"A Daily Influence of American Thought": The Second Air Division Memorial Library, Commemorative Diplomacy, and Anglo-American Relations, 1944-1975

Sam Edwards

In the summer of 1963, with Cold War tensions still fresh in the wake of the Cuban missile crisis, municipal authorities in Norwich, England, dedicated a memorial to the World War II American military. Originally initiated in 1944 by officers in the Second Air Division (then based in the region), the memorial—a library—provided a space in which the people of Norfolk could encounter a "daily influence of American thought and ideals." Various dignitaries attended the dedication ceremony (including the Lord Mayor, the Bishop of Norwich, and representatives of the U.S. Embassy), together with a large crowd of locals, several hundred American veterans, and serving members of the U.S. Air Force. This was just one amongst many post-war commemorations of the U.S. Eighth Air Force, the broad contexts and chronologies of which I have discussed elsewhere.[1] However, due to its long gestation together with the fine details of some of those involved, the Second Air Division Memorial Library is also deserving of a fuller analysis. Here is a revealing example of post-1945 cultural diplomacy and all in a region integral to Cold War American national security: eastern England. By 1960, indeed, there were almost 40,000 American service personnel in the region,[2] whilst at the decade's end an intelligence analyst in the State Department could still record—in a memo for President Johnson—that American "Airfields in England" together with other nearby "real

[1] See Sam Edwards, *Allies in Memory: World War II and the Politics of Transatlantic Commemoration, 1941-2001* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
[2] Simon Duke, *US Defence Bases in the United Kingdom: A Matter for Joint Decision?* (London: Macmillan, 1987), p. 34, 96-100, 112.

estate for U.S. military Forces" were crucial components of the Atlantic Alliance, and of American defense.[3]

Twentieth century American cultural diplomacy—a form of public diplomacy focused on what Nicholas Cull has called the "dissemination of cultural practices"—has long been the subject of study.[4] The pioneering work was undertaken in the 1970s and 1980s by those including Frank Ninkovich, Emily Rosenberg, Frank Costigliola, and Alan Winkler,[5] whilst in more recent years the field has been further nuanced by the work of Cull (on the United States Information Agency), by Greg Barnhisel (on the role played by various shades of "modernism" in Cold War ideological confrontation), and by Justin Hart's critical reappraisal of the philosophical underpinnings that guided post-1945 public diplomacy.[6] Elsewhere, an especially rich scholarship exists examining the myriad ways in which specific expressions of American culture were put to work in Cold War Europe, including feature films, cultural exchanges, sport, music, art and books.[7] This latter subject has drawn particularly engaged

[3] See "What Now for Britain? Wilson's Visit and Britain's Future, Memorandum, Thomas L. Hughes to the Secretary of State, 7 February 1968": reprinted and discussed in Jonathan Colman, "Communication: What Now for Britain?: The State Department's Intelligence Assessment of the Special Relationship, 7 February 1968," *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol.19, No. 2 (2008), p. 354.

[4] For the definition, see Nicholas Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945-1989* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. xv.

[5] See Frank Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas: U.S. Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938-1950* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Emily Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982); Frank Costigliola, *Awkward Dominion: American Political, Economic, and Cultural Relations with Europe, 1919-1933* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984); and Alan Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information, 1942-1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978).

[6] See Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*; Greg Barnhisel, *Cold War Modernists: Art, Literature and American Cultural Diplomacy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); and Justin Hart, *Empire of Ideas: The Origins of Public Diplomacy and the Transformation of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[7] On film, see Nicholas Cull, "Film as Public Diplomacy: The USIA's Cold War at Twenty-Four Frames per Second," in Kenneth Osgood and Brian Etheridge, eds., *The United States and Public Diplomacy: New Directions in Cultural and International History* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2010), pp. 257-284. On cultural and educational exchanges, see Liping Bu, "Educational Exchange and Cultural Diplomacy in the Cold War," *Journal of American Studies,* Vol. 33, No. 3 (1999), pp. 393-415; and Sam Lebovic, "From War Junk to Educational Exchange: The World War II Origins of the Fulbright Program and the Foundations of American Cultural Globalism, 1945-1950," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (2013), pp. 280-312. On sport, see Russ Crawford, *The Use of Sports to Promote the American Way of Life during the Cold War: Cultural Propaganda, 1945-1963* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2008). On music, especially jazz, see Lisa Davenport, *Jazz Diplomacy: Promoting America in the Cold War Era* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2009); and on American women's associations, ambassadorial families and transatlantic marriages, see Helen Laville, *Cold War Women: The International Activities of American Women's Organisations* (Manchester, UK: Manchester

attention, with both John Hench and Gary Kraske tracing American use of books as "weapons" to the 1940s ideological confrontation with fascism.[8] For Kraske the overseas outposts established by the American Library Association (ALA) were in fact formative in developing the methods and approaches later common to Cold War-era U.S. cultural diplomacy.[9]

In politics and purpose, the Second Air Division Memorial Library was a constituent of this wartime and post-war cultural diplomacy. Yet in three important ways it was also distinct. First, whilst the origin of the idea was directly contemporaneous with the activities of the ALA, the Memorial Library's official opening in 1963 meant that it began just as American commitment to book-based cultural diplomacy waned: a report produced that very same year recorded that the number of overseas American librarians funded by the United States Information Agency (USIA) had declined from 131 to just 34.[10] Second, the project was always transatlantic in form and detail. The local community was in at the start, and local leaders played a key role in the dedication and ultimate direction of the Library. Third, and perhaps most importantly, the building dedicated in Norwich in 1963 was not *only* a forum for the communication of American "thought and ideals."[11] It was also—very purposefully—an

University Press, 2002); Susan Zeiger, *Entangling Alliances: Foreign War Brides and American Soldiers in the Twentieth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2010); and Donna Alvah, *Ambassadorial Families: American Military Families Overseas and the Cold War, 1946-1965* (New York: New York University Press, 2007). On American bases overseas, see Maria Hohn and Seungsook Moon, eds., *Over There: Living with the U.S. Empire from World War Two to the Present* (London: Duke University Press, 2010).

[8] For books, libraries, and U.S. cultural diplomacy, see John B. Hench, *Books as Weapons: Propaganda, Publishing, and the Battle for Global Markets in the Era of World War II* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010).

[9] Gary E. Kraske, *Missionaries of the Book: The American Library Profession and the Origins of United States Cultural Diplomacy* (Westport, CT: The Greenwood Press, 1985). For a discussion of the library in U.S. society, see also Wayne A. Wiegand, *Part of our Lives: A People's History of the American Public Library* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2017); and Patti Clayton Becker, *Books and Libraries in American Society During World War II* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

[10] See Kraske, *Missionaries of the Book*, p. 252.

[11] Thinking about the Library as a "forum" is a useful way of understanding (and describing) its intended role as both institution of learning but also of memory. That is, it was designed to provide a space in which ideas might be exchanged and in which the past might be recalled.

institution of, and for, "memory," and to that extent the cultural diplomacy performed by the Library was fused with the "commemorative diplomacy" of the Memorial.[12]

Recently, the "soft power" performed by such commemorative diplomacy has been the subject of nascent attention, particularly with regards to the important diplomatic roles played by major international commemorations as well as by overseas architecture.[13] Nonetheless, there has been no study of an institution which was (and still is) a forum for both conventional post-1945 cultural diplomacy and these newly emerging forms of commemorative diplomacy. Focusing on the period 1944 to 1975 (during which the Library first emerged and then consolidated its role), this article examines how the Second Air Division Memorial Library met the demands of this peculiar dual function. I begin by outlining the Library's origins, which are revealing of important shifts during and after the war concerning the American role in Europe (and beyond). This done, I examine the planning, design and dedication of the Library during the Cold War tensions of the early 1960s, before turning to the subsequent efforts by the Memorial Trust to ensure—as the veterans of the Division had always desired—that the Library would "live" as a memorial.

The article shows how the Library's origins and ultimate purpose helped it to avoid—on the whole—the sort of criticisms levelled by European governments and populations at other forms of post-1945 U.S. cultural diplomacy. Where these other endeavors—especially those funded by the Federal government—not infrequently suffered from European resentments

[12] See Brian Etheridge, "The Desert Fox, Memory Diplomacy, and the German Question in Early Cold War America," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (2008), pp. 207-238; and Brian Etheridge, *Enemies to Allies: Cold War Germany and American Memory* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2016). See also M. Todd Bennett, "The Spirits of '76: Diplomacy Commemorating the US Bicentennial in 1976", *Diplomatic History*, Vol 40, No. 4 (2016), pp. 695-721; R. D. Schulzinger, "Memory and Understanding U.S Foreign Relations," in Michael J. Hogan and T.G. Paterson, eds., *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 336-352.

[13] Bennett, "The Spirits of '76: Diplomacy Commemorating the US Bicentennial in 1976"; and Serge M. Durflinger, "Marring the Memory: The 1967 Vimy Ridge Commemorations and Canada-France Relations," *The International History Review*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (2017), pp. 1-19. See also Ron Robin, *Enclaves of America: The Rhetoric of American Political Architecture Abroad, 1900-1965* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992).

regarding their perceived role as vehicles for American propaganda, the Second Air Division Memorial Library largely remained beyond reproach, its crucial (and ideologically-freighted) Cold War role legitimated by dutiful commemorations of the World War II past. The history of the Memorial Library thus sheds light on the diplomatic power and potential of commemoration, especially when it is the result of private, non-state, initiative; and it demonstrates the influential role that could be played by local European communities in Cold War-era transatlantic relations.

