

For the Record: Memory and the Second World War Paintings of Carl Schaefer, RCAF

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A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Art History

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts (Art History) at

Concordia University

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

September 2011

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**CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY**

**School of Graduate Studies**

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## ABSTRACT

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Although the Second World War ended over sixty five years ago, veteran's memories of the conflict continue to shift in focus with the passing of time. During the war Carl Schaefer (1903-1995) served with the RCAF as an official war artist attached to bomber, fighter, and coastal commands in Europe. This thesis compares Schaefer's war diary and letters written during the war with two interviews conducted with the artist many years after the war. The comparison yielded some interesting discrepancies in Schaefer's memory of his role as an official war artist. During the war, Schaefer emphasized in his diary and letters the main goal of the war art program: accurate images of Canada's involvement in the war for the historical record. In the two post-war interviews, however, Schaefer's memory of his role had shifted when he mentioned that he considered his war-time work as art, rather than historical records.

The reasons for the shift in Schaefer's memory are complex and varied. In order to understand the process by which his memory of the war altered over time, I have consulted theories written by several oral historians. The key reason for the shift in memory is that Schaefer, like other war veterans, sought to establish meaning for his role in the war that would give him a feeling of composure, thus helping him feel good about his life. The shift in Schaefer's memory also offers clues regarding the context of the interviews conducted after the war.

## Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to thank my Mom and Dad, without whom none of this would have been possible. I would also like to thank all of my professors in the Art History Department at Concordia University for their hard work and inspiration. In particular I am most grateful to my advisor Martha Langford, Loren Lerner, and Catherine MacKenzie for their guidance and help throughout my studies at Concordia. Two awards have also helped me complete this thesis: the Renata Hornstein Graduate Fellowship in Art History and the Concordia Art History Faculty and Staff Adopt a Student Award.

I would also like to thank Laura Brandon of the Canadian War Museum who helped tremendously with researching Carl Schaefer's war artist file at the CWM.

Last but certainly not least I would like to thank my partner Ronak Kordestani, whose patience during my two years of graduate studies was amazing.

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During the Second World War, Carl Schaefer (1903-1995) served as an official war artist with the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF), attached to bomber, fighter and coastal commands in Europe. Schaefer enlisted in the RCAF in February 1943 and was discharged in June 1946. Before and after the war, he was often described as a regionalist artist, and he made no apologies for that distinction.<sup>1</sup> Born in Hanover, Ontario, Schaefer made his best landscape paintings based on the rural countryside in the proximity of his birthplace, though he trained and also painted elsewhere. In 1921 he began studies at the Ontario College of Art and his teachers included J.E.H. MacDonald and Arthur Lismer, members of the Group of Seven. That famed collection of artists who, for better or worse, dominate Canadian art historical scholarship, significantly influenced Schaefer's career as an artist. However, as George Johnston points out, Schaefer's style of painting is highly personal in its deviation from the Group's "big, abstract, decorative canvases toward something more intimate and realistic."<sup>2</sup> Schaefer himself would become a member of the Canadian Group of Painters and the Society of Painters in Water Colour.

During the financially difficult years of the 1930s, Schaefer returned to Hanover. He began working with watercolour instead of oil, a quick drying and portable medium that would be particularly useful during his service as a war artist in the following decade. Some of Schaefer's most well-known landscape paintings were created during this period, such as *Storm Over the Fields* (1937) (Fig. 1). Johnston observes that Schaefer's landscapes began to develop the "ominous and brooding tones ... though not so fully realized" as those that would become characteristic of his official war art.<sup>3</sup> In 1940, Schaefer was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship, the first Canadian artist to win this prestigious award, allowing him to paint full

time in Vermont. Although Schaefer continued to paint landscapes in Vermont, he began depicting new subjects, such as collapsing stairways and tenements.<sup>4</sup> Schaefer taught painting throughout his career, and in 1940 became the chair of the Ontario College of Art painting department.<sup>5</sup> As Placentile explains, Schaefer's students had no trouble connecting with him because "his work did not use vastly abstract methods."<sup>6</sup>

Like many Canadians, however, Schaefer became anxious to join the war effort overseas, particularly after his half-brother, a pilot in the RCAF, was killed in action in December 1941.<sup>7</sup> As there was no official war art program at the time, Schaefer began by depicting images of the war effort on the Canadian home front. His initial attempts were sketches depicting war-related industrial work in 1942, first at the John Inglis Company of Toronto, a company manufacturing marine engines, turbines and Bren guns, followed by a commission to depict Canada Packers' wartime production.<sup>8</sup> After lobbying H.O. McCurry, director of the National Gallery of Canada, who was recruiting Canadian war artists, Carl Schaefer was appointed official war artist in February 1943 with the RCAF. He was sent overseas at the age of forty.

This was a turning point in Schaefer's life, a fact that his biographers never fail to mention. Biographical accounts referring to Schaefer's war work can be found in Gray, Rand and Steen's brief monograph on the artist, various exhibition catalogues, and the published reminiscences of George Johnston, a lifelong friend of Schaefer. Schaefer's work as a war artist is mentioned in his obituary, as well as an article written by Paul Duval in 1945, Bill Twatio's essay in *Esprit de Corps*, Joan Murray's *Canadian Artists of the Second World*



*War*, and *Exhibition of Canadian War Art*, which was the catalogue for an exhibition that took place at the National Gallery of Canada in 1946.

Schaefer was commissioned as a Pilot Officer in the RCAF, and was promoted to the rank of Flight Lieutenant in 1944.<sup>9</sup> His first assignment as a war artist was in Southern England with Fighter Command.<sup>10</sup> He was then stationed with No. 6 Group Bomber Command in Yorkshire, England. In 1944, Schaefer served in Northern Ireland and in 1945 he served in Iceland with Coastal Command. His career as a war artist was at first stimulating and exciting, according to Gray, Rand and Steen, as he learned technical details about aircraft mechanics, flying, gunnery, and navigation.<sup>11</sup> Off duty, as Bill Twatio points out, Schaefer met Ernest Hemingway and Canadian war correspondents Gregory Clark, Matthew Halton, and Ross Munro, to whom Schaefer explained, “my job is to identify with the men and what’s around me. There is no artsy business about this.”<sup>12</sup>

On February 9, 1944, Schaefer was in attendance at the National Gallery in London for the Official Canadian War Artist’s Exhibition. He was photographed with Kenneth Clark, the Duchess of Kent, and Vincent Massey, in front of his painting *Bullseye, Night Exercise from Flying Control* (Fig. 2). As Gray, Rand and Steen point out, the National Gallery exhibition was an important event because it gave recognition that war artists were contributing to the war effort.<sup>13</sup> By documenting the high profile guests in attendance, the official photograph adds further status to Schaefer’s participation in the exhibition.

Two post-war exhibitions of Canadian war art that took place at the National Gallery in Ottawa included works by Schaefer. The first of these major exhibitions was in 1945 and was followed by a tour that stopped in Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, and Vancouver. The second manifestation, which, according to Joan Murray, was the final major exhibition of the Canadian war art program, took place in May and June 1946 at the National Gallery, followed by an extensive Canadian tour.<sup>14</sup> Schaefer was well represented in this exhibition with eighteen of his works listed in the catalogue.<sup>15</sup>

Schaefer the war artist continued to be represented in solo and group exhibitions after the war. In 1969 a retrospective exhibition was organized of Schaefer's work completed between 1926 and 1969. While only five of Schaefer's paintings as an official war artist were exhibited, the selection included some of his best recognized works, such as *Marshalling Lancasters Against Stuttgart* (1943) and *Bomb Aimer, Battle of the Ruhr, 1944*, (1951) as well as a less well known painting, *Operational Ammunition 303, Still Life* (1943), which depicted a belt of ammunition.

Two major touring exhibitions of Canadian war art took place in the late 1970s and 1980s. *A Terrible Beauty: The Art of Canada at War* toured Canadian galleries between 1977 and 1980. Only one of Schaefer's paintings was included: *Pranged Halifax, 'Queenie'* (1944). Three of Schaefer's paintings were exhibited in *Canadian Artists of the Second World War* (1981): *Burning Night Fighter* (1946), *Marshalling Lancasters Against Stuttgart, Battle of the Ruhr* (1943) and *'Q' Queenie* (1945). Two subsequent exhibitions encouraged Canadian public interest in war art: *Art at the Service of War* (1984) included only works from the First

World War; *Canvas of War: Painting the Canadian Experience, 1914 to 1945* (2001) exhibited works by Canadian artists from both World Wars, including Schaefer's.

A retrospective solo exhibition of Schaefer's career organized by Museum London, titled *Storm on the Horizon*, toured Canada between 2008 and 2010. Five official war pieces were included in the exhibition, and, unusually, nine of Schaefer's pre-war industrial drawings from the City of Toronto Art Collection were also included.<sup>16</sup> The exhibition of these drawings of the industrial war effort on the Canadian home front brought attention to this somewhat overlooked aspect of Schaefer's production, providing evidence of his preparation to become a war artist.

Schaefer was deeply affected by his experiences as a war artist, which is another fact that his biographers never fail to mention. After his return, Schaefer had difficulties adjusting to civilian life and returning to work as an artist. In a letter to fellow Canadian war artist Bruno Bobak dated 23 August 1945, Schaefer complained that he was "having a hard time being home and constantly expected to paint."<sup>17</sup> Several years of focusing on the demands of the war art program had made it difficult for this regionalist to paint the landscapes in Ontario that had occupied him before the war. Schaefer lost touch "with his subject and his direction became uncertain" as Johnston points out.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, Schaefer's post-war paintings, according to Twatio, were dominated by "symbols of death: stark, lifeless trees, ruined buildings and ravaged land."<sup>19</sup> Typical of this period in Schaefer's career is the watercolour *Carrion Crow* (1946) (Fig. 3). Unlike the representation of vast Canadian landscapes that had

occupied Schaefer before the war, this image is instead focused on a single lifeless bird amid a decaying scene of dead trees and brown leaves. As Schaefer points out, after the war he was “filled with memories of death and painted poisonous toadstools and rotted logs as symbols of death.”<sup>20</sup> These images came out in his later work, but Schaefer’s war-time work was of a different order. This thesis is concerned with Schaefer’s memories, not of war itself, but of his role in depicting it, and how those memories evolved over time.

## War Memory: An Active Process

As a war artist Schaefer was expected to record images of the activities, personnel and equipment of the RCAF for the historical record. The emphasis was always on accuracy as war artists were “charged with the portrayal of the significant events, scenes, phases, episodes in the experience of the Canadian Armed Forces especially those which cannot be adequately rendered by in any other way”.<sup>21</sup> Official war artists wore a uniform, received pay as soldiers, and had to conform to the rank and file like other military personnel.

