Understanding the reflections of battlefield tourists regarding their experiences to sites associated with WWI and the Vietnam War: An analysis of travel blogs.

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Abstract

The travel and tourism industry is connected to the ideas of leisure and relaxation, however not all tourism sites and experiences occur in this way. Dark tourism or thanatourism relates to the darker side of travel; it has the potential to incite deeper feelings and emotions. It is commonly described as travel to places associated with death. For that reason battlefield tourism is a category of dark tourism. Battlefield tourism experiences have the potential to provoke the contemplation of life and death.

The aim of this study is to explore online travel blogs to discover and understand the reflections of battlefield tourists who visit sites that have witnessed terrible loss of human life and acts of inhumanity, sites that represent the worst of humankind. This study takes an interpretivist approach, utilising qualitative and unobtrusive data collection methods to obtain relevant travel blogs. The selected case studies include sites associated with WWI (Belgium, France and Turkey) and sites connected to the Vietnam War (or American War), including the War Remnants Museum, Cu Chi Tunnels and My Lai. The selected research method involved the process of thematic analysis, which enabled the examination of 40 travel blogs, 20 blogs per case study. The rationale for these cases is that they have not been previously analysed in a study which focuses on the tourists' reflections of their experiences at sites of historic warfare, and which focuses specifically on the concept of dark tourism and mortality.

The findings suggest that tourists can have a deeply reflective experience at sites of historic warfare. In addition, they can also experience contested feelings towards the war narrative. The three key outcomes are: mortality mediation involving a connection with the dead, contemplation of their own mortality and viewing death statistics as real people. Another outcome was contested mortality mediation which occurred when tourists felt a dissonance towards the narrative of war. The third outcome was a connection with the living which included an emotional connection to the local people. These three outcomes led to the overall understanding of battlefield experiences, which is the meaning of life and humanity (connecting to people), and the passing of time (the writing of history – of winners and losers). The findings of this study add to the knowledge of battlefield tourism, helping to understand how tourists experience historic sites of war. With continued research there will come a

greater understanding of how best to manage battlefield tourism sites and experiences in the present and future.

Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

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Chapter One

Introduction

At first glance death and tourism seem like an unsuitable combination, especially when one considers that tourism is part of the leisure economy. Conversely, although death may be dark in subject matter it still holds a certain interest for many people. The reasoning for this can range from simple curiosity, educational purposes, philosophical or religious reasoning or even a taboo morbid interest. Whatever the motivation or reasoning, the topic of death demands attention. News reports, newspapers and news websites often place the most morbid stories on the front pages; the topic of death cannot be ignored and is likely to result in more clicks, higher viewership numbers and more sales. Death is a part of life, which thus far is unavoidable. For many it is something to be feared, a subject that is too difficult to contemplate. Yet there are times in life when the guard can slip and the mind considers the inevitable.

Dark tourism, also known as thanatourism, is the combination of death and tourism. The concept of dark tourism became widely recognised in academia after Lennon and Foley (2000) published the book *Dark tourism: The attraction of death and disaster*. Lennon and Foley (2000) describe dark tourism as "an intimation of post-modernity" (p. 11). They view modern technology as the catalyst in creating interest in morbid attractions. Once a horrific event takes place it becomes "embedded in mass consciousness through popular culture and media" (p. 10). This is given as an explanation as to why people are drawn to attractions of death. Such morbid attractions can range from places of human incarceration (prisons, slave forts), war and conflict related attractions (concentration camps, historic battlefields, war memorials), natural disasters (earthquakes, floods), sites connected to death (cemeteries, terrorist attacks) and crime scenes (sites of individual murder) (Timothy, 2011). Conversely, Stone (2012a) asserts a deeper philosophical reasoning behind the interest in dark tourism. Stone's (2012a) theory states that the secular nature of Western modern society has resulted in death becoming hidden from everyday life, and as such dark tourism is a method for tourists to construct their own meaning of mortality. Seaton (1996) coined the term thanatourism in his defining article *Guided by the dark: From thanatopsis to*

thanatourism. Seaton (1996) views dark tourism not as a modern phenomenon, but one that dates back to the Middle Ages. Thanatoposis, meaning the contemplation upon death, is seen by Seaton (1996) as the travel dimension of dark tourism. From this understanding the term thanatourism was conceptualised. The definition given by Seaton (1996, p. 240) states that thanatourism is:

> "Travel to a location wholly, or partially, motivated by the desire for actual or symbolic encounters with death, particularly, but not exclusively, violent death, which may, to a varying degree be activated by the person-specific features of those whose deaths are its focal objects."

Dark tourism is essentially an umbrella term which contains specific forms of dark tourism within it. Examples include holocaust tourism (Ashworth, 2002), genocide tourism (Beech, 2009), slavery tourism (Rice, 2009) and battlefield/warfare tourism (Lloyd, 1998; Ryan, 2007a; Baldwin & Sharpley, 2009; Smith, 1996; Dunkley et al., 2011). Battlefield and warfare tourism are fundamentally the same concept, what separates the terms is that battlefield tourism specifically refers to the visitation by tourists to battlefields where wars were or are being fought (Seaton, 1999; Baldwin & Sharpley, 2009). Warfare tourism, on the other hand, refers to all aspects relating to war and tourism. For example this includes: battlefield tours, war museums, war memorials, war graves, battle re-enactments and active 'hot' war experiences (Dunkley et al., 2011). This thesis focuses primarily on battlefield tourism; however it also incorporates the wider warfare tourism experience, as it is difficult to separate the two concepts since they are intertwined at a destination of historic warfare.

War and tourism, similar to dark tourism, appear at face value as completely unrelated activities, yet this is far from the case. Smith (1996) views war related attractions as potentially the single largest tourism category. Iles (2008) confirms the war tourism link by stating that the tourist activity of war commemoration enables a nation's military history to continue in modern day social memory. A somewhat controversial, but accurate, statement by Scofidio and Diller (1994) suggest that historic wars will guarantee future tourism. Scofidio and Diller (1994, p. 19) also point out the connection between war and tourism:

> "Tourism and war appear to be polar extremes of cultural activity [...]. The two practices, however, often intersect: tourism of war, war on tourism, tourism as war, war targeting tourism, tourism under war, war as tourism are but a few of their interesting couplings."

The technological innovations that occurred during war time (World War Two: 1939-1945) enabled the development of a post-war tourism industry (Smith, 1998). The freedom to travel was viewed as a human right and mass tourism was seen as a way to generate a greater global understanding (Iles, 2008). Tourism as an activity of peace would replace war.

Since battlefield tourism is under the umbrella of dark tourism and thanatourism, there is consequently an area to explore the experiences and reflections of battlefield tourists. This relates to a desire to understand how battlefield tourists engage, process and reflect on their dark encounters. Historic sites of warfare are undeniably dark in nature and have the potential to incite deep emotions. As theorised by Stone (2012a), dark tourism can be utilised as a method for tourists to construct their own meaning of mortality. Dark tourists have the potential to encounter the issue of death, contemplating their own while gazing upon the others' untimely end. The concept of mortality mediation - relationships between the living and the dead (Stone, 2012a; Walter, 2009), and the contemplation of death have not been applied to the complex phenomenon of battlefield tourism, which involves issues surrounding competing political ideology, authenticity and interpretation, the impacts and influences of popular culture and the aspects of differing nationalities and their involvement. As a result of these factors a gap in the literature has been identified.

This thesis involves the investigation of two case studies, namely World War One (WWI) 1914-1918 battlefields and Vietnam War sites. These case studies have been selected based on several factors. The battlefields of WWI experienced pilgrimage and commemoration on a scale not seen prior. The total casualties resulting from WWI are over 37,400,000 million, with a total of over 8,500,000 million killed (PBS, 2014a). Even though WWI began 100 years ago, the battlefields still draw thousands of tourists today. Nations that were involved in the war continue to commemorate the fallen, and tourists continue to take part in these services. For this reason the battlefields of WWI are a case study in this thesis. The second case study, sites of the Vietnam War (known in Vietnam as the American War), has been selected due to the small number of

battlefield tourism literature published on Vietnam. As a tourist destination Vietnam is growing in popularity due to the *doi moi* regime change (Suntikul, 2010) which has seen a decline in communism and a move towards a more capitalist approach, opening the country to foreign investment. The Vietnam War as a case study is in considerable contrast to WWI as it occurred in more recent times (surviving veterans) and was highly controversial in nature, due to the reasoning behind US involvement and continuation in the war. Due to these divergent factors the two case studies have been selected as they provide a means to draw insights of the experiences and reflections of battlefield tourists at very distinct destinations.

1.1 Research aim and objectives

Dark tourism has been chosen as a topic for this thesis as I believe the subject matter has the ability to provoke deep thought processes in tourists who take part. The darker forms of dark tourism, according to Stone's (2006) dark tourism spectrum have higher political influence and ideology and are the sites of actual death. Battlefield tourism as a sub-type of dark tourism falls under the darker to darkest end of Stone's (2006) dark tourism spectrum. This is due to the fact that battlefields are the actual sites of death, and due to the nature of warfare they are inherently high in political influence and ideology. As a result, I personally find it interesting to discover and analyse how tourists consume, interpret, process and reflect on such experiences.

Visiting dark attractions, such as battlefields, cannot be compared to other traditional tourism experiences, nor can they be compared to non warfare dark attractions. Warfare tourism involves the combination of unique factors that are not found in other forms of tourism; for example, battlefield tourism includes the following issues which are important and set it apart from other tourism types: battlefields are visited by pilgrims who are mourning lost loved ones, veterans return to the battlefield after war and often have traumatic memories of past events, different nationalities visit the same sites and often have opposing views of the past, there can be issues of interpretation – who writes the history? How can war be presented in a way that does not trivialise it? Or present it as entertainment? What happens when other nationalities feel uncomfortable with the presentation of history given? What if an attraction has gone too far in its pursuit of the 'shock factor'?

