other digital equipment. Sleek hard drives have replaced old floppy disks. Tiny digital recorders have pushed aside chunky audiocassettes. A wireless printer, digital scanner, and numerous flat-screen computer monitors signal that the center operates in the twenty-first century.

It isn’t just with hardware that the center is “going digital.” Jordan Kuck and Will Rall, the center’s two graduate research assistants, have been working alongside the UT’s Special Collections department to enter the quickly expanding field of digital education by constructing an online digital archive. The Friends and Foes project aims to capture the experiences of World War II veterans as portrayed through a diverse array of historical documents including letters, photographs, advertisements, magazines, and newspapers.

Most of the summer’s time and effort has been geared toward scanning some unique sources housed at the university. However, these documents will not simply stand alone once the project is finished. The archive will present various
themes focusing on different aspects of war experiences. For example, the theme Home Front Enemies explores how those at home perceived the distant enemy by investigating imagery in German, American, and Australian propaganda posters. Other themes like War and Food and Enemies as Symbols will engage soldiers’ recollections of meals and interactions with maps.

The center has produced a small, prototype version of the website, utk.edu/go/ee, that focuses exclusively on World War II. In the future, the center has ambitions to expand the site and include a wide range of other conflicts like World War I, the Vietnam War, and the Korean War. The center may also expand to the Crusades in collaboration with the Medieval and Renaissance scholars at the university’s MARCO Institute. The Friends and Foes online digital project is an exciting new opportunity for the Center that will help us strengthen our commitment to educating audiences about the relationship between war and society.

Digital (continued)

UT at War

UT at War, a current research focus of the center, presents excerpts highlighting the university’s 100-year military history and tradition. This issue will focus on the efforts of UT scientists during World War II, drawing upon description of wartime years from university historians Milton Clark’s, who worked with volunteer historians Julian R. Fleming, Francis R. O’Brien, Clayton R. Pummer, and Elwood D. Shibley; two engineering instructors, Ernest C. Holdredge and Charles L. Segaser; and an instructor of physics, E. T. Jerny.

Just what specific rules these individuals played in the making of the atomic bomb is unknown, but the contribution of another faculty member, William Pollard of the Physics Department, can be more fully documented. Pollard had a PhD from Rice and had been a member of the faculty since 1936. He was a specialist in the fields of cosmic rays, gas adsorption, and the theory of gas flow.

Early in the war, MIT asked UT to grant Pollard leave to work in its radiological laboratory, which was engaged in defense work for the Army and Navy. President Hoskins refused, pleading the need to keep Pollard on campus for the university’s own wartime programs. A request from the Pu-

nition of castor oil, which was used as a lubricant for aircraft engines, hydraulic brakes, shock absorbers, and other mechanisms; and food technicians experimenting with improving methods for the university’s food preservation.

Other members of the faculty made wartime contributions off-campus. Alvin Nielsen of the physics department worked at the University of Chicago Metallurgical Laboratories, on infrared detection devices; Katherine Way, another young physicist, went to the US Naval Ordnance Laboratory in Wash-

ington, DC. She also went to the Universi-
ty of Chicago Metallurgical Laboratories, where she worked under nuclear scien-
tists Leo Szilard, Enrico Fermi, and Eugen Wigner on a process for effecting an explosive chain reaction with U-235 and for large-scale production of plutonium for use in atomic bombs.

The Chicago laboratories were a major center for the new— and secret—Man-
hattan Project, established in Oak Ridge in 1942 as the Clinton Engineer Works and charged with the awesome task of producing aworkable atomic bomb.

The Manhattan Project absorbed the attention of a number of UT faculty. On the UT campus in the summer of 1943, some taught courses in a program orga-
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established in Oak Ridge. Among the forty-
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