The American Occupation, the Second Air Division, and a Church of Memory, 1942-1945

The origins of the Memorial Library ultimately lie with what David Reynolds has called the wartime American "occupation" of Britain, and especially of eastern England—by the spring of 1944 there were 1.5 million U.S. service personnel in the country, of which 426,000 were based specifically in East Anglia (the easternmost region of England, consisting of the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, and Cambridgeshire).[14] The vast majority of these were members of the United States Eighth Army Air Force, responsible for the American contribution to the Allied strategic bombing campaign in Europe. The Eighth Air Force itself was formed of three Air Divisions, each with integrated fighter units and maintenance organizations to support the bomber operations. The First Air Division, operating Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress aircraft, was based in the Huntingdon area, whilst the Third Air Division, similarly flying B-17s, had bases in Suffolk and southwest Norfolk. The Second Air Division, meanwhile, flew Consolidated B-24 Liberator bombers from fourteen airfields in Norfolk and northeast Suffolk, half a dozen of which formed an orbit of sorts around the city of Norwich.[15] As a result, by 1944 the American

[14] See David Reynolds, *Rich Relations: The American Occupation of Britain, 1942-1945* (London: Phoenix Press, 2000), p. 104, 109, 112.
[15] For a detailed history of the 8th Air Force, see Roger Freeman, *The Mighty Eighth: Men, Units and Machines: A History of the US 8th Army Air Force* (London: Cassell Military, 2000). See also Donald L. Miller, *Eighth Air Force: The American Bomber Crews in Britain* (London: Aurum Press, 2006).

population of Norfolk was around 57,000.[16] By the war's end, 7,000 of these servicemen had been killed in action (with 26,000 American airmen killed across the entire Eighth Air Force).[17]

In size and scale this wartime American presence was an unprecedented event in British history and it was accompanied by a significant quota of culture shock as well as a rush to develop legal and institutional accommodations.[18] The British government agreed that jurisdiction over American troops would remain with the U.S. military, and national and local authorities duly produced informative guidebooks intended to acclimatize the newly arrived allies to British mores and customs.[19] Meanwhile, the U.S. military similarly produced information booklets, delivered orientation lectures, and generally endeavored to explain those aspects of British culture most likely to confuse: linguistic differences, the currency, the status of the monarchy, the experience of the war to date.[20] Most controversially, and in accordance with contemporary racist stereotypes as well as federally sanctioned policy, the military authorities also segregated the 12,000 African-American personnel based in East Anglia (at the height of the occupation there were around 130,000 African-American troops in Britain, all of whom were subject to military segregation).[21] Evidence suggests that East Anglian authorities—much like the national government—colluded with this policy and on occasion even actively promoted it. At the same time, friendly interactions between Black troops and local people also often confounded the stereotypes, and such encounters (in Britain and also

[16] Reynolds, *Rich Relations,* p. 104, 109, 112.
[17] Edwards, *The Second Air Division Memorial Library*, p. 15.
[18] Ibid.
[19] There were numerous such guidebooks produced both nationally and regionally. See, for example, the locally produced guidebooks held in Suffolk Record Office (HD 2272/153/10/1/5/1) and Essex Record Office (D/DU 1865/5/2).
[20] See U.S. Government Printing Office, *Instructions for American Servicemen in Britain 1942* (Bodleian Library: University of Oxford, 2004)—a reprint of the original typescript published by the War Department, Washington, D.C., 1942.
[21] Miller, *Eighth Air Force*, p. 231.

France) later played a key role in mobilizing some of those African American veterans at the forefront of the post-war civil rights campaign.[22]

In conjunction with regulating the assimilation to local life of military personnel, the other key focus of the U.S. military authorities in Britain concerned the construction of the bases from which their bombing campaign would be launched. This, too, produced unprecedented changes, particularly for the local landscape. By the end of the war, sixty-six entirely new airfields had been constructed by a combination of American military engineers—often involving large numbers of African-American personnel—and local British contractors. These were landscape levelling events, as impactful on terrain and topography as was the industrialization of agriculture which had been underway since the late nineteenth century.[23] Hedgerows were grubbed, farmhouses knocked down, fields realigned, arable land paved and concreted.[24]

But it was not just the landscape which was altered by the American presence. So too were those communities near the bases, with one local woman later recalling the profound impact on the small town of Wymondham (near the American base at Hethel): "About 7pm every evening the town filled up with Yanks pouring in, some in trucks, but an awful lot of cycles, a mode of transport that did not seem very familiar to lots of them. The cinema was full every night, all the pubs were overflowing, the dances were packed."[25] The ancient capital of East Anglia, dotted with the architectural imprint of the Tudor period, quickly became the default destination for aircrew on furlough, at least for those with insufficient Leave to get them to London and back. As one American airman explained: "a liberty run of trucks went in to

[22] For details, see Graham Smith, *When Jim Crow Met John Bull: Black American Soldiers in World War II Britain* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1987). See also Steve White, *World War II and American Racial Politics* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019).
[23] See Roger Freeman, *The Airfields of the Eighth: Then and Now* (London: After the Battle, 1978).
[24] For a first-hand account of the airfield construction program, see Robert Arbib, *Here We Are Together: The Notebook of an American Soldier in Britain* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1947).
[25] Pamela Standley, quoted in Steve Snelling, *Over Here: The Americans in Norfolk during World War II* (Derby, UK : Eastern Daily Press, Breedon Books Publishing Company, 1996).

Norwich every night, parked at the Cattle Market and brought home those who had visited the flicks, the Norwich pubs or their girls."[26] Another airman, likewise a regular visitor the city, similarly remarked that for most locally based Americans Norwich "was the place to go,"[27] something which duly prompted the municipal authorities, the headquarters staff of the Second Air Division, and the American Red Cross to develop a host of events, activities and facilities for those on Leave.[28]

In time, these close connections between the city and the resident American military, together with the huge casualties suffered by the Eighth Air Force in the first year of their campaign, led several senior American officers to start pondering the construction of suitable memorials—sites at which those under their command might mourn and reflect, and at which local communities might encounter the sacrifices made by their ally. In Norwich, memorial discussions first began in December 1944 and plans quickly (albeit, as we shall see, briefly) consolidated around a very particular scheme: the reconstruction of a local church damaged during the Blitz.

The initial idea came from Colonel Arnold, of the Second Air Wing (a constituent part of the Second Air Division).[29] "For some time," said Arnold, he had been "thinking and working along the lines of some sort of permanent structure . . . which would be a memorial to the men who lost their lives in combat from the 2BD [Second Bomb Division] area around Norwich."[30] As Arnold explained, a key purpose of the planned memorial was to "give an

[26] See Sam Edwards, ed., *The Second Air Division Memorial Library* (Norwich, UK: Fourth Edition, 2016), p. 8.
[27] Ibid, p. 9.
[28] For more details about the local experience, see Snelling, *Over Here*; F. Meeres, *Norfolk at War: Wings of Friendship* (Stroud, Gloucestershire, UK: Amberley Publishing, 2012); and Martin Bowman, *Fields of Little America: An Illustrated History of the US 8th Air Force 2nd Air Division* (Peterborough, UK: GMS Enterprises, 2001).
[29] The precise date at which the plans first emerged is unclear, but the first reference in the records is in a memo dated 18 December 1944. See "Headquarters 2nd Bombardment Division, Memorandum to Chief of Staff," 18 December 1944. See "Minutes, Wing and Group Commanders Meeting, Hethel," 29 December 1944, Minutes, Notes and Correspondence of Meeting of Wing and Bombardment Commanders, American Memorial Committee, 1944-1945, SO 247/6, Norfolk Record Office (hereafter NRO).
[30] "Minutes, Wing and Group Commanders Meeting," Hethel, 29 December 1944, SO 247/6, NRO.

indication to the friends and relatives of those people who have died over here what the Division did; something which will be tangible and something which will be in the right spirit."[31] After all, Arnold continued, once the victory was won "the [air]fields will be plowed up" and there would be "no one to answer their questions after the war."[32] For Arnold, therefore, the Division "owed" the next of kin—as much as the dead themselves—a marker recording the service and sacrifice of their loved ones; they owed them something to which they might later make a pilgrimage of remembrance once the final victory was won.

To this end, Arnold contacted the Bishop of Norwich requesting a commemorative tablet within the city's Cathedral. The Bishop was sympathetic, but nonetheless explained that "such a Memorial would not be suitable, in view of the tremendous history that has gone on and is represented in the Cathedral today."[33] Put differently, the Bishop felt there was a real risk that the recent sacrifices of American airmen would be overwhelmed by the seven centuries of history contained within the carefully carved and sculpted Norman nave. With the Bishop's keen support, Arnold therefore hit on a different idea, that of "rebuilding a church in which we could be represented by having a tablet of bronze for each Group on the wall; and on this tablet, listed the names of each individual who had died, either KIA or died not due to his own misconduct while serving in the Group."[34] The church identified as perfectly suited for such a project was St. Anne's, which had been bombed in 1942 with the result that "practically nothing exists today, except the land, which is owned by the church property [sic]."[35] As Arnold soon learned from contacts in the Bishop's office, the church was deemed suitable in large part because it was "located in an area the English termed a high-class or upper-class working section" of "skilled labor."[36] Once restored, St. Anne's would thus serve

[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.

a worthy community of sober, thrifty, and industrious workers. The local vicar happily responded that Arnold's idea was "very sound," going on to offer to "do anything he could to work the plan out."[37] Rough costings were quickly produced, with the Americans offering 50% of the overall funds (around £12,000) and the British government and local authorities providing the balance.[38]

The idea of establishing "war despoiled" churches as war memorials was just then being much discussed in Britain.[39] In 1945, the Dean of St. Paul's and city authorities in London collaborated on a small volume exploring this very idea, with several of their suggestions well-received by contemporary public and politicians.[40] In the pages of the national press, too, the merits of various memorial forms were vigorously debated, and reconstructing war damaged churches was identified by none other than the Archbishop of Canterbury as an appropriate form of post-war commemoration.[41] Arnold's 1944 plan to reconstruct St. Anne's Church as a memorial to American war dead was clearly in good company therefore, and it might reasonably have secured support from local people as well as from the U.S. military authorities. Yet within the space of a month the plan had foundered. The key sticking point concerned its perceived sectarian nature. To be sure, Arnold had anticipated potential resistance and during a meeting in late 1944 he had already made his own position very clear:

> On the question of religion, my personal feeling is: as a person, I am not interested in the Church of England, I am not interested in the Roman Catholic Church, or the Protestant. I am interested only in putting the memorial where it would have the best outlook and would be in a most representative section. I

[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.
[39] "Col. Arnold, Notes on Proposed Air Forces Memorial in Norwich as presented to the Vatican," SO 247/6, NRO.
[40] See H. Casson et al, *Bombed Churches as War Memorials* (Cheam, Surrey, UK: The Architectural Press, 1945).
[41] "The Primate on War Memorials," *The Times* (London), 28 February 1946, p. 7.