All of the above issues, and many more not stated, are common factors that impact the battlefield tourist experience. It is this aspect that I find interesting; to find out how tourists cope with such sites and what is the outcome of their experience. The other factor that has greatly influenced my research aim and objectives are the ongoing works by Dr Philip Stone and Professor Richard Sharpley. Stone and Sharpley have added significant knowledge to the area of dark tourism, following on from the earlier foundational works by Seaton (1996; 1999) and Lennon and Foley (2000). Stone's (2009; 2011; 2012a; 2012b) focus on the absence of death in modern society and the conceptualisation of the mortality mediation concept has guided one of the objectives of this study. Stone (2012a) states that dark tourism enables tourists to symbolically connect with the dead and allows them to construct their own meaning of mortality. I find this philosophical theory fascinating and see a gap in current research where it has not been applied to battlefield tourism. Sites of warfare hold strong memories and emotions for people, even if they were never there. This is what makes battlefield tourism a suitable form of dark tourism to apply the mortality mediation concept. When people visit sites of war they often bring their own preconceptions or feelings related to the events that took place. I aim to discover how battlefield tourists reflect on their experiences. Has their visit changed their previous perception? Has it reinforced it? How do they reflect on the nature and scale of death and atrocity which occurred at the site? Do they relate this experience to themselves, their own mortality?

In regards to preconceptions the media and popular culture have enabled us to learn about and consume past and current events. Movies, documentaries and books (non-fiction and fiction) have allowed people to feel as if they are or were part of an event, they may feel empathy, anger or solidarity for those who died. The influence of the media and popular culture should not be underestimated in its ability to shape societal and individual opinion. Former President Richard Nixon went as far as to blame the US media's coverage of the Vietnam War as the catalyst in turning the public against the war, resulting in the US pulling out (Hallin, 2006). However, historians have dismissed this idea. This is one of the factors which makes the Vietnam War an interesting case study. There are aspects of the Vietnam War which influence how certain tourists respond to warfare attractions in Vietnam, for example if they are American were they pro or anti the Vietnam War, and in what way would this impact on their experience and reflections? Personally, I find the psychology of tourists a fascinating area to research. Understanding the psychology of battlefield tourists involves comprehending how they

respond and reflect on historic sites of war. The category of the battlefield tourist is unfortunately one that is not going to disappear anytime soon, as wars appear to continue. In my opinion it is important to gain as much understanding as possible about battlefield tourism and its tourists, as regrettably, warfare persists into the 21st century.

Following the discussion of dark tourism and battlefield tourism, the subsequent table outlines the research aims and objectives which are guiding this thesis.

Table 1: Research aim and objectives

Research aim	To gain an understanding of the personal reflections held by tourists after experiencing a historical site of warfare.
Research objectives	1. Gaining a better understanding of the experiences held by tourists at sites of warfare. 2. To understand whether the factor of a historic timeline has an influence on tourist reflections. 3. To discover whether nationality or personal connection to the war site affects factors of haunting memory, memento mori (reminders of death) and moral instruction. 4. To identify similarities and differences between tourist reflections at WWI sites and Vietnam War sites.

1.2 Paradigm and methods used

The research philosophy adopted in this thesis is that of interpretivism. This is a highly qualitative study which assumes that meaning is constructed by the travellers (Scotland, 2012). The aim is to discover how battlefield tourists construct their reality and to identify the meanings that are involved in this process. A qualitative approach is most appropriate as the central focus of this thesis is to gain an understanding of the emotions, experiences and reflections of battlefield tourists. To achieve such a deep understanding of the tourist experience it is imperative to use a qualitative approach to research. When dealing with highly subjective and emotive subject matter a qualitative design is required as a quantitative approach would prevent in-depth analysis of tourist reflections. To gain an insight into the reflections of battlefield tourists, the chosen method of data collection is unobtrusive in the form of online travel blogs.

Weblogs, known as blogs are a form of social media which allows users to publish content on the internet. Specific travel blogging websites enable users to create what is

termed 'user generated content.' Travel blogging applications present travellers with the opportunity to provide their 'raw' experience with other internet users (Volo, 2012). By using unobtrusive online data collection methods the issue of reactive measurement effects are reduced. This method is also sympathetic to the research subjects as they are openly presenting their thoughts and emotions in a public (often faceless) medium, rather than discussing sensitive topics in a face to face interview. I have chosen social media, specifically blogging, as my data collection method as blogging is a growing (Nielsen Company, 2012) form of online interaction between people in virtual communities. Conducting research online is a relatively new concept, and has presented social science researchers (both qualitative and quantitative) with innumerable methods of collecting data. The internet has essentially challenged the traditional forms of data collection.

1.3 Thesis structure

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. The first is the introductory chapter which establishes the outline and structure of this thesis. The second chapter firstly provides the background literature surrounding the philosophy of death. The concepts of dark tourism and thanatourism are explored by reviewing the current theoretical understandings of this phenomenon. This is followed by a review of the longstanding and current findings and theories of warfare tourism and battlefield tourism. This covers the general aspects of warfare tourism to the specific features of battlefield tourism. The methodology chapter will follow the literature review. This chapter will firstly position the ontological and epistemological philosophy of this thesis and then follows on into the specifics of the qualitative research strategy, including data collection methods (unobtrusive measures through online blog research) and the choice of analysis (narrative inquiry using thematic analysis). Chapters four and five present and analyse the findings of the blog data. Chapter four covers the findings related specifically to WWI battlefields and chapter five covers the Vietnam War findings. The findings chapters precede the discussion chapter which presents the analysis of both the WWI and Vietnam War findings. Finally, chapter seven concludes the thesis by interpreting the overall understanding of this research and what it has achieved in addressing the research aim and objectives. This includes recognition of the study's limitations and a proposition for future research directions in the area of battlefield tourism.

Chapter Two

Literature

2.1 Introduction

Tourism is often associated with leisure and relaxation – mainly the three S destinations (sun, sand and sea). However, there is another side to tourism that is usually hidden from the brochures and that is the darker side of travel. Dark tourism or thanatourism goes far beyond the traditional resort based holiday; it is a form of travel that has the potential to incite deeper feelings and emotions. Dark tourists venture to places that have witnessed atrocities, sites and destinations that may have seen years of unimaginable horror. Dark tourism sites are wide ranging, including sites of war and conflict, human incarceration, crime scenes, resting places and sites of natural disasters (Timothy, 2011). The specific type of dark tourism discussed and explored in this thesis is that of battlefield tourism, also known as warfare tourism. This term encompasses the visiting of battlefields, war memorials, cemeteries and war museums (Dunkley et al., 2011).

Battlefields represent an interesting paradox between the 'then' and 'now.' An active battlefield becomes a location where the normal laws of society do not apply, where the objective is primarily to kill another human being. After war these sites often become sacred as they are the ground where many unfound bodies remain. A place where inhabitants (soldiers and civilians) had feared for their lives and witnessed comrades and family members die, is now open for tourists to take photos and join tour groups. Time has changed the site from one of absolute horror and pain to one of interest and remembrance. Visiting such emotionally charged sites is certainly different than visiting a beach or shopping mall, and dark tourism and battlefield tourism scholars have been investigating the motivations and impacts of visiting these sites.

The structure of this literature chapter will begin with a general overview of the philosophy of death, referring to some of the earlier works by Socrates and Montaigne to modern day philosophers to give an understanding of how the concept of death has

been viewed and debated throughout history. Following the discussion of the philosophy of death is the dark tourism literature. The philosophy and contemplation of death is linked to dark tourism as seen in the works of Seaton (1996, 1999), Stone (2006, 2009, 2011, 2012a, 2012b) and Sharpley (2012). The topic of warfare tourism begins with a brief historical background and provides the main findings and concepts surrounding battlefield tourism, specifically identifying cases that incorporate WWI and the Vietnam War. The literature then moves to more specific aspects of battlefield tourism, such as the motivations behind battlefield tourism, the debate behind the tourist and the pilgrim and issues of interpretation and authenticity. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the case study sites, including a historic timeline of events of WWI and the Vietnam War (seen in the appendices), what countries were involved, the key battlefield locations and a brief investigation into ongoing issues or debates related to the wars. A justification of the research approach for this study is also provided which is further elaborated on in the methodology chapter.

2.2 Philosophy of death

Death is a fact of life that no mortal being can escape from. Philosophers have debated mortality for thousands of years and not one of them will be able to consciously experience their death. Anxiety around death stems from the fact that humans do not know what will happen after death. This is an area that has been thoroughly debated between philosophers. Montaigne (1572-74, as cited in Schumacher, 2011) believes that since we do not worry about our non existence before conception, we should not worry about our future death. Socrates (399 BC, as cited in West & Starry West, 1998) stated that death could actually be the greatest blessing, we do not know, yet we treat it as the greatest evil. However, in contrast Kamm (1993) believes that death must be bad as everything for the individual will be over. Scherer (1971) confirms this idea by stating that no longer being is what makes death such a threat. Conversely, Feuerbach (1980) believes that death is not dreadful. If death is natural and has occurred at an advanced age and the person has achieved what they wanted in life then death is healthy. However, death is dreadful if it is an unnatural, violent death (Feuerbach, 1980). This statement fits accordingly to dark tourism and battlefield tourism. The death that is present at dark sites (battlefields) is unnatural, young soldiers who are sent to war is viewed as a horrible violent end and ultimately a waste of life. According to Malarney (2002, p. 179) death on the battlefield is considered the "quintessential bad

death." In Vietnamese culture a 'bad death' results in the soul being unable to enter the afterlife, it will remain as a wandering ghost. This is the death that is feared, this is what causes a visitor to hope for a 'good death', a natural death occurring at an advanced age.

In general, societies in the West take a different view to life and death than those living in the East. In Eastern philosophy the yin and yang represent the good and the bad, therefore East Asians see both the good and bad within issues (Ma-Kellams & Blascovich, 2012). A study conducted by Ma-Kellams and Blascovich (2012) found that Easterners viewed death as being linked to life, and when asked to think about mortality East Asians were more likely to think about life and living. Westerners were more likely to focus on the thought of death. This study may point to a reason as to why death is hidden in Western society. For Easterners thinking about death is not harmful to the self as it reminds them of living. Ma-Kellams and Blascovich's (2012) research also found that Easterners were more likely to engage in an enjoyable activity after thinking about their mortality. However, when Westerners were asked to contemplate their mortality their thoughts continued to dwell on the topic of death. This illustrates how Western society prefers to hide the issue of death as it is often associated with negative thoughts.