Like many other soldiers, Schaefer kept a personal war diary. Schaefer’s diary gives us an interesting look into the daily life of a war artist living through the extraordinary events of the Second World War.<sup>22</sup> Contained in his diary are passages about the everyday, ordinary details of the war: the horrible weather in England, drinking beer with his fellow war artists at the local pub, and news from back home, juxtaposed with information regarding major bombing offensives and near death experiences (Schaefer was in a pub in London when it was hit by a German bomb). His diary, therefore, characteristically mixes the familiar with the unimaginable, a phenomenon noted by literary scholar and Second World War Marine bomber pilot Samuel Hynes: “the juxtaposition of discordant details that gives war diaries their most distinctive quality, the strangeness of war-experience.”<sup>23</sup>

Schaefer’s war diary also vividly describes the process by which RCAF war artists depicted the Second World War. Final paintings were developed through sketches and photographs which Schaefer occasionally obtained by accompanying the crews on their training exercises

and flights. The following diary entry, dated 6 March 1944, describes a flight that Schaefer witnessed from the cockpit of a Halifax bomber:

Yesterday on a cross-country ... four hours at 15000 (feet), managed to get several photographs of clouds and two formations of Harvard's coming into the base. It was fine and warm ... with bright sun beating down, although the Halifax doesn't offer as much space in the cockpit for making drawings and taking photographs. I am fortunate to be able to sit up, paint away above the clouds, you get a feeling of release from the earth, it's all new and strange.<sup>24</sup>

As Brandon notes, Schaefer gained first-hand knowledge of aircraft and cloud formations during these flights.<sup>25</sup> In his diary, however, Schaefer expressed his disappointment that, as an artist stationed with Bomber Command, he was forbidden from accompanying the bomber crews on their bombing missions.<sup>26</sup> As accuracy was a key concern for the war art program, Schaefer believed that he needed personally to witness the bombing missions; otherwise the accuracy of his images would suffer. This emphasis on accurately recording the war for the historical record is also reflected in two personal letters written by Schaefer to McCurry in 1942 and 1946.<sup>27</sup> However, in interviews between Schaefer and Joan Murray in 1979 and Hugh Halliday in 1986 on the subject of his war art, Schaefer's memory of his role as a war artist had shifted slightly in scope. By comparing these two interviews with Schaefer's war diary and letters, some interesting discrepancies emerge. During these interviews with Murray and Halliday, Schaefer emphasized that he considered his paintings from the war as

art, rather than historical records. Contrary to his statements during the war, it was an “artsy,” or one might say, ‘artistic’ “business” after all.

Why did Schaefer’s memory of his role as a war artist shift over the years? The reason for the change in perspective is that his memory of the Second World War, like other veterans of the conflict, continued to evolve with the passing of time. As oral historian Fred Allison suggests, changes in veterans’ accounts “give us insight into memory and how it is shaped over time”.<sup>28</sup> Individual memory does not remain static or unchanging. Rather it is ephemeral and dynamic, constantly moving and shifting in focus. The reasons for these changes are complex, but one factor, according to another oral historian, Allesandro Portelli, is that “memory is not a passive depository of facts, but an active process of creation of meanings.”<sup>29</sup> When individuals recall past events a process of composition occurs whereby, Alistair Thompson believes, we compose our memories in order to feel comfortable with our lives.<sup>30</sup> Writing about personal narratives, Hynes believes that a veteran’s memories go through a process of selection over time whereby one anecdote is preserved and another is rejected and forgotten.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, oral historian Blake Heathcote observes that personal memories collected during an interview are flawed because “we edit what we cannot, do not, or wish not to remember.”<sup>32</sup> Most oral historians however, including Heathcote, accept the flaws inherent in personal memory because they reflect a variety of factors that are interesting in their own way, such as a war veteran’s desire to get on with his or her life.<sup>33</sup>

A second factor in these shifts in personal memory over time is the influence of collective memory on the way individuals recall the past. Similar to changes in personal memory, collective memories of war also evolve over time. These shifts in collective memory

influence individual memories because, in Thomson's view, our memory is composed to reflect "the public language and meanings of our culture."<sup>34</sup> Historian Alison Landsberg uses the term "prosthetic memories" for recollections not strictly derived from a person's lived experience, that nevertheless merge with their personal narrative until a composed story emerges that reflects the collective remembrance.<sup>35</sup> These memories, or what Hynes considers "myths," circulate publicly through a wide array of channels, such as war movies, television documentaries, history books and Remembrance Day services.<sup>36</sup> Although Winter and Sivan do not accept the idea that private memories are either entirely individual or entirely socially determined, veterans' memories of war likely reflect a combination of both private and collective remembrance.<sup>37</sup>

Since the 1980s, a significant body of literature has been devoted to the nature of war memory.<sup>38</sup> Much of this literature is devoted to the study of the collective memory of war. According to Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper, war has proven to be one of the "most productive and compelling subjects" in the field of memory studies.<sup>39</sup> In *The Politics of Memory*, these authors explore the ways in which the state has played a crucial role in the formation and practice of war memory. They identify two ways in which war memory has tended to be studied: politically, by looking at war memory through rituals involving national identification; and psychologically, in terms of personal and collective mourning resulting from the suffering and death caused by war.<sup>40</sup>

The branch of these studies that concerns us here is the literature on art as an expression of war memory. Carl Schaefer was an official war artist who painted images of Canada's



involvement in the Second World War primarily for the historical record. It is important, therefore, to remember that questions of national identity and politics were central when Schaefer depicted the war. But they were not the only factors influencing his production. As Schaefer was an artist, his paintings always involved a creative process as well as conformity to the needs and demands of the military. As Keren and Herwig point out, “artistic groups have always played a role in the process of war commemoration” but their work has nonetheless been subject to artistic creativity.<sup>41</sup>

Two scholars who relate war art to public memory and identity have been particularly important to this study. Laura Brandon, curator of war art at the Canadian War Museum and author of several books on war art, focuses on the construction of social memory and forgetting in relation to Canadian war art. Brandon argues that the Canadian war art collection has “functioned as an under recognized war memorial or site-of-memory.”<sup>42</sup> Art historian Brian Foss has written extensively on the relationship between war art and national identity in Second World War Britain. Foss recognized that the Second World War had a tremendous impact on art production and consumption. The chaos caused by war on British art production, according to Foss, allowed for a “centrally organized and creatively administered body such as the WAAC (War Artists’ Advisory Committee) to step into the breach.”<sup>43</sup> In Britain, therefore, the state was instrumental in establishing a support network for artists during the war and in so doing encouraged promotion of British national values through the visual arts. In the work of Brandon and Foss, expressions of collective memory and national identity in official war art have been carefully analyzed. Two other key studies on official Canadian war art have also been important for this research. *A Terrible Beauty:*

*the Art of Canada at War* (1977), edited by Heather Robertson, and Joan Murray's *Canadian Artists of the Second World War* (1981) reintroduced the Canadian public to the official war art produced by Canadians that had been largely confined to storage since the Second World War. Robertson and Murray focus on the paintings as significant works of art, rather than accurate images for the historical record. This shift in the way that art historians have evaluated official war art is significant for this thesis because it is also reflected in a statement that Schaefer made in an interview with Murray in 1979, that he considers his war work as "art and not records."<sup>44</sup>

The purpose of my own investigation is to shed light on the Canadian war artist Carl Schaefer, and specifically on the way that shifting memory led to shifts in the way that Schaefer himself understood and explained his Second World War work. In his personal recollections of the war, shared at different stages of his life, one can detect changes in focus in Schaefer's memory of the war. The evidence used to explore Schaefer's personal memory varies in form from oral history interviews, private letters and war-diaries. These types of sources, as Paul Thompson notes, tend to be biased, but "with all these forms of evidence, what we receive is social meaning."<sup>45</sup> The argument made here is that, as Schaefer aged, he like many other war veterans sought to establish some meaning for his role in the war. For Schaefer, this meant re-evaluating his work as a war artist in terms of art, rather than documentary war records. For the interpreters of his work, this shift also carries meaning.

## The Artist as a National Resource

The relationship between art and war, or art and terror, has always been an ambivalent one, to put it mildly. True, art needs peace and quiet for its development. And yet time and time again it has used this quiet, of all things, to sing the praises of war heroes and their heroic deeds.

Boris Groys<sup>46</sup>

A noticeable characteristic of Schaefer's pre-Second World War landscapes from the 1930s was the representation of ominous, foreboding cloud formations. These images of dark clouds metaphorically refer to the difficult years of the Great Depression, and are characteristic of Schaefer's paintings from the 1930s, such as *Storm Over the Fields* (Fig. 1). As noted earlier, Schaefer made a conscious effort to change direction in his work, moving from landscape to industrial themes, in his desire to reflect and contribute to the war effort, and he signaled that change in his communication with McCurry by mentioning that he was already developing his technical skills through drawings of the war industry in Canada. This work included "making drawings of operations at the John Inglis Plant, where marine engines, turbines, Bren guns, anti-tank rifles and Brownings are being manufactured".<sup>47</sup> Trying to persuade McCurry of his particular qualifications, Schaefer was also arguing for the general importance of the war artist. He added that:

I feel at the present time some effort should be made to use the abilities of artists in the war effort and we just can't go on doing these things for our own satisfaction. The artist as a national resource has never been thought of as it has been in England and the U.S. Surely he is as useful as iron, steel and pulp. It's too bad we didn't have a Canadian artist on the job at Dieppe.<sup>48</sup>

Schaefer is referring to a battle that took place before the start of the war art program. On 19 August 1942, Allied forces, many of whom were Canadian, attacked Dieppe, France, which at the time was under German occupation. The Canadians failed to seize the port city and were forced to retreat. Schaefer's comment about a war artist "on the job" at Dieppe suggests that even in defeat, Canada needed images. An artist in the service of the nation might have documented the failed Dieppe mission favourably by representing the sacrifices of the fallen and depicting captured Canadian soldiers as war heroes. Schaefer's comparison of war artists with national resources can be taken to mean that their work would strengthen the Canadian war effort. Their images could effectively be used to "sing the praises of war heroes and their heroic deeds" (in the words of Groys), particularly after a disastrous mission such as Dieppe 1942.

Lobbying McCurry for a national war art program and a part in it, Schaefer needed to be strategic; his reputation as a landscape painter would not serve him; he had to demonstrate an affinity for military and industrial subject matter. The lithograph *Crankshaft for Corvette, Marine Engine* (1942), for example, was based on sketches done by the artist at the John Inglis Plant before he left for Europe as a war artist (Fig. 4). It depicts a large component for the engine of a warship. Dominating the composition is the naval component itself, its size and scale blocking the much smaller and less significant human figures from view. Accuracy, especially relating to images of machinery and technology of modern warfare, would become one of the most important aspects of Second World War art.