> think we must all admit that the Church of England has a standing and recognition in the British government that no other church has in any other government, and as such, is more or less part of the government. Consequently, it was decided that it would be the proper thing to have the memorial in a Church of England, and that is why we went to the Bishop of Norwich.[42]

For Arnold, therefore, the memorial's "sacred" mission—to provide "a haven . . . wherein those principles must burn brightly and forever"—ensured that in terms of form and design, the "most logical conclusion" was that it "must be religious and, specifically, a church."[43] That said, Arnold was well aware that "the personnel of our Armed Forces are of many creeds" and so the "problem of their amalgamation under a single roof is, indeed, a delicate one."[44] But as a key purpose of the memorial was to "reach the greatest number of people of Norwich," a community Arnold believed to be "solidly Anglican," the church must similarly "be Anglican."[45] Towards the end of the meeting Arnold also launched into some rather awkward rhetorical gymnastics, asserting that issues of denomination were incidental, for first and foremost the plan being proposed was for a memorial, not a church. "The purpose of this Memorial," asserted Arnold, was to ensure "a spiritual blending and meeting of <u>two races</u> and <u>all creeds</u> as a living testimony to faith in an ideal" (the only instance during planning for the memorial where the presence in the region of segregated Black troops was even acknowledged).[46]

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[42] "Minutes, Wing and Group Commanders Meeting, Hethel," 29 December 1944, Minutes, Notes and Correspondence of Meeting of Wing and Bombardment Commanders, American Memorial Committee, 1944-1945, SO 247/6, NRO.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid. Emphasis in original.

For Arnold, it all clearly made perfect sense. For others, however, the proposal was rather more problematic and when the planning committee next met, in January 1945, the combined forces of the Division's Chaplains threw cold water on the idea of a "non-sectarian" church as a memorial, arguing that it would be "impractical" and would very likely "not operate successfully."[47] Central to their objections was the fact that the largest denomination within the Division was Catholic and as such the restoration of an *Anglican* church was clearly anathema. As a result, a delegation of senior officers was dispatched to the Vatican to seek advice on exactly what might be acceptable by way of a memorial.[48] At the same time, it also became apparent that Arnold's initial belief in the "solidly Anglican" nature of Norwich was a little wide of the mark, with his committee learning that "only a small percentage" of the city faithful "were Anglican" and many had offered "marked opposition" to the reconstruction of St. Anne's as a memorial.[49] By the end of January 1945, therefore, Arnold's original plan to establish a reconstructed Anglican church as a Divisional memorial was "definitely scrapped," and attention shifted to some of the other ideas previously raised.[50] These included a home for the aged, a community hall, a "scholarship endowment for youths," a hospital chapel, "recreation centers," marble memorials, or "a library with attached memorial." In quick order those involved settled on this last option—a memorial library—especially once word was received from the Vatican that His Holiness Pope Pius XII "favored the library as well as other educationally inclined memorials" (rather surprisingly, given the architecture of the Vatican, the Pope declared himself "decidedly against the erection of useless marble monuments").[51]

[47] "Meeting of Norwich Memorial Committee, Held January 15, 1945, at Hethel," SO 247/6, NRO.
[48] Ibid.
[49] "Dinner Meeting of Norwich Memorial Committee held at Hethel Aerodrome, Monday, 22 January, 1945, 7:00pm," SO 247/6, NRO.
[50] Ibid. Divisional commanders would draw upon this experience a few months later to reject plans emanating from the HQ of the Eighth Air Force for a memorial window in Westminster Abbey (which did not come to fruition). See "Headquarters 2nd Air Division to Commanding General Eighth Air Force," 4 March 1945.
[51] It was due to the large number of Catholic service personnel in the 2nd Air Division that input was sought from the Pope. "Notes on Discussion of Norwich Air Forces Memorial," SO 247/6, NRO.

The Memorial Library and Commemorative Diplomacy, 1944-1963

When the idea of an "American Library in Norwich" had been first broached back in December 1944 it was quickly discarded for one key reason: the officers of the Second Air Division declared that they could not "undertake to sponsor a memorial which would entail a continuing responsibility" nor could they "undertake anything which would require continuing American supervision."[52] Reconstructing St. Anne's Church was therefore seen as a suitable means through which to memorialize without committing to an entangling alliance with local people. Just a month later, however, any such circumspection had dissipated, if not entirely disappeared, and for those Americans involved the very fact that the Memorial Library would demand a continuing commitment now seems to have been actively attractive. The transition from church to library is therefore revealing of changing American ideas regarding the most appropriate aesthetic of commemoration in an era in which the potential value of post-war alliances had newly emerging significance.

Plans for the Memorial—first made public in the spring of 1945—thus developed at the very moment American politicians, diplomats and soldiers were busily declaring their continued commitment to the defense of democracy. And in this context, the choice of a library now became eminently fitting. These were the churches of modern American democracy, the buildings in which American ideals were enshrined and expressed. None other than FDR himself had declared in 1941 that libraries were "great symbols of the freedom of the mind" and the American Library profession, albeit it often reluctantly, soon found itself drawn into the work of wartime propagandizing.[53] They were not alone in doing so. Keen to bolster British appreciation of American democratic culture, the Office of War Information (OWI) had recently established an American Library in London (opened in 1943 and modelled on the

[52] "Extract of Minutes, Meeting of Wing and Bombardment Group Commanders, Headquarters 2nd Combat Wing on 29 December 1944" (minutes approved 3 January 1945), SO 247/6, NRO.
[53] President Roosevelt, quoted in Patti Clayton Becker, *Books and Libraries in American Society During World War II: Weapons in the War of Ideas* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2005), p. 205.

successful American Library in Paris). Stocked with 18,000 books, 550 American journals, and used on a monthly basis by over 1,000 Britons, this "outpost" library was well-received by those in the capital towards whom it was especially directed: the "influential and articulate."[54] Such a warm response might well have been anticipated, for the idea of an American library "over here" already had traction of sorts. Nineteenth century steel tycoon Andrew Carnegie, British born and American by adoption, had funded the establishment of numerous local libraries in the land of his birth, in part because he believed such institutions to be *the* very symbol of democracy and of Anglo-American civilization (Norfolk, for instance, had three such Carnegie Libraries: in Great Yarmouth, Gorleston and King's Lynn, whilst neighboring Suffolk had one, in Lowestoft, destroyed by an air raid in 1941).[55]

Such precedents ensured the proposed Library quickly found local support. Indeed, it was a visit to the Lord Mayor of Norwich in February 1945 that seems to have actually catalyzed the project.[56] Talking to a delegation of U.S. officers (led by Colonel Arnold) the Mayor explained that the city council already had plans for a new municipal library, and so with their agreement (and funds) the planners might simply "turn over the entrance hall . . . so it could be suitably decorated and embellished with plaques, memorials, statuary, and paintings so as to constitute a memorial to the men of 2d Air Division killed in action or line of duty."[57] Clearly the municipal authorities saw in the Memorial a similar opportunity as the Diocese of Norwich had previously identified in the proposed restoration of St. Anne's Church, and the very same opportunity as the British government later saw in some of the post-war plans and policies emanating from Washington, D.C. For not unlike the future Marshall Plan, the Library

[54] For the American Library in London, see Kraske, *Missionaries of the Book*, p. 139-143.
[55] For some details about Carnegie's role in library construction, see Wayne A. Wiegand, *Part of our Lives: A People's History of the American Public Library* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 94-97.
[56] "Extract of Minutes of Group Commanders Meeting of 20 February 1945," SO 247/6, NRO.
[57] The plans for the new municipal library reached back to February 1936, when the city council purchased a plot of land on Bethel Street, Norwich. See "B.D. Storey, Town Clerk, to Colonel Arnold," 9 March 1945, SO 247/6, NRO.

was now to be a mutual endeavor nonetheless enabled by American money.[58] Little wonder the project also found favor with senior American military and diplomatic figures. General Ira Eaker (commanding the 8th Air Force in Britain) "enthusiastically indorsed the idea" whilst Harry Hopkins, FDR's Special Assistant, likewise "wholeheartedly indorsed the memorial" and declared that "the President himself was much in favor of such a memorial."[59]

The keen commitment on the part of the officers of the Second Air Division to the idea of the Library as a *living* memorial—an idea much debated in both the U.S. and Britain at this moment—was a crucial factor in securing such high-level support.[60] We recall that this purpose had already emerged as central to Arnold's plan for the restoration of St. Anne's church, but as the project shifted towards a library it was further elaborated. For those Americans involved, the idea that the memorial must "live" was central not just to its ability to console the bereaved but also because of its developing (and newly important) function as an agency of post-war cultural diplomacy. Simply remembering was not sufficient; the sacrifices the memorial was to enshrine required clear definition, and in stark contrast to the original idea the cause—and commitment—now needed to be ongoing. Hence a key part of the plan agreed with the mayor in the February 1945 meeting: In addition to commemorative art and statuary, the entrance to the Library was also to have "two rooms—one an American reference room and the other a room for current American periodicals."[61] These additions would fuse the memorial's