2.3 Dark tourism and thanatourism

Battlefield tourism is a type of warfare tourism which is connected to dark tourism, also known as thanatourism (Dunkley et al., 2011). The term 'dark tourism' was first mentioned by Foley and Lennon (1996). It involves travelling to sites associated with death, suffering, disaster, destruction and human tragedy (Timothy, 2011). Thanatourism specifically relates to travelling to a location (wholly or partially) motivated by the desire to have an actual or symbolic encounter with death (Seaton 1996). The term thanatourism comes from the word thanatology. Within contemporary philosophy thanatology aims to tame death by allowing people to face their own mortality (Schumacher, 2011). Thanatology seeks to understand human attitudes towards death and the rationality behind the human condition to fear death (Schumacher, 2011).

In regards to dark tourism, there has been debate as to whether all 'dark sites' should be considered dark tourism or thanatourism and whether tourists to those sites should be labelled as dark tourists or thanatourists. Sharpley and Stone (2009a) state that the label dark tourism or dark tourist has negative connotations, hinting that the tourist concerned is in some way ghoulish, interested in the morbid and macabre side of life. In relation to this discussion, Slade (2003) argues that Australian and New Zealand tourists to Gallipoli should not be included in Seaton's (1996) definition of thanatourism, as they are seeking to connect with their national identity, rather than an experience or connection with death. However, Scates (2002) who does not specifically study thanatourism, found that Australian visitors to WWI sites (Gallipoli and Flanders) spoke of spiritual encounters on the battlefields. Their experiences included feeling the chill in the air, being watched, God weeping when it rained and seeing ghostly figures on the landscape. This contrasts with Slade's (2003) theory that Australian and New Zealand tourists are not seeking a symbolic encounter with the dead. Even if they were not motivated by such an experience, it appears that a symbolic encounter with the dead can occur nonetheless. Through an analysis of tourist experiences at battlefields in the United Kingdom, Miles (2014) found that tourist experiences were more casual, likely to be affected by the commercialisation of historic battlefield sites, rendering them lighter in nature. As a result Miles (2014, p.134) concluded that "thanatopsis is a rare feature of tourist visits" to battlefields within the United Kingdom and calls for a more cautious description of the 'dark tourist' in tourism terminology.

Much of the literature (Strange & Kempa, 2003; Seaton, 2009; Sharpley & Stone, 2009b; Wight, 2009; Sharpley, 2009a, 2009b; Brown, 2013; Lemelin et al., 2013) on dark tourism has centred on the supply side of dark tourism and how site managers should present sensitive experiences to tourists. However, Stone and Sharpley (2008) have turned their attention to the demand for dark experiences. Stone and Sharpley (2008) explored the relationship between western society's perspectives on mortality and the potential for dark tourism to enable tourists to confront the inevitable issue of death. This theory was further conceptualised by Stone (2012a) who states that dark tourism acts as mediation between life and death. Western society is becoming more secular and everyday encounters with death are becoming less common, ordinary death is sequestered behind closed doors through the medicalisation and professionalisation of death (Stone, 2012a). Death, which for thousands of years was at the core of human

culture (Schumacher, 2011) is now hidden from the everyday world. In contemporary Western society death is kept away from the living community, it is no longer common to see people die and there is an element of uneasiness when the topic of death is discussed (Schumacher, 2011).

Death has become a taboo subject, which has been described by Gorer (1955) as the 'pornography of death.' In Victorian society death was seen and accepted as a natural part of life, yet sexuality was viewed as obscene (Gorer, 1955). By the mid 20th century, in Western society, a reversal had occurred, whereby society is no longer as prude, however death is viewed as an unmentionable topic (Gorer, 1955). To expand on this viewpoint, Walter (1991) discusses the theory that death is not a problem for modern society, but a problem for the modern individual. Traditional societies which were based on a group setting would cope with death with a communal ritual (as death threatened the group not the individual) (Bloch & Parry, 1982); while modern society focuses on the identity of the individual and so the individual is threatened (Slater, 1974). As a result, society at large does not deny death, but the individual does (Walter, 1991).

In contemporary society there is a notable 'absent-present' death paradox (Stone, 2012a). While the death of the self has been made private, the death of the other is constantly within our gaze, presented and recreated through the media (news media) and popular culture (movies, books, video games, internet) (Stone, 2012a). This is where Stone and Sharpley (2008) argue that dark tourism is able to revitalise the subject of mortality within contemporary culture. The tourist consuming a dark tourism experience is able to view death through a filter, such as education, commemoration or entertainment. This enables the self to tame or neutralise the threat of mortality (Stone and Sharpley, 2008). Neutralising the threat of mortality is an important human attitude as it would not be possible to live comfortably with the constant fear of death (Schumacher, 2011).

2.4 Dark tourism demand and supply

People who desire an encounter with the dead can utilise dark tourism as a way to link themselves (the living) with the 'other' (the dead), this also allows the dark tourist to construct their own meanings of mortality (Stone, 2012a). In contrast Biran et al.

(2011) who focused their research on Auschwitz-Birkenau found that tourists who visited the concentration camps held various motives for their visit. Many wanted to learn and understand the history of the place and to have an emotional heritage experience. Biran et al. (2011) believe that tourists who have minimal interest in death while visiting Auschwitz could be labelled as taking part in Sharpley's (2005) 'pale tourism' classification, and that the visit could relate more with heritage tourism than dark tourism. The pale tourism classification relates to tourists who have a limited interest in death and are visiting sites that were not intended to be tourist attractions (Sharpley, 2009b). Therefore, the tourists' personal motivation could determine whether a site is considered dark tourism or heritage tourism.

Following pale tourism, the matrix of dark tourism demand and supply includes grey tourism demand and grey tourism supply. Grey tourism demand involves tourists who have a fascination in death and are visiting accidental attractions which were not designed for tourism consumption. In contrast, grey tourism supply includes tourists who have a limited interest in death and are visiting sites which are purposefully exploiting death. A matrix of dark tourism demand and supply is illustrated in Figure 1.

PALEST DARK TOURISM
DEMAND

ACCIDENTAL DARK TOURISM *SUPPLY*	**PALE TOURISM**	**GREY TOURISM SUPPLY**	PURPOSEFUL DARK TOURISM *SUPPLY*
	GREY TOURISM DEMAND	**BLACK TOURISM**	

DARKEST DARK TOURISM
DEMAND
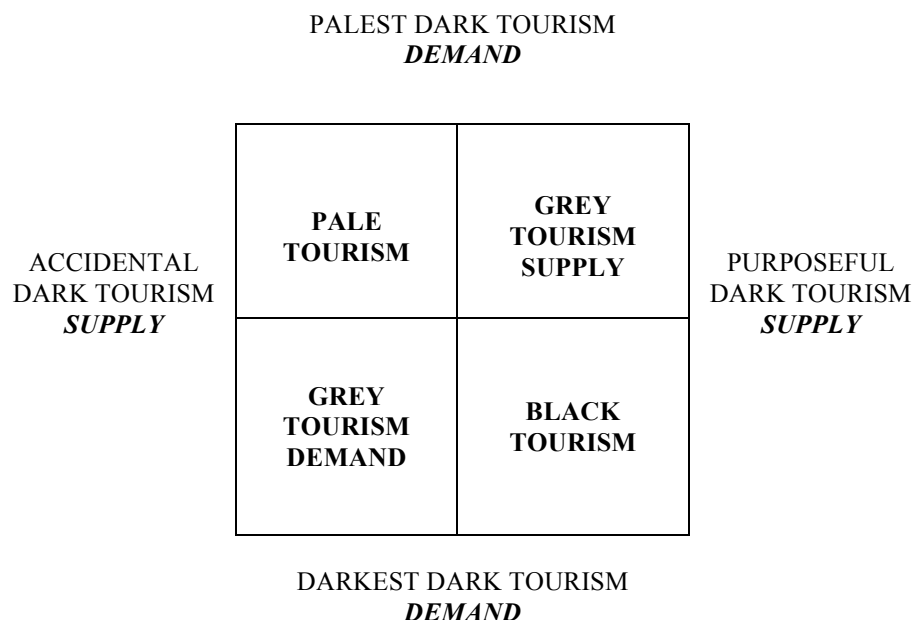
Figure 1: Matrix of dark tourism demand & supply. After Sharpley (2009b)

The final classification is black tourism which is considered by Sharpley (2009b) to be the most pure form of dark tourism. This includes tourists who have an interest in death and this interest is satisfied by purposeful supply by the operator. However, it is important to note that the dark tourism demand and supply matrix is not concrete as different tourists will consume dark tourism sites in a number of different ways (Sharpley, 2009b).

2.5 Dark tourism spectrum of supply

In relation to dark tourism classification, Stone (2006) developed a dark tourism spectrum of supply. This spectrum ranges from darkest to lightest. The darkest end of the spectrum includes sites that have actually witnessed atrocity such as the 'Killing Fields' in Cambodia, and the lightest end comprises sites that are *associated* with death, such as the London Dungeon, which today has an entertainment focus (Stone, 2006). The dark tourism spectrum helps in understanding and categorising numerous dark tourism sites which vary immensely. For example, travelling to Europe to participate in assisted suicide is referred to as death tourism; however it has also been proposed as the darkest form of dark tourism (Miller & Gonzalez, 2013; Sharpley, 2009b), as it includes the tourism industry and death. When looking at death tourism it is difficult to view it as a form of dark tourism alongside themed attractions such as haunted houses, which are dark in subject matter yet are very entertainment focused. This is where the dark tourism spectrum can enable such diverse sites and products to be labelled as dark depending on their content and context.

Considering the shade of darkness of a site involves a number of factors. Stone's (2006) dark tourism spectrum outlines darker sites as having greater political influence and ideology, an educational orientation, more focused on commemoration, a perception of authentic interpretation, an authentic location, likely to be more recent in occurrence, the supply of the product is non-purposeful and as such there is likely to be less tourism infrastructure. In contrast, the lightest dark tourism sites have weak political influence and ideology, an entertainment orientation, a commercial basis, a perception of inauthentic interpretation, the location is likely to be seen as inauthentic, the event may have occurred in the distant past, the supply is more probable to be purposeful and thus it is expected that the level of tourism infrastructure will be higher (Stone, 2006). Although Sharpley (2009b) states that the spectrum of supply could

run the risk of oversimplifying the complex nature of dark tourism, it nevertheless aids in the conceptualisation of the wide variety of dark tourism attractions. The dark tourism spectrum of supply is illustrated in Figure 2.

