

Articles

The Great War, Archives, and Modern Memory*

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RÉSUMÉ Un débat a fait surface au sein de la communauté archivistique à savoir si l'archiviste est le créateur de la mémoire du passé ou simplement un agent au service des créateurs. Une école de pensée voit l'archiviste comme le « gardien » des documents dont le rôle est de les préserver et de les rendre accessibles à d'autres, ces derniers devenant ainsi ceux qui forgent notre connaissance du passé. Une école alternative définit l'archiviste comme créateur autonome à titre d'auteur des documents d'archives. Dans cette perspective, les archivistes jouent un rôle crucial dans la création de la mémoire d'une société et de ses différentes facettes en créant des silences – ces trous dans notre connaissance du passé – par le biais d'une diversité d'interventions professionnelles. En premier lieu, l'article examine ce débat à l'aide du cas restreint des archives militaires canadiennes de la Première Guerre mondiale. On présente d'abord un récit de la constitution de ces archives et des deux stratégies contemporaines à la Guerre destinées à documenter le conflit. En deuxième lieu, et brièvement, on considère comment les archivistes qui se sont succédé depuis ont porté des jugements de valeur sur ces documents tout en les respectant et en leur offrant une « visibilité archivistique. » Troisièmement, et en guise de conclusion, on propose des observations sur l'archiviste comme auteur ou créateur de la mémoire. L'article répond à la proposition faite par Terry Cook pour que les archivistes examinent eux-mêmes leurs politiques de la mémoire – une exploration de ce dont on se souviendra et de ce qui sera relégué aux oubliettes, ce à quoi concourent toutes les fonctions archivistiques.

ABSTRACT A debate has emerged within the archival community: is the archivist a creator of our memory of the past, or merely a helper to the actual creators? One school of thought defines the archivist as the “guardian” of the record, whose role is to preserve it and make it available to others, the creators of our knowledge of the past. An alternative school defines the archivist as an autonomous creator, as the author of the archival record. From this perspective, archivists play a critical role in the creation of society's memory, and, its logical obverse, in creating silences – gaps in our knowledge of the past – across the spectrum of our professional work. This article examines this debate in a narrow context, the Canadian military record of the First World War, by presenting, first, a narrative of the history of this record and the two contemporary archival strategies employed to document the war. Second, very briefly, it considers how subsequent archivists have made judgements of value respecting these records by giving them an “archival profile.” Third, by way of a conclusion, it offers observations about the archivist as author, as a creator of memory. This paper is a response to Terry Cook's call for the examination by archivists of “our own politics of memory” – an

exploration of what is remembered and what forgotten, as reflected across all archival functions

“Pour savoir, il faudrait regarder dans les vieux papiers, dans les archives, qu’ils disent, et je ne sais pas ce que c’est que ces cochonneries-là.”

Louis Perigaud, *La Guerre des boutons*¹

My argument hinges on a short word, the distinction captured in the juxtaposition of the contemporary slogans “archives for the creation of memory” and “archives as the creation of memory.” By the former, the archivist is defined primarily as the custodian of the record – a “device” of public memory, in the words of one archival educator, “but not its creator or interpreter.”² This school of thought – which has been called neo-Jenkinsonian – defines the archivist’s primary task as guaranteeing that a record is *archival*, that is, it retains the key attributes of *impartiality* and *authenticity*.³ As guardian of the record, the archivist’s duty is to preserve it and make it available to others (for example, historians), the true creators of our knowledge of the past. “The Archivist’s career,” Sir Hilary enjoined us repeatedly, “is one of service. He exists in order to make other people’s work possible.”⁴

An alternative school of thought, advocated here, defines the archivist not as a mere instrument of the real creators of our memory of the past, but as an autonomous creator. As the author of the archival record, the archivist plays a critical role in the construction of our knowledge of the past and, its logical obverse, in creating silences – gaps in memory. Our authorship, the particular story we choose to tell, reflects judgements we make across the spectrum of our professional work, from the advice we offer records creators through to our appraisal and acquisition decisions to our arrangement and description work to our reference and public programming activities. As the product of archival politics, of purposive archival intervention, the record requires not only guarding, but our close scrutiny.⁵

This wide-ranging debate on the archivist’s role, and the profound implications that role has for the status of archives as evidence, is addressed here through a case study centring on the Canadian military record of the First World War. At one level, this paper can be read as a history of this record: it outlines an account of its creation and the two contemporary archival strategies employed by Max Aitken and Arthur Doughty to document Canada’s participation in the Great War, then reviews its subsequent construction by archivists. More importantly, this paper uses this case study to respond to Terry Cook’s call for the examination by archivists of “our own politics of memory” – what is remembered and what is forgotten – across the various archival functions.⁶

The First World War was the first of the great world-wide conflicts of this

century, pitting the “Central Powers” of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey, and smaller allies against the “Entente,” the British Empire, France, Russia, Italy, Japan, the United States, and their allies. The war’s most immediate consequence was mass bereavement.⁷ The Great War, as it was called at the time, left an estimated 8.6 million soldiers dead, along with millions of civilians, including those killed in the twentieth century’s first genocide, suffered by the Armenians.⁸ By nurturing Bolshevism in Russia and National Socialism in Germany, with their catastrophic consequences, and in response, the mobilization of democratic states under Anglo-American leadership, the war has had deep repercussions for the political events of our century. The war also had the more immediate effect, at least according to liberal nationalist Canadian historiography, of giving birth to a distinct sense of Canadian – rather than British Imperial – nationality.⁹

Canada, with a population of under 8 million, necessarily played a small part in the conflict. Shortly after the British declaration of war in August 1914, Canada offered an initial contingent of 25,000 soldiers for service overseas. The 1st Canadian Division was fighting in France by early 1915. That autumn the Canadian Corps was formed, incorporating the 1st and 2nd Canadian Divisions, and the Canadian Cavalry Brigade. Further contingents and reinforcement drafts continued to be sent overseas. By the time of the Armistice in November 1918, the Canadian Corps had expanded to include four infantry divisions and corps units. Other Canadian units, including some artillery batteries, engineering companies, and railway and forestry troops, served directly under British command in France and Belgium. Still other units, responsible for administrative support, training, forestry, and medical care, served in England. Canadian hospitals were sent to the eastern Mediterranean; an engineering unit built bridges in Palestine. Canada also joined with other western nations in sending contingents to Murmansk and Siberia in an unsuccessful effort to resist the Bolshevik seizure of power in Russia. The Canadian Expeditionary Corps (CEF), as the army raised during the war was designated, grew to nearly 620,000 in the course of the conflict, of whom roughly 425,000 served overseas. Canada suffered approximately 60,000 killed and 170,000 wounded.¹⁰ By way of comparison: the United States, with a population eleven times Canada’s, lost 48,000 dead.¹¹

Our memory is our knowledge of the past. We generally speak of two levels of documented memory: the contemporary record and the secondary literature subsequently constructed from that record.¹² The record is the essential path to the past, the site where an event is originally documented – “the only direct access we have to past actions.”¹³ It can exist in any one of multiple contemporary or historical media.¹⁴ Personal and family memory (family oral traditions and the recollections of individuals) and what has come to be called social memory (traditions which span a larger community) are not records unless they are captured on a recording medium.¹⁵ Non-recorded memory is

unsustainable over the long term.¹⁶ “With the loss of books,” wrote Orderic Vitalis, an English monk born in 1075, “the deeds of the ancients pass into oblivion ... with the changing world, as hail or snow melt in the waters of a swift river swept away by the current never to return.”¹⁷

To understand the past requires analysis of both how the contemporary record was constructed – a function we associate with archives – and how a secondary literature was constructed from that record: the task of the historian. It is well understood that the manner in which the First World War has been represented by historians has shifted continuously, subject to historiographical fashion. Interpretations of the past change.¹⁸ But as well, at a more fundamental level, the bedrock on which this literature sits – the archival record of the war – was constructed and reconstructed by the decisions made by archivists during the war to advise records creators, acquire records on the spot, and create records themselves; and by the actions of subsequent generations of archivists to appraise, acquire, and re-appraise records, and lend meaning to archival holdings through their descriptive, reference, and public programming decisions. The production and reproduction of the archival record – the flux of the documentary landscape – warrant the same close scrutiny from archivists that the writing of history has received from historians.¹⁹

The Creation of the War Record

The Canadian war, fought on many fronts, was administered in a handful of offices. In Canada, the Ministry of Militia and Defence in Ottawa was responsible for the recruitment, preliminary training, and dispatch overseas of recruits. In England, the Ministry of the Overseas Military Forces of Canada oversaw the administration of Canada’s expeditionary forces, and functioned as liaison between the Canadian government and the British government, the War Office, and British General Headquarters (GHQ).²⁰ The Canadian Section at British GHQ was responsible for personnel in France and Belgium.²¹

Records were created by and exchanged between units and formations in the Canadian military overseas and in Canada in order to communicate and document official decisions; records registry offices in Ottawa, London, and at the Canadian Section at British GHQ made what effort they could to impose order on the masses of documents they received. Fortunately, the majority of records were administrative, prepared on official forms, and subject to clearly articulated rules and procedures, widely distributed to the thousands of newly minted adjutants and records clerks.²² The growing level of entitlements associated with service, and greater emphasis placed on individual merit as the basis of promotion, swelled the heavy burden of paper carried by the military.²³ Personnel files, which assembled necessary information about individuals in a convenient manner, were the major documentary product of the First World War.²⁴ The Canadian Records Office at the Overseas Ministry in London had a staff of nearly one thousand to manage these files alone.²⁵

The urge to document the war was powerful: contemporaries recognized it as a momentous event. Dominion Archivist Arthur Doughty labelled it “the outstanding event in Canadian history for generations to come.”²⁶ As government redefined itself to wage war more effectively, assuming ever greater responsibility for regulating economic and social life, the volume of public records grew rapidly.²⁷ The “makeshift expedients” employed in war administration and records-keeping raised fears that considerable quantities of valuable records would be lost, particularly because an equally rapid decline in government activity was predicted at the war’s end, after demobilization.²⁸ William Wood, member of a special mission sent at the behest of the Dominion Archivist from Canada to Europe to document the war effort, recognized that wartime records had emerged “like a flood” – and anticipated that they would dissipate just as rapidly.²⁹

The articulation of what we would now label documentation strategies produced two distinct wartime initiatives which anticipated the present-day debate within the archival literature on the archivist’s proper role. The one tactic was to survey the wide range of wartime activity, and make overtures to records creators to take custody postwar of government records and select private sector records once their operational use had ended. The other tactic, far more ambitious, was to author the archival record even more clearly by wide-ranging and pointed advice on records creation and maintenance, by aggressive acquisition, by transcribing interviews with key participants, by requesting reports on activity, and by commissioning photographs, films, and art.