[58] Ibid. The plan for the library was formerly proposed and approved at a meeting of the memorial committee held on 12 February 1945. See "Minutes of Meeting of Norwich Memorial Committee at Hethel Aerodrome, Monday 12 February 1945." NRO.
[59] Ibid. "Notes of Discussion on Norwich Air Forces Memorial." NRO.
[60] For details about the contemporary "living memorial" debate in the U.S., see Piehler, *Remembering War*, pp. 133-135. See also A.M. Shanken, "Planning Memory: Living Memorials in the United States during World War II", *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 84, No. 1 (2002), pp. 130-147. Some cultural elites, replaying a debate had in the post-1918 period, feared that American towns might become awash with GI memorials of dubious quality and as a result elements within the architectural community advocated "living" memorials: community halls, hospitals, and libraries. Others, however, retorted that a "true" memorial must be a monumental work of art. Similar discussions were also had in the UK although they tended to promote far less furor as many British communities had embraced the concept of "living memorials" a generation earlier. See Macintyre, *Monuments of War*, pp. 166-183.
[61] See "Colonel Bryan to Hon J.hn C. Winant, American Ambassador, 19 May 1945," Minutes, Notes and Correspondence of Meeting of Wing and Bombardment Commanders, American Memorial Committee, 1944-1945, SO 247/6.

commemorative and cultural objectives and help ensure that the 300,000 locals anticipated regularly to use the Library would indeed encounter a "daily influence of American ideas."[62] The officers of the Second Air Division unanimously agreed that this was "was much the best proposal."

Such was the hospitable ground upon which the project developed. General Kepner, the Division's commander, first made public the new form of the project via an appeal leaflet issued in 1945.[63] Largely authored by Colonel Arnold, but signed by General Kepner, this leaflet—44,000 of which were distributed to divisional personnel and local people—drew upon ideas and phrasing that Arnold had already articulated elsewhere. As the leaflet explained:

> We all have memories of gallant comrades who paid the supreme sacrifice in war-torn hostile skies and those who died honorably in the line of duty. In order to perpetuate their memory, we propose to erect a Memorial to these honored dead—*your* memorial to *them*. This memorial must be a spiritually living thing. The deep and sacred feeling giving birth to this Memorial, their spirit of youth, hope and desire for a world of decency, freedom and peace must live on…This memorial must be a haven wherein the flame of their principles must burn brightly and eternally, wherein the bewildered, stumbling footsteps of succeeding generations can be unerringly placed on the right paths.[64]

[62] Ibid. "Extract of Minutes of Group Commanders Meeting of 20 February 1945." NRO.
[63] For details of the funding drive, see "General Kepner to all Commanding Generals and Commanding Officers, 24 March 1945." NRO. The funding drive was officially launched on 26 March 1945, with the target set at £20,000. For details of the number printed and distributed, see "Minutes of 2nd Air Division Memorial Committee Held at Hethel, 18 April 1945," Minutes, Notes and Correspondence of Meetings of Wing and Bombardment Commanders, American Memorial Committee, 1944-45, SO 247/6, NRO.
[64] "Second Air Division Memorial Appeal Leaflet," 1945, MC 2059/1, 911x7, NRO.

The appeal quickly drew support from the personnel of the Division, who were encouraged to volunteer donations from their monthly paycheck, something duly organized by local base commanders. As a result, by the summer almost £20,000 had been raised. On 3 July 1945, just a day before the celebration of American Independence, the newly appointed Governors of the Memorial Trust then met for their first meeting, in the Guildhall in Norwich. Those present included a full quota of local luminaries, such as the Lord Mayor, the Commander of the local Home Guard, the editor of the *Eastern Daily Press*, as well as Lady Mayhew, a senior figure in the local Red Cross and Miss Joyce Ruscoe Secretary of Norfolk War Charities (both invited to ensure that the project was suitably inclusive of what Bryan patronizingly referred to as the "feminine angle").[65] Representing the Americans were three officers of the Second Air Division, to be replaced in future years (once they had returned home) by two individuals nominated by the U.S. Ambassador, John Winant.[66] On accepting the position of Governor, Lady Mayhew expressed the sentiment of many, explaining that the memorial was a "wonderful idea" for it would be a "lasting tribute to those who gave their lives and a living vital symbol of the cooperation between our two nations which has meant so much to the world and which must be continued and enriched."[67] F.C. Jex, a local Justice of the Peace invited to become a Governor of the Trust, was similarly effusive in reply, remarking that the proposed memorial would be a "magnificent gesture on the part of the American forces in Norfolk, and leave a permanent record of the great bond of friendship between the two Countries."[68]

[65] See "Colonel Bryan to Mr Cozens-Hardy," 3 April 1945, SO 247/6, NRO. Incidentally, Mr Cozens-Hardy had previously suggested to Bryan that both Lady Mayhew and Miss Joyce Ruscoe should be invited because "one cannot have one lady alone. It should either be two or none". See "Mr Cozens-Hardy to Colonel Bryan," 28 March 1945. NRO.
[66] Ibid. "Colonel Frederick Bryan to Fred Salter, US Embassy," 19 June 1945, Minutes, Notes and Correspondence of Meetings of Wing and Bombardment Commanders, American Memorial Committee, 1944-45, NRO.
[67] Ibid. "Lady Mayhew to Colonel Bryan," 19 May 1945, SO 247/6, NRO.
[68] Ibid. "F.C. Jex to Colonel Bryan," n.d, SO 247/6, NRO.

Among the first issues discussed by the new Memorial Trust concerned exactly how best to proceed with the project. The Governors, conscious that any substantive building work would necessarily be delayed by the priorities of post-war reconstruction, initially considered commissioning a "notable piece of sculpture" which might be executed more promptly, and later absorbed into the entrance hall of the completed library.[69] In May 1945 Colonel Bryan met with three British sculptors to discuss possible designs, including Sir Charles Wheeler (later responsible for another American-sponsored statue in Norfolk, that of Thomas Paine in Thetford, unveiled in June 1964).[70] However, little real progress was made in this direction as it proved difficult to discuss and decide the details of potential sculpture when the exact plans for the Library itself remained unclear. And on this question, a subtle but revealing difference had emerged in Anglo-American conceptions of the Library's overall design.

[INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE]

The Appeal Leaflet issued by the officers of the Division in early 1945 and distributed to the troops included a telling representation of the proposed memorial's exterior: the front cover included a picture of a grand and classically inspired façade complete with imposing columns. Such a design—most likely produced by an artist on the Headquarters Staff of the Division—had roots firmly in the conventions of American municipal (and collegial) architecture, and was also powerfully suggestive of the influence exerted on the aesthetics of American library design by the Carnegie era (many Carnegie Libraries built in the U.S. in the first two decades of the twentieth century were of this very style). Yet transposed to foreign shores such a design also carried Imperial pretensions, especially as this was the very form of architecture favored in the first half of the twentieth century by those building the overseas Embassies and Consuls via which the U.S. State Department expressed newly emerged

[69] "Colonel Arnold to Basil Cozens-Hardy (Town Clark)," 26 March 1945, SO 247/6, NRO.
[70] See Sam Edwards, "He came from America didn't he? The Thetford statue controversy and the problem of Paine in transatlantic memory, c. 1909-1970," in S. Edwards and M. Morris, eds., *The Legacy of Thomas Paine in the Transatlantic World* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2018), pp. 205-231.

American power and prestige.[71] Of course, municipal neo-classicism of this sort was by no means unusual in Britain and so might have been readily accepted, especially as it remained in fashion throughout the 1930s (see, for instance, the new public library opened in Manchester in 1934). Nevertheless, the two architects approached by the Memorial Trust to work up some initial plans thought rather differently, dismissing such an aesthetic as "rather bleak."[72] Instead, they plumbed for a "style and materials" suggestive of the "older buildings of the city", and so they envisaged "walls of flint and stone, a pantiled roof, and stone mullioned windows."[73] Such a design, they explained to Arnold, would "have the character of a Norfolk tithe barn of the middle ages," a type of English building "on which some of your [American] universities are based" and so it should be suitably appreciated, they hoped, "on your side of the Atlantic."[74]

Two divergent aesthetics had emerged. One—clear and present in the appeal for funds—suggested an American commitment to a neo-classical style oft-used in domestic municipal architecture, long popular in the construction of public libraries, and recently re-energized by those responsible for building American embassies in the 1920s and 1930s. The other, a rather more "English" aesthetic, found ultimate inspiration in the same mock Tudor style frequently favored by interwar housing developers. At stake, therefore, was the extent to which the eventual library would be visibly and distinctly American, or of a style more local and vernacular.

Perhaps rather conveniently, these Anglo-American differences in design and architectural aesthetic soon became null and void, largely due to problems with the schedule. For the Governors of the Memorial Trust quickly realized that due to the constraints of post-war reconstruction the original timescale was rather optimistic. By 1946, plans were already

[71] See Robin, *Enclaves of America*.
[72] "Donald H. McMorran to Col. Frederick Bryan," 30 June 1945, Minutes, Notes and Correspondence of Meetings of Wing and Bombardment Commanders, American Memorial Committee, 1944-45, SO 247/6, NRO.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.

delayed, and in subsequent years the lack of progress led some in the Second Air Division Association to contemplate "other kinds of memorial" (such as the aforementioned commemorative sculpture).[75] But these moves ultimately came to naught, and any time the Governors sought advice from the Division's veterans the latter made clear that they wished to continue with the project as originally planned. Such commitment parallels that of contemporary U.S. foreign policy amidst the heightening tensions of the Cold War. In 1948, for instance, the U.S. Air Force returned to eastern England, and by 1949—as arguments raged over the future of Berlin—B-29 aircraft equipped to carry the "bomb" were in the region.[76] Within a decade of V-E Day, the American military had in fact re-occupied the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk (albeit it on a smaller scale than during the Second World War), and by the end of the fifties there were around 40,000 American GIs again based in East Anglia.[77] On-going plans and discussions regarding the Second Air Division Memorial Library were connected to—and shaped by—this evolving geo-political context. The long-drawn out delay therefore ensured that the memorial ultimately became as much "about" the politics of the Cold War as it was about the sacrifices of the Second World War.