SITES OF DEATH & SUFFERING					SITES ASSOCIATED WITH DEATH & SUFFERING
Greater political influence & ideology					Lesser political influence & ideology
DARKEST	DARKER	DARK	LIGHT	LIGHTER	LIGHTEST
Educational focus					Entertainment focus
History – Commemorative					Heritage - Commercial
'Authentic' product (Location & interpretation)					'Inauthentic' product (Location & interpretation)
Relatively recent event					Longer time since event
Accidental supply					Purposeful supply
Less tourism infrastructure					Greater tourism infrastructure

Figure 2: Dark tourism spectrum of supply. After Stone (2006)

The selected case studies (WWI and Vietnam War sites) would be placed at various points across the dark tourism spectrum of supply. For example, actual battlefields that witnessed death are located at the darker end of the spectrum, while memorials or nearby museums related to the wars are located towards the middle of the spectrum.

2.6 The other dead

The other dead refers to the other which a tourist can encounter during a dark tourism experience. The word 'other' in a dark tourism context can be connected to the meaning of 'the other' given in earlier anthropology and tourism literature (Said, 1978; Hollinshead, 1999; Urry, 2002). The term other has commonly referred to someone or people who are different from us. The other presented in dark tourism is different to us as they have died in (usually) horrific circumstances, unlike the 'normal' death that most expect to face. Mediating with the other dead involves the transfer of information about those who have died with tourists (Stone, 2012a).

According to Stone (2012a) dark tourism acts as a new mediating institution which protects, maintains and influences the relationships that people hold between the living and the dead. With secularism it is said that modern societies have separated the connection that the living have with the dead (Walter, 2009). However, connections can still be made via traditional mediators such as graves, genealogy, music, literature, family, language, photographs and history (Walter, 2009). According to Walter (2009) two mediators that have become key institutions between the living and the dead in modernity are the mass media and tourism. During times of tragedy people turn to the news media to obtain information and try to understand and make sense of what has occurred (Walter, 2005). Essentially society helps make sense of mortality and is able to make a connection with the dead via the media rather than the priest (Stone, 2012a). Walter (2009, p. 44) goes on to state that the media and dark tourism are closely linked as "they both mediate sudden or violent death to mass audiences."

2.7 Dark tourism – mediators linking the living to the dead

2.7.1 Haunting memories at dark tourism sites

Through the consumption of dark tourism the self can encounter the other dead (Stone, 2012a). There are various relationships that one can have with the dead; this includes 'haunting memories' where the unquiet dead haunt society. Haunting memories are the most apparent when the victims have died in vain, such as meaningless or illegal wars (Walter, 2009). Deaths and tragic events which are the

most difficult to understand usually form the basis for dark tourism (Stone, 2012a); their haunting nature disturbs people, which is not easy to forget. There is a sense of needing to comprehend the event, this is when a connection can be made between the self and the other dead (Stone, 2012a). For American tourists visiting Vietnam there may be a need to see the country and try to understand what happened. Many Americans will have witnessed media and popular culture representations of the Vietnam War and thus they may hold haunting memories caused by the actions of their government. Taking a trip to Vietnam could potentially, for an emotionally engaged tourist, create mediation between the self and the causalities of war.

2.7.2 Narrative at dark tourism sites

Interpretation and its use of narrative is an important aspect of any dark tourism site. This is how the dead can communicate their story to tourists to consume as an experience (Stone, 2012a). The narrative at Robben Island, the prison which held the former South African President Nelson Mandela, promotes reconciliation, the triumph of the human spirit and the ability to achieve victory over repression (Strange & Kempa, 2003). Narrative can produce and enhance an emotional experience for the visitor (Kang et al., 2012). At Gallipoli narrative is utilised to communicate the struggles of the ANZACs during the failed Gallipoli campaign (Slade, 2003). The use of effective narrative acts as the starting point in the mediation of mortality between the tourist and the other dead. However, as mentioned earlier interpretation at contested sites such as battlefields can invoke the questioning of authenticity. Ryan (2007b) states that a visitor should question why a site is interpreted in such a way, who has done the interpreting and what information has been left out.

2.7.3 Education as a mediating institution

Education is another form of mediating institution, linking the tourist (living) with the dead. In regards to battlefield tourism, the battlefield tour is a common way for tourists to visit a site of historic warfare and receive an educational experience. A battlefield tour is usually led by a knowledgeable guide who will provide guests with an understanding of what happened at the specific site. Dunkley et al. (2011) found a motivating factor for joining a battlefield tour was having a historical interest in the site, either personal or general. Winter (2011a) also supported education being a motivating

factor for participation in battlefield tourism; research participants stated that education was an important reason to visit WWI sites. Across the Western Front there are several large visitor centres and museums which help to educate tourists about the history of the sites (Winter, 2011a). Education aids the visitor in understanding the events that took place, and thus the visitor may have a greater chance in undertaking an emotive and engaging experience.

2.7.4 Entertainment linking the living and the dead

The use of entertainment at dark tourism sites also helps to mediate between the living and the dead. Entertainment may seem immoral at a dark tourism site; however, dark tourism does provide a socially sanctioned place in which a taboo topic (death) can be consumed (Stone, 2012a). Referring to Stone's (2006) dark tourism spectrum of supply, dark tourism sites which utilise entertainment as a component of the product are likely to be considered as the lightest dark attractions. Products such as the London Dungeon represent death in a sanitised form which is less authentic (Stone, 2006), and thus it is viewed as a socially acceptable way to reproduce the concept of death as entertainment. Battlefield sites such as Gallipoli can present a paradox regarding the touristic experience. Commemorative services on April 25th are very solemn, yet the evening prior to the dawn service can resemble a concert or camping party with many young Australian and New Zealand backpackers celebrating through the night (Scates, 2002). This demonstrates how dark events which involve significant contemplation of life and death can also include elements of entertainment.

2.7.5 Memorialisation to connect with the dead

When an event cannot be remembered through first hand memory it becomes remembrance and over time this evolves into memorialisation and then history (Stone, 2012a). WWI and those who died have become part of remembrance and memorialisation as people must learn about the events through books, media (Walter, 2009) and travel. Although the deaths are not personally witnessed during our time, commemoration is given as a way to remember them (Walter, 2009). This remembrance and memorialisation acts as a mediating relationship between the living and the dead (Stone, 2012a), possibly providing an opportunity for tourists to contemplate their own mortality. Memorials are often located on battlefields and

people travel to these structures as a way to remember and commemorate those who have died (Baldwin & Sharpley, 2009). Although many visitors will have no personal connection to the dead, memorials provide a public place where visitors can contemplate their personal and collective thoughts, memory and understanding of the war.

2.7.6 Memento mori the reminders of death

Another way in which dark tourism can connect the living to the dead is through feelings of 'memento mori' (reminders that one will die). Memento mori can be traced back to the Middle Ages with the 'Dance of Death' (Seaton, 1996). This was a depiction of a skeleton, a symbol of death, which carried people away. The meaning behind the 'Dance of Death' was to remind people to enjoy the time they had before it was taken from them (Seaton, 1996). Seaton (1996) proposes that dark tourism is an extension of the Romantic era and its depictions of death (such as the Dance of Death); it is a cultural representation which reminds people of their mortality as they experience everyday life (Stone, 2012a).

> "The death of the other reveals to me that I personally belong to the category of 'everyone,' that I, too, am one of those 'other' mortals."
> (Schumacher, 2011, p. 116).

In terms of dark tourism consumption, a dark experience can enable the self to construct their own meaning of mortality (Stone, 2012a). Although Walter (2009) states that individual tourists who are reminded of their own mortality are likely to have varied experiences. A dark encounter could act as a shield from our own mortality; we see the viewed death as completely unrelated to how our own will be. In Stone's (2012a) opinion the degree of memento mori experienced by tourists is the heart of dark tourism. Conversely, Stone (2012a) acknowledges that the way in which sites are narrated will have an effect on how death and mortality are presented and consumed (e.g. through education, entertainment, memory). In contrast, Biran and Poria (2012) assert that an individuals' perception of a site (whether they view it as dark) is the core element of dark tourism.

2.7.7 Moral instruction and its relation to the dead

Moral instruction is another way for people to relate to the dead. Dark tourism sites allow emotionally engaged tourists to undergo a process of self-reflection (Stone, 2012a). This self-reflection can provide tourists with the desire to prevent future intolerances or atrocities that they encounter (Robb, 2009). Moral instruction at sites of conflict can include narratives of tolerance, hope and peace (Stone, 2012a). Leopold (2007, p. 57) believes that war heritage sites have an obligation to promote peace "through the commemoration of the past and education of future generations." In the absence of death in everyday life, dark tourism can present a resurgence of death within the public sphere (Stone & Sharpley, 2008). Absent death is made present to the public and is able to be gazed upon (Stone & Sharpley, 2008). Therefore dark tourism has the potential to aid people in creating and understanding personal meanings of life and death. Consequently, Stone (2009) believes that dark tourism may have more relation to life and living, than death and dying.

2.8 Warfare tourism

Sites associated with warfare have attracted visitors for over a thousand years (Baldwin & Sharpley, 2009). War and its relation to tourism can be connected to the early Grand Tours which were taken by upper-class European young men from the mid 16th century into the early 19th century (Towner, 1984). The Grand Tour would encompass an itinerary of Europe which was partially shaped by war (Seaton, 1999). These tours were influenced by the classics of Homer, Virgil and Caesar (Seaton, 1999), literature which is centred on war and battles. The Battle of Hastings which occurred in England in 1066 attracted 67,000 visitors in 2005 (Piekarz, 2007a). An engaging visitor centre provides visitors with interpretation of the battle, enabling them to understand the history of the land. Over the past 100 years battlefield tourism has increased considerably, a result from the growth in tourism and from the number of wars and battles that have occurred in recent times (Baldwin & Sharpley, 2009).

Smith (1996) states that war is a deeply imbedded human activity; it gives "meaning and memory to places and events that link warfare to tourism" (p. 248). As a result Smith (1996) suggests that war related tourist attractions are probably one of the largest single tourism categories. The First World War (WWI) 1914-1918 can be

viewed as the defining moment in which battlefield tourism became widely recognised (Baldwin & Sharpley, 2009). However, the WWI battlefields were not the earliest to attract battlefield tourists or the attention of academics. The Battle of Waterloo 1815 (present day Belgium) drew in tourists even while the battle was still occurring (Seaton, 1999). It was the most visited battlefield in Europe until the battlefields of WWI took precedence in the 1920s and 1930s (Seaton, 1999). Seaton (1999) recognised the category of the recreational tourist who visited Waterloo. These individuals (mainly English) travelled to Waterloo after the battle keen to see the authentic aftermath of war, in their eyes a sight of achievement.