Each strategy had its influential advocate. On the one hand was the professional practitioner Arthur Doughty, Dominion Archivist of Canada from 1904 to 1935, learned historian, and widely published scholar. Indefatigable in the acquisition of records of relevance to Canada (he enjoyed great success in obtaining records from the aristocratic descendants of both French and British senior colonial officials), he was persuasive, cultured, and determined to document the war according to traditional archival principles and practice.³⁰ On the other hand was amateur archivist Max Aitken, a brash, energetic self-made multi-millionaire from Newcastle, New Brunswick. Aitken was also a British Member of Parliament, raised to the peerage as Lord Beaverbrook in 1916, the same year he assisted Lloyd George in unseating Asquith as British Prime Minister. Even though he entered the British cabinet as Minister of Information in February 1918, Beaverbrook maintained his commitment to the authorship of the Canadian archival record to the end of the war.³¹

Max Aitken and the Canadian War Records Office

At loose ends at the outbreak of the war in August 1914, Max Aitken returned to Canada from England that autumn, appeared on recruiting platforms, and resumed previous links with leading Canadian politicians including Prime

Minister Robert Borden, and Minister of Militia and Defence, Sam Hughes.³² Casting about for a means to participate in the war effort, Aitken arranged his appointment in January 1915 to the Canadian militia, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel, to deal with “records generally appertaining to the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Forces and particularly the reporting of all casualties occurring therein.”³³ Aitken widened his role once the First Canadian Division went to France in March 1915, dubbing himself the “Canadian Eye-Witness” (the British also had their own “eye-witness,” their officially accredited war correspondent).³⁴ Travelling extensively through the Canadian trenches, Aitken sent frequent short cables to Borden and Hughes and prepared lengthy biweekly and monthly narratives of the activities of Canadian units for Sam Hughes.³⁵ Aiming “to follow the fortunes of the First Division in France, to share its experiences, to give to the public of Canada an account of the performances of its Regiments,” Aitken also provided colourful accounts to the Canadian press.³⁶ His reports “were snatched from the firing line,” he acknowledged, “and what they gained in vividness, they may have lost in accuracy.”³⁷

In response to the chaos created by the masses of documents he had accumulated, Aitken established the Canadian War Records Office (CWRO) in January 1916.³⁸ As he later explained to Borden in requesting financial assistance, he “consider[ed] [the] compilation of records of extraordinary importance and under existing conditions much valuable material will be lost unless proper system is put into shape at once.”³⁹ The CWRO soon had a staff of eleven officers and seventeen men in England and in France.⁴⁰ As initially planned, the Office was to function as a repository to which records were sent, read, sorted, filed, and indexed.⁴¹ But over time the simple collection of records became only one of three areas of activity. Soon, as well, the CWRO itself began to create records to document the war. Finally, it also assumed a growing role as publicist for Canada’s war effort. At the base of all CWRO activity was a self-consciously documentary impulse:

When a civilisation such as that of the modern world is suddenly thrust into the cauldron of a desperate war [one CWRO report explained], it knows enough of the value of the past to have no excuse for failing to record the present. It has, or should have, the imagination to realise how priceless the documents of the War will be to the remote future, for it knows what it would give for operation orders of the Battle of Hastings or a private Diary of William the Conqueror.⁴²

British army regulations, which governed the Canadian military during the First World War, required the creation of records for historical purposes. Orders were issued for each unit both in Canada and overseas to maintain a war diary “to furnish an accurate record of the operations from which the history of the war can subsequently be prepared.”⁴³ Other historical information

– “the description of the origin of every Canadian regiment, and its actions in the field” – was also to be maintained.⁴⁴

Units were thus required to produce something by way of “historical records,” and the CWRO acted rapidly to assert its authority over these materials. By September 1916 it arranged to have the war diaries of Canadian fighting units, which had been sent to the British as a matter of course, handed back.⁴⁵ In a room donated by the Public Record Office, CWRO staff registered the arrival of war diaries, followed up on missing numbers, prepared duplicates by photostat for Imperial authorities (the British price for surrendering the originals), and finally filed and indexed the original diaries.⁴⁶ In April 1917 the CWRO became the official repository for diaries created by Canadian units in the United Kingdom.⁴⁷ Other historical documents were lodged at the principal CWRO office, which maintained an extensive collection of files organized by unit, into which records were placed about units’ historical origins, mobilization, and training; the honours and awards conferred on its officers and men; as well as summaries of operations, and related reports, maps, orders, and photos. Badges, regimental colours painted on cardboard, copies of general and routine orders, issues of the *London Gazette*, foreign propaganda (copies of French, German, Italian, and Belgian communiqués), trench magazines, and news clippings were also collected.⁴⁸

The CWRO issued regular appeals to units for records.⁴⁹ At its behest, the military authorities issued Routine Orders reminding units to send their files, correspondence, and other documents to the CWRO.⁵⁰ The CWRO also made arrangements for the Canadian Records Office to forward “historical material” received from units.⁵¹ It as well made efforts to collect private photos, writing families of Victoria Cross winners, for instance, for photographs of the recipients.⁵²

But Aitken was not satisfied with merely accepting the records of others. Confronted by the problem of documenting the war, particularly at the sharp end at the front, the CWRO intervened to fill the record gap.

The nature of modern war [one CWRO report argued] is the prevalence of confused and protracted struggles where the range of vision is limited to a few yards and each small group or Unit is aware of nothing but what is happening in its immediate neighbourhood. And it is precisely the stories of these groups which make up the battle as the fragments make up the mosaic, and which yet so seldom penetrate as far as the War Records Office, and through it to posterity. A Company Report or a really extensive and well-written account of an action composed by a Battalion Commander is therefore of priceless value, but such things are more rare than they should be, and every day makes them more irreplaceable as memory fades and the witnesses disperse.⁵³

Discussion within the CWRO on documentary strategies was accompanied by an ongoing evaluation of the records it collected. In a document prepared for

A.E. Kemp, the Minister of the Overseas Military Forces of Canada, Aitken explained:

Into the system the incoming tide of material from the Canadian Corps is fitted as molten metal is poured into a mould, and can as readily be extracted for the historian as the occasion requires. The material is carefully examined and sifted, and exposed to rigid criticism. The omission of vital documents is instantly detected, and the whole passed through a sieve in the meshes of which inferior records of actions stick like large lumps. The object of this criticism is to guard against omissions or deficiencies which cannot be rectified in the future, and to point a warning finger at the weak points in our military narrative so that they may be made good before the actors have vanished from the scene.⁵⁴

If his metaphor was mixed, Aitken's aim was clear.

The war diary was viewed as the basic tool for historical research, yet the official requirement to maintain diaries could easily become a virtual dead letter. Amid the welter of wartime demands, the maintenance of an accurate and complete record of activity was bound to be a low priority, especially for front-line units.⁵⁵ At the CWRO, war diaries were read to identify technical defects (such as illegibility and factual omissions), and to evaluate their historical value.⁵⁶ The CWRO frequently criticized diaries for their thin descriptions, and their lack of detailed appendices, maps, and sketches.⁵⁷ Aitken, now Lord Beaverbrook, wrote to the commander of the Canadian Corps, Lord Byng, in February 1917 requesting his "help on a really very important matter": the quality of war diaries.⁵⁸ The CWRO subsequently issued periodic reports back to units "in which individual flaws and omissions are noted and recommendations for improvement made, together with general remarks and suggestions."⁵⁹

Other records were also scrutinized, such as those pertaining to the Battle of the Somme. The responsible CWRO officer regretted the absence of Company reports and "Special Interest" reports. In contrast to earlier battles the Somme "lack[ed] the interest and good stories," he lamented, attributing this failure to the fact that, unlike earlier reports, the Somme material was not read until some time after it was received and "supplementary inquiries in special points" were not "made to individuals while the events were still fresh in their minds."⁶⁰ Problems of obtaining a suitable standard of record from units drew the CWRO to send what it called "records" officers to the front "to get those extraneous accounts which alone make the actions vivid and help to ensure real historical accuracy on the details of the fighting." Duties included provision of advice on the writing of war diaries, on the spot assistance in solving problems of controversy over the historical record, action to address problems encountered over brigades revising battalion war diaries in the guise of editing, and finally, accumulation of knowledge of the terrain over which units

fought (thought to be useful in writing subsequent historical work).⁶¹ Originally based at British GHQ, in the summer of 1917 CWRO records officers moved closer to the front, to the headquarters of the Canadian Corps.⁶² That August two CWRO officers toured combat units, their mission being “to disperse the idea held by some regiments that Diaries were a kind of formal routine to be filled up hastily at the end of the month, and another curious myth that full accounts of actions were forbidden by the doctrine of military secrecy.”⁶³

Records officers gathered both oral and written testimony from a range of informants, “from survivors of important engagements and wounded soldiers” and from the private soldier to the senior officer, recognizing that each had a unique perspective to offer.⁶⁴ According to one CWRO report:

The stories come in many shapes and illustrate many types of mind. The Private or the Sergeant gives an individual adventure in a direct and simple style. The Company Commander after a hard-fought action sits down in a captured dugout to give his pencilled account of the battle. The results are compressed into the iron form of the Battalion Diary, or given by the Colonel in a fuller narrative of the whole action. The Commanders of Brigades and Divisions send in their report dealing with the issue from the broader standpoint of tactics and strategy. The Monthly Diaries of the Corps are well kept and convey in a dry and official manner the essential facts of the situation.⁶⁵

Late in the war Beaverbrook called unsuccessfully for selected survivors of actions which had occurred in 1915 before creation of the CWRO to be called to London from France “in order that they may give their testimony.”⁶⁶ Escaped Canadian POWs, however, were interviewed routinely, and at the end of the war, returned POWs were quizzed regarding “ill-treatment, unnecessary punishment, food, sanitary accommodation, working conditions, etc., in the several camps in which the prisoner had been confined.”⁶⁷ Perhaps the most noteworthy instance of CWRO records creation was its role in deliberately falsifying records. With Aitken’s assent, the Intelligence Department of British GHQ planted false information about the movement and battles of Canadian military units in the communiqués he provided to the Canadian press.⁶⁸

The CWRO also experimented very successfully with other media in documenting war. Aitken saw a tremendous potential in photography “to obtain a permanent and vivid impression, accessible to everyone, of what our men have achieved.”⁶⁹ In April 1916 the CWRO received approval from the War Office to appoint the first Official Canadian Photographer.⁷⁰ His first task was to document all towns, buildings, positions, and trenches currently or previously occupied by Canadian troops.⁷¹ Plans then grew more ambitious. “We must see our men climbing out of the trenches to the assault,” one CWRO report affirmed, “before we can realise the patience, the exhaustion, and the courage which are the assets and the tools of the modern fighting man.”⁷² Over 4,500

photographs were taken by the end of the war.⁷³ Film, which one CWRO officer described as “one of the most wonderful and potent of all modern inventions,” promised to be even more engaging.⁷⁴ Beaverbrook was strongly drawn to film, “that subtle admixture of art, reality, and swift and dramatic movement, which rivet the eyes and mind past all withdrawing.” He also appreciated its wide appeal, “not to the elect alone but to the emotions common to humanity.”⁷⁵ Lieutenant F.O. Bovill was appointed war cinematographer on 26 July 1916.⁷⁶ The CWRO had shot 40,000 feet of film by the war’s end.⁷⁷

The Canadian War Memorials Fund (CWMF), established in November 1916, considerably extended the scope of wartime documentation strategies by commissioning war art.⁷⁸ Beaverbrook was disturbed by the limited lifespan of photographs and film; he saw art as a documentary medium with “permanency and prestige.”⁷⁹ Independent of the CWRO but still administered through it, the CWMF commissioned just over 1,000 works of art “in order that the episodes and general character of this colossal struggle and the personalities and figures of those who took part in it, may be rescued from oblivion.”⁸⁰ War activity at home, at sea, and in the air, as well as at the front, was depicted in both traditional and modernist styles.⁸¹

Records creation was the most striking aspect of the work of the CWRO, but it was pursued against considerable resistance. Censors resisted unnecessary exchange of information.⁸² Access to the front was restricted on the grounds of security, and hampered by the difficulty of wartime travel. Finally, “the men of action,” Beaverbrook explained, “have been impatient of the necessity of describing the things they have done.”⁸³ The CWRO found its war publicity efforts a critical compensating source of support for its work.