Such depersonalized images, according to Laura Brandon, were markedly different in subject matter than the paintings depicting Canadians produced during the First World War.<sup>49</sup> The First World War paintings, part of the Canadian War Memorials program, featured large compositions representing the misery, tragedy, and destruction characteristic of that conflict.<sup>50</sup> Although the Canadian Second World War art program came into existence partly because of the success of the First World War art program, the later war's images do not, for the most part, represent any negative consequences of war. Rather they tend to reflect the prevalent idea that the Second World War was a 'good war' in which the reasons for fighting were more identifiable and the enemy more obvious. Heroism and technological superiority were emphasized over death and tragedy.<sup>51</sup>

Although Canada declared war on Germany on 10 September 1939, the Canadian War Records (CWR), the official Canadian war artist program, did not begin until 1943. One of the key figures in the development of the war art program was Vincent Massey, Canada's High Commissioner in London.<sup>52</sup> He and McCurry lobbied the Department of National Defense for the establishment of a war art program. In January 1943, the War Artist's Committee (WAC) formally began selecting artists for a Canadian war art program with assistance from military representatives of the Army, Navy and Air Force.<sup>53</sup> In Ottawa, the WAC wrote detailed instructions for war artists to follow in the field. Dated 2 March 1943, the instructions noted that "the intention is that your productions shall be worthy of Canada's highest cultural traditions, doing justice to History, and as works of art, worthy of exhibition anywhere at any time."<sup>54</sup>

When the official war art program was launched, Schaefer was one of the first artists to be selected for overseas duty. Having served with Fighter Command, he was assigned to paint images of the No. 6 Bomber Group of the RCAF in England. No. 6 Group was a Canadian group of bomber aircraft and air crew, formed on 1 January 1943. Although No. 6 Group operated within Bomber Command of the British RAF, the crews were entirely Canadian. No. 6 Group, therefore, not only represented a significant achievement for the Canadian military in the Second World War, but also symbolized Canadian sovereignty and independence from Great Britain.<sup>55</sup> It was therefore appropriate that the RCAF enlist a Canadian official war artist such as Schaefer to depict images of the aircraft and Canadian crews of the newly formed No. 6 Group. War artists were indeed national resources capable of promoting Canadian military independence from Great Britain for the historical record. As Laura Brandon argues, war art has often been used in the service of nation building, and Schaefer's images should have added to the historical record of the war an important visual record of a significant Canadian military accomplishment.<sup>56</sup>

But according to the Official History of the RCAF, No. 6 Group's early efforts had been quite disappointing.<sup>57</sup> Poor results were blamed on the rapid expansion of No. 6 Group as well as a lack of experience among personnel.<sup>58</sup> In its initial phase of operations, therefore, No. 6 Group had an extremely high rate of loss compared with the rest of Bomber Command. Bomber Command's strategy of targeting cities and other heavily populated areas in Germany had also been a controversial topic of the war, still unresolved to this day. Because of these controversial aspects of No. 6 Group, it was beneficial for their image and legacy in the historical record to have an official war artist "on the job" (in Schaefer's words) depicting

favorable images of the crews and their operations. War artists were subject to strict guidelines regarding what could and could not be painted, and therefore had no choice but to record No. 6's activities in a positive light; otherwise their images would be subject to censorship. One section of the Canadian War Committee instructions for war artists listed the following as appropriate subjects:

You're expected to record and interpret...relations according to the artistic sense – (1) the spirit and character, the appearance and attitude of the men as individuals or groups of the service to which you are attached. (2) The instruments and machines which they employ and (3) the environment in which they do their work.<sup>59</sup>

Schaefer's painting *Marshalling Lancasters Against Stuttgart* (1943) exemplifies his program as a war artist to promote national interests for the historical record (Fig. 5). This watercolour depicts a series of Lancaster bombers preparing for takeoff on a mission over Stuttgart, Germany. The painting is dated 7 October 1943, which is the date that No. 6 Group was involved in the night bombing of Stuttgart.

Although Schaefer gave a specific date of 7 October 1943, this information is part of the title; the watercolour was probably completed at a later date. As previously mentioned, a typical procedure for Schaefer and other war artists was to develop the subject and composition of a painting through preliminary notes, sketches, and photographs, and then to produce the painting in his studio (Fig. 6). Comparison between sketch and painting shows that the form of the Lancaster bomber aircraft was developed by the artist in preparatory sketches and that

smaller, less significant details, such as the human figures on the ground were added to the composition later.

In a compositional technique developed by Schaefer before the war in works such as *Crankshaft for Corvette, Marine Engine*, the human figures in *Marshalling Lancasters Against Stuttgart* are much smaller in scale than the towering figures of the Lancaster bombers. During the Second World War, technology and machines were used on an unprecedented scale, and the relative size of the aircraft in *Marshalling Lancasters Against Stuttgart* symbolizes the importance of technological innovation during the Second World War. The war was also the first conflict in which cities became targets for systematic bombing campaigns. Bombing cities and industrial targets, although controversial, required even more advanced technological abilities on the part of the nations involved. Schaefer's painting alludes not only to the strategic importance of a modern air-force and advanced aircraft technology, but also to the competence and resources required by the nations involved to conceive of and engage in such a sophisticated form of warfare. The Lancaster bomber in particular was viewed as a tremendous innovation for the Allies in terms of long-range bomber aircraft, and one they would use to devastating effect against German towns and cities.<sup>60</sup>

The nature of the Allied bombing campaign was again symbolically depicted by Schaefer in this painting through dark, ominous looking clouds that hang low in the sky over the formation of Lancaster bombers. These dark, stormy skies also recall the cloud formations characteristic of Schaefer's pre-war landscapes, such as *Storm Over the Fields*. The effect



was intentionally dramatic. In Schaefer's diary entry for October 7, 1943 he wrote of his impressions after witnessing the display of Lancasters taking off for Stuttgart: "what a show, just like lights on a Christmas tree, with all its excitement, but there is a quiet calmness. We count each one as it is airborne and give her thumbs up with the last kite away."<sup>61</sup>

Schaefer's second letter to McCurry, responding to criticisms of the RCAF section of the 1946 war art show at the National Gallery, reveals some of his intentions for this work:

they might take time to look at more of my pictures and after a long time come to realize something of that great mystery of uncharted space, intangible drama and the feeling of such a new form of warfare. It's still all too new and passed too quickly and comfortably for some folks.<sup>62</sup>

In this comment, Schaefer was responding to criticisms that the RCAF war artists did not produce enough images of aircraft in the sky. He reminded McCurry that war artists in the RCAF section were grounded:

[They were] strictly forbidden to have any part in it. Yet Public Relations Officers and correspondents were permitted to accompany crews on these operations. The fault does not rest with the artists.<sup>63</sup>

In Schaefer's war diary he had frequently complained that as a war artist he was not allowed to take part in any of the missions with the bomber crews. His diary entry dated 4 February 1944 explains that Schaefer was "fed up with combat reports second hand" and "the attack

may be launched in the north any day now...I want to be in on the landings...otherwise I may as well pack up and go back home.”<sup>64</sup>

And yet in two interviews conducted many years after the war had ended, Schaefer does not mention anything about this perceived problem. His main concern during the war – that his role as a war artist was to create accurate images for the historical record of the war – seems to have evaporated. In his appeal to McCurry on behalf of a war art program and his potential to serve, he had emphasized his technical ability to create accurate images of equipment and personnel for the war record. Stuck on the ground, he was unable to apply these skills to the degree he thought necessary, according to his orders as a war artist, and his letter of 1946 reiterated that complaint. At the same time, he continued to insist on accuracy – a condition that could not be met on the basis of testimonials and photographs from the crews. He wanted his work understood on those terms. But when Schaefer was interviewed on the subject of his war art many years after the war, his focus seemed to have shifted. This personal shift coincides with a collective shift in attitudes to the Allied bombing of German cities. Debated at the time that Schaefer was focusing on doing his job, the bombing became one of the more controversial aspects of the Allied strategy during the Second World War.

## Rethinking Images of Bombing

It seems to me that the moment has come when the question of bombing German cities simply for the sake of increasing the terror, although under other pretexts, should be reviewed. Otherwise, we shall come into control of an utterly ruined land ... The destruction of Dresden remains a serious query against the conduct of Allied bombing. I am of the opinion that military objectives must henceforward be more strictly studied in our own interest rather than that of the enemy.

Winston Churchill, 1945<sup>65</sup>

*Marshalling Lancasters Against Stuttgart* depicts a particularly controversial phase of Allied operations during the Second World War. Although historical revisionism, as Tim Cook points out, was a central motif of the moralistically minded 1990s, public perception of Bomber Command had already been tarnished as early as the end of the war.<sup>66</sup> Even during the war, Cook adds, the Allies “indiscriminate bombing was objected to in many quarters.”<sup>67</sup>

Bomber Command, including the Canadian No. 6 Group, was responsible for the strategic bombing of German cities and industrial targets during the war. Following British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain’s promise that that Britain “would bomb purely military objectives and even in this endeavor would take due care to avoid civilian casualties,” Bomber Command initially targeted only strategic targets such as airfields or armament factories.<sup>68</sup> However, as several authors point out, these daylight bombing raids “proved

extremely costly” and in 1942 Bomber Command switched to night-time raids into Germany.<sup>69</sup> In February, 1942, Air marshal Sir Arthur “Bomber” Harris became Commander-in-Chief of Bomber Command, and the primary objective of Bomber Command would now be “focused on the morale of the enemy civil population and, in particular, of the industrial workers.”<sup>70</sup> Although this revised strategy could not avoid killing German civilians and destroying thousands of homes, as well as a high rate of casualties among the air crews themselves, according to Tim Cook, the Allied bombing campaign cannot be understood without a discussion of the contextual reasons behind it.<sup>71</sup>

The reasons for the Allies to drop thousands of high-explosive bombs on German cities from above were numerous and varied. The Germans had themselves bombed cities in England, including the so-called Blitz which was the nightly firebombing of London in 1940, so for some, no rationale was needed. Practically, the attempt to precision bomb German industry by day was a failure that also incurred heavy Bomber Command losses. There was a perceived necessity to have a so-called Second Front in Western Europe, lessening the burden on Russian forces on the Eastern Front by diverting German forces to fight Bomber Command. As mentioned, it was also argued that bombing German cities would destroy armaments factories and, more importantly, civilian morale and the will to fight.<sup>72</sup> Although controversial, Bomber Command’s decision to switch from precision bombing to night area bombing of German cities in February 1942 can be justified, to a certain degree, within the context of the Second World War. As Earl R. Beck writes, the Allied bombing offensive “was an inhumane kind of war, but it came in response to an equally inhumane method of waging war on the part of the Germans.”<sup>73</sup>

For the bomber crews themselves, the difficult aspect of the bombing campaign during the war was the extremely high rate of losses among the crews incurred during the missions. No. 6 Group suffered particularly hard as casualties within the group were immense. For example, between March 1943 and February 1944, only briefly did No. 6 Group's Halifax loss rate fall below 5 per cent, which was supposed to be the highest rate of loss needed to sustain morale.<sup>74</sup> Greenhous and Halliday referred to the No. 6 Group Halifax loss rate in January 1944 as a "virtual death warrant" because it reached 9.8 per cent.<sup>75</sup> In total, almost ten thousand RCAF airmen were killed in Bomber Command, and RCAF had approximately 13000 casualties during the Second World War, the highest number of casualties in the Canadian military during the war. A significant factor undermining the high rate of casualties suffered by No. 6 Group is that the rate of loss would have probably been lower if the all Canadian No. 6 Group of the RCAF had not been formed and the Canadian bomber crews had simply existed as a part of the RAF.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, as Wise and Bercuson point out, "the Canadian government's insistence that Canada have its own bomber formation (6 Group) caused heavy casualties among Canadian aircrew."<sup>77</sup>

Schaefer knew that it was beneficial for Canadian national interests for the newly formed, entirely Canadian, No. 6 Group of Bomber Command to be pictorially well represented in the historical record created by the war artists. That was his job, and his diary makes no mention of resistance or moral concerns; he just wanted to get it right. He was evidently proud of No. 6 Group and caught up in the adventure. Despite the extreme danger to bomber crews, during the war and immediately after, Carl Schaefer glorified the bombing campaign in his personal letters and diary:

There are no existing paintings of the operations of our No. 6 Bomber Group over a target area. This was a very special effort on the part of the RCAF and one of which we can feel extremely proud. It was a fantastic phase of the war, thousands of Lancasters or Halifaxes dropping tons of death and destruction on a far away target, into that inferno of hell, all from such a romantic night sky, yet few Canadians know what these great machines really look like, but any Canadian can tell you all about the American Flying Fortress.<sup>78</sup>

Although Schaefer mentioned that “there are no existing paintings of the operations of our No 6 Bomber Group”, he himself did complete one painting representing this phase of operations. *Bomb Aimer, Battle of Ruhr, 1943* is one of Schaefer’s best known images from the war because it depicts a rare action image of an RCAF bomber over the target area from a vantage point inside the plane (Fig. 7). According to Schaefer the figure depicted is Don Carr, the bomb-aimer of a Halifax aircraft whom Schaefer spoke with while developing the subject.<sup>79</sup> As represented, Carr is anonymous; he does not make eye contact with the viewer as his face is turned towards the battle happening outside the space of the aircraft. Below the aircraft, the depicted battle takes place over the skies of Germany. Schaefer represented the battle as a series of brightly coloured searchlights criss-crossing the sky in sharp, dramatic diagonals. These diagonal lights represent the frantic pace and action of the battle, as well as the danger inherent for the bomber crews as these lights effectively indicated the location of enemy bombers to the ground forces ready with anti-aircraft fire.