The evolving methods of American foreign relations only accentuated the synchronicity between moment and memorial. For if, in 1945, the idea of a memorial *library* had traction given developing American interest in the policies and practices of cultural diplomacy, this only intensified in the decade that followed. By the end of the 1940s the successor to the OWI—the USIA—had developed whole programs focused on cultural diplomacy and targeted especially at western European allies. Educational exchanges, special radio broadcasts, lectures, pamphlets and posters all became the ammunition in a new age of "psyche-warfare."[78]

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[75] See "Philip Hepworth, City Librarian, Norwich, "Norwich Central Public Library,'" April 1967, Minutes, Agenda, Notes, Reports, 1951-1967, SO 247/7. NRO.
[76] Duke, *US Defence Bases in the United Kingdom*, p. 21
[77] Ibid, pp. 35-36, 99, 112.
[78] See Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*.

By the early 1950s, the Federal government was funding overseas book programs promoting American democracy as well as supporting the construction of new libraries in Europe and Japan.[79] In this context, a Memorial Library was a peculiarly fitting means through which to memorialize those killed in the wartime past whilst also helping to consolidate Anglo-American relations in the present (and all in a region where the reality of these relations remained a fact of daily life). The Library thus developed in tandem with increasing Federal commitment to new forms of cultural diplomacy whilst nonetheless remaining a 'private' and unofficial venture throughout. This actually worked in its favor, ensuring that the plans were not affected by, for instance, Senator Joseph McCarthy's 1953 investigation into several overseas American libraries (run by his recurrent target of choice, the State Department).[80]

The significance of the Library's commemorative role was powerfully revealed when, in June 1963, it was at last dedicated. Municipal authorities were clearly intent on making dedication day—13th June—a grand affair. British and American flags flew in the gentle breeze, and brightly colored spring flowers blossomed among the raised beds outside the new library. Significantly, and despite all the earlier discussion as to whether it should be Classical or English-vernacular in style, the completed Library was ultimately an expression of 1960s civic modernism: rectangular, abrupt in its landscaping, and making full use of concrete and glass. For the City Librarian—Philip Hepworth—this was all to the good, for he had always disliked the "sham classicism" suggested by the artwork on the cover of the original 1945 Appeal Leaflet, preferring instead the sort of aesthetic used in the development of new towns like Milton Keynes and new libraries like those at Luton.[81] Of course, this rather stark aesthetic also had implications for other aspects of the original design. For instance, the grand entrance

[79] See Kraske, *Missionaries of the Book*, pp. 209-239, esp. 218-225. See also Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, pp. 174-175.
[80] See Kraske, *Missionaries of the Book*, pp. 250-252.
[81] "Philip Hepworth, City Librarian, Norwich, 'Norwich Central Public Library,'" April 1967, p. 2, Minutes, Agenda, Notes, Reports, 1951-1967, SO 247/7, NRO.

hall envisaged back in the late forties—which, we recall, was to include commemorative sculpture—fell by the wayside. The passage of almost twenty years, changing municipal requirements, and rising costs had all combined to reduce the 1945 idea of an imposing "Memorial Library" to the more intimate 1963 idea of a "Memorial Room." This did at least ensure that one key feature of the original plan found new importance. For, in the absence of imposing architecture or evocative sculpture, the Memorial now drew its role and rationale from its core function: to provide a space in which local people could encounter American history, culture and ideas, and all via an extensive collection of books, newspapers, magazines and periodicals.

{INSERT FIGURES 2 AND 3 HERE]

Officiating over the unveiling of the new Memorial Room—which included on the walls some interesting artwork recording the wartime American presence—was the Bishop of Norwich, something which ensured that the occasion was organized in accordance with domestic traditions of commemorative ceremony. Much like the local choreography of Armistice Day the occasion began with a short religious service at St. Peter Mancroft church (directly opposite the new library), before the Bishop then led a procession of dignitaries, visiting veterans and locally-based U.S. airmen to the memorial (the latter lined the route, stood to attention). Here, with the steel-helmeted Color Guard of the U.S. Third Air Force in close attendance, the Bishop dedicated a Roll of Honor listing the almost 7,000 names of the Division's dead. For the *Eastern Daily Press*, whose editor, T.D. Copeman, had long been involved in plans for the Library, it was a solemn occasion of remembrance that reaffirmed connections made twenty years previous. As a reporter explained: "The old comrades, when they came into the church with their families, and widows of the fallen, were middle-aged and in some instances elderly, merged, like their British counterparts, into the mass of a profoundly civilian not militaristic country. Some of them had flown from the Pacific coast to attend the

ceremony, but there was nothing except the cut of their hair to distinguish them from their Norfolk friends and hosts, who mingled with them in the pews."[82] Such a "merging" of Britons and Americans was similarly apparent in the words used by those marking the moment. More than one speaker was at pains to assimilate into both local and national history the American warriors who had fallen two decades before. The oft-used rhetorical strategy for this involved connecting the heroes of the 1940s with those of earlier times, most frequently Horatio Nelson and Edith Cavell, both Norfolk natives, and the latter of whom was also buried in Norwich.[83]

[INSERT FIGURE 4 HERE]

Anglo-American connections were similarly at the forefront of the speeches made by those Americans in attendance, who included G. Lewis Jones (the Cultural Attaché at the U.S. Embassy), General Kepner, (the Division's wartime commander), and Brigadier General Milton Arnold, the man who had initiated the project back in 1944. All spoke of the Anglo-American bonds forged in the forties and still vital, they believed, in the sixties. But Jones—a professional diplomat—took time to explicitly tease out these connections. Reading a special message from President Kennedy, Jones declared that: "These men and their companions in arms in the Royal Air Force and the United States Army Air Corps were given the hard task of risking the present for the future. They met the test. May their sacrifice continue to strengthen the bonds of friendship between our two nations, allies past and present, against tyranny. May it also inspire us to pursue with energy and patience the opportunities for securing peace with justice preserved for us by those whose memorial we dedicate today."[84] Speaking just eight months after the Cuban missile crisis, the "test" of "securing peace"—which Kennedy had successfully met—remained one of the key challenges of the post-war period. And this was a

[82] Jonathan Mardle, "Norfolk memorial to 6000 airmen dedicated," *Eastern Daily Press* (Derby, UK), 14 June 1963, p. 1.
[83] Press Release, "Dedication of 2nd Air Division Memorial Library," MC 2059/1 9X7, NRO.
[84] President John F. Kennedy, "Message on the Dedication of the 2nd Air Division Memorial Library, 13 June 1963," MC 2059/8 911X7, NRO.

challenge directly connected to eastern England, for if the world had gone to war in the autumn of 1962 amongst those organizations that would surely have been ordered into battle was the Third U.S. Air Force, whose commanding officer was a Governor of the Memorial Trust.

As well as providing a powerful and evocative symbol of Anglo-American unity in both past and present, the ceremony of dedication also closed with a bequest for the future. those Americans in attendance gifted to the civic authorities three flags, all for permanent display in the new Memorial Room: the Stars and Stripes, a Second Air Division flag, and an original Eighth Air Force flag, donated by the modern day commander of that organization. Placed close to the Division's Roll of Honor, the flags ensured that the Library's commitment to cultural diplomacy *and* memory diplomacy, past *and* present, was especially apparent. A visitor could pay homage before the names of the dead, contemplate Old Glory, and then collect a book celebrating the history and culture of those who had made the supreme sacrifice.

The Library in Action: Books, Lectures and Reunions

The Memorial Room quickly established its place in local life and culture, with a November 1965 meeting of the Trust happily recording that it had seen a "steady stream of United States visitors" and was also "much used by the people of Norwich and Norfolk."[85] Similar statements followed in subsequent meetings throughout the late 1960s. For the Trustees and veterans this was pleasing news, although the records make clear that they did not rest on their laurels. A key initial objective was to make good on the original idea by ensuring that local people did indeed have access to a repository of American books, periodicals, and "thought." The details regarding annual book purchases frequently featured in the Trust's minutes, and by the end of the 1960s these purchases had developed a reasonably consistent form. Understandably, given

[85] See, for instance, "Chairman's Report, The Memorial Trust of the 2nd Air Division, USAF, 17 November 1965." NRO. Similar statements recurred in subsequent meetings. See: "24 November 1966; 12 December 1967," Minutes, Agenda, Notes, Reports, 1951-1967, S0247/7, NRO.

the Library's origins, books dealing with the history of the Second World War, with the allied bombing campaign, and especially with the U.S. Eighth Air Force featured prominently in the lists of acquisitions. In 1969-1970, for instance, the Trust's Chairman explained that the "most important book published during the year as far as the American Memorial Trust is concerned was undoubtedly *The Mighty Eighth* by Roger Freeman."[86] As such, the Library purchased multiple copies (six), noting that the book had "aroused great interest locally."[87] But together with the list of popular military history titles, the Trust also took seriously its role as a forum for, and distributor of, American culture. Among those books purchased in 1969, for example, was Craven's *American Sculpture*, Warwick's *Early American Dress*, and Furnas's *The Americans: a Social History of the US*. A year later, these titles had been joined by Wright's *American Fiction, 1876-1900* as well as a three-volume bibliographic work titled *Notable American Women 1607-1950*. This was an eclectic mix, clearly suggestive of the Trust's commitment to the Library's original role: to provide "a daily influence of American thought."[88] Such details also reveal another important feature of the Memorial Library which marks it as distinct from similar institutions established overseas by the American Library Association (ALA) and, later, the USIA. There was no explicit censorship here of the sort that, a decade earlier, had led the ALA to issue a statement condemning McCarthyite attacks on book purchase policy for overseas libraries.[89] These were American books, chosen by British librarians (and by a British-chaired memorial trust).[90]

[86] "Chairman's Report, Memorial Trust of the 2nd Air Division, USAF," December 1970, SO 247/8, NRO.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid.
[89] See Kraske, *Missionaries of the Book*, p. 250.
[90] American input in the book acquisition process was apparent elsewhere though, most notably in the practice of former Second Air Division veterans gifting volumes to the Library's collections, something which increased in the 1980s and 1990s (often posthumously). In the 1990s, too, the Trust also took on an American Librarian, a role which for some years was administered by the U.S.-UK Fulbright Commission. Today, the Library continues to benefit from American involvement, specifically postgraduate interns who are part of a transatlantic exchange program run with the support of the University of East Anglia.