Beaverbrook felt that the entry of the CWRO into “publicity” was a “natural growth” from its supply of records.⁸⁴ Weekly communiqués of the activities of the Canadian Corps were compiled by CWRO representatives at the front, cabled to Canada, and sent to the British press.⁸⁵ More substantial publications soon followed. (These publications reflected a continuum within records creation, encompassing archival, journalistic, and historical work.) Aitken published the book *Canada in Flanders* in 1916, and two more volumes of exploits of the Canadian Corps followed before the end of the war.⁸⁶ Several other books as well were published before the war’s end, including one entitled *Thirty Canadian VCs*. The first volume of a history of the Canadian Army Medical Corps was published in 1918. The popular magazine *Canada in Khaki* began publication in 1917, replete with articles, pictures, and stories supplied free of charge by writers and artists, many serving in the CEF. The *Canadian Daily Record*, carrying news from Canada, was also inaugurated that month. By the end of the war 787 issues were published. The *Canadian War Pictorial*, filled with photos and illustrations, was issued every few months.⁸⁷

“What could not be foreseen,” Beaverbrook observed in 1918, “was the enormous part that publicity was to play in the present War. That came as a startling phenomenon, strange at least to all the Allies, and no Government had a Military Department ready for the occasion.”⁸⁸ Official efforts to mobilize consent had grown all the more pointed as signs of war weariness became evident.⁸⁹ Public exhibitions and film, with a very broad reach, were seen as particularly effective tools to reach “the mind of the people.”⁹⁰ In December 1916 the CWMF sponsored the first exhibition of CWRO photographs, held at the Grafton Galleries in London before touring England and Canada. Admission was charged, copies sold, and profits amounted to over 1,000 pounds, used to support further CWMF work.⁹¹ A second exhibition, featuring the seizure of Vimy Ridge by the Canadian Corps, opened in July 1917 in London. What was touted as the largest photograph in the world, measuring 22 by 11 feet, helped to attract 80,000 visitors to the exhibition.⁹² The War Memorials Fund also underwrote Fund activities by sponsoring public exhibitions of war art.⁹³ Above all, the CWRO saw the “enormous value [of film] for the purposes of propaganda. It might indeed almost have been invented for that purpose,” it reported; “there is a limit to the public appetite even for the best of written propaganda” – but none, apparently, to cinema.⁹⁴ The CWRO program was extensive. Beaverbrook was Chairman of the War Office Cinematograph Committee, which distributed eight minutes of newsreel weekly to be shown before feature films throughout Great Britain, the Empire, and allied and neutral nations. Beaverbrook made a point of including CWRO material “devoted to the exploits of the Canadian Corps” within newsreels.⁹⁵ John Buchan, director of the British Department of Information, expressed the view that Canadian publicity was leading people to believe “that Canada is running the War.”⁹⁶

Arthur Doughty and the War Records Survey

Arthur Doughty, Dominion Archivist of Canada, made his first wartime visit to England in the spring of 1916. Arguing that “the present war will be a great feature in Canadian history,” Doughty had written his Minister in December 1915, recommending that he be sent overseas to collect records, both official and private, created by Canadian troops.⁹⁷ After renewing his call a month later, pleading “urgent need,” Doughty was “detailed to proceed Overseas on special service in connection with research and archives” with the rank of honorary major.⁹⁸ Doughty was quick to visit the CWRO, concerned that it eclipsed his prerogatives as Dominion Archivist. In fact, on the eve of his departure for Europe, he had remarked to Sir Edmund Walker, president of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, that the purpose of his visit was to “save the material from which a true account of Canada in the war could be written ... so that we shall not depend on such men as Sir Max Aitken.”⁹⁹

According to Beckles Willson, one of Aitken's assistants, Doughty made his entry into the CWRO one day in May 1916, announced that "as Dominion Archivist, all Canadian records – civil, naval, and military were by statute under his control" – and then left, to the amazement of CWRO staff.¹⁰⁰ Whatever the truth of that first encounter, an accommodation was soon made between the two archivists. Doughty recorded his impressions of Aitken in his diary:

He is evidently a man of action ... Seems strange to find him engaged in the work of making a record of the war. He is evidently in earnest about it and is determined to make it a success. He is full of enthusiasm, of good judgement. Whatever may be his motive he is doing the work well. Asked me for suggestions ... the right man in the right place.¹⁰¹

Aitken invited Doughty to his country estate on a couple of occasions, agreed to provide Doughty with a report on CWRO work, and promised that CWRO records would go to the Public Archives of Canada at the end of the war.¹⁰² Aitken also arranged for Doughty to visit France with accreditation from the CWRO "in order that he may there make an investigation as to the methods of preserving Canadian War Records in the Field."¹⁰³ Four of Doughty's London staff were seconded to work in the War Diaries Section of the CWRO.¹⁰⁴ Doughty prolonged his visit to the United Kingdom in order to assist Aitken with advice.¹⁰⁵

But Doughty did not find the work of the CWRO entirely adequate.¹⁰⁶ On his return to Canada, he drafted a memo to the Prime Minister outlining a project to conduct a comprehensive survey of war records.¹⁰⁷ He underlined the importance of acting now while the war continued: "It is only while the organization is a living organism that one can obtain all the sources of information."¹⁰⁸ In part, Doughty was dissatisfied by the scope of CWRO activities, which focussed on the fighting units; he wished to document all aspects of the war effort, including work at the provincial and municipal levels of government and that undertaken by private organizations. Doughty's professional rigour is evident in his concern that records creators and their interrelationships be documented (rather than records simply inventoried or collected); he saw fit to outline the archival principle of provenance in his memo to the Prime Minister. Doughty may not have condemned Aitken's efforts to create a documentary record, but he was clearly more comfortable with more conventional definitions of the archival record. "All original sources have value, but for accuracy of fact the documentary evidence left by the transaction itself is almost always of more use than the descriptive account of the transaction written by the onlooker," he wrote. Aitken, in contrast, looked for the good story – and was not above creating it himself. Concern over custodial practices at the CWRO may have underlain Doughty's advice to the Prime Minister that "care

should be taken to exercise supervision over any records that may be extracted from files for the purpose of preparing studies on special subjects connected with the war, as experience has proved that this practice often leads to the loss of valuable records.”¹⁰⁹ Doughty may also have wished to strengthen his claim to war records, recommending that “the final use to which the Survey can be put is as a co-ordinating body to facilitate the eventual concentration of all the original evidence in one national collection at Ottawa.”¹¹⁰

The Order in Council authorizing the survey – and providing \$5,000 from the War Vote – recognized “the necessity for the immediate and thorough steps to preserve the various records of the war so that they may be available and intelligible for historical and other uses in the future.”¹¹¹ Doughty had major ambitions for this work, which was to embrace “all the activities of the Government.”¹¹² He outlined a plan to Prime Minister Borden whereby a document series of First World War records would be published similar to the fifteen volume *Documents Relating to the Constitutional History of Canada, 1759–1791*, produced by the Public Archives over the decade prior to the war.¹¹³

Members of the War Records Survey met in Ottawa in May 1917 to plan their work and divide responsibilities. Five members, under the direction of Brigadier-General Ernest Cruickshank, head of the Army Historical Section, were to survey war activities in Canada.¹¹⁴ The three members responsible for the survey of activities overseas, the Canadian Special Mission – with Doughty at its head – departed on the *Metagama* for England on 2 June 1917.¹¹⁵

Few archivists have journeyed to appraise records under such perilous circumstances: the ship immediately ahead in the convoy, as well as the vessel directly astern, were both sunk by U-Boat. Once in Great Britain, mission members personally inspected Allied war activities of relevance to Canada and arranged for copies of pertinent documents. The Royal Navy, responsible for the convoy of Canadian soldiers overseas, was particularly helpful.¹¹⁶ While the units at the front were outside of the scope of the Special Mission, every other Canadian unit received a questionnaire requesting an outline of its war activities, its hierarchical and other functional relationships, its records classification system, and its plans for the future disposal of war records. Because commanding officers responded defensively, concerned that their units were under investigation, members of the Special Mission often found a follow-up visit to the unit invaluable. Compromises were struck, Doughty received his responses, and the units received undertakings about the uses to which the information would be put. Military secrecy was guaranteed; concerns over the potential for military embarrassment were mollified. Work nevertheless proceeded more slowly than Doughty had anticipated: “the want of proper authority” with the military caused delay, he said; “it was very difficult to get all the officers to give the sort of information that was required”; and

finally, Doughty had not anticipated that “the organization was so extensive.” Doughty returned to Canada in early September dissatisfied over “the lack of support” he felt he had received in England and France – Wood arriving in November and Lanctôt with the balance of the survey in March 1919.¹¹⁷ In total, 150 reports on overseas activity were prepared and deposited in the Public Archives of Canada.¹¹⁸

On his return to Canada, Doughty was disappointed to discover the state of the records survey there. Although he hoped to carry on with the survey “as originally intended,” Doughty was drawn into an increasingly time-consuming role as official collector of war trophies for the Canadian government.¹¹⁹ Colonel Wood, who was given charge of the project, discussed plans with Doughty to approach provincial premiers asking them for authorization to request information from their ministers and deputy heads.¹²⁰ But the plan was never pursued. A rebuff from the Militia Department in Quebec City – Wood’s place of residence – anticipated the frustrations Wood soon faced in conducting the Canadian phase of the War Records Survey. Officials in Quebec, Doughty reported, “could not comply with his request without some direct instructions from the Militia Department in Ottawa.”¹²¹ With the Armistice, official interest in documenting the war dissipated rapidly. The survey of war records in Canada fell far short of the standard set by the overseas survey.¹²²

Custodial History

The postwar fate of the documentary record of the war was of common concern to both Beaverbrook and Doughty. Essential to the acquisition and preservation of records was space for storage, and the Public Archives of Canada had nowhere near adequate room for the masses of records that had accumulated.¹²³ The Dominion Archivist took the opportunity presented by the success of the Canadian Corps at Vimy Ridge in April 1917 to write his Minister, Secretary of State E.L. Patenaude, to argue that there was “only one suitable monument to fittingly celebrate such an important event and that was the erection of a building in which to deposit all the records of the Confederation.”¹²⁴ Unfortunately, Patenaude resigned from Cabinet six weeks later over the introduction of Conscription and never responded to Doughty’s proposal. Shortly afterwards Doughty called for a “Canadian War Archives House” to mark the Canadian Jubilee, the fiftieth anniversary of Confederation.¹²⁵ Recognizing that “the interval between the active use of the papers and their deposit in a permanent resting place in the Dominion is the danger period,” Doughty continued to lobby on behalf of a strategy whereby records would be consolidated in England, culled, arranged, and described before shipment back to a new repository in Canada.¹²⁶ Doughty was given his opportunity when in December 1918 he was appointed to a three-man Commission on War Records and War Trophies, which was mandated to recommend suitable accommodation

for wartime documents and artifacts.¹²⁷ The Commission's report urged that a "Memorial Building" be built in Ottawa as a repository for the Canadian War Memorials Fund paintings and portraits, the Canadian War Records Office material, and war trophies, and with a hall or chapel for memorial services and assemblies.¹²⁸ Beaverbrook commissioned an architect to design a building – and promised a significant financial contribution to the project.¹²⁹ But nothing occurred. Postwar budget restrictions and a growing revulsion against the war ensured that no special repository for the records of the First World War was ever built in Canada.¹³⁰ For lack of archival space, Doughty was in no position immediately after the war to pursue aggressively the record he had surveyed so assiduously.