Because of the value Schaefer attached to the theme of bombers over the target area, which frustratingly amounted to “less than one half of one percent of the work produced,” the artist sought to have a “large and more permanent painting” done because the original was on “extremely fragile tracing paper.”<sup>80</sup> In 1951, six years after the war ended, Schaefer completed a larger watercolour version of *Bomb Aimer*, which is currently in the collection of the Canadian War Museum. That the artist would return to this subject matter well after the end of the war signals his belief in the historical importance of the theme and its place in his memory. Informed by his sketches and notes, the painting is an act of imagination, nourished by his memory of Carr’s and other airmen’s descriptions. This was the mission’s decisive moment. While Schaefer never saw it, he chose to memorialize it. Schaefer’s emphasis on the importance of *Bomb Aimer* can also be seen as a reflection of his desire to deflect attention away from the fact that he was not a part of these bombing missions. Perhaps *Bomb Aimer* helped him to forget his wartime frustration.

*Bomb Aimer* remained an important work to Schaefer, perhaps his greatest contribution to the visual representation of World War II, but interestingly, his opinion of the bombing campaign changed after many years of reconsideration. In the two post-war interviews between Schaefer and art historians, the artist downplayed the heroic language characteristic of his diary and letters. If Schaefer was reconsidering his opinion of the bombing campaign and Bomber Command, it might have been because of a similar shift in the collective memory of this episode of the war.

The shift was widespread. In his 1999 book *On the Natural History of Destruction*, W.G. Sebald observed a lack of public discussion in Germany on the effects of the bombing campaign during the Second World War. Sebald believed it was paradoxical that, although over a million tons of bombs were dropped on Germany, destroying several towns and cities, killing as many as 600,000 German civilians and destroying approximately three and a half million homes: “it seems to have left scarcely a trace of pain behind in the collective consciousness, it has been largely obliterated from the retrospective understanding of those affected, and it never played any appreciable part in the discussion of the internal constitution of our country.”<sup>81</sup> Sebald’s influential writings contributed to the reopening of these closed chapters of German collective memory. They help us to understand what was occurring on the ground in the sights of the Canadian bomb aimers.

On the Allied side, critical examination of the bombing of German cities and civilians began in the United States and Britain during the war as the bombs dropped. The front page of the New York Times dated 6 March 1944 carried the headline “Obliteration Raids on German Cities Protested in the U.S.”<sup>82</sup> The article continues by pointing out that several clergymen and pacifists opposed the bombing of German cities. Well known pacifist Vera Brittain was quoted as saying that the raids were morally questionable because “hundreds of thousands of helpless and innocent people are being subjected to agonizing forms of death and injury comparable to the worst tortures of the middle ages.”<sup>83</sup> In February 1945, during the final year of the war, the historic German city of Dresden was destroyed by approximately 800 Allied bombers, including Canadians. Although this mission occurred after Schaefer’s service with No. 6 Group, he was unquestionably aware of its importance, then and after the



war. More than any other, this highly controversial bombing mission has become a part of the collective memory of the war. As predicted by Churchill, it was widely condemned within the former Allied nations. In the immediate aftermath of the war, protest originated mainly from religious groups and pacifists. Vera Brittain's memoirs from 1957, for example, questioned the morality of the bombing campaign, believing that "obliteration" bombing on the part of the Allies amounted to a "policy of genocide" that led to the creation of atom and hydrogen bombs.<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, according to Brittain, the Allied bombing of Germany should have been condemned because it went against Christian teaching, purposely targeted old and historic cities in Germany, and encouraged Nazi retaliation on English cities. As she wrote:

As soon as "obliteration" bombing became part of Allied war strategy, atom and hydrogen bombs "lay in the logic of history". It was the first step towards the policy of genocide which in the nineteen-fifties would threaten mankind with extinction.<sup>85</sup>

Historiographical trends both reflect and produce collective memories of the war, which in turn affects the personal memories of veterans, such as Schaefer.

In the post-war years, the morality of Allied bombing was increasingly discussed by revisionist historians and documentary producers. In 1973, six years before Schaefer's interview with Joan Murray, the BBC produced a series of documentaries titled *The World at War*. One of the chapters, titled *Whirlwind: Bombing Germany*, focused exclusively on the

history of the Allied bombing campaign in the Second World War, presenting both sides of the bombing debate.<sup>86</sup>

While Schaefer enthusiastically supported and his work glorified Canadian efforts to bomb Germany, in later years, his memories of the war, in particular the bombing campaign, seem to have shifted away from enthusiastic patriotism. In his book about Schaefer, George Johnston, who was a personal friend of the artist, explained that Schaefer's time with No. 6 Group had been hard on him, not only because he had lost many of his friends from the aircrew and the casualties were high, but also "the whole intention of the bombing campaign had become hard to accept. Carl was not one to miss the meaning of what was being done".<sup>87</sup>

Johnston's *Carl: Portrait of a Painter from Letter's and Reminiscences* is a particularly interesting study of Schaefer because the author based the book entirely on personal memories of his friend, as well as private letters from Schaefer to himself. It is, therefore, not an academic study of the artist and does not include any scholarly apparatus. Johnston's book, however, is based on recollection, or memory, and offers a fascinating insight into Schaefer's state of mind as the war receded: it demonstrates that personal memories shift in perspective over time as individuals recall important events in their lives and establish meaning for what has taken place in their personal histories. For example, when discussing Schaefer's *Carrion Crow* (1946), Johnston explains that the work "symbolizes how the war memories were becoming modified in his imagination. Peace, after the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the unimaginable reports from Europe of the death camps, was beginning to bring home the meaning of what had been going on and what it portended."<sup>88</sup>

Johnston keenly observed that new information informed Schaefer's attitudes and led to a change in subject matter in his post-war art. But it can also be argued that Schaefer's memory adapted to offer a new way of looking at the artist's official war art, shedding light on his comment that "what he produced during the war he considers art, and not historical record."

Schaefer had certainly been inventive. The subject matter of a bomb aimer over a target area is rare among Canadian war art of the Second World War. For this reason, a comparison between Schaefer's *Bomb Aimer* and Miller Brittain's painting of a similar subject, *Night Target, Germany* (1946), is useful because this work is the only other known example by a Canadian war artist of bombers in action over a target area (Fig. 8).

Miller Gore Brittain (1914-1968) served as a bomb aimer with the RCAF on a Halifax III bomber stationed in Brighton, Yorkshire with No. 78 Squadron in 1944 – 1945.<sup>89</sup> After he had completed 37 operational sorties and received the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC), Brittain joined the war art program as an artist, serving until 1946. Unlike Schaefer, therefore, Brittain had active duty in the air force before becoming a war artist. When Brittain wrote McCurry asking about the possibility of becoming a war artist, McCurry was enthusiastic at the prospect of commissioning an artist with previous combat experience. McCurry baldly stated his reasoning, and echoing Schaefer's complaint, with direct reference to the work produced during the war: "Most of our war artists were forbidden to go on operational flights, and we have a preponderance of uninteresting ground records."<sup>90</sup>

Unfortunately for McCurry, the vast majority of paintings executed by Brittain during the war depicted the men and women the artist encountered during his service with the RCAF, rather than combat scenes. According to Brian Foss, even though Brittain had completed 24 missions over enemy territory “he was unsure of his willingness and ability to depict scenes of destruction.”<sup>91</sup>

Brittain’s single representation of Canadian bombers over enemy territory is *Night Target, Germany*. This painting depicts a number of bombers in action, unloading bombs over a target city in Germany under a moonlit sky. Searchlights are represented covering the night sky, effectively pointing out the targets to enemy anti-aircraft gunners below. Brittain described a similar scene:

The targets are really beautiful at night. You never saw fireworks like that at the Saint John Exhibition. Jerry sends up something to scare us that is the most beautiful of all. A great red flare bursts and out of it come long silver streamers like some sort of enchanted tree...Emerging from the cloud I thought of Alice going through the looking glass. All about us was a different world. I have never seen anything to equal that night.<sup>92</sup>

*Night Target, Germany* and *Bomb Aimer* represent similar subject matter: the bombing of enemy targets seen from the viewpoint of the bomb aimer position of the aircraft. The most distinctive features of both works are the searchlights which not only illuminate the bombers in the sky, but also, according to Foss’s analysis of Brittain’s painting “constitute an abstract

pattern.”<sup>93</sup> In Schaefer’s painting of the same subject, the searchlights depicted similarly create an abstract pattern below the bomb aimer’s window.

The most obvious difference between the two images is that Schaefer imaginatively depicted the bomb aimer from behind as he gazed down through the aiming apparatus. This composition gives the impression that there was some degree of accuracy and precision achieved by the bomb aimer in hitting the target area. In Brittain’s image, however, the individual is not depicted, and the scene gives the impression of a detached observation of the destruction wrought below.

During the war, these two Canadian war artists and representatives of the RCAF both discussed the aesthetic beauty of the war in the air. Both Schaefer and Miller Brittain, however, were also deeply affected by what they saw during their service in the RCAF. This is not unusual, based on the high rate of casualties in the RCAF, as well as the intensity of the bombing campaign they were part of. After the war, once they had established in their personal memories the meaning of the bombing campaign and its impact on the RCAF crews as well as German civilians, their recollections seem to have recomposed as they avoid glorifying the subject of bombing Germany. Composure occurs when people construct memories to help them feel comfortable with their lives, using the language and meanings of our culture, according to Thomson.<sup>94</sup> Even before the end of the war, Miller Brittain’s memories of the bombing missions he had been part of became more composed as the reality of the destructive power of night bombing became clearer. In a letter written to his parents in 1944, Brittain described a night attack on Germany:

The night attacks although they are deadly are very beautiful from our point of view.

The target is like an enormous Christmas tree twenty miles away but straight beneath one looks like pictures I have seen of the mouth of hell.<sup>95</sup>

## A Terrible Beauty: Putting the Art Back into War Art

Articulating the past historically does not mean recognizing it the way it really was. It means appropriating a memory as it flashes up in a moment of danger.

Walter Benjamin<sup>96</sup>

A world weary and sick of war, aware of all the stupidity, selfishness and incompetence which plunged it into such misery a second time, will likely be indifferent to monuments and battle pictures with all the difficulties of reconstruction, debt, and disillusionment to worry about.