Yet there was also a striking absence among the titles selected, and thus an omission in the American "thought" offered for contemplation. For, although the Library was dedicated during the height of the Civil Rights campaign, there seems to have been little contemporary investment in literature authored by, or about, African Americans. To be sure, the Library had numerous texts about the Civil War and about slavery. But treatments of the Black experience post-Reconstruction were few and far between, an absence paralleled in the ceremonies which accompanied dedication day itself. Indeed, whilst some of the dedication speeches had highlighted Norfolk's connection to the Great Emancipator—Abraham Lincoln—there was no real acknowledgment of the wartime service in the region of Black troops (who had built many of the airfields from which the Second Division had flown). The omission is still more arresting when one is reminded of the year in question: 1963. Just two months after the dedication ceremony, albeit three thousand miles away, none other than Dr. Martin Luther King would use a similar connection between place and moment to powerful effect during a speech on the footsteps of the Lincoln Memorial, one which was purposefully timed to draw on the centenary of Emancipation. At the dedication of the Second Air Division Memorial Library, however, such attention to cotemporary racial politics was noticeably absent.[91]

In the aftermath, however, these issues did at least prompt a new idea from the Memorial Trust: a report authored on 16 June 1963 (just three days after the memorial's dedication) makes clear that the warm local response to a talk given by a returning veteran on "America and the colour problem [sic]" had prompted the *Eastern Daily Press* to argue that something akin to a "Reith Lecture" would be a fitting means through which to continue the Library's mission.[92] The Trust responded with interest and plans were duly initiated, although there was engaged discussion over the fine details. Some suggested it should be annual, some

[91] It should be noted that the Library's current holdings are impressively diverse, the result of a careful and considered acquisition process by Library staff over the last thirty years.
[92] See "American Memorial: The Next Steps," 16 June 1963, Minutes, Agenda, Notes, Reports, 1951-1967, SO 247/7, NRO.

suggested bi-annual, and another simply remarked that it should be "arranged at least in every three years."[93] All were keen, however, to ensure that a lecture secured appropriate coverage and attention. Tom Copeman, the Trust's Chairman, was amongst the most ambitious, envisaging a lecture to "further mutual understanding between the American and British people" which was "to be delivered on June 13th [anniversary of the dedication] which Anglia Television would transmit at Anglia's expense to a wide audience."[94] By Christmas 1963, this idea had been further refined, with Copeman reaffirming his support for an annual lecture "putting the American idea to this locality," a suggestion about which Anglia TV were "extremely enthusiastic."[95] But others felt rather differently, preferring something more academic in tone and tenor. Particularly vocal on this point was a "Mrs [Jane] Thistlethwaite," Trust Governor and American wife of Frank Thistlethwaite, Vice-Chancellor of the University of East Anglia (UEA), which had become closely involved in the Trust's plans for an Anglo-American lecture.[96] Established in the very same year that the Memorial Library was dedicated, the UEA was an apt partner, particularly given the institution's early commitment to the study of American History. Vice-Chancellor Thistlethwaite was among the pre-eminent post-war British scholars of the United States, serving as founding Chair of the British Association of American Studies (1955-1959) whilst among the faculty he appointed to the newly-formed UEA American Studies program was H.C. Allen, another luminary of contemporary Anglo-American scholarship.[97]

[93] "Report detailing the origins and planning for the Memorial Lecture program," Lectures-Correspondence, 1969-1970, SO 247/101, NRO.
[94] See "American Memorial: The Next Steps," 16 June 1963, Minutes, Agenda, Notes, Reports, 1951-1967, S0247/7, NRO.
[95] "Report detailing the origins and planning for the Memorial Lecture program," Lectures-Correspondence, 1969-1970, SO 247/101, NRO.
[96] Ibid.
[97] For a sense of their scholarship see, for example, Frank Thistlethwaite, *America and the Atlantic Community: Anglo-American Aspects, 1790-1850* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963); H.C. Allen and Roger Thompson, *Contrast and Connection: Bicentennial Essays in Anglo-American History* (London: G. Bell and Sons Ltd, 1976).

With supporters of this standing, plans continued over the next year and some hoped that a lecture might be arranged by 1965 in time for the twentieth anniversary of the Memorial Library's foundation (in terms of when the appeal for funds was first issued to personnel in the Division).[98] This was not to be and the anniversary passed with little progress, although there was at least some further clarity on the overall purpose of a sponsored Memorial Lecture. One Governor explained that those invited should address a subject "of general appeal—the question of the Social Background [sic] of the United States of America—attack on poverty during the last four years—anything of general social interest to make us understand America better."[99] This idea was well-received and a lecture along these lines duly followed in 1966, although this was not a purely Memorial Trust endeavor. Rather, the Trust had joined forces with the local branch of the English-Speaking Union and invited Professor Vincent R. Rogers to the city. Rogers, a Social Scientist, lectured on the subject of Anglo-American differences in educational systems and structures (much like the absence in the Library's book stock, Roger's lecture seems to have said remarkably little about one key difference: the impact of a still lingering segregation, even almost ten years after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision). The lecture was delivered in the Music Room at the Assembly House, "which was filled to capacity," and by all accounts those in attendance found the talk interesting and informative.[100] Inspired by both the turnout and response, the Board of Governors redoubled their efforts, and by 1967 they had revisited the idea of a named Memorial Lecture and had begun to approach potential speakers. Supported by Vice-Chancellor Thistlethwaite together with input from the Cultural Attaché at the U.S. Embassy, they aimed high.

[98] "Report detailing the origins and planning for the Memorial Lecture program," Lectures-Correspondence, 1969-1970, SO 247/101, NRO.
[99] Ibid.
[100] "Report detailing the origins and planning for the Memorial Lecture program," Lectures-Correspondence, 1969-1970, SO 247/101, NRO.

The Governors first approached Senator William Fulbright, a key figure in post-war American cultural diplomacy and the man who gave his name to the United States' foremost international exchange program. Unfortunately, however, Senator Fulbright—who declared himself "greatly honored by the invitation"—was otherwise engaged, explaining that as he was shortly up for re-election he would need to attend to the demands of the campaign trail.[101] Others duly considered included the journalist Alistair Cook (British by birth, but American by adoption) as well as the former diplomat Dean Acheson, before the committee finally identified the perfect candidate: Senator Fulbright's close friend, the noted historian Professor Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.[102] In correspondence inviting Schlesinger—a well-known public intellectual and a man active in JFK's administration—Thistlethwaite recounted the idea behind the Memorial Lecture. After explaining the interest and input of the UEA (which had some "interesting programs, including one in American studies"), Thistlethwaite remarked that:

> It so happens that here in Norwich […] there is a Memorial Trust to the USAF [sic] Second Air Division, so many of whose serving officers and men lived near and learned to know Norwich during the last war. The Trust and the University together have determined to establish a lectureship in the general field of Anglo-American relations . . . [and] to have you inaugurate the lectureship would give it the best possible start and the kind of public and academic cache which we're so anxious to

[101] See "J.W. Fulbright to Prof. Frank Thistlethwaite," 17 August 1967, Lectures, 1968-69, SO 247/99, NRO. Fulbright was also asked in 1969, but again Congressional duties intervened. See "Senator J.W. Fulbright to Prof. Frank Thistlethwaite," 21 January 1969, Lectures-Correspondence, 1969-1970, SO 247/101, NRO.
[102] For discussion over potential speakers, see "2nd Air Division Memorial Trust Lecture Committee," 4 July 1967, Lectures, 1968-69, SO 247/99, NRO.

> achieve and which you are so eminently equipped to enable us to achieve.[103]

Schlesinger, who had only recently returned to teaching after several years advising key Democrats, expressed interest, but he also sought some clarification as to his exact remit, confessing he had "no fresh or interesting thoughts on the subject of Anglo-American relations."[104] Thistlethwaite, acknowledging how "hackneyed is the theme of Anglo-American relations," nonetheless explained to Schlesinger that he had "*carte blanch* [sic] for any subject of contemporary relevance" as long as it met the University's Senate Resolution to convene a lecture "which will further mutual understanding between the American and British peoples."[105] Suitably reassured, Schlesinger duly accepted the invitation, and by early spring 1968 the Memorial Trust was able to co-ordinate with UEA to work out some of the fine details of place, date and timing.

It was at this point though that Thistlethwaite also identified a possible obstacle: the title of the proposed lecture. Schlesinger, responding to the Brief given by the Trust, had offered the title "Beyond Vietnam: Is there an Anglo-American role?",[106] but Thistlethwaite feared that this might prove contentious, explaining that in Britain there was a "difficulty with the image of Vietnam". He continued:

> This [Vietnam] has now become so evocative that its very use this spring in advertising a lecture by a prominent American, even though a distinguished scholar and no longer associated with the Administration,

[103] "Prof. Frank Thistlethwaite to Prof. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.," 18 September 1967, Lectures, 1968-69, SO 247/99, NRO.
[104] "Prof. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. to Prof. Thistlethwaite," 31 October 1967, Lectures, 1968-69, SO 247/99, NRO.
[105] "Prof. Frank Thistlethwaite to Prof. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.," 15 November 1967, Lectures, 1968-69, SO 247/99, NRO.
[106] See "Prof. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. to Prof. Frank Thistlethwaite," 23 February 1968, Lectures, 1968-69, SO 247/99, NRO.