Visiting battlefield sites has often been described as a pilgrimage. The use of this term came into popularity by war writers following WWI (Lloyd, 1998). Travellers, who made the journey to a place now considered sacred ground, especially to those connected to the war, were viewed as pilgrims. War and pilgrimage has largely been connected to WWI visitors due to the scale and nature of the war and society's culture at the time. WWI servicemen described the horrors which took place, the death which surrounded them, their connection to those who had died and also religious references to the 'holy ground' where their comrades rested (Lloyd, 1998). A combination of these factors led to the connection between pilgrimage and war. Various academic articles have been published exploring the issues of pilgrimage to WWI battlefields.

Scates (2002) explored how pilgrimage to the cemeteries of WWI (Gallipoli) can create a reappraisal of gender and national identity for Australian travellers. Scates' (2002) qualitative study also examined the complexity of both personal and collective memory of WWI and how meaning changes which each generation. In following the concept of pilgrimage, Hyde and Harman (2011) refer to travel to Gallipoli by Australians and New Zealanders as a secular pilgrimage. The findings from this quantitative study found that a journey to Gallipoli can be motivated by spirituality, nationalism, family pilgrimage, friendship and travel (Hyde & Harman, 2011). Winter (2011a) undertook a quantitative study looking at the motivations of international tourists at WWI battlefield sites in Belgium. The results found that tourist motivations revolve around acts of remembrance and education (Winter, 2011a).

The WWI battlefields of today are physically unremarkable, yet they hold strong appeal due to the development of mythology and imagery (Iles, 2008) which has continued into

modern social memory. This act of memory can be articulated today through the participation in battlefield tours. The battlefield tour guide takes on the task of engaging tourists with their emotions and imagination (Iles, 2008) to try and understand the events which took place so long ago. War cemeteries enable the war dead to remain in social memory, in the act of visitation tourists facilitate this memory to continue (Winter, 2011b). Tourists who visit a particular cemetery will usually do so depending on their nationality or family involvement (Winter, 2011b). Another important factor is the location of the cemetery or its proximity to an important site (Winter, 2011b), indicating that accessibility is a contributing factor to visitation numbers.

Vietnam War tourism literature does not refer to the concept of war and pilgrimage. This is probably due to the fact that the Vietnam War does not have the same 'romanticised' or religious connotations as WWI, nor was it near the same scale in terms of death. When looking at a historic timeline, the Vietnam War is still considered as a relatively recent war (veterans are still alive today). It is also not without controversy, regarding political reasons for involvement, the use of the draft in the US and the military strategies used by the US, such as carpet bombing and the use of the herbicide Agent Orange (Hallin, 2006; Karnow, 1997). As a result battlefield tourism literature related to Vietnam has focused on a range of concepts which are comparatively different to those of WWI tourism literature.

Henderson (2000) explored the concept of war as a tourist attraction in Vietnam, examining the challenges involved when such a sensitive topic is presented to national and international tourists. Care is needed in balancing the desire for education and entertainment (Henderson, 2000), along with managing the different perceptions that tourists bring with them. Since the Vietnam War is still within living memory, Agrusa et al. (2006) investigated the potential of American veterans returning to Vietnam as tourists through a quantitative survey. The results of the survey were mixed with most veterans having a low interest in returning, yet for those who did want to return there was a high interest in wanting to visit war displays and museums (Agrusa et al., 2006).

Qualitative battlefield tourism literature has investigated complex issues related to how Western popular culture has impacted on tourists' views of Vietnam as a war rather than a country. Alneng (2002) states that Western tourists to Vietnam often

refer to Hollywood movies as their knowledge of the Vietnam War and would dismiss authentic war cemeteries as government propaganda. Schwenkel (2006) conducted an ethnographic study focusing on Vietnam's contemporary memory of the war and its relation to tourism. Schwenkel (2006) notes that the name 'American War' is utilised to target a domestic market when presenting the war as a tourist product. In contrast, the war is marketed as the 'Vietnam War' for US and other international tourists. Vietnamese tour operators take on the Vietnam War narrative that is represented in US history and popular culture (Schwenkel, 2006). Battlefields are often contested sites to visit with many complex angles relating to history, nationality and politics. The tourists who visit battlefields bring with them their own knowledge and interpretation of the past and present, and this is what makes the battlefield tourist experience an interesting area to research.

2.9 War and Tourism

War itself has had a significant impact on present day tourism. The technological advances developed during WWII, such as the aircraft, enabled people to engage in international travel (Smith, 1998). For small pacific islands such as the Solomon Islands, WWII led to the creation of infrastructure, this included airfields, hospitals, roads, housing and wharf facilities (Panakera, 2007). War also fostered the belief that people should have the freedom to travel internationally (Smith, 1998). Having the freedom to travel is seen as a privilege of those living in democratic nations. The connection between freedom and travel has continued to be emphasised in times of war and conflict. A 'Tourism Week' was established in 2004 in the state of Louisiana to encourage Americans to travel (Weaver, 2011). The concept was developed by the Travel Industry Association as a way of 'thanking the troops for protecting their freedoms to travel' (Milligan, 2004). In this way tourism has become connected to American values which were developed during WWII. After 1945 an unprecedented number of people began to take part in leisure activities, this was termed "post-war" tourism (Lisle, 2000). Tourism was also seen as a way to promote global understanding, a peacemaking activity that enabled people to see other cultures and appreciate our similarities rather than our differences (Lisle, 2000). It is believed that establishing peace between nations would be more likely if people are able to travel to other countries and learn about their way of life. This theory promotes the idea of the 'global village.' The term 'global village' relates to the bonds that people have with

individuals all over the world (D'Amore, 1988); that human beings share more similarities that unite us, rather than differences that divide us (Lisle, 2000).

2.9.1 Motivations for battlefield tourism

Battlefields are considered a sub-category of warfare attractions (Baldwin & Sharpley, 2009), which includes war memorials, historic battlefields, active war zones, cemeteries, graves and museums (Timothy, 2011). There are a number of reasons why tourists are motivated to take part in battlefield tourism; interestingly sites which have witnessed the most violence are usually the most appealing (Timothy, 2011). Dunkley et al. (2011) explored the motivations of battlefield tourists to the WWI battlefields of Somme and Ypres. Findings revealed themes surrounding pilgrimage and remembrance, validation and special interest. Hyde and Harman (2011) focused on motives for secular pilgrimage to the Gallipoli battlefields, through their research five motives emerged, these were: spiritual, nationalistic, family pilgrimage, friendship and travel. Tourist motivations to the WWI town of Ypres in Belgium were segmented based on the factors of education, holiday and remembrance (Winter, 2011a).

Thi Le and Pearce (2011) conducted a quantitative study, focusing on the segmentation of battlefield tourists to Vietnam's former demilitarised zone (DMZ) based on their motivations. Three groups were identified: (1) the passive tourist (2) the opportunist and (3) the battlefield tourism enthusiast. The battlefield tourism enthusiast is mainly in Vietnam for a holiday, yet they show a greater interest in education and history than the other two categories (Thi Le & Pearce, 2011). In some regards they can be referred to as "Battlefield visitors for a day" (Thi Le & Pearce, 2011, p. 461) as the majority have not travelled to Vietnam specifically to visit battlefields.

Dann's (1977) theory for "What makes tourists travel?" is the push and pull tourist motivation framework. Push factors view the tourist as a subject and looks at the factors which predispose that person to travel (Dann, 1977). In contrast, pull factors are what attract the tourist to that particular destination (Dann, 1977). In regards to battlefield or war tourism, push factors include, but are not limited to, a desire to express an interest in death, morbid curiosity, to learn about history, commemorate

lost lives, guilt or to affirm national or cultural identity (Panakera, 2007). Pull factors to war related sites include remembrance and education, often times this relates to an interest in heritage (Panakera, 2007). When considering both visitors who are connected to the war and those who are not, the main motivations for visiting battlefields are to commemorate those who died, to learn about the war that occurred and to gain an understanding of why it happened. Frost (2007, p. 187) states that the interest tourists have in visiting battlefields "is in the continuing meaning and significance of historic battles to modern societies." Thus, past wars still have an impact on today's societies and battlefield tourists are seeking an understanding of how the past events are affecting our present day.

2.9.2 The tourist and the pilgrim

A key issue which features frequently in discussions of battlefield tourism is the distinction between the battlefield 'tourist' and the 'pilgrim' (Baldwin & Sharpley, 2009). A battlefield pilgrim (someone who was personally connected to the war concerned through the loss of a family member) was originally seen to have higher status than the tourist who was looked upon negatively, seen to be ghoulish, gazing upon a site of mass death (Baldwin & Sharpley, 2009). By the late 1800s people were unsure of the morality concerning battlefield tourism (Lloyd, 1998). In 1915 Thomas Cook, the travel agency, had to discontinue trips to the WWI battlefields after receiving many enquiries from interested tourists (Lles, 2008). Civilians visiting the active battlefields of WWI were referred to as 'trench tourists' (Sherman, 1999, p. 36).

However, today's battlefield tourists to WWI sites have been found to exhibit similar characteristics as pilgrims and vice versa. Winter (2011a) found that both tourists and pilgrims wished to commemorate the war and also have an educational experience. This led Winter (2011a) to propose that battlefield tourists should not be defined in opposition to pilgrims. This is in contrast to Baldwin and Sharpley (2009) who theorised that pilgrims have a focus on spirituality, while tourists have a focus on education and understanding, and each take part in their own form of remembrance. Another factor which ties tourists and pilgrims together is that of national identity. Hyde and Harman (2011) highlight the deeply meaningful experiences which Australian and New Zealand travellers can have when making the pilgrimage to the battlefields of Gallipoli. The majority of these travellers were motivated by

nationalistic motives tied to national identity. This demonstrates how tourists without a personal family connection cannot always be classified as leisure tourists simply wishing to gaze upon a site of mass murder. Hence, pilgrims and tourists can be harder to separate based on their experiences.

2.9.3 Interpretation and authenticity of battlefield sites

A significant difficulty regarding battlefield sites concerns interpretation and authenticity. When consuming a battlefield experience the tourist needs to consider who is presenting the interpretation. Leopold (2007) proposed a code of conduct for war heritage sites which included the maintenance of accuracy. The code stated: "Truthful displays and an un-biased representation of artefacts have to be ensured to present an objective picture of war heritage sites" (Leopold, 2007, p. 56). War heritage sites that present government propaganda can be especially harmful as they distort the truth and make it harder for former foes to become friends.