A. Y. Jackson, 1942<sup>97</sup>

In the years following World War II, A.Y. Jackson's prophetic statement of 1942 appeared to come true as the collection of Canadian war art was rarely exhibited. However, in 1977 and 1981, two important exhibitions of Canadian war art took place and accompanying catalogues were published.<sup>98</sup> *A Terrible Beauty: the Art of Canada at War* (1977), organized by Heather Robertson, and *Canadian Artists of the Second World War* (1981) by Joan Murray, represented a significant moment in the history of Canadian war art because these paintings had rarely been seen by the Canadian public since the National Gallery exhibition that immediately followed the war.<sup>99</sup> In the spirit of Jackson's prediction, Robertson speculates that the reason the war art collection "has been ignored and neglected" could be because "revulsion against war...has led to the rejection of the beauty it produced."<sup>100</sup> Likewise, Murray wrote that after 1946 "people did not seem to want to see them, perhaps

because they put the war as much out of their mind as possible.”<sup>101</sup> The art historians and curators involved, therefore, would have to find a new approach and a new way of looking at the war art collection if they were to generate interest with a contemporary audience. This new approach would have to recognize that contemporary viewers who did not live through the World Wars might be skeptical about the paintings glorifying war, however just that war may have been.

Although revulsion against images glorifying war may have been the main reason for the decline of interest in war art, there was also a second reason the paintings were rarely exhibited. Conforming to the war art program’s stress on accuracy, the realistic images produced by war artists were out of style. Modernism, as Brandon points out, “dominated twentieth-century Canadian art,”<sup>102</sup> and modernism tended to reject representational painting as illustration. Murray, for example, points out that “modern art in its more advanced form was eliminated by the [war art] guidelines” adding that, according to Lawren Harris, “accuracy was a deterrent” to the appreciation of these works in a modern context.<sup>103</sup> Schaefer’s biographers never fail to mention his uneasy relationship with modernist art. Johnson, for example, notes that Schaefer rejected post-Second World War modernist trends in art that were “wholly esthetic” and “asked the viewer to think only of the surface of the canvas.”<sup>104</sup> However, as Boutilier observes, while his subjects did not change, Schaefer’s style evolved, becoming “airier and more abstract over the years.”<sup>105</sup> Johnston also observed that despite Schaefer’s rejection of many of the modernist trends in art, he was “not a simple realist, there is an abstraction in his paintings.”<sup>106</sup> Therefore, despite a representational style of painting that remained constant throughout his career, during the post-war period of his



life, Schaefer increasingly tried to distinguish his art from illustration by drawing attention to abstract ideas depicted in his paintings. He stressed that his wartime paintings represented the beginning of this shift in his art:

I do think I got some air coming through my colour, that's the trick, not the colour but the air, of all the four elements, it's the air. I think I understand earth, the anatomy of the land, but the air is another matter. I often think of what I tried to do in my war paintings ... I think that was the start of it.<sup>107</sup>

By the time *A Terrible Beauty* was published in 1977, art historical discourse had been enlivened by new approaches. Social history and feminism, for example, had been adopted as important art historical methodologies; official war art could be re-evaluated on these terms. However, art historians continued to be dogged by questions surrounding the quality of the art produced by official war artists. Brandon notes that “the (Canadian War Museum) collection has functioned as an under recognized war memorial or “site of memory” but that concern with the works as art has obscured their deeper, collective significance.”<sup>108</sup>

The return to the public eye of the war art collection, after more than a thirty-year absence, informs the question of Schaefer's perception of what he had done as a war artist for two related reasons. First, *A Terrible Beauty: the Art of Canada at War* and *Canadian Artists of the Second World War* represented a shift in the way that art historians and curators presented the official war art collection. Whereas war artists during the Second World War were mainly concerned with producing accurate historical records, that objective was downplayed in favour of newer trends in art history, namely formalism, social history and

feminism. Schafer would have been prompted to rethink his production along those lines; perhaps he agreed with such readings, perhaps he did not. His 1979 remark to Joan Murray that “what I produced I consider them as works of art and not historical records” allows for broad interpretation and also reflects the shift in how art historians themselves stopped considering accuracy an important factor for war art.<sup>109</sup>

On Remembrance Day, 11 November 1977, the exhibition of Canadian war art *A Terrible Beauty* opened at the Rodman Hall Arts Centre in St. Catharines, Ontario.<sup>110</sup> For the next two years the exhibition toured fourteen galleries from all parts of Canada until its installation at the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa. The exhibition and catalogue were important moments in the history of Canadian war art because, according to Robertson, the quality of the art had “never been adequately assessed” and the majority of the paintings were unseen by Canadians.<sup>111</sup> Ruth Pierson’s review of the catalogue reiterates that *A Terrible Beauty* has provided a service for Canadians through the “rescue of remarkable works of art from the oblivion to which most of them had been consigned in a warehouse of the Canadian War Museum.”<sup>112</sup>

The direction to read these works as art, not illustration, is explicit in Robertson’s catalogue. In one passage she explains that:

Although they were expected to produce an accurate record and were frequently ordered to paint certain subjects, the war artists enjoyed great freedom of subject and

interpretation; their legacy ... is not only an exhaustive visual study of war but a great contribution to contemporary Canadian art.<sup>113</sup>

According to Robertson, producing accurate records was now considered a less important characteristic for war art than “freedom of subject and interpretation,” a significant shift from the wartime attitude. Accuracy is almost a negative quality for Robertson. Although during the war, the goal of war artists may have been “an exhaustive visual study of war”, they were henceforth to be recognized for their “contribution to contemporary Canadian art.”

*A Terrible Beauty*, furthermore, juxtaposes works by Canadian war artists with poetry, letters and testimonies by Canadian soldiers and civilians who lived through war. For the most part, as Pierson’s review of *A Terrible Beauty* points out, the writing included in the catalogue is by non-professional writers.<sup>114</sup> By presenting the paintings alongside unofficial writing by ordinary Canadians writing ““from-below,” instead of texts by historical officers during the war, or its authorized historians after, this methodology of *A Terrible Beauty* substitutes memory for history, thereby downplaying the official nature of war art. This struck some people as odd. Reviewer Pierson notes that the text and images presented side by side in *A Terrible Beauty* are often incongruent.<sup>115</sup> Although Pierson finds this aspect of the catalogue problematic, the disconnected text and images actually symbolizes something significant in itself: a diminished concern with the historical accuracy of the images and text. Finally, Pierson’s biggest complaint with the catalogue *A Terrible Beauty* is its lack of “scholarship or adequate scholarly apparatus.”<sup>116</sup> No artist or writer biographies are included, footnotes are non-existent, and the locations or subject matter depicted in the paintings are rarely

explained by the author, despite the fact that official war artists were required to accurately document this information in great detail.

In 1981 Canadian art historian and curator Joan Murray published *Canadian Artists of the Second World War*. Her book included the detailed footnotes, artist biographies, and scholarly apparatus that were lacking in *A Terrible Beauty*. Some of the information found in the artists' biographies, according to the author, was obtained directly through interviews conducted between Murray and the artists featured in the catalogue and exhibition.<sup>117</sup>

However, like Robertson, Murray also argued that accuracy for the historical record was a negative connotation of official war art. Although Murray believed that the failure of the Second World War art program was its lack of works of modern art, the strength of the paintings was that “they have the immediate appeal of popular art. They form a bridge between “Art” and the part of the public that never comes to the gallery.”<sup>118</sup>

On March 28, 1979, Murray had interviewed Carl Schaefer on the subject of his official war art from the Second World War.<sup>119</sup> During the interview, Schaefer said:

“I don't regret it ... I'd go through the whole thing again in relation to what I could contribute in many ways but what I produced I consider them as works of art and not records.”<sup>120</sup>

Schaefer's statement of 1979 represents a drastic shift in his memory of his role in the war. His wartime attitude was exemplified in comments made during the war to Canadian war correspondents that “My job is to identify with the men and what's around me. There is no

artsy business about this.”<sup>121</sup> It is significant that Schaefer’s interview in 1979 was conducted by Murray, who is not only an art historian, but was also the director of the Robert McLaughlin Gallery in Oshawa, Ontario, when the touring exhibition *A Terrible Beauty* was shown there in December 1977. According to Robertson, Murray also contributed to the organization of the exhibition and advised on the selection of paintings to be exhibited.<sup>122</sup> Schaefer’s comment that he considers his war work as art, and not historical records, was most likely influenced not only by the fact that he was being interviewed by an art historian, but also, and more importantly, a curator partially responsible for the return of the Canadian war art collection to the public spotlight during the late 1970s. Context and audience are always important factors that shape memory during an interview and affect the responses given by the interviewee, as Allison points out.<sup>123</sup>

Schaefer became somewhat hostile during his interview with Murray. He complained that the information provided in *A Terrible Beauty*, an exhibition that Murray helped organize, was incorrect because a poem listed in the catalogue, *Watching Aircraft Take Off for Germany* by Raymond Souster, was dedicated to Carl Schaefer.<sup>124</sup> Schaefer claimed that he didn’t know Souster. He then complained to Murray that his painting *Pranged Halifax* was improperly listed in *A Terrible Beauty* as *Pranged Halifax, ‘Q’ Queenie of the Ruhr*. The caption should have read “Battle of the Ruhr.” Growing angrier with the errors in the catalogue, Schaefer said to Murray “we’re relying on you people to do something for us and why the hell don’t you do it?” Historical accuracy, as previously mentioned, was not the key concern of *A Terrible Beauty*; accuracy of the art historical record was plainly very important to Schaefer.

The pattern that emerged from both *A Terrible Beauty* and *Canadian Artists of the Second World War* was a concern by art historians over the quality of art produced by the official war artists. This concern began immediately after the war, when Kenneth Clark, who was the director of the National Gallery in London and a key figure in the British Second World War art program, observed that the best work done by Canadian artists during the war came from the Army, whereas the weakest showing was from the Air Force.<sup>125</sup> However, questions concerning the works as art, rather than historical records, became central issues in the years surrounding *A Terrible Beauty*.

Of all of Schaefer's war art, *Bomb Aimer* is the painting that has received the most attention from post-war writers. For example, Bill Twatio wrote that *Bomb Aimer* is typical of Schaefer's "tense and foreboding" war paintings that were "executed in dark, monochromatic colours."<sup>126</sup> However, in the Canadian War Museum curator Hugh Halliday's interview of Schaefer, conducted in 1986 the artist surprisingly said that the painting he considered to be his best work from the war was not *Bomb Aimer*, or even *Marshalling Lancasters*. Schaefer stated that the painting *Operational Ammunition 303, Still Life, 1943* "is the finest painting I did of 129 paintings for the war record...none superior to that, none."<sup>127</sup> (Fig. 9).

This is an arresting comment, because Schaefer's war diary documents his judgment that *Operational Ammunition* was only "so-so" (those are his words).<sup>128</sup> Schaefer wrote about *Operational Ammunition* in a few of his war diary entries of late 1943. In all these entries, however, he seems disappointed in the painting, or uninterested in it. Schaefer also does not explain in his war diary the context of the painting, or any meaning the painting might have

had for him during the war. Moreover, he does not devote much thought to the painting, except to say that some of the other American artists “were nuts about it.”<sup>129</sup> Schaefer’s diary does not elaborate which artists approved of this particular painting. For whatever reason or reasons, his attitude towards the painting shifted dramatically after the war.

