

Matériel Culture

The archaeology of twentieth century conflict



Edited by John Schofield, William Gray Johnson and Colleen M. Beck

ONE
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MATÉRIEL CULTURE

The twentieth century probably saw no more conflict than in previous centuries; increased global communication and media coverage have, however, heightened our awareness of it. The scale and intensity of war was greater than anything before and the human cost reached unprecedented and previously unimaginable levels. Following the end of the century the materiality of these many conflicts – from local skirmishes to world wars – is becoming accepted on to the heritage agenda as a valid form of cultural resource for the benefit of future generations. *Matériel Culture* describes these recent developments, and documents why the study of conflict is important – and to whom.

The term ‘matériel culture’ encompasses the material remains of conflict, from buildings and monuments to artefacts and militaria, as well as human remains. This collection of essays, from an international range of contributors, illustrates the diversity in this material record, highlights the difficulties and challenges in preserving, presenting and interpreting it, and above all demonstrates the significant role matériel culture can play in contemporary society. Archaeologists have led the way in understanding these remains, as the fantastic selection of case studies in this volume suggests. Among the many studies are: the ‘culture of shells’, the archaeology of nuclear testing grounds, Cambodia’s ‘killing fields’, the Berlin Wall, the biography of a medal, the reappearance of Argentina’s ‘disappeared’ and Second World War concentration camps.

In presenting this collection the editors challenge our perception of what constitutes cultural heritage, what is significant about it, and what is worthy of record and preservation. This new and exciting field of archaeology has a wide relevance for academics and professionals in many disciplines, most certainly in archaeology, heritage management, history and anthropology.

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MATÉRIEL CULTURE

The archaeology of
twentieth-century conflict

Edited by

John Schofield, William Gray Johnson
and Colleen M. Beck



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Dedication

During the course of this project we have become increasingly aware of the degree to which our interest and enthusiasm for matériel culture have been shaped by our own lives, and by the experiences of close friends and family. It is almost as though the very act of studying modern military archaeology has become an encounter with our lives; our own pasts. No doubt this will also be the case for numerous of our contributors: it clearly is for Jody Joy and Gabi Dolf-Bonekämper, whose contributions are arguably the most intimate of this collection. It is for this reason that we dedicate this volume to those whose experience has contributed in a significant way to shaping our own interest in the past:

For JS, Group Captain Arthur Schofield (1920–2001); for WGJ, PFC W.M. Johnson (1924–) and Capt O.G. Rucker, Jr (1928–); for CMB, Lt Col, USAF, W.R. Beck (1919–), W.R. Beck (1924–) and MM2, USN, W.K. Kolb (1944–).

Without them our enthusiasm for and commitment to this subject would never have materialized, and this book, and other related articles, would not have been written.

JS, WGJ and CMB
July 2001

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Material culture is the aspect of social reality grounded in the objects and architecture that surround people. It includes the usage, consumption, creation, and trade of objects as well as the behaviors, norms, and rituals that the objects create or take part in. Some scholars also include other intangible phenomena that include sound, smell and events, while some even consider language and media as part of it. The term is most commonly used in archaeological and anthropological studies, to define Material vs Non-material Culture. Posted on September 30, 2011 by Sitwe. will also discuss the importance of culture as a tool for a country's development with specific examples drawn from certain domains of life. Principally, the paper will begin with a brief introduction followed by definition of key terms before differentiating the concepts under study. This will be followed by a brief conclusion of key issues in the essay. Torres (2008:81) defines "the way of life of a people. However, each culture has its own material and non-material cultural possessions. Material culture is the physical objects that represent a particular culture whereas non-material culture contains ideas, attitudes or beliefs in a certain culture. What is Material Culture? As mentioned above, material culture includes the physical objects that can be seen, touched and felt by others. No matter to which period they belong, the archaeological sites people have created fall under material culture.