Governments can manipulate the presentation and interpretation of contested sites, and as a result visitors who desire an educative experience must question the narrative that is being communicated (Panakera, 2007). In addition to this, popular culture such as movies, books and video games can create a myth around real war events (Wight, 2007), thus having an influence on how history is presented and remembered. This creates a challenge for any battlefield site manager and tour guide as they must aim to present the truth to their visitors without sanitising or misrepresenting history.

Tourists who wish to visit battlefields can often desire an imagined brush with danger (Lisle, 2000); however their needs for safety and comfort are also a significant factor that affects the authenticity of battlefield attractions. The Cu Chi Tunnels in Vietnam are an example of how a tourist attraction must balance the need for a war time experience with that of safety and comfort. Machine gun fire takes place in the distant background to achieve the experience of 'being there' in the war, however the tunnels themselves (once used by the Viet Cong) are now enlarged for tourists and are dimly lit with emergency exits and also sprayed to eradicate spiders and snakes (Schwenkel, 2009). This illustrates how the Cu Chi Tunnels are no longer entirely authentic. The tourist who desires to be a 'war hero' must be reassured that the attraction is safe.

Frost (2007) states that battlefield tourism can be viewed as 'heritage dissonance.' This concept was developed by Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996) who described the term as applying to situations where heritage interpretation caused a lack of agreement between the various groups that were connected to that heritage. Lemelin et al. (2013) have noted that the narratives of indigenous people from North America and Australia are often omitted from battlefield tourism sites; the colonial narrative is the dominant voice. Controversies surrounding governments' handling of war events extends to issues off the battlefield, such as Japan's history textbooks which are said to whitewash Japanese war crimes during WWII (Cooper, 2007). Also the Bush Administrations' control of the media which prevented photographs being taken of American flag draped coffins returning home from Iraq (Belenky, 2009). This was in contrast to the Vietnam War where returning coffins were often photographed and thus people were unable to forget the costs of war (Telegraph Media Group Limited, 2009).

2.9.4 War life-cycle

Weaver (2000) proposed a model which helps to explain the impact of war on tourism from a destination life-cycle perspective based on Butler's (1980) destination life-cycle model. Weaver's (2000) version of the war distorted life-cycle model has four separate stages, these are Pre-war, War, Post-war A and Post-war B. During the *Pre-war stage* the destination will see a drop in tourist arrivals as there is an associated risk attached with visiting this destination; there is a sense of *instability* (Weaver, 2000). The *War stage* involves the outbreak of actual conflict and thus a *collapse* of the tourism industry occurs. Following the collapse, an *exploration* phase will emerge; this includes the more extreme adventure travellers. Piekarz (2007b) describes these tourists as 'hot war travellers' as they often seek the thrill of being in a war zone. Following *War* is the *Post-war stage A*; this is when tourist numbers begin to increase. These travellers tend to include the adventure tourists, the curious and family members searching for loved ones. Weaver (2000) describes this as an *early recovery*, and as visitor numbers pick up the destination enters a *late recovery* phase, however the destination is still considered dangerous and people employed in the peacekeeping industry may still be present.

As time passes and visitor numbers continue to increase the destination is said to enter a *development* phase (Weaver, 2000). This is when the increases reflect growth that would have occurred had there been no war. At this stage veterans may return to the former war zone as tourists. As a general tourist market increases (non participants of the war) the destination enters the *late development* phase. During this phase the destination may have little indication that it was once a war zone as battlefields may simply resemble grassy fields. Significant anniversaries of the war will be commemorated (i.e. fifty years). Leopold (2007) believes that Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos would be classified in the development to late development phases as they are receiving an increase in visitation by veterans and also by general tourists who are showing an interest in war related sites.

Weaver (2000) states that as significant anniversaries are reached the destination would achieve peak visitation levels which would indicate that the destination was nearing the *commemoration plateau* phase. Following peak visitation numbers the destination will naturally enter an *adjustment* phase as visitor numbers slowly decline as veterans of the war begin to pass away. Sites connected to WWII would be within this phase. As Cooper (2007) states, WWII veterans are now octogenarians and thus their source as a battlefield tourist market will no longer be relevant. The final stage of the destination life-cycle is the *Post-war stage B*; at this point there are no longer any living veterans from the war, this is the stage in which WWI sites are situated. However, visitation continues as the site may take on a mythological or symbolic status as the site is seen as sacred ground. The destination enters a phase of *stability* whereby visitor numbers will peak during certain commemorations and anniversaries, such as ANZAC day which is commemorated at Gallipoli every April 25th. These services help to reinforce the mythological status of these sites (Weaver, 2000), for example Australia and New Zealand is connected to Gallipoli through the association of it being the psychological birth place of the two nations. Wars of the past will enable future tourism activities, and at the same time tourism will enable visitors the opportunity to encounter the wars of the past (Lisle, 2000). A visual of this concept is presented in Figure 3.
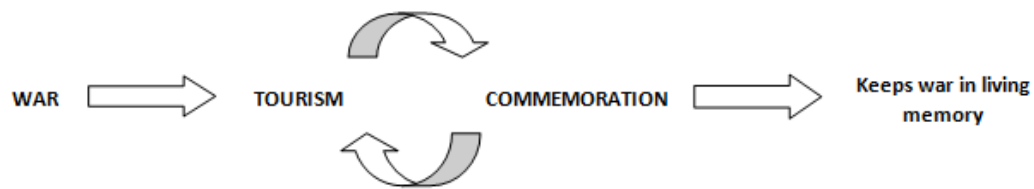
Figure 3: War, tourism and commemoration cycle.
Adapted from: Scofidio and Diller (1994) and Lisle (2000)

The war life-cycle is represented in Figure 4 which highlights the stage where WWI and Vietnam War sites are currently sitting. WWI sites are at the Post-war B stage which is expressed as stability. Vietnam War sites are situated in the Post-war A stage which is located between the development to late development phases.
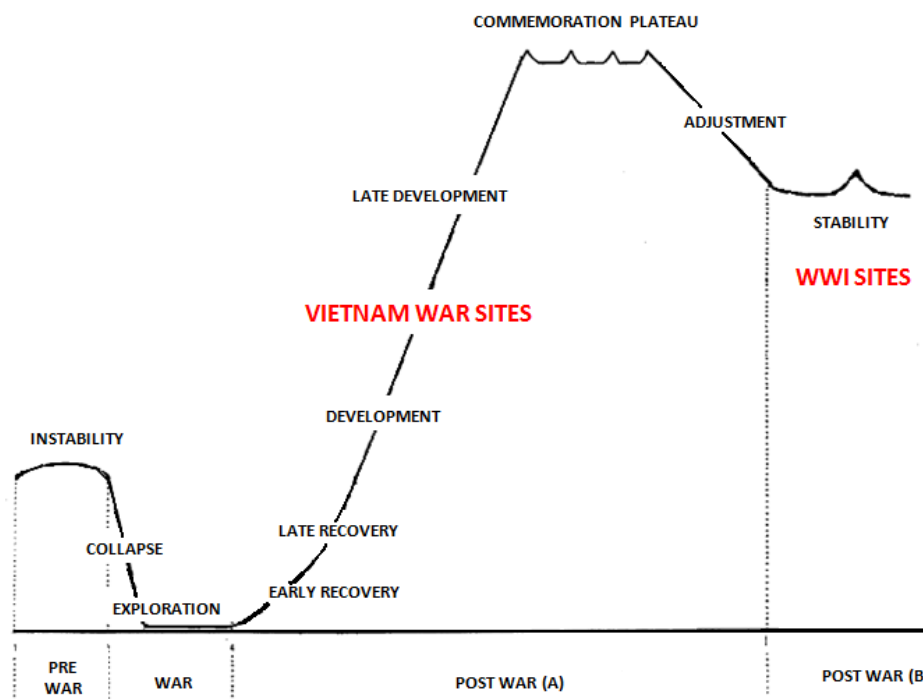
Figure 4: War-distorted Destination Life-cycle. After Weaver (2000)

2.10 Battlefield case studies

The case studies selected for this thesis have been chosen for several reasons, relating to past dark tourism and battlefield tourism literature, growth in the tourism industry, popularity of certain war sites and timely relevance. The selected case study sites (WWI and Vietnam War) both include battlefields which resulted from separate wars

during the 20th century. Although these case studies mutually represent a form of dark tourism and battlefield tourism they cannot be directly compared to one another as the two wars have important differences that make direct comparisons inappropriate. The warfare tourist attractions of WWI and the Vietnam War will be investigated in a manner that draws insights into the reflections of tourists who have experienced these war attractions. The key differences between WWI and the Vietnam War are a historical timeline, the scale of the war, the countries involved in the conflicts and their different perspectives and cultures and the political justifications for the two wars. The following segment discusses the case study sites, including a brief history of the wars and an outline of the countries involved. A chronology of the wars and summary of the key sites are attached in the appendices.

2.10.1 WWI

World War One, also known as the First World War or the Great War, was a global conflict that began on 28 July 1914 with the Austrian Emperor Franz Josef declaring war on Serbia, following the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. The war ended on 11 November 1918 with an armistice signed between the Allies and Germany. WWI was comprised of several different self-contained campaigns which represented separate national goals (Strachan, 2013). This meaning that often the origin of battles were distinct from one another and were carried out in the hopes of achieving a national objective. These campaigns are commonly known as the Western Front, Eastern Front, Gallipoli, Italian Front, Palestine Front, Mesopotamian Front and the sea war. The main countries involved in WWI are separated into either the Allied Powers or the Central Powers, as seen in Table 2.

WWI included forces from across Europe, Africa, the Middle East and East Asia. The factors that led the major powers of Europe to war are complex and historians continue to debate the underlying causes of the war. It is believed that a combination of factors occurring at the same time all contributed to the declaration of war. These factors include a desire to expand empires, an arms race between major powers, treaties that ensured other countries would go to war if an empire did, social turmoil caused by the Industrial Revolution and miscalculations by rulers and military generals (PBS, 2014b). What is easily identifiable is the event which triggered WWI into action.