At the war's end, all military records first came under the custody of the Department of Militia and Defence in Ottawa, where efforts continued – lasting for decades – to impose order on the mass of wartime documents.¹³¹ Three categories of records were at issue: the registry files created both overseas and in Canada (on which the War Records Survey had focussed its attention); the personnel files and related documents maintained at the Canadian Records Office; and the historical records created in many media by the CWRO.

Registry files held at the various branches of the Ministry of the Overseas Military Forces of Canada were sent after the war to the central registry at Militia Headquarters in Ottawa, where a separate Overseas Section was created.¹³² In Canada, every military district was directed to convene a Board of Officers to review its central registry files. Considerable discretion was given for their disposition: "useless matter" was to be destroyed; documents "of historical value" were to be sent to the Historical Section of the General Staff in Ottawa.¹³³ Similarly, considerable quantities of First World War financial records were destroyed in 1923 and 1926 on the grounds that they were "duplicate," or that there had been "no occasion to refer to any of these Files for several years," or that they were "of a routine nature."¹³⁴

Canadian Expeditionary Force personnel records held overseas were consolidated at the War Records Office prior to demobilization. For fear of losing key documents, the decision was made not to cull files in their overseas location, even for duplicates.¹³⁵ Shipment back to Canada began in 1919.¹³⁶ The Records Office at Militia Headquarters in Ottawa, although considerably expanded during the War, was swollen by overseas files, and a new Directorate of Records was established to take charge of all records created during the First World War relating to personnel.¹³⁷ Instructions were issued to units in Canada that CEF files were to be reviewed, and select categories of documents, including medical records and the proceedings of courts of enquiry and courts martial, were to be removed and sent to the Directorate of Records. The residue was to be destroyed.¹³⁸ The principal ongoing use for these files was for pension claims, and proposals were made in 1929 to

transfer the function from the Directorate of Records to the Department of Pensions and National Health. However, it was only in 1948 that this transfer occurred, with the creation of the War Service Records Division of the Department of Veterans Affairs.¹³⁹ In 1960 these records were placed in the Public Archives Records Centre and transferred in 1971 to the new Personnel Records Centre of the Public Archives of Canada as semi-active operational records.¹⁴⁰

In the autumn of 1919 the records of the CWRO were shipped to Canada.¹⁴¹ They did not go to the Public Archives, but went instead to the Historical Section of the General Staff in Ottawa, where they were filed and arranged for the purpose of writing an official history of Canada's war effort.¹⁴² Housed in various temporary buildings before shipment to the new Public Archives Record Centre in 1956, they were accessioned – along with First World War registry files – as archival documents in 1962.¹⁴³ The CWRO photos were transferred from the Department of National Defence to the custody of the Public Archives in 1964.¹⁴⁴ The CWMF donated its art to the Government of Canada in 1920.¹⁴⁵ With rare exceptions, no painting ever came to the Public Archives. CWMF art was housed at the National Gallery of Canada until its transfer to the Canadian War Museum in 1971.¹⁴⁶ CWRO film was returned to Europe in the 1920s for conservation reasons, where it remains today in the custody of the Imperial War Museum in London.¹⁴⁷

The Archival Profile

The creative role of the archivist – authorship – encompasses the spectrum of archival functions. To this point I have focussed on a very striking example of archival authorship, the activities of the Canadian War Records Office, and contrasted that with Doughty's far more traditional wartime strategies, although Doughty's role in authoring the archival record should not be understated – his intervention with creators would have concerned Jenkinson. (Doughty alerted the immediate records creators to the secondary uses to which their records might be subject, identified which records were of significance and those which were not, and even his decision to place greater value on records created by direct participants in events, rather than those created by onlookers, was an act of authorship.)¹⁴⁸ Very briefly, I intend now to review the considerable profile the National Archives of Canada has subsequently given the records of the First World War that Beaverbrook and Doughty first helped to author.

The most stimulating literature in recent years in archival theory has focussed on appraisal, defined overwhelmingly as the key role of the archivist.¹⁴⁹ Destruction, Tom Nesmith has observed, "creates some records as much as it ends the existence of others. It creates records by repositioning, or reframing other surviving records, or by removing aspects of their context of

understanding.”¹⁵⁰ Decisions about what is kept and what is discarded reflect most vividly a politics of memory.

In an institutional context, the basis of an archivist’s authority is control over records destruction. This increased over time. Arthur Doughty had only a qualified right to identify historical records and negotiate their transfer to the Public Archives of Canada, and the Department of National Defence routinely destroyed records, as we have seen, without reference to Doughty or his successors.¹⁵¹ To some extent, the Dominion Archivist’s control strengthened with the establishment of the Public Records Committee in 1945, responsible for the approval of all records destruction within the federal government.¹⁵² Doughty sat on this committee *ex officio* as vice-chairman. Gustave Lanctôt, a member of the War Records Survey, was Dominion Archivist when in 1948 the committee approved an extensive program to cull the personnel files of ex-servicemen held at the Department of Veterans Affairs.¹⁵³ Only records relevant to a potential pension claim – notably medical, dental, and pay documents – were to be retained.¹⁵⁴ The removal and disposal of “unnecessary paper” on the First World War service files was completed by 1956.¹⁵⁵ Yet only with the Public Record Order in 1966 did the Dominion Archivist obtain complete authority over records disposition.¹⁵⁶ What remained of the heavily culled personnel files (with approximately thirty documents on the typical file) were appraised for their archival value in 1985, and accessioned as archival records in 1992 – the only large (albeit weeded) set of individual case files, numbering roughly 620,000, held in its entirety by the National Archives of Canada. The archival impulse to document the war in every detail has also been reflected in decisions to preserve all First World War subject files from both the official registries and the CWRO. These were accessioned in 1962, and the photographs were accessioned two years later.

Decisions about records creation, acquisition, and destruction demonstrate archival authorship most starkly. But to complete accession notices, to arrange and describe, and to prepare finding aids – what we call control work – is also to give records a profile; or, in a manner of speaking, to write a narrative. As others have commented, this is not innocent.¹⁵⁷ Gerald Ham observed fifteen years ago that the preparation of inventories and finding aids for records “help[s] to establish their bona fides as legitimate collections.”¹⁵⁸ Similarly, Nesmith argues, “when an archives seeks out certain records, selects them, then emphasizes or de-emphasizes them in various ways, it helps author them too. It reframes them, their value, importance, potential uses, meanings, and intelligibility. These actions, in effect, ‘create’ the records as much as the initial transcribing did.”¹⁵⁹

All records at the National Archives of Canada benefit from a basic accession notice – that minimal level of intellectual control that our responsibilities under federal access to information and privacy legislation require. But not all records benefit by a more detailed inventory description. Not all have a file or

item list – a finding aid. Fewer still have a more desirable, automated finding aid. Yet \$180,000 was recently invested during a period of sharply contracting budgets to produce such a list for the CEF personnel files. Similar decisions are made with respect to preservation treatment. In light of limited conservation budgets, only select records qualify for processing into special file folders and custom archival containers, or receive special conservation treatment. Recently \$15,000 was invested to remove mould from First World War officers' files. Other files in our holdings are left untreated. We have also in the past microfilmed records (a select, small fraction of our total holdings) in order to place them on a medium accessible to researchers both in Ottawa and, through inter-institutional loan programs, around the world; the entire First-World War unit diaries were microfilmed during the 1970s.¹⁶⁰ In our public programming, perhaps the highest of pedestals an archive can now offer is its website; the documents scanned and mounted there are conferred a particular prestige.¹⁶¹ The attestation forms completed by First World War recruits at the time of enlistment are virtually unique among the archival holdings of the National Archives of Canada in having been offered a place there at a cost now of \$350,000 (and growing).¹⁶² The signals we send researchers are evident: the archival record of the First World War is of particular significance.

Throughout the gamut of professional activity, archivists practise a politics of memory, a determination of what will be remembered. This influence can be exercised overtly, by the records we create, acquire, and destroy. But our politics can also be practised more subtly, by the cues or prompts we give users of records. As the ultimate custodian of this archival record, the National Archives has written its own narrative of the war by its inclusive acquisition practices and the high profile it has given the archival record of the First World War. The war was an event to be documented in great detail, whose significance has warranted ongoing “reframing,” to use Tom Nesmith's expression, by means of preserving, arranging, describing, listing, publishing, and exhibiting.¹⁶³ Judgements of value are embedded in every decision by which some records were given a far greater profile than others – and by which archivists at the National Archives of Canada have authored the Canadian military record of the First World War.

Conclusion

What happens to the usefulness of archives as evidence if we admit the role of the archivist, across the spectrum of archival functions, in authoring the record?¹⁶⁴ What act does in fact the record document? The records of the First World War are scarcely reassuring on this count. Using examples drawn only from their initial stage of creation, it is evident, first of all, that the textual records the CWRO sought to produce were clearly concerned with documenting successes, various deeds of valour – not the failures of the Canadian mili-

tary. As well, we have seen Aitken's complicity in the planting of false information in the communiqués he provided to the Canadian press.¹⁶⁵ In the interest of creating a suitable record, moreover, official photographers were instructed not to represent Canadian dead.¹⁶⁶ The CWRO would "stage" photos, often far behind the front, of what purported to be actual battle and manipulate the product to produce the desired effect, typically by adding shell bursts.¹⁶⁷ A bronze sculpture called "Canada's Golgotha," by CWMF sculptor Derwent Wood, was particularly controversial, and demonstrated how tendentious representation in documentary art might be. Featuring a crucified Canadian soldier, nailed to a barn door by his jeering German captors at 2nd Ypres in April 1915, it drew a number of official German complaints immediately after the War. The incident, based on hearsay, could never be authenticated. This sculpture was used by the Germans as late as the Second World War as evidence of Entente propaganda.¹⁶⁸

The moral defence of the integrity of archives as evidence was the cornerstone of Jenkinson's thought.¹⁶⁹ But Jenkinson defined archival records narrowly, created as a means and a by-product of official transactions, accumulated and weeded naturally in the course of normal business activity for administrative ends, by their creator, or by successors inheriting operational needs. As the "unself-conscious residue of action," *not* created for posterity, records are held to be "impartial" and "authentic."¹⁷⁰ Jenkinson's archival undertaking to researchers was that a record rests unaltered since its acquisition from the creator or legitimate successor – hence the significance of *unblemished* custody. The *archival* record thus preserved enjoys a special status as a "most reliable source."¹⁷¹ Archivists, Luciana Duranti argues in our day, cannot "consider themselves creators of archival value ... and at the same time view themselves as protectors of evidence."¹⁷²

Archivists are faced with a choice. We could abjure a broad role both as creators of knowledge and guardians of memory in favour of a narrow mandate to protect evidence of official transactions. To this end, many archivists emphasize their responsibilities to define the circumstances under which *records* (specific kinds of document) can be deemed to be created reliably, authentically, and "unself-consciously" and weeded "naturally" according to operational requirement – recognizing no other document as archival. (By these criteria, the records of the CWRO do not qualify as archival.) A mere "document" is not of archival concern, only a "complete, reliable, and accurate" record. Accordingly, valuable work is currently underway, for instance, to establish the functional requirements for electronic record-keeping systems, based on documentation standards including the elements of "recordness" and the properties (integrity, completeness, accuracy and reliability) of evidence.¹⁷³ This is the neo-Jenkinsonian position, often pursued with the laudable intent of ensuring administrative, legal, or political accountability.¹⁷⁴

This position is not so much wrong-headed as limiting. Archivists should

dedicate themselves to a far more encompassing memory function, tackling the issue of evidence in an alternative manner. We must recognize that a tremendous wealth of memory inhabits a wide range of documents. As a mediated product of a series of decisions, created by a will, for a purpose, to convey a message to an audience, a document's meaning is rarely self-evident, and we must orient our work with it accordingly.¹⁷⁵ To understand a document requires understanding the circumstances surrounding its creation and subsequent use, both prior to – and after – acquisition by an archive. Concern over the status of archives as evidence is consequently best addressed by means of directly confronting these two orders of contextual information.