> would bring a real danger of an organized demonstration. The emotional response to the image goes beyond pacifist reaction to the war, beyond opposition to American politics in the Far East and even beyond Anti Americanism itself. Particularly so far as students are concerned it has become confused to some extent with the whole pattern of current protest against student grants and against all symbols of an alien authority, political and academic.[107]

Thistlethwaite was perhaps overly sensitive here, although he did have some personal experience of the difficulties academics can face when drawn into the work of transatlantic diplomacy: he was one of those co-opted in 1939 by Lord Lothian, then Ambassador to the United States, to join the British Press Service in New York.[108] Schlesinger clearly understood, replying that if "the word 'Vietnam' is so incendiary I would suggest: 'After the Superpowers: The Anglo-American Prospect.'" Regardless, the general content remained unchanged, and included an extended discussion of the Anglo-American alliance in the age of super-power rivalry (for Schlesinger, the alliance remained essential).[109] The lecture—delivered on 14 May—was "an outstanding success" and Thistlethwaite's fears were not realized.[110] For the Trust, this was a flying start to their plans for regular sponsored memorial lectures, and so they moved quickly to consolidate the idea with a second lecture. This time, however, and with an irony perhaps not lost on Prof. Thistlethwaite, the response was rather different.

[107] "Prof. Frank Thistlethwaite to Prof. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.," 15 March 1968, Lectures, 1968-69, SO 247/99. NRO.
[108] Howard Temperly, "Frank Thistlethwaite", Obituary, *The Guardian* (London), 19 February 2003.
[109] "Prof. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. to Prof. Frank Thistlethwaite," 20 March 1968, Lectures, 1968-69, SO 247/99, NRO.
[110] "F.R.D. Walter to D.H. Simpson, News Editor, Eastern Counties Newspapers Ltd," 13 May 1968, Lectures, 1968-69, SO 247/99, NRO.

Plans for a follow up to Schlesinger's inaugural had already emerged by December 1968, and a year later the Trust had confirmed the speaker: the former diplomat and architect of post-war U.S. foreign policy, George Kennan, then a Professor at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton.[111] In the months beforehand the Trust advertised the lecture in the regional press and arranged the details of Kennan's visit (like his predecessor, Schlesinger, this involved a trip to see the Memorial Room at the Library before heading to the University campus to give the actual lecture). Kennan's title was—it seemed—suitably uncontroversial, and so on this occasion Vice-Chancellor Thistlethwaite clearly did not find it necessary to suggest an amendment: "The United States in 1970."[112] This was a subject which had, said Kennan, caused him "much inner questioning," for he was aware that to "discuss the present painful problems of our country in a forum beyond our own borders" was a "bold undertaking." Nonetheless, he explained, it "is on my mind, and that is perhaps the best recommendation for a lecture subject."[113]

This time, however, the very sort of outrage and anger Thistlethwaite had feared Schlesinger might encounter was realized. To be sure, the lecture—on 18 May 1970—seems to have begun without issue. Kennan opened by acknowledging that it was a "painful time to talk about the United States in a foreign country" as things had happened in recent weeks, "as you know, which tax every American's feelings about his own country" (he was referring to the still escalating conflict in Vietnam, which had seen President Nixon authorize the invasion of neighboring Cambodia).[114] What followed was a searching examination of the various contemporary challenges Kennan believed confronted the United States, especially the

[111] "John R. Wood to R.G. Gurney", 28 November 1969, Lectures-Correspondence, 1969-1970, SO 247/101, NRO.
[112] Ibid.
[113] "George Kennan to Prof. Frank Thistlethwaite," 6 April 1970, Lectures-Correspondence, 1969-1970, SO 247/101, NRO.
[114] George Kennan, "The Profession of Diplomacy," University of East Anglia, 18 May 1970, MC 376/376, NRO.

economic impact of the "military-industrial" complex. However, relatively soon into the proceedings he began to be disrupted, with the *Eastern Daily Press* subsequently reporting that Kennan "was constantly heckled by students over the U.S. policy on Cambodia and Vietnam." And this was no spontaneous outpouring of emotion but a pre-planned and well-organized protest, for as the heckling continued, another "group took up the cry, and distributed leaflets attacking the 'genocide' in South-East Asia."[115] In the end, several members of the audience were ejected from the proceedings, whilst Kennan continued with his lecture (which, tellingly, included various frustrated criticisms levelled at what he saw as the "extraordinary disorientation and disaffection of American youth, student youth in particular"[116]). In later correspondence with the Memorial Trust, Kennan—no stranger to criticism—made clear to Thistlethwaite that "the interruptions at the lecture did not really bother me," although as a self-confessed "notorious critic of our involvement in Southeast Asia" he did admit surprise "at being held responsible for precisely that."[117]

In the grand scheme of 1960s era protests this was of course a rather minor affair.[118] It paled before the March 1968 demonstration outside the American Embassy in London and paled, too, before the sort of controversy that accompanied the 1966 revelations regarding the role of the CIA in funding the Congress for Cultural Freedom. But though smaller in both scale and significance, for the Board of the Memorial Trust it was nonetheless rather shocking. At a subsequent meeting the Chairman told his fellow Governors that he found the whole affair "extremely embarrassing," recording his particular frustration that "someone of the importance of Professor Kennan" had to endure having "a few ill-mannered students . . . heckle and abuse

[115] See "US professor heckled at UEA", *Eastern Daily Press*, 19 May 1970.
[116] George Kennan, "The Profession of Diplomacy," University of East Anglia, 18 May 1970, MC 376/376, NRO.
[117] "George Kennan to Prof. Frank Thistlethwaite," 22 June 1970, Lectures-Correspondence, 1969-1970, SO 247/101, NRO.
[118] For in-depth discussion of British opinion *vis a vis* the Vietnam War, see in particular the work of Sylvia Ellis: "Promoting Solidarity at home and abroad: the goals and tactics of the anti-Vietnam War movement in Britain," *European Review of History*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (2014), pp. 557-576; and "British public opinion and the Vietnam war," *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (2020), pp. 1-19.

him."[119] Later, in his official report to his fellow Governors, the Chairman similarly noted that the lecture "was marked by noisy and organized interruption" which was of "great embarrassment" to the hosts.[120] Moreover, whilst the room was "fairly full" the Chairman was nonetheless concerned that "not more people were attracted to such a lecture," going on to question whether "we are justified in spending £150 a year on these lectures and would the money not be better spent on books or possible some other initiative in fostering Anglo-American relationships?"[121]

This last question raised a key issue. The purpose of the Memorial Library was to commemorate the sacrifices of the Second Air Division whilst also furthering mutual Anglo-American understanding. The Memorial Lectures were an adjunct to this endeavor, designed to ensure that the Library "lived" as a memorial and so continued to have a clear role and purpose. But the contemporary geo-political climate, widespread unpopularity of U.S. foreign policy in Southeast Asia, rising anti-Americanism, and fraying of the Anglo-American bond (especially since the assassination of JFK) had all combined to make public discussions of anything connected to the United States rather difficult, if not provocative.[122] And this was particularly the case when speakers did not focus on "social issues" (as had been originally anticipated) but instead examined contemporary foreign policy concerns. Of course, this was a decision for which they could hardly be held responsible, as both Schlesinger and Kennan were very much foreign policy specialists. In part, therefore, blame for any failings in the bi-annual lecture lay with the Trust—their choice of speaker was out of step with their stated intention to bring to Norfolk distinguished authorities who might explain aspects of American society.

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[119] "Chairman to Mr J.B. Howard (Clerk to the Governors)," 19 May 1970, Lectures-Correspondence, 1969-1970, SO 247/101, NRO.
[120] "Chairman's Report, Memorial Trust of the Second Air Division," Minutes, 1969-1972, SO 247/8, NRO.
[121] "Chairman to Mr J.B. Howard (Clerk to the Governors)," 19 May 1970, Lectures-Correspondence, 1969-1970, SO 247/101, NRO.
[122] For details about the Anglo-American relationship during the Vietnam War, see Sylvia Ellis, *Britain, America and the Vietnam War* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004).

Another crucial problem concerned the specific form and delivery of the Memorial Lectures. The involvement of UEA and the decision to offer something suitably "academic" had severed the Lectures from the very thing which gave them point and purpose—the Memorial Library itself. Away from the carefully framed site of memory, and away too from the visual signs and symbols of solemn remembrance (such as the Roll of Honor) the Lectures appeared unshackled from any specific commemorative function, something which in turn opened up space for critical commentary. Seen in this light, Kennan's reception could surely have been anticipated, and given Thistlethwaite's prior concerns regarding the welcome he feared Schlesinger—a committed Democrat and outspoken critic of the Nixon Administration—might receive it seems strange that he was not similarly concerned by the response that the far more controversial Kennan might elicit.[123] The final problem with the planning and execution of the first two Memorial Lectures concerned the timing. Initially, the Governors hoped to schedule the lectures in tandem with a veterans' reunion, something that would no doubt have altered the tone of the proceedings. After all, veterans were themselves symbols of the Library's commemorative mission and their presence in the audience would have re-connected this mission to the Lecture, ensuring the space for protest was significantly circumscribed. It proved impossible, though, to co-ordinate both reunion and lecture, and so the latter proceeded independently and was protested accordingly.

