

Landscape Series

Volume 25

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Todd R. Lookingbill • Peter D. Smallwood
Editors

Collateral Values

The Natural Capital Created by Landscapes
of War

 Springer

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Foreword

In June 1970, during the height of the US-Vietnam War, Motown singer Edwin Starr re-recorded the Temptations album track “War” and issued it as a single. It quickly went to #1 on the Billboard charts. With its blasting, syncopated horn section and Starr’s deep voice soul-shouting the unadorned lyrics, the song cut through the AM radios of America’s youth as both protest anthem and pop song anguish:

War! huh, yeah
What is it good for?
Absolutely nothing!

If only such clarity were true. Historians of empire, revolution, and independence, chroniclers of medicine and technological innovation, soldier poets, and political leaders all struggle with Starr’s question: War, *what is it good for?*

Editors Todd R. Lookingbill and Peter D. Smallwood, and the varied set of scholars who authored the individual chapters, grapple with this question in terms of conservation, ecosystem services, and cultural landscapes. Edwin Starr’s song echoes throughout the book, even in its potent title *Collateral Values*.

Wisely, the editors partitioned the book into two sections: Battlefields and Borderlands. In the first half of the book, the authors visit the US, English, and French battlefields, crossing historical periods from medieval England to World War I. Jason Julian’s chapter on the Southern Plains of Texas and Oklahoma examines the relationship between frontiers, forts, and front-country conservation. Carly Sabilia and her coauthors, Lookingbill and Geoffrey Carter, conduct a similar analysis, this time exploring the history of warfare in early English history and introducing the concept of “constructive conservation.” Rémi de Matos Machado and J.P. Hupy shift to the larger-scale landscape of the 10,000 hectare Verdun Forest (site of one of the biggest battles of World War I), describing its ecosystem services and its service as a “place of memory.” Lookingbill and coauthors, Emily Minor and Lisa Wainger, focus on a different kind of invasion than in most military strategic studies, in this case the invasion of non-native plants. They warn that such invasions can catch managers “unaware of dangerous thresholds in long term resource management of battlefield landscapes.”

The second half of the book is even more global, while maintaining its focus on localized case studies from the Korean War Demilitarized Zone to the conflicts of Latin America, the Cold War's creation of European borderlands, and the unfinished future of Afghanistan's painful wars and the fate of the US Guantanamo Bay Naval Station in Cuba. (Full disclosure: In 2013, working as science advisor to the director of the National Park Service, I wrote an earnest white paper on the creation of an international peace park at Guantanamo and how such a designation could solve several diplomatic, national political, and environmental problems. It disappeared in the yaw of bureaucracy). Lisa Brady examines the environmental and political history of the Korean Demilitarized Zone and translates that history into a trajectory of conservation possibilities—even going so far as to describe it as potentially a “green ribbon of hope.” Saleem Ali provides a similar analysis of the Cordillera del Condor corridor, buffering the conflicted boundaries of Peru and Ecuador, and reminds us of the importance of post-conflict strategies that can make conservation workable and effective in the long term. David Havlick looks at the Cold War and “the transition of militarized landscapes into new land uses dedicated to conservation.” His discussion of “recasting” military landscapes is both a process for peace and a potential policy of merit. Joe Roman's chapter on Guantanamo is both a historical review and a creative presentation of a model for conservation as a diplomatic tool. Smallwood and Chris Shank's chapter on Afghanistan's Wakhan National Park, larger than Yellowstone and home to 17,000 persons and iconic wildlife, also focuses on transition—what they call “the long journey from geopolitical buffer zone to national park.”

The diversity of cases, methodological strategies, and insights gives *Collateral Values: The Natural Capital Created by Landscapes of War* a robustness of importance. This is a place-based book with sweeping consequences.

As cultural sites, these places are crucial for memory—they are physical remembrances that neither necessarily reify nor reject events but can preserve their recognition for future generations. As protected areas that provide measurable (and often significant) ecosystem services, they are (or can be) transcendent landscapes—the destruction of war transformed in peace as described in Isaiah 2:3–4:

...and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks:
nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

The authors (both editors and chapter writers) wisely avoid the moral myopia of describing the “benefits” of war. They write, “The central premise of this book is that these sites represent potential opportunities for environmental conservation and restoration.” I would go further: They have described, as my colleague and teacher William R. Burch, Jr., has argued, a form of conservation practice that redeems the faults of prior and present generations—what he has called “redemption ecology.” And in doing so, they provide a way forward that is both visionary and practical—for scientific and scholarly research; for conservation planning, policy, and practice; and for civic action.

We may not be able to yet answer Edwin Starr's piercing question, but the book you are about to read is a stepping stone on the redemptive path.

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Acknowledgments

It took the efforts of a great many people to produce this book, and we are deeply grateful to them all. This volume represents many years of thinking about the intersection of warfare and conservation. We are first thankful to all of our chapter authors, who helped expand and extrapolate the concept of “collateral values” to the many time frames and locations represented in the book. The intellectual framework benefited from early conversations with Gary Machlis and colleagues at the National Park Service, including Shawn Carter, Peter Sharpe, Christine Arnott, Kristen Allen, Dorothy Geyer, and Tim Blumenschine. Kimberley Browne, Taylor Holden, Amanda Waggoner, and others in the University of Richmond’s Spatial Analysis Lab assisted with map creation for several of the chapters. We are also indebted to Savannah Wilson, who assisted with copy editing and formatting as part of the last push across the finish line. Finally, we appreciate the support, advice, and guidance provided by Springer and the editors of this series, especially Janet Silbernagel.

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