First, archivists must have an understanding of the context within which documents are produced, and convey that understanding in their descriptive records. Context must be understood broadly as encompassing the political and social circumstances in which records are created; the administrative structures within which they are created; the bureaucratic procedures by which they are created; the records-keeping or information management systems and practices which control their organization and retrieval; the form and medium in which a document is created; and its custodial history. This is a familiar call.¹⁷⁶

But there is also a second order of equally critical contextual information, to which archivists are far less attentive. We must be frank about our own politics of memory. To this end we must consider factors of context raised by archival custody of records and again ask the same questions we had regarding the original context within which records were created. Archivists must have an understanding of the institutional context within which they, as archivists, author the archival record, and convey that understanding in their descriptive records. We must communicate to our users the institutional, legal, policy, and procedural framework in which archives function. We must articulate the constraints, including our professional standards, which help define the ways in which we exercise archival creativity within the descriptive records which we create. Most importantly, we must convey the nature of the advice on records creation that we as archivists offer, our appraisal decisions, our selection criteria, and our rationale for establishing priorities within and across the spectrum of our custodial and public programming activities. In a sentence, we must make evident our archives-making.¹⁷⁷

Are archivists independent creators of memory or handmaidens to the actual writers of our past? The answer is clear. Our memory of the past is embedded in a vast array of documents whose contents and meaning have been constituted and shaped along a long continuum of records manufacture astride which archivists are crucially poised. To be prepared to explain our archives-making across the spectrum of our work is to accept our accountability for these actions. It is also fully to acknowledge our authorship, our vital place in the creation of society's memory. This is the agenda for a modern archival science.

Notes

- * The views expressed in this paper are my own, and not necessarily the official position of the National Archives of Canada. I would like to express my gratitude to NA colleagues Kerry Badgley, Paul Marsden, and Bill Parenteau, who kindly commented on earlier drafts of this paper. I would also like to thank Tom Nesmith of the University of Manitoba for sharing with me his recent work on “post-modern” archives. Finally, I am very grateful to *Archivaria*’s two anonymous readers, as well as to its current editor, Don Macleod of the Archives of Ontario, for their helpful and probing comments. An earlier version of this paper was read at the Annual Meeting of the Society of American Archivists in Orlando, Florida in September 1998.
- 1 Louis Perigaud, *La Guerre des boutons* (Paris, 1995), p. 236.
 - 2 Luciana Duranti, “The Concept of Appraisal and Archival Theory,” *American Archivist* 57 (Spring 1994), p. 343.
 - 3 Hilary Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration: Including the Problems of War Archives and Archival Making* (Oxford, 1922), pp. 12–15, also defines “naturalness” and “interrelationship” as basic qualities of archival records. “Neo-Jenkinsonian” views have been expounded recently in Duranti, “Concept of Appraisal”; and by her student Heather MacNeil, in “Archival Theory and Practise: Between Two Paradigms,” *Archivaria* 37 (Spring 1994), pp. 6–20. Terry Cook, who introduced the label, also sees sympathy among contemporary Australian theorists for this position. See “What is Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift,” *Archivaria* 43 (Spring 1997), pp. 17–63, footnote 17.
 - 4 Hilary Jenkinson, “The English Archivist: A New Profession,” in Roger H. Ellis and Peter Walne, eds., *Selected Writings of Sir Hilary Jenkinson* (Gloucester, 1980), p. 258.
 - 5 This school of thought has been developed in Brien Brothman, “Orders of Value: Probing the Theoretical Terms of Archival Practice,” *Archivaria* 32 (Summer 1991), pp. 78–100; Cook, “What is Past is Prologue”; Richard Brown, “Death of a Renaissance Record-Keeper: The Murder of Tomasso da Tortona in Ferrara, 1385,” *Archivaria* 44 (Fall 1997), pp. 1–43; Tom Nesmith, “What is a Postmodern Archivist?: What Can Douglas Brymner, an Unmuzzled Ox, and Star Trek Tell Us?,” paper presented to the Annual Conference of the Association of Canadian Archivists, May 1998, Halifax.
 - 6 Cook, “What is Past is Prologue,” p. 19.
 - 7 Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Sorrow: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge, 1995).
 - 8 Martin Gilbert, *The First World War: A Complete History* (New York, 1994), p. 541.
 - 9 Norman Hillmer and J.L. Granatstein, *Empire to Umpire: Canada and the World to the 1990s* (Toronto, 1994), pp. 62–63.
 - 10 G.W.L. Nicholson, *The Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914–1919* (Ottawa, 1964), p. 535.
 - 11 Gilbert, *First World War*, p. 541.
 - 12 The postmodern impulse, preoccupied by the manner in which “histories” are constructed, is threatening to collapse the traditional scholarly division of labour between the “retrospective” disciplines, history, and archival science. For examples, see Gerald Sider and Gavin Smith, eds., *Between History and ‘Histories’: The Making of Silences and Commemorations* (Toronto, 1997).
 - 13 Terry Eastwood, “Towards a Social Theory of Appraisal,” in Barbara L. Craig, ed., *The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh A. Taylor* (Ottawa, 1992), p. 80. For an elaboration of four categories of record, see Luciana Duranti, “Diplomatics: New Uses for an Old Science (Part II),” *Archivaria* 29 (Winter 1989–90), pp. 4–17, esp. p. 9.
 - 14 The “record” is defined in Section 2 of the *National Archives of Canada Act* (1987) as “any

- correspondence, memorandum, book, plan, map, drawing, diagram, pictorial or graphic work, photograph, film, microform, sound recording, videotape, machine readable record, and any other documentary material, regardless of physical form or characteristics, and any copy thereof.”
- 15 Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford, 1976), p. 130, called the memories of old people “the archives of the poor.” The lifespan of such archives, unfortunately, is limited.
 - 16 I leave aside here a consideration of the role of the artifact in sustaining memory.
 - 17 Quoted in M.T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England, 1066–1307* (Cambridge, 1979), p. 117.
 - 18 Fierce debates have focused, for instance, on the causes of the War, the quality of British generalship, and the consequences of the Versailles peace settlement.
 - 19 The greatest weakness of the historical profession, Hans Booms observed, has been that “historians have never considered it significant that, besides the workings of chance, the ways in which archivists design, mould, and shape the documentary record might also have an effect on the ‘historical picture.’” See Booms’ article, “Society and the Formation of a Documentary Heritage: Issues in the Appraisal of Archival Sources,” *Archivaria* 24 (Summer 1987), p. 81.
 - 20 National Archives of Canada (hereafter NA), Privy Council Records, RG 2, vol. 1154, PC 2651, 28 October 1916. The standard history of the Ministry of the Overseas Military Forces of Canada is Desmond Morton’s, *A Peculiar Kind of Politics: Canada’s Overseas Ministry in the First World War* (Toronto, 1982).
 - 21 Its principal role was to ensure units remained at War Establishment. It also collected, registered and dispatched war diaries to England, as well as other records created by units and formations of the Canadian Corps. NA, National Archives of Canada Records, RG 37, vol. 358, *Canadian War Archives Survey, XII: Units in France*, “Canadian Section, GHQ, 3rd Echelon.”
 - 22 *Canadian Expeditionary Force Units: Instructions Governing Organization and Administration* (Ottawa, 1916). *The King’s Regulations and Orders for the Canadian Militia, 1910* (Ottawa, 1910), paragraphs 1452–1521 provided detailed instructions on records-keeping, including the format of correspondence, regular reporting requirements, and the completion of forms. In Belgium and France, the British *Field Service Regulations* were used by Canadian units. For record-keeping, Chapter XV, “Orders, Instructions and Reports in the Field,” and Chapter XVII, “Office Work in the Field,” were most pertinent. Although as little record-keeping as possible was to be conducted in the field, and as few records as possible were to be retained with the unit (they were to be sent back to DAG, 3rd Echelon), units were expected to maintain a register (AF2040) of outgoing and incoming correspondence.
 - 23 The personnel file was crammed with documents on enlistment, movement, medical and dental reports, pay, honours and awards, discipline, and discharge. The requirements that next of kin be notified in the event of casualty and, in the case of death, given the location of the grave, meant that next of kin’s addresses were necessarily kept on file and up-to-date.
 - 24 The need to document personnel carefully arose in the early modern military in order to record length of service and pay owing so as to prevent embezzlement by officers and men. Geoffrey Parker, *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road, 1567–1659: The Logistics of Spanish Victory and Defeat in the Low Countries’ Wars* (Cambridge, 1972), pp. 192–93. At a later date, the actual personnel file emerged, marking “the entry of the individual into the field of knowledge” through the exercise of a new kind of discipline over individuals. The file was used to track down deserters, avoid repeat enrolments, and document individuals’ value. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York, 1977), pp. 191, 189.
 - 25 NA, RG 37, vol. 358, Canadian War Records Survey, XIII, Auxiliary Services, “Canadian Record Office”; *Report of the Ministry, Overseas Military Forces of Canada, 1918* (London,