During the 1986 interview, which was videotaped, Halliday pulled the painting *Operational Ammunition* out of a stack of Schaefer’s watercolours at the Canadian War Museum vault. At this moment of the interview, Schaefer’s body language changed dramatically and he became visibly excited by the appearance of the still life. One of the benefits of studying oral history testimonies, such as Schaefer’s interview with Halliday, is the ability to observe the body language of the person being interviewed. During Schaefer’s interview with Halliday, for example, subtle body gestures become important clues in deciphering which war paintings Schaefer believed were his most important contributions to the war record.

*Operational Ammunition 303, Still Life* generated the most excitement from Schaefer during this interview. The painting, however, is not an action image of the type so highly valued by the military, so ardently wished for by McCurry, and it does not glorify the Lancaster bomber. Instead, it is an image of a belt of ammunition. However, as Schaefer mentioned to Halliday, it was “not just an illustration of a belt of ammunition. It had to do with an abstract, psychological idea”.<sup>130</sup> Comparing the painting with his pre-war pieces, Schaefer then added that “I painted still life and peaceful farm lands all through the 1930s, they were fruits of the land and the glory of nature.”<sup>131</sup> In his post-war reevaluation of the painting, thus, Schaefer

not only believed that the piece had psychological meaning beyond the objects depicted, but also linked the painting with his pre-war production as an artist.

Halliday did not ask, and Schaefer did not elaborate on, the psychological idea embedded in the painting, nor did they discuss the symbolism of a belt of ammunition. One possibility, however, is that after the war, Schaefer regarded this painting as an expression of grief over the casualties suffered by his fellow RCAF airmen during the war.<sup>132</sup> The bullets represented in the painting, therefore, could symbolize individual pilots and other aircrew killed in action during the war. Schaefer might have depicted each bullet in the belt of ammunition to symbolize an individual airman who did not return from an RCAF mission in the war.

Looking at *Operational Ammunition* as a symbolic representation of the artist's fellow airmen who were casualties of war, opens the possibility that the painting itself is a sort of war memorial painted by the artist for the RCAF crew members who lost their lives in the Second World War. Indeed, as Brandon points out, the entire Canadian war art collection should be viewed as a war memorial.<sup>133</sup> Moreover, as Ashplant, Dawson and Roper note, artists "drawing on individual and shared memories which they help connect up into sectional memories, may help to generate a dissenting or oppositional narrative which can challenge dominant official memory."<sup>134</sup> As previously mentioned, artists are key figures in the production of war memorials. For the most part, Canada's official Second World War artists depicted the war positively by emphasizing heroism and modern technological innovation over death and tragedy. Through its symbolism suggesting casualties during the war, Schaefer's *Operational Ammunition* opposes the official memory of the war because in



symbolic language it depicts the fact that the air war was costly in terms of casualties on both sides.

As an official artist Schaefer's role was to capture in painting the RCAF and the Canadian military for the historical record. Although images of dead soldiers, depicting either the Axis or Allied soldiers or civilians, were painted by official Canadian war artists, these images are quite rare. Some exceptions include the drawings and paintings by official artists Aba Bayefsky and Alex Colville that depict the victims of the Holocaust at concentration camps. However, few images of dead Canadian soldiers were painted by official artists, and Schaefer did not overtly depict death or casualties of war in his official paintings. After the war, he did express his grief, however, though in a more conventional and literal manner. *In Memoriam* (1951) is another still life painting, in this case a wreath of flowers contained in a square black box, symbolically representing the artist's mourning over lost RCAF members (Fig. 10). The inscription on the reverse side of the painting explains its meaning: "In memoriam to pioneers, my friends and those I knew in the RCAF World War II 1939-1945".<sup>135</sup> It seems entirely possible that *Operational Ammunition* was also intended from the beginning as a memorial to the victims of war, explaining why Schaefer drew attention to the work in post-war interviews, referring to the image as an "abstract, psychological idea." It is equally possible that this interpretation came to him later, as his memory of the war shifted and drew closer to contemporary cultural trends and collective memories. Another reason might have been practical: art historians had tended to focus on his other works from the war, for example *Bomb Aimer* or *Marshalling Lancasters*, thus reducing the artist's oeuvre from the

war to one or two key paintings. Schaefer himself wanted to be remembered afresh, perhaps differently, so he actively drew attention to one of his lesser known works from the war.

## Memory as Historical Evidence

Writing on the value of personal reminiscences as historical evidence, Gwyn Prins explains that “Much of the criticism by document-driven historians is along the lines that reminiscence by the famous is too easily open to convenient self-vindication *ex post facto* and, by the unimportant, to lapse of memory.”<sup>136</sup>

Interviewed twice for his personal reminiscences of the Second World War and his war art production, Carl Schaefer could be confident that he had earned his place among the so-called famous Canadian artists of his generation. But can his shifting recollections of his role as a war artist, alternating between considerations of the paintings as both historical records and art, be considered “convenient self-vindication?”

During the war the emphasis for official Canadian war artists was on accurate images of the nation’s contribution to the Allied war effort. Thus, war artists meticulously recorded:

details of arms, bicycles, equipment, clothing, participants and terrain of aircraft and ships...each sketch and picture must be directly related to the Canadian service at war, each must be dated, described and fully annotated according to the character of the subjects.<sup>137</sup>

From our contemporary vantage point, it is obvious today that the paintings produced by official war artists, in particular the RCAF, were not accurate. The artists knew it then. Their images at first carried the illusion of accuracy, but over sixty-five years later they appear now

to be more of a sophisticated form of propaganda for the historical record. Accuracy in war is difficult to achieve, not only by war artists, but also by the bomber crews that Schaefer represented in his images. As Paul Fussell notes in *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War*,

The fact was that bombing proved so grossly inaccurate that the planes had to fly well within anti-aircraft range to hit anywhere near the target, even then they very often missed it.<sup>138</sup>

Fussell further suggests that “as the war went on ‘precision bombing’ became a comical oxymoron relished by bomber crews with a sense of black humor.”<sup>139</sup> The idea of strategic or precision bombing was a myth created by the leaders of the bombing campaign to give the public some resemblance of not only technological mastery, but also morality and humanitarian concern on the part of the Allies towards their enemy. The failure of precision bombing strategic targets, coupled with an extremely high rate of casualties among bomber crews, led to an adopted strategy of devastating night area-bombing of cities and civilian targets.

But Schaefer’s official war art does not illuminate the technological failures of precision bombing, or the tremendous loss of life that was a consequence of area bombing. These facts have become notorious aspects of the Second World War from the point of view of those involved in the bombing and a key subject of the work of revisionist historians.

Carl Schaefer used hindsight when he evaluated his work as a war artist in terms of art, stressing the abstract ideas that motivated him, rather than realistic depiction in service of the

historical record. As a veteran of the war who was well aware of what was being done, he knew that his paintings weren't accurate. He also knew that many years after the conflict that the public would be skeptical of the value of war art that "sings the praises of war heroes and their heroic deeds" in the words of Boris Groys. Was it self-vindication when, in 1979, he claimed that "what I produced I consider them as works of art and not records?" Probably, and his statement reflects a concern often voiced by traditional historians that the evidence gathered from oral testimonies should be used with extreme caution. Considering the controversial use of oral evidence in *The Valour and the Horror*, a Canadian documentary on the Second World War that was very poorly received by several historians and veterans groups, Bercuson and Wise, for example, stress that "what a person remembers or thinks or says can be very different from what he or she might have remembered or thought or said long ago."<sup>140</sup> This thesis might see to validate the claim made by Bercuson and Wise. However, the shifting memory patterns of interviewees do not pose as great a problem for historians as these authors suggest. Rather, the evidence gathered from an individual's memory can be used not only to establish the meaning of what happened many years ago, but also to understand the contemporary context of the interview. Carl Schaefer's re-remembering of his wartime oeuvre has a great deal to tell us about countries that go to war, and the propensity of their citizens to forget.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Margaret Gray, Margaret Rand, and Lois Steen, *Carl Schaefer* (Agincourt, On: Gage Pub., 1977), 2.

<sup>2</sup> George Johnston, "Carl Schaefer: A Short Appreciation," *Carl Schaefer: Retrospective Exhibition, Paintings from 1926 to 1969* (Montreal: Sir George Williams University, 1969), 2.

<sup>3</sup> Johnston, "Carl Schaefer," 2.

<sup>4</sup> Rosemary Tovell, *Painter of the Soil: Carl Schaefer, Works on Paper* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1999), 7.

<sup>5</sup> Milena Placentile, "Canadian Painters as Art Educators 1920-1950," 4 September 2001, *Hart House: University of Toronto*, <<http://www.utoronto.ca/gallery/archives/education.htm>>.

<sup>6</sup> Placentile, "Canadian Painters as Art Educators."

<sup>7</sup> Gray, Rand, and Steen, 29.

<sup>8</sup> Alicia Boutilier, *Carl Schaefer: Storm on the Horizon* (London, On: Museum London, 2008), 31.

<sup>9</sup> Paul Duval, "War Artist Carl Schaefer's Life is no Dilettante's Existence," *Saturday Night* 60 (3 March 1945): 17.

<sup>10</sup> National Gallery of Canada, *Exhibition of Canadian War Art* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1946), 24.

<sup>11</sup> Gray, Rand, and Steen, 29.

<sup>12</sup> Bill Twatio, "The Faces of Carl Schaefer: an Artist's Life and Vision are Forever Changed by War and Death," *Esprit de Corps* 14.5 (June 2007): 22.

<sup>13</sup> Gray, Rand, and Steen, 32.

<sup>14</sup> Joan Murray, *Canadian Artists of the Second World War* (Oshawa, On: Robert McLaughlin Gallery, 1981), 123.

<sup>15</sup> National Gallery of Canada, 4.

<sup>16</sup> Boutilier, 57.

<sup>17</sup> Carl Schaefer, personal letter to Bruno Bobak, 23 Aug. 1945, Canadian War Museum archives, <[http://catalogue.civilization.ca/musvw/FullBB.csp?Profile=Profile52&OpacLanguage=eng&SearchMethod=Find\\_1&PageType=Start&PreviousList=Start&NumberToRetrieve=10&RecordNumber=&WebPageNr=1&StartValue=1&Database=1&Index1=1\\*Titlebib&EncodedRequest=1\\*FC\\*91\\*905\\*F1ftN\\*16\\*AD\\*24\\*C1\\*13\\*D7v&WebAction=ShowFullBB&SearchT1=.1.223660&SearchTerm1=.1.223660&OutsideLink=Yes](http://catalogue.civilization.ca/musvw/FullBB.csp?Profile=Profile52&OpacLanguage=eng&SearchMethod=Find_1&PageType=Start&PreviousList=Start&NumberToRetrieve=10&RecordNumber=&WebPageNr=1&StartValue=1&Database=1&Index1=1*Titlebib&EncodedRequest=1*FC*91*905*F1ftN*16*AD*24*C1*13*D7v&WebAction=ShowFullBB&SearchT1=.1.223660&SearchTerm1=.1.223660&OutsideLink=Yes)>.

<sup>18</sup> Johnston, "Carl Schaefer," 2.

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<sup>19</sup> Twatio, 22.

<sup>20</sup> Carl Schaefer, *Carl Schaefer Retrospective Exhibition: Paintings from 1926 to 1969* (Montreal: Sir George Williams University, 1970), 7.

<sup>21</sup> Carl Schaefer, Interview by Joan Murray, 28 March 1979, transcript, Carl Schaefer file, War Artist Files, Canadian War Museum.