Table 2: Main countries involved in WWI

Allied Powers	Central Powers
France	German Empire
British Empire	Austria-Hungary
• United Kingdom	Ottoman Empire
• Australia	Bulgaria
• Canada	
• India	
• New Zealand	
• South Africa	
Russian Empire	
Italy	
United States	
Serbia	
Romania	
Belgium	
Greece	
Japan	

(Simkins et al., 2013; Countries of the World, 2014)

On 28 June 1914 the Serbian nationalist Gavrilo Princip used a revolver to assassinate the Archduke Franz Ferdinand who was the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary. One month later Austria-Hungary declared war against Serbia. Germany and Austria-Hungary did not intend the war to expand outside Europe; however other empires had their own national interests (O'Neill, 2013).

WWI utilised the tactics of 19th century warfare, combined with 20th century technology. Both the British and German empires were successful in developing new warfare technology; however this development made WWI an industrial war which only extended the fighting and resulted in significant loss of life and resources. By the end of the war on 11 November 1918 over nine million people had died (PBS, 2014b). The outcome of WWI has shaped the world we see today. Strong empires fell (German, Russian, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman), while others were left significantly damaged (British and French). This made way for a new order, namely the US rose to take position as the new global power militarily and economically (Hart, 2013). A brief chronology of the key events of WWI can be seen in Appendix 1.

The map depicted in Figure 5 highlights some of the key WWI battlefield sites.

Figure 5: Map highlighting WWI sites
(CIA: The World Factbook 2013-2014a)

Literature on WWI tourism research has focused on cemetery visitor books and the differences between pilgrims and tourists (Winter, 2011b); religion and pilgrimage on the Western Front (Clarke & Eastgate, 2011), social memory through forms of commemoration (Winter, 2009), motivations in battlefield tourism – Somme and Ypres (Dunkley et al., 2011), Gallipoli pilgrimage (West, 2008; Hyde & Harman, 2011), and also a concentrated focus on national identity relating to Gallipoli and the ANZACs (McKenna & Ward, 2007; Scates, 2002; Slade, 2003). WWI as a focus of research has produced a variety of studies, therefore existing literature is utilised for this study. However the concept of mortality mediation has not been applied to WWI sites, hence WWI has been selected as a case study to draw insights into the dark tourist experience.

Selecting WWI sites and the Vietnam War adds the factor of a historical timeline, since WWI occurred from 1914 to 1918 and the Vietnam War from 1956 to 1975. Some of the most well known sites from WWI include, Gallipoli (Turkey) and the Western Front (Belgium and France), which includes the battles of Ypres (Passchendaele), Somme and Verdun. Since these sites are the most well known they

are likely to be the most visited by tourists and thus presented online in travel blogs. Another factor which must be mentioned is the timely relevance of the 100 year anniversary of the beginning of WWI on 28th July 1914. Anniversaries marking special milestones, such as semi-centennials and centennials, will result in peak visitor numbers as special dates involve commemorational services (Weaver, 2000). Several of the key WWI battlefields are discussed in Appendix 2 to highlight their importance during the war and as a result their popularity today.

The former battlefields of WWI are now identified by their cemeteries and memorials which were established by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) by Sir Fabian Ware in 1917 (CWGC, 2014). The cemeteries in Belgium, France and Gallipoli were constructed to provide a social memory of WWI and to honour the dead individually (Winter, 2011b). They were also designed to remind visitors of the sacrifice made by ordinary civilian-soldiers and to suggest unity of a nation as all of the graves are uniform in design, regardless of rank or social class (Lloyd, 1998). Furthermore travel to the WWI battlefields during the 1920s provided a visual horror of war and led to the desire to work for peace (Lloyd, 1998). The memory of WWI and its traditions of remembrance continue today. For example, at Menin Gate in Belgium the Last Post is played every night at 8:00pm by members of the local Fire Brigade. This practice began at the unveiling of the memorial in 1927 (CWGC, 2014). Lloyd (1998) states that ceremonies such as the one at Menin Gate enabled mourners to connect with their bereaved relatives, to feel that they were with them once again and they would not be forgotten. The concepts of remembrance and sacrifice are also noted at annual ceremonies in Gallipoli, this being the Dawn Service every Anzac Day (25 April). The Gallipoli Peninsula has numerous cemeteries and memorials honouring the dead who fought for the Allies and the Ottoman Empire. The Lone Pine and the Chunuk Bair memorial honour the Anzacs and the Canakkale Martyrs' Memorial and the 57th Infantry Regiment Memorial honour the Turkish soldiers.

Since WWI was a global war that resulted in mass casualties and the use of resources, many defining outcomes were to take place which went on to shape the 20th century as well as the 21st. The events of the war led to the fall of the German, Russian, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires (Hart, 2013). It also led to the decline in the economic power of the British and French empires. As a result the US took on the

role as a new global power, and Russia's Revolution led to communism. The horrendous post-war social and economic conditions left many unsettled which eventually bred feelings of nationalism and racism which went on to shape the Second World War (WWII) (Hart, 2013). The immense human costs of WWI had an impact on political opinion as to what should be done to control and deter the use of military power in the future. Negotiation rather than force was viewed as the best alternative to war and US President Woodrow Wilson established the League of Nations (O'Neill, 2013). Its founding principles went on to shape the United Nations.

2.10.2 Vietnam War

The Vietnam War, known in Vietnam as the American War, occurred from 1956 to 1975. It is also referred to the as the Second Indochina War which occurred soon after the First Indochina War with the French (1946 to 1954). It should be noted that the name 'Vietnam War' will be referred to in this study as opposed to the name 'American War.' The reason being is that this study is largely seen from a Western perspective. The countries involved in the Vietnam War are separated into Anti-Communist and Communist forces, many had direct involvement or a supporting role. Table 3 outlines the situation.

The centre of the Vietnam War was based on the different ideologies of North and South Vietnam. North Vietnam had defeated the French administration in the First Indochina War and believed that Vietnam should follow a communist regime similar to China or the Soviet Union (Hosch, 2010). In contrast the South Vietnamese government wanted to follow the Western approach to governance. As this conflict grew the US feared that if South Vietnam was defeated then the 'domino effect' would occur. This is the theory that if the Communists were the victors then much of Asia would fall to communism, likened to a row of dominoes falling over (Isserman, 2010).

Table 3: Main countries involved in Vietnam War

Anti-Communist	Communist
South Vietnam	North Vietnam
United States	Viet Cong (National Liberation Front)
South Korea	Khmer Rouge
Australia	Pathet Lao
Thailand	
New Zealand	**Support**
Khmer Republic	China
Kingdom of Laos	Soviet Union
	Cuba
Support	North Korea
Philippines	Czechoslovakia
Taiwan	Bulgaria
Spain	

(Karnow, 1997; Clymer, 2006; Spector, 2013)

To try and prevent the domino effect the US sided with South Vietnam by offering military advice. However eventually this resulted in the deployment of active combat troops (1965) as full on warfare developed. One aspect that complicated matters was that many regular North Vietnamese citizens were not political (Communists) but viewed US involvement as a replacement of the French colonists, threatening their independence (Hayslip & Pham, 2006). These individuals were grouped alongside the Communists as they fought against the US foreign authority in the hopes of unifying Vietnam. Those fighting for the North Vietnamese cause were receiving assistance from China and the Soviet Union (Hosch, 2010); this reflects how the Vietnam War was in effect a proxy 'Cold War' between the US and world Communism.

Due to this assistance and the use of the Ho Chi Minh Trail as a supply line, the war continued to drag on despite the technological superiority of the US military. Ultimately the mounting number of US casualties began to take their toll on America and as a result American public opinion turned against the war, eventually the final US troops were withdrawn from Vietnam in 1973 (Wiest, 2006). At this point it was up to South Vietnam to defeat the North. In 1974 the US Congress cut support to South Vietnam, leaving the South to a probable defeat (Wiest, 2006). In 1975 the North Vietnamese led a full scale invasion into the South and on 30 April 1975 Saigon fell to the Communist North Vietnamese. A brief chronology of the key events of the Vietnam War can be seen in Appendix 3.

The Vietnam War has been largely left out of academic studies regarding dark tourism or battlefield tourism. Tourism research relating to the Vietnam War has focused on segmenting visitors based on motivations (Thi Le & Pearce, 2011), and determining the potential of Vietnam veterans returning to Vietnam as tourists (Agrusa et al., 2006). Vietnam is a growing tourist destination (Thi Le & Pearce, 2011), with plenty of tourist attractions that relate to the war, this includes the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ), the War Remnants Museum, Reunification Palace, Hue and the Citadel, Hoa Lo prison in Hanoi 'Hanoi Hilton,' Cu Chi tunnels, Vinh Moc tunnels, Khe Sanh and My Lai. These sites are the most well known in relation to the Vietnam War and are likely to be the most popular attractions on tourist travel blogs. The map depicted in Figure 6 highlights some of the key Vietnam War sites. Several of the key Vietnam War sites are discussed in Appendix 4, which outline their significance in the war and why they are popular today.

In terms of the American Vietnam War narrative, Vietnamese-Americans have felt that their participation in the war has been made invisible (Isaacs, 2006). The focus of commemoration in the US is mainly on the US military members who died, largely excluding the many South Vietnamese who died along side them. The subject of South Vietnamese war dead being made invisible is also an issue in Vietnam. War monuments and martyr cemeteries commemorate the North Vietnamese war dead, however soldiers from the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN – South Vietnamese) had their monuments dismantled at the end of the war (Schwenkel, 2009). South Vietnamese veterans had been silenced from telling their war narrative to tourists. This situation has now altered due to the *doi moi* regime change which saw a decline in communism during the late 1980s and a growth in international tourism (Suntikul 2010).

Figure 6: Map highlighting Vietnam War sites
(CIA: The World Factbook 2013-2014b)

After the Communist victory in 1975, ARVN veterans faced discrimination as economic policies benefited those who supported the Communist revolution during the war (Schwenkel, 2009). ARVN veterans had to find their own means to create a living. With the growth in international tourism after the *doi moi* regime change ARVN veterans found that their war experiences were sought after by international tourists and as a result their knowledge has become a tourist product. Western tourists tend to be

comfortable with the US Vietnam War narrative and often question the war narratives presented by the Vietnamese government (Alneng, 2002), thus the ARVN perspective is popular as it is viewed as authentic.