- c.1919); "Canadian Record Office," pp. 433–5; *Canadian Routine Orders*, Appendix, Order No. 2042, 20 July 1917.
- 26 NA, RG 37, vol. 195, Doughty to Hughes, 16 February 1916.
- 27 See Robert Craig Brown and Ramsay Cook, *Canada, 1896–1921, A Nation Transformed* (Toronto, 1974), chapters 11 and 12.
- 28 NA, RG 37, vol. 352, "Memorandum to Sir George Foster, Acting Prime Minister, Ottawa, from Arthur Doughty," 22 March 1917; NA, RG 37, vol. 304, p. 5.
- 29 NA, RG 37, vol. 352, "Private Memoir on the Canadian War Archives Survey, Colonel Wood, 1 January 1918," pp. 2A, 16.
- 30 Ian E. Wilson, "'A Noble Dream': The Origins of the Public Archives of Canada," *Archivaria* 15 (Winter 1982–83), pp. 16–35.
- 31 A.J.P. Taylor, *Beaverbrook* (Harmondsworth, 1972); Anne Chisholm and Michael Davie, *Beaverbrook: A Life* (London, 1992).
- 32 Taylor, *Beaverbrook*, pp. 125–42; Chisholm and Davie, *Beaverbrook*, pp. 124–35.
- 33 NA, RG 2, vol. 1106, PC 3117, 6 January 1915.
- 34 Aitken's dispatches remained subject to British censorship, much to his frequent outrage. Jeffrey A. Keshen, *Propaganda and Censorship During Canada's Great War* (Edmonton, 1996), pp. 28–34.
- 35 NA, Records of the Department of Militia and Defence, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 177, file 6, "Secret Reports and Reports of Minor Offensive Operations."
- 36 NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 1, "Canadian War Records Office. Report Submitted by Officer in Charge," 11 January 1917.
- 37 NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 5, "Canadian War Records, 1915 to 1918," [c. 1918], p. 4.
- 38 Aitken appears to have instigated the dispatch of a letter from George Perley, Canadian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, to Canadian Prime Minister Robert Borden, seeking his support to broach with Imperial authorities the claim that "Canada should have custody of the records of our Divisions and Army Corps." See NA, MG 26 H, R.L. Borden papers, vol. 64, item 32442, Perley to Borden, 23 December 1915.
- 39 NA, MG 26, H, vol. 64, item 32444, Aitken to Borden, 1 January 1916, and item 32470, Aitken to Borden, 14 February 1916.
- 40 NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 5, "Canadian War Records, 1915 to 1918," [c. 1918], p. 5.
- 41 NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 1, "Canadian War Records Office. Report Submitted by Officer in Charge," 11 January 1917, p. 2.
- 42 NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 5, "Canadian War Records, 1915 to 1918," [c. 1918], pp. 1, 1a.
- 43 The requirement for units to maintain war diaries was based on the *British Field Service Regulations*. See NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 176, file 2, "Reports, Historical Section, C.W.R.O., General," Holt-White to Beaverbrook, "Re: War Diaries," 13 February 1917. Diaries were to be maintained until units were disbanded in Canada. See NA, Department of National Defence Records, RG 24, vol. 1749, DHS 6–13, "District and CEF Unit Diaries"; *CEF Routine Orders*, Routine Order 834, 23 July 1918 and Routine Order 1337, 21 November 1918.
- 44 NA, RG 9, III D 1, folder 175, file 1, "Canadian War Records Office. Report Submitted by Officer in Charge," 11 January 1917, p. 4; *CEF Routine Orders*, Routine Order 236, 22 February 1918.
- 45 NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 2, HS 40–1–2, "Reports C.W.R.O. For Lt.-Col. Doughty, 22-8-17," p. 8.
- 46 NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 5, "Canadian War Records, 1915 to 1918," [c. 1918], pp. 9–10.

- 47 *General Routine Orders*, Routine Order 1510, dated 30 March 1917.
- 48 NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 5, "Canadian War Records, 1915–1918," [c. 1918], pp. 10–11. Considerable attention was devoted to establishing a file classification system, where the primary indicated the arm of service, the secondary a subdivision of the arm, and the tertiary the specific unit. At that point unit files were further subdivided into five parts: Historical Records, Badges and Colours, Honours and Awards, Orders, and Photographs. See NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 176, file 5, "Report on the progress of the work of the Historical Section since 1st July, 1917," pp. 4–6.
- 49 NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 2, HS 40-1-2, "Reports C.W.R.O. For Lt.-Col. Doughty, 22-8-17," p. 2. One such appeal read, "The War Records Office cannot fulfil its destiny without the full and generous co-operation of every unit in the field, no matter how small that unit, be it only a wiring party or an A.P.M. or a postman. Whatever your command, you must help." NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 5, "The Canadian War Records Office – 15 Tudor Street."
- 50 *Routine Orders*, Routine Order 788, 13 March 1917, 1015, 31 March 1917, 2984 and 2985, 26 November 1917, "Disposal of Documents"; reaffirmed by a routine order on 6 September 1918, instructing units to segregate "historical" from "non-historical" before shipment to CWRO. See NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4646, folder 176, file 1, "Reports on Progress -Historical and Parcels Sections."
- 51 NA, RG 37, vol. 358, Canadian War Records Survey, XIII, Auxiliary Services, "Canadian Record Office," pp. 193–94, 206.
- 52 Peter Robertson, "Canadian Photojournalism and the First World War," *History of Photography* 2, no. 1 (January 1978), pp. 37–52.
- 53 NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 5, "Canadian War Records, 1915 to 1918," [c. 1918], pp. 12–13.
- 54 NA, MG 26 H, vol. 64, item 32587, *Canadian War Records Office. Report submitted by the Officer in Charge to the Honourable Sir Edward Kemp*, 30 March 1918, p. 10.
- 55 According to Doughty, "It is only by the exercise of the greatest energy that an intelligent diary of the doings of each unit can be obtained. The men at the front have their work cut out to save their lives." NA, MG 26 H, vol. 64, items 32523 and 32524, Doughty to Borden, 11 August 1916.
- 56 This work fell to H.P. Biggar of the Dominion Archives staff in London. See NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 2, HS 40-1-2, "Reports C.W.R.O. For Lt.-Col. Doughty, 22-8-17," p. 10. Technical defects included illegible writing, poor carbon copies, a failure to indicate the specific location of the unit (rather than "in the field," "in the trenches"), a failure to indicate the strength of the unit or its commanding officer, a failure on the part of the responsible officer to sign the war diary. NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 176, file 5, "Report on the progress of the work of the Historical Section since 1st July, 1917."
- 57 In a rare glowing review, the diary for the 12th Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery, for September 1916 was described as "probably the most instructive and certainly one of the most interesting diaries written by any unit in the Canadian Corps. All information and every phase of operations is given in detail, almost hourly. This unit has also included in Appendices all Operation Orders and messages, several of them written in the field; added to this are several excellent sketches and maps." More typically, the shortcomings of diaries were underlined. The diary for the 14th Battalion for September 1916 did "not give an accurate account of the important part taken by this unit in the different operations ... The difficult position allotted to this Battalion and its heavy casualties are certainly not properly recorded. The Appendices attached are not sufficient." Comments relating to a 47th Battalion diary, later that autumn were that "this diary is practically useless, as it gives no idea of what happened in trenches. Though this Battalion was in front line on twelve different occasions during this period, only on one occasion does it attempt to record operations." The 2nd

Divisional Supply Column produced "A very poorly written diary, though an entry is made each day it only gives a vague idea of what the unit is doing. Such entries as: – "Same as previous day," "Same as before," "Lorries on supplies" appear as the only entry for weeks at a time." NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 176, file 2, "Reports, Historical Section, C.W.R.O., General," "Report on War Diaries Submitted to Lieut. J.H. Watkins Canadian War Records by Sgt. W. Douglas," February 8th, 1917, pp. 4, 8, 11, and Appendix, 1st August 1917, p. 3.

- 58 Affirming that battalion diaries in particular "leave much to be desired," and announcing that he was sending examples of "bad" diary entries, Beaverbrook argued that "there are some Battalions which have actually lost their place in history through carelessness in keeping their records." He requested that Byng place an "insertion in Orders" and provided an example text. He also asked for permission to correspond with unit commanders directly. NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 176, file 2, "Reports, Historical Section, C.W.R.O., General," Beaverbrook to Lt. General Sir Julian Byng, 13 February 1917.
- 59 NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 176, file 6, "Report on the Public Record Office Section of the Canadian War Records, From January 1st to June 30th 1918," p. 3.
- 60 NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 4, "Memorandum on the Supply of Records and Narratives on Recent Fighting."
- 61 Records officers required, in addition to official accreditation, adequate transportation (a horse or car as necessary) and a stenographer to take down interviews in shorthand and to type them later. An enlisted man who could double as a stenographer was also seen as a desirable choice for interviewing private soldiers, notoriously reticent when interviewed by an officer. NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 4, "Memorandum on the Supply of Records and Narratives on Recent Fighting."
- 62 NA, RG 24, vol. 1749, DHS 7-1, "Canadian War Records Office, London," Beaverbrook to Perley, 23 July 1917.
- 63 NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 5, "Canadian War Records, 1915 to 1918," [c. 1918], p. 11.
- 64 NA, RG 37, vol. 362, file "Miscellaneous Reports, 1918-1925."
- 65 NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 5, "Canadian War Records, 1915 to 1918," [c. 1918], p. 6.
- 66 NA, MG 26 H, vol. 64, item 32587, "Canadian War Records Office. Report submitted by the Officer in Charge to the Honourable Sir Edward Kemp," 30 March 1918, p. 5.
- 67 Report of the Ministry, Overseas Military Forces of Canada, 1918 (London, c. 1919), "War Record Office," p. 457.
- 68 NA, MG 26 H, vol. 64, items 32518-19, Aitken to Borden, 7 July 1916.
- 69 Robertson, "Canadian Photojournalism and the First World War," p. 40. The CWRO also took large photos of entire units at war's end. NA, RG 24, vol. 1749, DHS 7-1, "Canadian War Records Office, London," "Report submitted by Lord Beaverbrook to the Honourable Sir Edward Kemp, K.C.M.G., M.P., Minister, Overseas Military Forces of Canada," p. 3.
- 70 Captain E.H. Knoebel was the first official photographer, a post he relinquished in August 1916 owing to ill-health. Captain Ivor Castle, Knoebel's successor, was appointed that month. In June 1918 Lieutenant W.R. Rider was appointed to assist Castle. NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 5, "Canadian War Records, 1915 to 1918," [c. 1918], pp. 19-20; NA, RG 9, III D 1, folder 175, file 1, "Canadian War Records Office. Report Submitted by Officer in Charge," 11 January 1917.
- 71 NA, MG 26 H, vol. 64, item 32606, Report on the Joint Establishment of the Canadian Representative at the Front and Canadian War Records submitted by Sir Max Aitken to the Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Borden, G.C.M.G., p. 13.
- 72 NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 1, "Canadian War Records Office. Report Submitted by Officer in Charge," 11 January 1917, p. 7.