<sup>22</sup> Laura Brandon, curator of war art at the Canadian War Museum, generously supported this research. Carl Schaefer's war artist file at the Canadian War Museum has been an indispensable resource. Schaefer's file includes the paintings he produced as an official war artist during the Second World War, his wartime sketchbook, preliminary drawings, photographs, as well as his war diary, personal letters and two interviews conducted with the artist on the topic of his war art: with Joan Murray (28 March 1979) and Hugh Halliday (16 May 1986).

<sup>23</sup> Samuel Hynes, "Personal Narratives and Commemoration," *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 211.

<sup>24</sup> Diary of Carl Schaefer, 6 March 1944, Canadian War Museum Archives.

<sup>25</sup> Laura Brandon, "Carl Schaefer, War Artist: 1903-1995", <http://www.wlu.ca/lcmsds/cmh/back%20issues/CMH/volume%204/Issue%202/Brandon%20-%20Carl%20Schaefer,%20War%20Artist%20-%201903-1995.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> Bomber Command refers to the group formed in 1936 that was responsible for all bombing activities of the RAF during the Second World War, including No. 6 Group of the RCAF.

<sup>27</sup> Carl Schaefer, letters to H.O. McCurry, 30 August 1942, 10 November 1946, Carl Schaefer file, War Artist Files, Canadian War Museum.

<sup>28</sup> Fred H. Allison, "Remembering a Vietnam Warfight: Changing Perspectives Over Time," *The Oral History Reader*, eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), 223.

<sup>29</sup> Allesandro Portelli, "What Makes Oral History Different," *The Oral History Reader*, eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), 37.

<sup>30</sup> Alistair Thompson, "Anzac Memories: Putting Popular Memory Theory into Practice in Australia," *The Oral History Reader*, eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), 245.

<sup>31</sup> Hynes, 207.

<sup>32</sup> Blake Heathcote, introduction, *Testaments of Honour: Personal Histories of Canada's War Veterans* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2002), xvi.

<sup>33</sup> Heathcote, xvii.

<sup>34</sup> Thomson, 245.

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- <sup>35</sup> Alison Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory: the Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 30.
- <sup>36</sup> Hynes, 207.
- <sup>37</sup> Michael Keren and Holger H. Herwig, eds., *War Memory and Popular Culture: Essays on Modes of Remembrance and Commemoration* (Jefferson, N.C: McFarland, 2009), 3.
- <sup>38</sup> T.G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson, and Michael Roper, eds., *Commemorating War: The Politics of Memory* (New Brunswick, N.J: Transaction Publishers, 2009), 3.
- <sup>39</sup> Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper, 6.
- <sup>40</sup> Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper, 7.
- <sup>41</sup> Keren and Herwig, 4.
- <sup>42</sup> Laura Brandon, introduction, *Art or Memorial? The Forgotten History of Canada's War Art* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2006), xiii.
- <sup>43</sup> Brian Foss, *War Paint: Art, War, State and Identity in Britain 1939-1945* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 1.
- <sup>44</sup> Carl Schaefer, interview by Joan Murray.
- <sup>45</sup> Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 96.
- <sup>46</sup> Boris Groys, "Art at War", *Signals in the Dark: Art in the Shadow of War*, ed. Seamus Kealy (Mississauga, On: Blackwood Gallery; Toronto: Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, 2008), 9.
- <sup>47</sup> Carl Schaefer, letter to H.O. McCurry, 30 Aug 1942.
- <sup>48</sup> Carl Schaefer, letter to H.O. McCurry, 30 Aug 1942.
- <sup>49</sup> Laura Brandon, "Canada's War Art," Canadian War Museum, 17 July, 2011  
<<http://www.civilization.ca/cwm/explore/military-history/dispatches/canadas-war-art>>.
- <sup>50</sup> Brandon, "Canada's War Art".
- <sup>51</sup> Dean Oliver and Laura Brandon, *Canvas of War: Painting the Canadian Experience, 1914-1945* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2000), 156.
- <sup>52</sup> Murray, 7.
- <sup>53</sup> Oliver and Brandon, 162.
- <sup>54</sup> Instructions for War Artists issued to Flying Officer C.F. Schaefer, 25 September, 1943 (qtd. in Carl Schaefer, interview with Joan Murray).
- <sup>55</sup> Brereton Greenhous and Hugh A. Halliday, *Canada's Air Forces 1914-1999* (Montreal: Art Global, 1999), 114.



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<sup>56</sup> Laura Brandon, *Art & War* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 2.

<sup>57</sup> Brereton Greenhous, et al., *The Crucible of War 1939-1945: The Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 525.

<sup>58</sup> Greenhous, *Crucible of War*, 525.

<sup>59</sup> Carl Schaefer, interview by Joan Murray.

<sup>60</sup> The Avro Lancaster first saw active service in 1942. Developed initially for the RAF (Royal Air Force), this four-engined heavy bomber was also used by the RCAF and other Commonwealth forces during the Second World War. The Lancaster was primarily a night bomber, although it was also used in daylight precision bombing missions against industrial targets, such as the Ruhr Valley dams in Germany. According to the Official History of the RCAF, "the Lancaster was generally considered to be the best British designed heavy bomber of the war in terms of surviveability as well as bombload." (*Crucible of War*, 525).

<sup>61</sup> Diary of Carl Schaefer, 7 October 1943, Canadian War Museum Archives.

<sup>62</sup> Carl Schaefer, letter to H.O. McCurry, 10 November 1946.

<sup>63</sup> Carl Schaefer, letter to H.O. McCurry, 10 November 1946.

<sup>64</sup> Diary of Carl Schaefer, 4 February 1944.

<sup>65</sup> Winston Churchill, memorandum to British Chiefs of Staff, 1945 (qtd in Greenhous and Halliday, 118).

<sup>66</sup> Tim Cook, *Clio's Warriors: Canadian Historians and the Writing of the World Wars* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006), 227.

<sup>67</sup> Cook, 116.

<sup>68</sup> Earl R. Beck, "The Allied Bombing of Germany, 1942-1945, and the German Response: Dilemmas of Judgment," *German Studies Review* 5.3 (Oct. 1982): 329.

<sup>69</sup> Beck, 329.

<sup>70</sup> Beck, 329.

<sup>71</sup> Cook, 227.

<sup>72</sup> Cook, 227.

<sup>73</sup> Beck, 336.

<sup>74</sup> Greenhous and Halliday, 114.

<sup>75</sup> Greenhous and Halliday, 114.

<sup>76</sup> Greenhous and Halliday, 114.

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<sup>77</sup> David J. Bercusson and S.F. Wise, *The Valour and the Horror Revisited* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 10.

<sup>78</sup> Carl Schaefer, Letter to H.O. McCurry, 10 Nov 1946.

<sup>79</sup> Carl Schaefer, "Carl Fellman Schaefer: Personal Reminiscences," *Carl Schaefer: Retrospective Exhibition Paintings from 1926 to 1969* (Montreal: Sir George Williams University, 1970), 7.

<sup>80</sup> Carl Schaefer, letter to H.O. McCurry, 10 Nov 1946.

<sup>81</sup> W.G. Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction*, trans. Anthea Bell (Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf Canada, 2003), 4

<sup>82</sup> "Obliteration Raids on German Cities Protested in the U.S." *New York Times*, 6 March 1944: 1.

<sup>83</sup> "Obliteration Raids" 1.

<sup>84</sup> Vera Brittain, *Testament of Experience: An Autobiographical Story of the Years 1925-1950* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1957), 297.

<sup>85</sup> Brittain, 297.

<sup>86</sup> *The World at War*, vol. 4 "Whirlwind: Bombing Germany," producer Jeremy Issacs, DVD, (New York: A & E Home Video, 1974).

<sup>87</sup> George Johnston, *Carl: Portrait of a Painter from Letters and Reminiscences* (Moonbeam, On: Penumbra Press, 1986), 21.

<sup>88</sup> Johnston, *Carl: Portrait* 23.

<sup>89</sup> Brian Foss, *Spirituality and Social Consciousness in the Art and Thought of Miller Brittain* (M.A. Thesis: Concordia University, 1985), 90.

<sup>90</sup> Foss, "Miller Brittain," 95.

<sup>91</sup> Foss, 97.

<sup>92</sup> Foss, 100.

<sup>93</sup> Foss, 101.

<sup>94</sup> Thomson, 245.

<sup>95</sup> Foss, 101.

<sup>96</sup> Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History," *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, vol. 4, ed. Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 1996), 391.

<sup>97</sup> A.Y. Jackson (qtd in Murray 16).

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<sup>98</sup> Arnold J. McBay, "Images of Conflict: War Art in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century," 19 July 2011, <<http://www.aureolestudios.com/images/imagesofconflict.pdf>>.

<sup>99</sup> As I did not attend these exhibitions, I will be referring to the published catalogues.

<sup>100</sup> Heather Robertson, *A Terrible Beauty: the Art of Canada at War* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1977), 15.

<sup>101</sup> Murray, 16.

<sup>102</sup> Brandon, *Art or Memorial?*, 44.

<sup>103</sup> Murray, 15.

<sup>104</sup> Johnston, "Carl: Portrait of a Painter," 23.

<sup>105</sup> Boutilier, "Carl Fellman Schaefer: A Summary," *Storm on the Horizon*, 33.

<sup>106</sup> Johnston, 23.

<sup>107</sup> Qtd. In Johnston, 97.

<sup>108</sup> Brandon, *Art or Memorial?* Xiii.

<sup>109</sup> Carl Schaefer, interview with Joan Murray.

<sup>110</sup> Ruth Pierson, review of *A Terrible Beauty: the Art of Canada at War*, by Heather Robertson, *Archivaria* 5 (winter 1977-78): 208.

<sup>111</sup> Robertson, 15.

<sup>112</sup> Pierson, 208.

<sup>113</sup> Robertson, 15.

<sup>114</sup> Pierson, 209.

<sup>115</sup> Pierson, 209.

<sup>116</sup> Pierson, 210.

<sup>117</sup> Murray, 3.

<sup>118</sup> Murray, 16.

<sup>119</sup> For this thesis, I am using a transcript of the interview between Carl Schaefer and Joan Murray.

<sup>120</sup> Carl Schaefer, interview with Joan Murray.

<sup>121</sup> Twatio, 23.

<sup>122</sup> Robertson, "Acknowledgments".

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<sup>123</sup> Allison, 221.

<sup>124</sup> Carl Schaefer, interview with Joan Murray.

<sup>125</sup> Murray, 15.

<sup>126</sup> Twatio, 22.

<sup>127</sup> Carl Schaefer, interview with Hugh Halliday.

<sup>128</sup> Carl Schaefer, war diary, 17 October 1943.

<sup>129</sup> Carl Schaefer, war diary, 17 October 1943.

<sup>130</sup> Carl Schaefer, interview with Hugh Halliday.

<sup>131</sup> Carl Schaefer, interview with Hugh Halliday.

<sup>132</sup> This reading is indebted to Cynthia Hammond who suggested that the bullets depicted in *Operational Ammunition* could symbolize individual lives lost in war.

<sup>133</sup> Brandon, *Art or Memorial?* Xiii.

<sup>134</sup> Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper, 32.

<sup>135</sup> Carl Schaefer, *In Memoriam*, Canadian War Museum, Ottawa.

<sup>136</sup> Gwyn Prins, "Oral History," *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Peter Burke (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania University Press, 2001), 136.