For the Trust, it was all a rather chastening experience, and whilst in the aftermath of Kennan's visit they did not abandon the bi-annual lectures, they did nonetheless make two important decisions. The first was to sever the connection with UEA in the belief that "the

[123] Others did express their concern, and it seems Kennan had been under some pressure from "diplomatic circles to alter the alter the controversial title of his Lecture . . . to a general talk on the Diplomatic Service." In the end he seems to have done just this, although the change in title seems to have been too late for much of the publicity, and so many people were likely unaware. See "Chairman's Report, The Memorial Trust of the 2nd Air Division USAF," Meetings 1969-72, SO 247/8, NRO. See also "A.R. Jones to R.C. Gurney," 12 May 1970 and "Chairman to Mr J.B. Howard (Clerk to the Governors)," 19 May 1970, Lectures-Correspondence, 1969-1970, SO 247/101, NRO.

present climate of student opinion" made it "difficult to continue to hold the lecture at the University" (their role as partner passed to the local branch of the English-Speaking Union).[124] The second decision was to refocus their energies around a set of activities which they felt confident would elicit far less criticism: the organization of regular veterans' reunions.[125] In 1972, two years after Kennan's visit and just as the American military began withdrawing from Vietnam, the Trust was finally able to realise this latter objective.

In part, the decision by the Second Air Division Association to hold its annual reunion in Norwich was prompted by a key date—1972 was the 25th anniversary of the Association's foundation. The newly elected President initiated the plans in late 1971 and then contacted the Memorial Trust to sketch out the general schedule, but not before another member of the Association had first checked as to whether such a return would be welcomed by local people. The Chair of the Trust was happy to reassure however, explaining to this veteran that "Norwich would greatly look forward to a renewed association with the American veterans whom they knew so well and admired so much."[126] The group intended to arrive around 18 May, taking a Charter flight to the American base at RAF Mildenhall. This was to be followed by visits to Norwich to see the Library, re-connect with local friends, and take in nearby sites of interest (the Cathedral, the Castle). After a grand banquet, members of the group would then have time to travel independently before re-convening in London in early June for the flight home.[127] As it turned out, the eventual trip was remarkably close to this early outline. Around 75 veterans made the trip, many with their wives and families. At a cost of $309 per person, most were among the well-off retired middle-class, a fact that ensured the attendance of a high proportion

[124] See "J.B. Howard to R.L. Fredenburgh," 18 June 1971, "1971 Lecture," SO 247/103, NRO.
[125] Another Memorial Lecture was initially intended for 1972, but a combination of the Kennan experience, the Trust's inability to secure a suitably prominent speaker, and the demands of assisting with the planned veterans' reunion led the Board of Governors to postpone the next lecture for another year. Some of those contacted as potential speakers included U.S. Ambassador David Bruce and former National Security Advisor to both JFK and LBJ, McGeorge Bundy. Both declined. See "1971 Lecture," SO 247/103, NRO.
[126] "Chair of the Trust to C.P. Burtner," 13 May 1971, 1971 Lecture, SO 247/103, NRO.
[127] See "1972, 25th Annual Convention," SO 247/106, NRO.

of those who had served at commissioned officer grade (pilots, navigators, bombardiers, and ground staff). Each brought with him a book to be donated to the Library in memory of their fallen comrades, and just like nine years earlier, they were wined and dined by the Governors of the Memorial Trust, with help and support provided by the local branch of the ESU. Municipal dignitaries (including the Lord Mayor) and local people gave them a "hearty welcome" at the convention they held at City Hall as well as at several of their old bases which they visited by coach.[128] There were no protests, no heckling, no angry headlines, no vocal criticisms of American foreign policy or of contemporary American airpower. How could there be? Unlike the lecture given by George Kennan on the UEA campus, the two aspects of the Memorial Library's dual function had been re-connected: it was once again an institution of cultural diplomacy *and* of memory diplomacy, with the veterans fusing both roles in their very bodies and presence.

Similar activities recurred in subsequent years, part of a broader history in which veterans of the Second World War began to combine and commemorate, enlisting in associations to reconnect with their past.[129] In 1975, for instance, two hundred veterans of the Second Air Division returned to Norwich, and a year later still more returned. By the early 1980s such visits had become something of an annual event, always following a familiar pattern. The veterans came in groups, shook hands, shed tears at their old bases, remembered losses, delivered speeches, visited local schools and, increasingly, dedicated more memorials. Such activities were warmly supported by the Governors of the Memorial Trust, who found in these nostalgic and emotional "pilgrimages"—as they were often termed in the press—an invaluable means to draw attention to the Library's presence and role, and all in a manner far less likely to provoke a hostile response from those frustrated by contemporary American

[128] Ibid. See also "Second Air Division Association Norwich Reunion 19th/21st May 1972 booklet," SO 247/106, NRO
[129] See Edwards, *Allies in Memory*, p. 138.

foreign policy. Indeed, for those involved, such activities were often energizing. In correspondence prior to the 1975 return, one veteran—William Robertie—put it well:

> I would like to think that our small effort, a memorial dedicated to those who gave their lives for both countries, might be the launching platform for a major effort to save the world, if you will, from itself. . . . I realise this is a lofty aim. . . . The Memorial Library must remain a vibrant force, and it will only remain vibrant if we, the survivors and our friends, see the value of communication represented by a complete understanding through the medium of books and conversation. Right now we have the books and we have the conversation, but this is as of nothing if we unless we both embrace the concept that while we are different we are very much the same.[130]

This was the power of the Library as Memorial: through its books would come "understanding," whilst through the associated veterans' pilgrimages would come memories of a simpler time in which both Britons and Americans were "the same." In this framing, the tensions, differences, and disputes that had also accompanied the "friendly invasion" faded from memory, leaving only a sense of comradeship, common purpose, and mutual sacrifice. And by implication, there was similarly no place or space for the frictions of the 1960s. Such was the power of this commemorative diplomacy; images, ideas and rhetoric were pulled from the past and used to frame the present, giving the latter—albeit it briefly—a warm and rosy glow. William Robertie once more:

> World War I brought the English and Americans together on a "arms length" basis. World War II brought them together as bosom buddies!

[130] "William Robertie to Tom Eaton," 6 November 1974, 1974-75 Reunion, SO 247/107, NRO.

> World events since World War II have dictated that together with have a fighting chance, separately we are destined for oblivion.[131]

Conclusions: Cold War Anglo-American Relations and Commemorative Diplomacy

Over the last two decades, our understanding of the aims, approaches and sheer diversity of Cold War era American cultural diplomacy has been greatly enriched. The roles played by, amongst other things, music, sport, art, and of course government sponsored "information" campaigns have all been well studied, and the result is a far deeper appreciation of how various forms of "culture" were used to further post-1945 U.S. foreign policy objectives. As pre-eminent examples of American culture being "sold" abroad, book programs and the connected establishment of overseas libraries have been the subject of particularly focused research. The Second Air Division Memorial Library, initiated in 1944 but not dedicated until 1963, is one example of just such an overseas library—it was, we recall, to offer the people of Norwich and Norfolk a "daily influence of American thought and ideals," an aspiration entirely in tune with the objectives of contemporary Cold War cultural diplomacy.

But the Library is also distinct in important ways. This was not an institution funded by the U.S. State Department and intended to convert a reluctant or suspicious European population to the "American Way." This was not a USIA sponsored initiative intended to do battle with rival Cold War ideologies. This was, first and foremost, a memorial to fallen American servicemen, initiated by their comrades and ultimately brought to fruition by local community leaders. This original purpose—this legitimacy—always remained, even into the 1950s as the project was delayed, and even after the speeches and ceremonies that accompanied dedication in 1963. As visitors discovered, along the ordered shelves stood carefully selected tomes recording American history and explaining American culture; here was an education for

[131] Ibid.

the good people of Norwich and Norfolk (people who, on a sunny spring day, could often hear the roar of American air power pass overhead). Nearby stood both Old Glory and the names of the "Glorious Dead" (as Kipling would have them). The message was subtle but nonetheless clear: the right of the United States to be here *now* had been earned by those who had been here *then.* And as long as the Memorial Trust stayed true to this origin, as long as it remained a space for solemn commemoration rather than being seen as just another agency of contemporary U.S. cultural diplomacy, it was safe and secure from the suspicions, criticisms, and, at times, increasing anti-Americanism which so strained the transatlantic alliance in the 1960s and after.

This was what the details of the Library's origins, dedication and subsequent activities reveal. When it focused on commemoration the politics of its presence were veiled (and so safe from attack). When it undertook activities apparently disconnected from this founding ideal—like organizing public lectures by those such as Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. and, in particular, George Kennan—it exposed itself to the very same generational angst and anger then fueling Youth criticisms of American policy in Southeast Asia. Anchored to the past, it was beyond reproach; but if it appeared to drift into the present, its actions were as vulnerable to critique as those of any other agency of post-war American cultural diplomacy.

The history of the Memorial Library thus illuminates some of the familiar problems and pitfalls of post-1945 American cultural diplomacy in Europe whilst at the same time shedding light on an often-overlooked subset of distinct yet connected activity which generally encountered far fewer obstacles. The latter—"commemorative diplomacy"—drew together American service personnel (past and present), local British community leaders, municipal authorities, and, on occasion, co-opted American State actors, such as the Cultural Attaché from the Embassy, in the work of transnational cultural exchange. Its success in Norwich is perhaps best demonstrated by the fact that the Memorial Library remains active today, albeit

from within a different building—the original structure was sadly destroyed by fire in 1994, along with many of the books and records. The extent to which the Library continues as an unofficial agent of U.S. cultural diplomacy is perhaps most apparent though in its new designation. For in early 2020 the Second Air Division Memorial Library, initiated in 1945, opened in 1963, and re-dedicated (following the fire) in 2001, was rebranded as simply "The American Library." Today, it continues to stand in the very center of modern Norwich, a lingering and successful outpost of unofficial Cold War cultural diplomacy *and* a memorial to World War II American military sacrifice. Small in scale, provincial in realization, and localized in power and presence, this "American Library" nonetheless continues to fulfil the purpose first outlined in the Appeal Leaflet circulated amongst servicemen and local people back in the spring of 1945.

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