- 73 *Report of the Ministry, Overseas Military Forces of Canada, 1918* (London, c. 1919), "War Record Office," p. 456. Plans to photograph all members of the CEF were dropped. NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 176, file 5, "Report on the progress of the work of the Historical Section since 1st July, 1917," p. 3.
- 74 NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 5, "Canadian War Records, 1915 to 1918," [c. 1918], p. 21.
- 75 NA, MG 26 H, vol. 64, item 32587, *Canadian War Records Office. Report submitted by the Officer in Charge to the Honourable Sir Edward Kemp*, 30 March 1918, p. 9.
- 76 NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 2, HS 40-1-2, "Reports, C.W.R.O. For Lt.-Col. Doughty, 22-8-17," p. 7.
- 77 NA, RG 24, vol. 1749, DHS 7-1, "Canadian War Records Office, London," "Report submitted by Lord Beaverbrook to the Honourable Sir Edward Kemp, K.C.M.G., M.P., Minister, Overseas Military Forces of Canada," p. 4.
- 78 NA, RG 24, vol. 1749, DHS 7-1, "Canadian War Records Office, London," "Canadian War Memorials, Report of Executive Committee," 31 August 1919.
- 79 Maria Tippett, *Art at the Service of War: Canada, Art, and the Great War* (Toronto, 1984), p. 23. Beaverbrook emphasized that film was "eminently perishable and will not outlast five years if nothing is done to prolong their life." NA, RG 24, vol. 1749, DHS 7-1, "Canadian War Records Office, London," "Report submitted by Lord Beaverbrook to the Honourable Sir Edward Kemp, K.C.M.G., M.P., Minister, Overseas Military Forces of Canada," p. 4.
- 80 The CWMF was created separate from the CWRO to avoid the bureaucratic constraints facing the CWRO and Aitken after the establishment of the Ministry of the Overseas Military Forces of Canada in October 1916. English press magnate Lord Rothermere was CWMF Chairman, and Beaverbrook a member of the Executive Committee. See Tippett, *Art at the Service of War*, pp. 24-26; NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 5, "Canadian War Records, 1915 to 1918," [c. 1918], p. 15.
- 81 Artists included Britons Richard Jack, Christopher Nevinson, and Augustus John; and Canadians David Milne, Fred Varley, and A.Y. Jackson. NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 5, "Canadian War Records, 1915 to 1918," [c. 1918], pp. 16-7; NA, RG 24, vol. 1749, DHS 7-1, "Canadian War Records Office, London," "Canadian War Memorials, Report of Executive Committee," 31 August 1919.
- 82 On First World War censorship, see Keshen, *Propaganda and Censorship*.
- 83 NA, MG 26 H, vol. 64, item 32587, *Canadian War Records Office. Report submitted by the Officer in Charge to the Honourable Sir Edward Kemp*, 30 March 1918, p. 10.
- 84 NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 5, "Canadian War Records, 1915 to 1918," [c. 1918], p. 4.
- 85 NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 1, "Canadian War Records Office. Report Submitted by Officer in Charge," 11 January 1917, p. 5.
- 86 Aitken wrote the first two volumes, and T.G. Roberts the third. The second volume, published in the spring of 1917, dealt with the formation of the 2nd and 3rd Divisions and the battles of St. Eloi (April 1916) and Sanctuary Wood (June 1916). NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 5, "Canadian War Records, 1915 to 1918," [c. 1918], pp. 6-9.
- 87 NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 5, "Canadian War Records, 1915 to 1918," [c. 1918], pp. 17-19. See also NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 176, file 7, "Reports - Canadian Daily Record"; NA, RG 24, vol. 1749, DHS 7-1, "Canadian War Records Office, London," "Report submitted by Lord Beaverbrook to the Honourable Sir Edward Kemp, K.C.M.G., M.P., Minister, Overseas Military Forces of Canada," pp. 1-2.
- 88 NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 5, "Canadian War Records, 1915 to 1918," [c. 1918], p. 4.
- 89 By the end of 1917 French armies had mutinied and Russia had been forced out of the war by popular pressure. The introduction of Conscription in Canada led to riots in the Province of

- Quebec. On propaganda in the United Kingdom and the United States, see Peter Buitenhuis, *The Great War of Words: Literature as Propaganda 1914–18 and After* (London, 1989).
- 90 NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 5, "Canadian War Records, 1915 to 1918," [c. 1918], p. 15.
- 91 NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 1, "Canadian War Records Office. Report Submitted by Officer in Charge," 11 January 1917, Appendix D.
- 92 Tippett, *Art at the Service of War*, p. 27. See also NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 2, HS 40-1-2, "Reports, C.W.R.O. For Lt.-Col. Doughty, 22-8-17," p. 8. A third exhibition, less well attended, opened in 1919. NA, RG 24, vol. 1749, DHS 7-1, "Canadian War Records Office, London." "Report submitted by Lord Beaverbrook to the Honourable Sir Edward Kemp, K.C.M.G., M.P., Minister, Overseas Military Forces of Canada," pp. 1-2.
- 93 Tippett, *Art at the Service of War*, pp. 76-96.
- 94 NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 5, "Canadian War Records, 1915 to 1918," [c. 1918], p. 21.
- 95 NA, MG 26 H, vol. 64, item 32587, Canadian War Records Office. Report submitted by the Officer in Charge to the Honourable Sir Edward Kemp, 30 March 1918, p. 9.
- 96 As cited in Tippett, *Art at the Service of War*, p. 21.
- 97 NA, MG 26 H, vol. 64, items 32431-4, Arthur Doughty to P.E. Blondin, Secretary of State, 14 December 1915.
- 98 NA, MG 26 H, vol. 64, item 32437, Doughty to Blondin, 22 January 1916. NA, RG 2, vol. 1136, PC 589a, 10 March 1916. Doughty was perhaps more concerned, when he made that initial trip, to renew the Public Archives of Canada copying program in French colonial records than to secure relevant wartime records. NA, MG 26 H, vol. 64, items 32461-3, Doughty to Blondin, 4 February 1916. His honorary rank followed a request from Doughty to Minister of Militia Sam Hughes for the necessary credentials. NA, RG 37, vol. 195, Doughty to Hughes, 16 February 1916.
- 99 As cited in Tippett, *Art at the Service of War*, p. 17.
- 100 Beckles Willson, *From Quebec to Picadilly and Other Places: Some Anglo-Canadian Memories* (London, 1929), p. 210.
- 101 NA, Doughty Papers, MG 30, D 26, vol. 8, diary entry for 3 May 1916.
- 102 NA, Doughty Papers, MG 30, D 26, vol. 8, diary entries for 6, 8, 11, 28 May 1916.
- 103 NA, RG 24, vol. 1894, file 118, "Extracts from Canadian War Archives Survey, vol. 1, Militia Department and Commissioners, Canadian Special Mission," Max Aitken to Secretary, War Office, London, 19 July 1916.
- 104 NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 175, file 2, HS 40-1-2, "Reports C.W.R.O. For Lt.-Col. Doughty, 22-8-17," p. 9. See also NA, RG 2, vol. 1151, PC 2105, 20 September 1916, authorizing the transfer of Public Archives staff to the CWRO "to be used temporarily for the purposes of the historical section of the Canadian War Records."
- 105 NA, MG 26 H, vol. 64, item 32538, Doughty to Borden, 25 August 1916. "I was quite pleased with [the] method he has adopted, which will greatly facilitate the work of the historians of the future." NA, MG 26 H, vol. 64, items 32496-97, Doughty to Borden, 11 May 1916.
- 106 Doughty continued to applaud Beaverbrook publicly, observing in 1918 that "if there is one thing in connection with the war which has been well done it is the work carried out under the direction and largely at the expense of Lord Beaverbrook." NA, RG 37, vol. 366, file 1, "Copies of Memoranda by the Dominion Archivist, 1916-1922," "A War Memorial," p. 27.
- 107 NA, RG 37, vol. 352, "Memorandum to Sir George Foster, Acting Prime Minister, Ottawa, from Arthur Doughty," 22 March 1917; NA, RG 37, vol. 304, "Final Report," January 1919.
- 108 NA, RG 37, vol. 366, file 1, "Copies of Memoranda by the Dominion Archivist, 1916-1922," "Memorandum made at the Request of the Honourable the Secretary of State in con-

- nection with Colonel Wood's notes on the War Archives Survey," Arthur Doughty, 6 June 1918, p. 13.
- 109 NA, RG 37, vol. 352, "Memorandum to Sir George Foster, Acting Prime Minister, Ottawa, from Arthur Doughty," 22 March 1917, pp. 4–5.
- 110 NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, Folder 175, file 6, "The Canadian Record and the Commemoration of the War," p. 4.
- 111 NA, RG 2, vol. 1165, PC 980, 10 April 1917.
- 112 NA, RG 37, vol. 195, Doughty to Wood, 20 February 1917.
- 113 NA, RG 37, vol. 195, Doughty to Borden, 2 February 1917; Wilson, "A Noble Dream," p. 27.
- 114 NA, RG 37, vol. 352, "War Records Survey, 1917–18," file 7. In early 1917 the Historical Section had been created at the Department of Militia and Defence to write an official history of Canada's war efforts, with a focus on activity in Canada (NA, RG 2, vol. 1159, PC 19, 17 January 1917). The Historical Section was merged in 1921 with the War Narrative Section of the CWRO, which had been responsible for historical work within the Overseas Ministry (NA, RG 2, vol. 1276, PC 1652, 27 May 1921).
- 115 The other members were Lt.-Colonel William Wood, an active military historian from Quebec City, and Gustave Lanctôt, on staff at the Public Archives of Canada until his enlistment in the CEF two years earlier. Wood had written Prime Minister Borden the previous year calling for a complete survey of records of war activity and offering himself for the position of "War Historian of Canada." At the time, Borden had forwarded his request to Aitken, who turned Wood down. See NA, MG 26 H, vol. 64, items 32482-5, Wood to Borden, 30 March, 16 April 1916; item 32503, Doughty to Borden, 30 May 1916. On Lanctôt's wartime service, see NA, RG 37, vol. 196, Doughty to Burrell, 2 March 1918.
- 116 Non-Canadian records bearing on the service of Canadian units with Imperial forces, like the Forestry Corps; and with allied forces, such as the French Canadian hospital at St. Cloud offered to France, were also surveyed. NA, RG 37, vol. 352, "Private Memoir on the Canadian War Archives Survey, Colonel Wood, 1 January 1918," pp. 22–38.
- 117 NA, RG 37, vol. 366, file 1, "Copies of Memoranda by the Dominion Archivist, 1916–1922," "Memorandum made at the Request of the Honourable the Secretary of State in connection with Colonel Wood's notes on the War Archives Survey," Arthur Doughty, 6 June 1918, pp. 10–14.
- 118 NA, RG 37, vol. 352, "Private Memoir on the Canadian War Archives Survey, Colonel Wood, 1 January 1918," pp. 2B, 18, 33–36; NA, RG 37, vol. 366, file 1a, "Copies of Memoranda by the Dominion Archivist, 1916–1922," "Activities of the Government of Canada in Preserving Historical Records of the War," p. 2. The overseas survey is found in NA, RG 37, vols. 353–60.
- 119 NA, RG 37, vol. 366, file 1, "Copies of Memoranda by the Dominion Archivist, 1916–1922," "Memorandum made at the Request of the Honourable the Secretary of State in connection with Colonel Wood's notes on the War Archives Survey," Arthur Doughty, 6 June 1918, pp. 10–14. On Doughty's work on the collection, exhibition, and distribution of war trophies, see NA, RG 37, vol. 196, Doughty to Borden, 10 April, 8 May and 20 September 1918. See also Jonathan Vance, "Tangible Demonstrations of a Great Victory: War Trophies in Canada," *Material History Review/Revue d'histoire de la culture matérielle* 42 (Fall 1995/automne 1995), pp. 47–56.
- 120 NA, RG 37, vol. 196, Doughty to Wood, 14 and 19 June 1918.
- 121 NA, RG 37, vol. 196, Doughty to Burrell, 26 June 1918.
- 122 The survey of Canadian domestic war activity is found in NA, RG 37, vols. 361–62.
- 123 Even after expansion in 1926, an offer to the Public Archives of Canada in 1929 from the Department of National Defence to transfer to its custody over one million First World War files had to be declined. Public Archives of Canada, *Annual Report, 1929*, p. 5.