<sup>137</sup> Quoted in Carl Schaefer, interview with Joan Murray, 1979.

<sup>138</sup> Paul Fussell, *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 14.

<sup>139</sup> Fussell, 14.

<sup>140</sup> Bercuson and Wise, 7.

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Fig. 1. Carl Schaefer, *Storm Over the Fields*, 1937, oil on canvas, 68.5cm x 94cm, Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario.



Fig. 2. Official war artist Carl Schaefer, Sir Kenneth Clark, the Duchess of Kent and Canadian High Commissioner Vincent Massey at the opening of the Canadian war artist's exhibition at the National Gallery, London, England, 9 February 1944, photograph, Department of National Defence, pl. 22848. Reproduced in Gray, Rand, and Steen, 33.



Fig. 3. Carl Schaefer, *Carrion Crow*, 1946, watercolour, 43.5cm x 61.5cm, National Gallery of Canada.

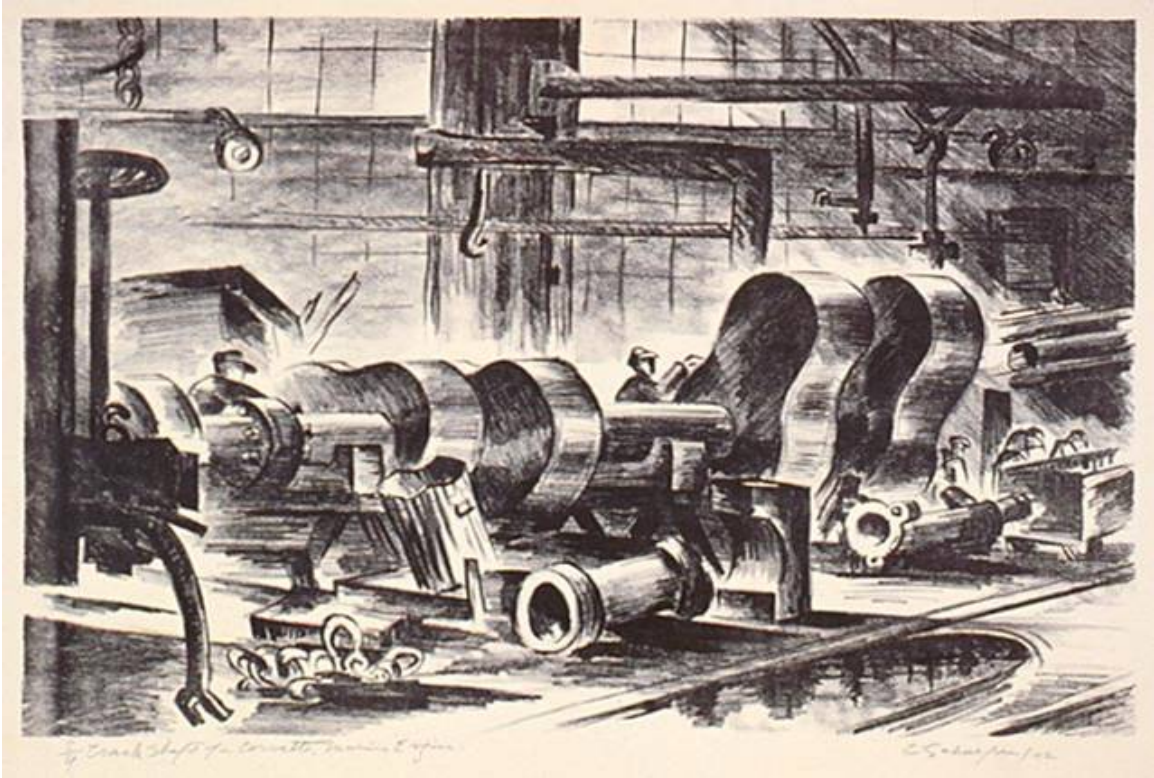


Fig. 4. Carl Schaefer, *Crankshaft for Corvette, Marine Engine*, 1942, lithograph, Art Gallery of Hamilton.

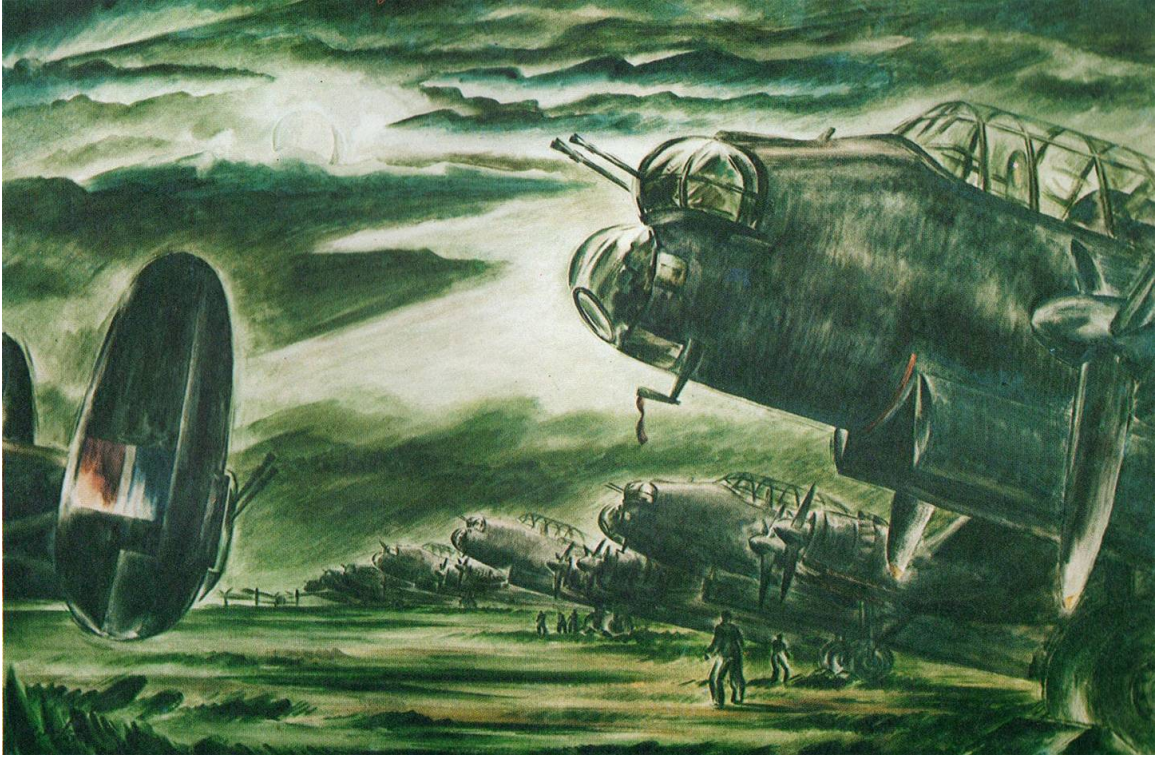


Fig. 5. Carl Schaefer, *Marshalling Lancasters Against Stuttgart*, 1943, watercolour, 66cm x 105cm, Canadian War Museum, artifact nbr. 19710261-5169.



Fig. 6. Carl Schaefer, no title, 1943, pencil drawing, 22cm x 25cm, Canadian War Museum, 19940015-073.



Fig. 7. Carl Schaefer, *Bomb Aimer, Battle of the Ruhr*, 1944, 1951, watercolour, 108cm x 69.5cm, Canadian War Museum, 19710261-5121.



Fig. 8. Miller Brittain, *Night Target, Germany*, 1946, oil, 76.5cm x 61.0cm, Canadian War Museum, 19710261-1436.





Fig. 9. Carl Schaefer, *Operational Ammunition 303, Still Life*, 1943, watercolour, 31cm x 46.5cm, Canadian War Museum, 19710261-5210.

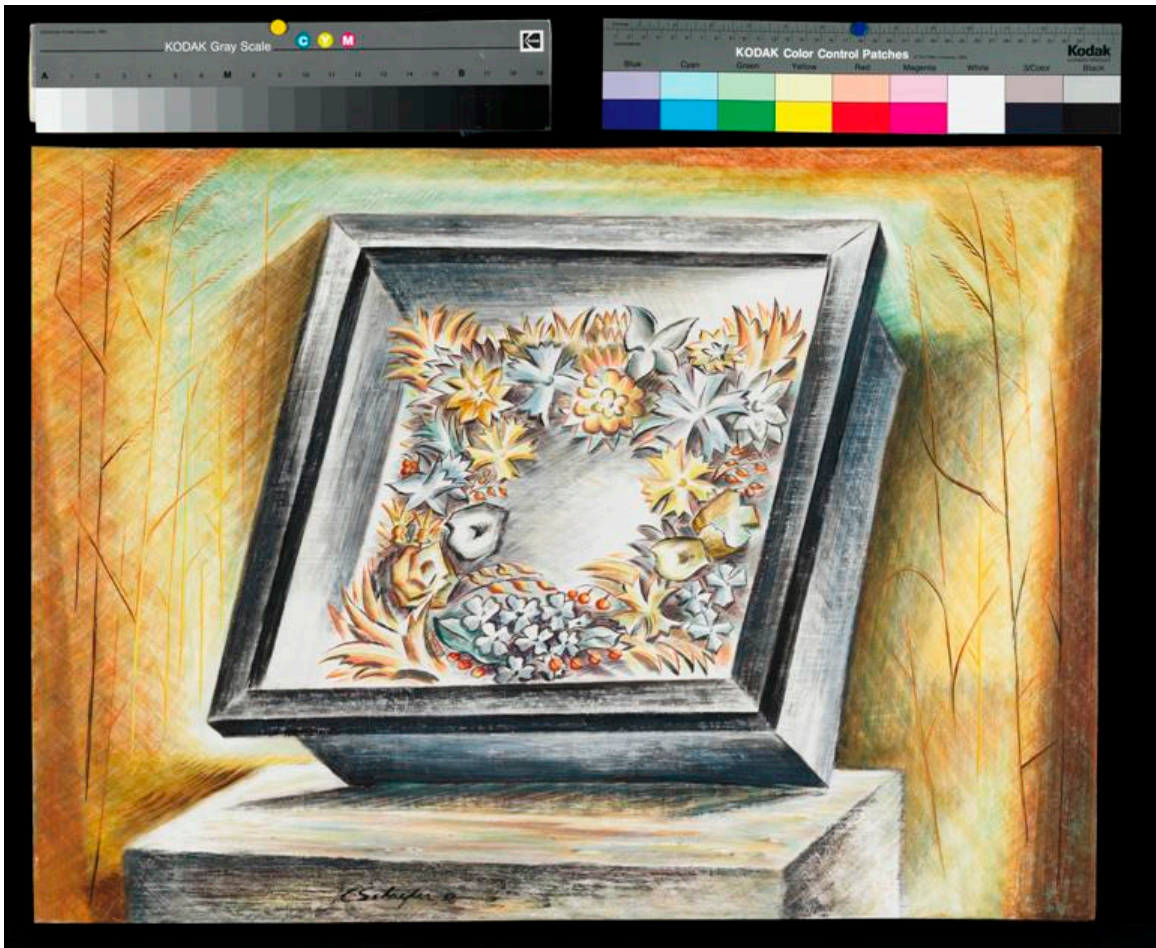


Fig. 10. Carl Schaefer, *In Memoriam*, 1951, egg tempera on wood panel, 54cm x 73.6cm, Canadian War Museum, 20080078-001.