- 124 Doughty noted at the same time that “our present building is so congested that we cannot take in any more papers.” RG 37, vol. 366, file 1, “Copies of Memoranda by the Dominion Archivist, 1916–1922,” letter from Arthur Doughty to E.L. Patenaude, Secretary of State, 26 April 1917, pp. 53–55.
- 125 NA, RG 37, vol. 352, file 10, “Friday 15th June 1917 Visit of the Canadian Special Mission.”
- 126 NA, RG 9, III D 1, vol. 4746, folder 176, file 2, “Reports, Historical Section, C.W.R.O., General,” “Memo to Lord Beaverbrook from Lt. Charles Hastings,” July 11th, 1917; NA, RG 37, vol. 352, p. 6. Doughty proposed as a “temporary expedient” the use of the “old Naval Building” next to the Public Archives. NA, RG 37, vol. 196, Doughty to Borden, 10 September 1917.
- 127 NA, RG 2, vol. 1213, PC 3043, 11 December 1918.
- 128 NA, RG 37, vol. 366, file 1a, “Copies of Memoranda by the Dominion Archivist, 1916–1922,” “Report of a Special Committee Appointed to Consider the Policy to be Adopted Relative to the Disposition of War Trophies and Objects of Interest Captured by the Canadian Forces in the European War,” 6 November 1918, pp. 3–4.
- 129 Tippett, *Art at the Service of War*, pp. 98–101.
- 130 See Laura Brandon, “The Canadian War Memorial That Never Was,” *Canadian Military History* 7, no. 4 (Autumn 1998), pp. 45–54. The United Kingdom, in contrast, created the Imperial War Museum, and Australia, the Australian War Memorial, to house documents and artifacts of the First World War. See Gaynor Kavanagh, “Museum as Memorial: the Origins of the Imperial War Museum,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 23, no. 1 (January 1988), pp. 77–97; Michael McKernan, *Here is Their Spirit: A History of the Australian War Memorial 1917–1990* (Brisbane, 1991).
- 131 In 1934 there was still a “considerable quantity of correspondence files and other documents, also records of overseas units which have not yet been opened, examined, sorted and properly filed.” NA, RG 24, vol. 57, HQ650-53-3, “Re-Organization of Record Office.”
- 132 NA, RG 24, vol. 1749, file 6–14, “Authority for Disposal of Correspondence, Files, and Documents, C.E.F.,” “Memo in Connection with the Return to Militia Headquarters, Ottawa, of All Overseas Files.”
- 133 NA, RG 24, vol. 1749, file 6–14, “Authority for Disposal of Correspondence, Files, and Documents, C.E.F.,” “Circular Letter No. 546,” 14 September 1920.
- 134 In both instances, a Board of Officers convened to review material and approve destruction. NA, RG 24, vol. 58, file 650-55-9, “Destruction of Books, Documents, Papers, etc. of the Overseas Military Forces of Canada and C.E.F.”
- 135 NA, RG 24, vol. 1749, file 6–14, “Authority for Disposal of Correspondence, Files, and Documents, C.E.F.,” “Memo in Connection with the Return to Militia Headquarters, Ottawa, of All Overseas Files.”
- 136 NA, RG 24, vol. 1749, file 6–14, “Authority for Disposal of Correspondence, Files, and Documents, C.E.F.,” “Transfer of Departments, Records Office, O.M.F.C. to Records Office, M.H.Q., Ottawa,” 30 August 1919.
- 137 NA, RG 24, vol. 57, HQ650-53-3, “Re-Organization of Record Office”; NA, RG 24, vol. 1871, file 8 (3).
- 138 NA, RG 24, vol. 1749, file 6–14, “Authority for Disposal of Correspondence, Files, and Documents, C.E.F.,” “Adjutant-General, Letter No. 1,” 5 January 1925.
- 139 NA, RG 24, C-5077, HQC 5384, “Transfer of CEF Records to the Department of Pensions and National Health”; NA, RG 2, vol. 2001, PC 811, 26 February 1948.
- 140 Department of Veterans Affairs, *Annual Report, 1970–71*, pp. 37–38.
- 141 NA, RG 24, vol. 1749, DHS 7-1, “Canadian War Records Office, London,” “Report submitted by Lord Beaverbrook to the Honourable Sir Edward Kemp, K.C.M.G., M.P., Minister, Overseas Military Forces of Canada.”
- 142 It is evident that the Historical Section anticipated holding on to the records indefinitely for

- reference, and for the writing of the official history and specialized historical monographs. NA, RG 24, vol. 1732, file DHS 1-4-3, "Notes and Recommendations Regarding the Permanency of the Historical Section, General Staff."
- 143 Public Archives of Canada, *Annual Report, 1969*, p. 1.
- 144 Robertson, "Canadian Photojournalism and the First World War," pp. 50–51.
- 145 Tippett, *Art at the Service of War*, pp. 93–96.
- 146 Laura Brandon, "A Unique and Important Asset? The Transfer of the War Art Collections from the National Gallery of Canada to the Canadian War Museum," *Material History Review/Revue d'histoire de la culture matérielle* 42 (Fall 1995/Automne 1995), pp. 67–74.
- 147 I am grateful to Greg Eamon of the National Archives of Canada for passing on to me his views on Canadian film-making during the First World War.
- 148 I am grateful to Tom Nesmith for these observations.
- 149 Terry Cook, "Mind over Matter: Towards a New Theory of Archival Appraisal," in Barbara L. Craig, ed., *The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh A. Taylor* (Ottawa, 1992), pp. 38–70.
- 150 Tom Nesmith, "Seeing with Archives: The Changing Intellectual Place of Archives," paper presented to the Annual Conference of the Association of Canadian Archivists, June 1997, Ottawa, p. 8.
- 151 In 1914 (NA, RG 2, vol. 1088, PC 1163, 4 May 1914) the Government of Canada partially implemented the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the State of the Records of the Public Departments, by an Order which required the preservation of public records unless their destruction was authorized by the Treasury Board, and authorized both the screening of records and the transfer of those of historical value to the (then) Public Archives of Canada. See Lewis H. Thomas, "Archival Legislation in Canada," *Canadian Historical Association Report, 1962*, pp. 101–115.
- 152 NA, RG 2, vol. 1912, PC 6175, 20 September 1945 established the Public Records Committee, chaired by the Secretary of State, with the Dominion Archivist as Vice-Chairman, two representatives from the Canadian Historical Association, and W.E.D. Halliday of the Privy Council Office as secretary. RG 37, vol. 9, "Report of the Advisory Committee on Public Records," 16 July 1945.
- 153 Department of Veterans Affairs, *Annual Report, 1949*, pp. 61–62.
- 154 NA, RG 35, series 7, vol. 9, file "Public Records Committee Minutes, pt. 2," 23/3/48, pp. 2–4. With tremendous constraints on archival space, voluminous series of case files were necessarily declared non-archival.
- 155 Department of Veterans Affairs, *Annual Report, 1956*, p. 43. Over 600,000 personnel records which had been placed in the custody of the Public Archives of Canada in 1947, and placed in temporary storage at Victoria Island and at the Experimental Farm, were "transferred to the Department of Veterans Affairs for screening along the same lines." Related policy files, administrative files dealing with casualties, and training and hospital books were retained. NA, RG 35, series 7, vol. 9, file "Public Records Committee Minutes, pt. 2," 23/3/48, pp. 2–4.
- 156 NA, RG 2, vol. 2357, PC 1749, 9 September 1966.
- 157 Tom Nesmith has pointed out that archivists' role in determining "what counts as meaningful context, or what contextual information counts as meaningful to an understanding of the evidence ... is a considerable power, and one which clearly can influence readings by others at the archives." Nesmith, "What is a Postmodern Archivist?" p. 9.
- 158 F. Gerald Ham, "Archival Choices: Managing the Historical Record in an Age of Abundance," *American Archivist* 47, no. 1 (Winter 1984), p. 16.
- 159 Nesmith, "Seeing with Archives," p. 8.
- 160 In providing reference, we also highlight documents: there are those to which we readily steer researchers, and those to which we fail to direct them. There are records we undertake

- to declassify beforehand, and those which the researcher must request to be declassified – and be prepared to wait for. Both of these activities are relatively difficult to document.
- 161 In its first year of operation, November 1996 to October 1997, the National Archives website's nominal database of CEF enlistments received nearly a half million visits.
- 162 To mount documents on a website is also to accept a considerably greater reference load for them. Since the CEF nominal database was mounted, reference enquires on these personnel files have increased threefold.
- 163 In November 1998 the National Archives opened an exhibition entitled "*NO MAN'S LAND: The Battlefield Paintings of Mary Riter Hamilton, 1919–1922*," to mark the eightieth anniversary of the Armistice ending the First World War.
- 164 M.T. Clanchy has discussed the role of the first monastic archives in the thirteenth century both in maintaining records, and, as necessary, forging them. See Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, pp. 128–29.
- 165 NA, MG 26 H, vol. 64, items 32518–9, Aitken to Borden, 7 July 1916.
- 166 Robertson, "Canadian Photojournalism and the First World War," p. 41.
- 167 *Ibid.*, p. 43.
- 168 Tippett, *Art at the Service of War*, pp. 81–87, 111.
- 169 Jenkinson took as the archivist's credo "the sanctity of evidence." See Sir Hilary Jenkinson, "British Archives and the War," in Roger H. Ellis and Peter Walne, eds., *Selected Writings of Sir Hilary Jenkinson* (Gloucester, 1980), p. 230.
- 170 "A document which may be said to belong to the class of Archives is one which was drawn up in the course of an administrative or executive transaction (whether public or private) of which itself formed a part; and subsequently preserved in their own custody for their own information by the person or persons responsible for that transaction and their legitimate successors ... To this Definition we may add a corollary. Archives were not drawn up in the interest or for the information of Posterity." Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration*, p. 11.
- 171 Duranti, "Concept of Appraisal and Archival Theory," pp. 334–35.
- 172 *Ibid.*, p. 340.
- 173 Paul Marsden, "When is the Future? Comparative Notes on the Electronic Record-Keeping Projects at the University of Pittsburgh and the University of British Columbia," *Archivaria* 43 (Spring 1997), pp. 158–73.
- 174 See, for instance, Duranti, "Concept of Appraisal and Archival Theory." See also Terry Eastwood, "What is Archival Theory and Why is it Important?," *Archivaria* 37 (Spring 1994), pp. 122–30; Luciana Duranti, "Reliability and Authenticity: The Concepts and Their Implications," *Archivaria* 39 (Spring 1995), pp. 5–10; Sue McKemmish, "Recordkeeping, Accountability and Continuity: The Australian Experience," in Sue McKemmish and Frank Upward, eds., *Archival Documents: Providing Accountability Through Recordkeeping* (Melbourne, 1993), pp. 9–26.
- 175 I paraphrase Joan Schwartz's description of the photograph from "'We make our tools and our tools make us': Lessons from Photographs for the Practice, Politics and Poetics of Diplomats," *Archivaria* 40 (Fall 1995), p. 55.
- 176 See Hugh Taylor, "Transformation in the Archives: Technological Adjustment or Paradigm Shift," *Archivaria* 25 (Winter 1987–88), pp. 12–28; Hugh Taylor, "My Very Act and Deed: Some Reflections on the Role of Textual Records in the Conduct of Affairs," *American Archivist* 51 (Fall 1988), pp. 456–69; Tom Nesmith, "Introduction: Archival Studies in English-speaking Canada and the North American Rediscovery of Provenance," in Tom Nesmith, ed., *Canadian Archival Studies and the Rediscovery of Provenance* (Metuchen, 1993), pp. 1–28; Brown, "Death of a Renaissance Record-Keeper."
- 177 Archivists conduct a novel kind of record-making when they construct archival datasets from large, inter-linked relational databases. I wish to thank Don Macleod for this observation.