Vietnam, however, still has significant ongoing issues related to the environment and wellbeing of the Vietnamese people as a result of the war. Unexploded ordnance is still a problem as the bombs that were dropped on Vietnam were developed for industrial cities not soft jungle environments. Due to the softness of the foliage many bombs did not explode on impact and for that reason they pose a serious risk to people today (MAG, 2013). Another problem is the use of the herbicide Agent Orange which has resulted in continued birth defects in Vietnam and ongoing medical problems for US, Australian and New Zealand veterans (Isserman, 2010; Department of Veterans' Affairs, 2014; American Cancer Society, 2014). The Vietnam War is significant in the fact that it is still debated today regarding the mistakes made and lessons learnt, or in some cases not learnt as it has been compared to the recent war in Iraq (Brigham, 2006). It was highly controversial due to the use of the draft in the US and Australia and also due to the tactics that were utilised during the war, such as bombing raids and the spraying of Agent Orange. The Vietnam War divided American, and even global opinion, and thus today Vietnam War attractions can produce divided reactions.

2.11 Conclusion

It is from the theory of mortality mediation that this study follows. The aim is to gain an understanding of the mortality mediation concept at sites of conflict and war (battlefields). Previous studies have focused on Ground Zero and the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and Memorial. The two case studies (WWI sites and Vietnam War sites) are focused on the tourists' personal reflections at these sites, whether they engage in mortality mediation and whether the two different wars produce different outcomes in experience and reflection, as each have differences regarding historic timeline, nationalities involved and differences in public and political opinions.

Dark tourism and battlefield tourism literature has often followed a qualitative research approach. One of the main reasons for this is that qualitative studies usually focus on understanding the participants' experience (Jackson et al., 2007); or to

conceptualise a new subject area, such as the early literature relating to the conceptualisation of thanatourism and death contemplation (Stone & Sharpley, 2008; Sharpley, 2009b; Stone, 2012a). A qualitative research design is suited to such studies as the method of analysis does not attempt to generalise any truth about reality, but to seek the meanings that people construct about a phenomenon (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2007). For this thesis a qualitative approach to research is most appropriate as the research aim centres on the tourists' personal experiences and their reflections. Analysing data that focuses on personal experiences and reflections takes on an interpretive approach to research (Jackson et al., 2007); the world of the research subject is understood through their experiences. Since the topics of dark tourism, death contemplation and the subject matter of battlefield tourism are considerably emotive it would be inappropriate to attempt to analyse such reflections through statistics (i.e. a quantitative research approach). Warfare studies that have utilised a qualitative approach include Alneng (2002); Schwenkel (2006); Iles (2012); Miles (2013) and Laderman (2009). Research that involves interpreting and understanding an individual's feelings, emotions and experiences can only be fully investigated via a qualitative strategy and methods of analysis.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The aim of research is to discover knowledge, and the methods of discovering knowledge through research are subjective (Scotland, 2012). It is also subjective as to what constitutes as knowledge. The two largely opposing approaches in conducting research are the positivist paradigm and the interpretive paradigm. The divergence between these approaches is linked to the inherent differences in ontological and epistemological beliefs. The interpretivist belief holds that the world is subjective and socially constructed (Gray, 2009). Earlier tourism works which were based in the study of sociology (Boorstin, 1964; Cohen, 1972, 1973, 1979 & MacCannell, 1973) focused on qualitative research designs, as the primary objective was to gain an understanding of tourist behaviour, sociology and psychology. Cohen (1988) asserts that qualitative inquiry has contributed to significant and long term additions to the knowledge of sociology in tourism. The ontology of qualitative inquiry assumes that meaning and understanding is developed by society, and it is imperative to understand the experience of the research participants. Based on this understanding, the design of this thesis follows an interpretivist, qualitative research strategy. The main justification for this choice is that the research objective points to highly emotive subjective matter which demands an in-depth look into the individual experiences and reflections of battlefield tourists. By researching online travel blogs personal in-depth understandings can be analysed.

This methodology chapter begins with an outline of the research aims and objectives. Following this there is a discussion of the chosen research philosophy, looking at the ontology and epistemology of interpretivism and constructivism and the qualitative research design. The research methodology section covers case studies and the use of narrative inquiry. Following the selection of methodology, is the methods and analysis section which describes and justifies the choice of thematic analysis and the reasons for using social media, unobtrusive blog research measures. The final segment of this chapter discusses the unique aspects of ethical and legal

considerations involved in online research methods and also the general limitations, trustworthiness and researcher evaluation of this study.

The main aim driving this research is:

To gain an understanding of the personal reflections held by tourists after experiencing a historical site of warfare.

In achieving this aim the following objectives are addressed in the research study:

- Gaining a better understanding of the experiences held by tourists at sites of warfare.
- To understand whether the factor of a historic timeline has an influence on tourist reflections.
- To discover whether nationality or personal connection to the war site affects factors of haunting memory, memento mori and moral instruction.
- To identify similarities and differences between tourist reflections at WWI sites and Vietnam War sites.

The purpose of this study is to analyse and understand the experiences of tourists at battlefields (sites of past warfare), and to identify whether their reflections display an engagement in mortality mediation. Many studies that centre on battlefield tourists have focused on motivations and the classification of battlefield tourist types, this also includes the study of national identity; therefore this study will attempt to focus on an area that has not yet been applied to battlefield tourism.

In regards to the meaning of reflection, reflection will refer to the process of internal exploration of an issue which is triggered by an experience (Boyd & Fales, 1983). The process of reflection can create or clarify meaning of the self, and has the potential to change an individuals' perspective on the issue at hand (Boyd & Fales, 1983). When referring to experience, the term tourist experience is applied. Tourist experience is a term that is socially constructed and includes interpretations from social and environmental components of the experience (Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009). The term tourist gaze was introduced by Urry (1990), which refers to the process of how a tourist objectifies and interprets their destination.

3.2 Research philosophy

Tourism is a complex phenomenon, and as a result Walle (1997) proposes that scientific methods of enquiry are not always appropriate. Scientific methods of enquiry, referring to quantitative methods, have dominated tourism research (Johnson et al., 1994; Baum & Mudambi, 1995; McKercher et al., 2006; Baggio & Sainaghi, 2011). Quantitative methods are related to the positivist paradigm whereby the researcher will objectively observe phenomena from the outside (Veal, 2006). In contrast, interpretive research utilises qualitative methods where the researcher will interpret phenomena based on the meanings held by the research participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The design of this study will be interpretive and qualitative in its approach. Interpretivism is linked to constructivism whereby truth and meaning are not found in an external world (Gray, 2009). One of the objectives of this study is to compare the touristic experience at sites of historic warfare (battlefields); this will include WWI sites and sites of the Vietnam War. To appropriately investigate and analyse such emotive experiences, an interpretive qualitative approach to research is necessary.

Prior battlefield tourism and dark tourism (thanatourism) literature has focused on motivations (Dunkley et al., 2011; Hyde & Harman, 2011; Raine, 2013; Slade, 2003; Thi Le & Pearce, 2011; Winter, 2011a), or the contemplation of death at non battlefield sites (Stone, 2011; Stone, 2012a; Stone, 2012b). A gap in the literature exists where the mortality mediation concept has not been applied to battlefield tourism sites, nor have different war sites been compared in the same study. Battlefield tourism literature has largely focused on one historic war without comparisons to other wars by the same researcher in the same study (Cooper, 2007; Slade, 2003; Smith, 1998; Winter, 2009; Winter, 2011b). To investigate, evaluate, compare and contrast the personal experiences of dark tourism/battlefield tourists requires an approach to research which enables the researcher to gather in-depth information about the bloggers' tourist experience and their personal reflections of that experience. This is why a qualitative research approach is most appropriate. Qualitative researchers aim to create a rich description of the phenomenon that they are investigating (Streubert-Speziale & Carpenter, 2003). This describes the intentions of the research; in-depth accounts from travellers' blogs are needed in order to gain an understanding of historic battlefield tourist experiences.

A qualitative interpretivist research approach acknowledges the existence of multiple realties, and assumes that reality is constructed through the meanings and understandings that are developed by individuals (Burns & Grove, 2003). Interpretivism often follows an inductive approach to knowledge, where the ultimate outcome is the generation of theory (Gray, 2009). Although an inductive approach enables theory to result from the research, it does not eliminate the researcher from examining existing theory. Existing knowledge enables a researcher to understand past theory and to help formulate the purpose of their own research (Gray, 2009). A qualitative researcher is part of the research process and will usually gather narrative descriptions from participants through means of observation or interview. Themes in participants' descriptions are identified which enable the researcher to provide a description of participant experiences and/or develop a theory (Vishnevsky & Beanlands, 2004).

3.2.1 Ontology and Epistemology

The ontology for this study is based on a nature of 'being,' and the epistemology involves meaning that is constructed by the bloggers. Understanding is gained through 'perceived' knowledge (Gray, 2009). Ontology relates to what constitutes as reality; the researcher's philosophical position will determine how knowledge is formed (Scotland, 2012). The ontology adopted here is based on meaning, particularly the meaning of language. A qualitative researcher will seek to identify the inherent features of a concept (Goertz & Mahoney, 2012). Epistemology is concerned with how knowledge is created (Scotland, 2012); it relates to "what it means to know" (Scotland, 2012, p. 9). The epistemological belief held by the researcher provides a philosophical setting for determining what constitutes as justifiable knowledge (Gray, 2009). A research paradigm includes the ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods. Each research project will differ depending on the researcher's philosophical views (ontology and epistemology) and their choice of methodology and methods (Scotland, 2012). As a result the conclusions made from qualitative research can never be empirically proven as truth or untruth.

3.2.2 Interpretivism and Constructivism

Qualitative studies aim to develop an understanding of the context in which phenomena and behaviours occur (Altinay & Paraskevas, 2008). Discussion surrounds the meaning of concepts and can be related to philosophy, whereby considerable time is spent on developing concepts and concept analysis (Goertz & Mahoney, 2012). Seeking to explore peoples' perspectives or experiences involves taking an interpretivist naturalistic tradition (Gray, 2009); the researchers' beliefs are held within all stages of the research process. This approach assumes that the world is created by the actions and beliefs of people; truth emerges from people not from an external source waiting to be discovered (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2007). Methods adopted by the researcher aim to discover how people construct reality and to identify the meanings involved (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2007).

Through the subject's interactions with the world, meaning is created. Since meaning is constructed each individual will create their own meaning in a different way, even if it is in relation to the same phenomenon (Gray, 2009). Due to this an interpretivist-constructivist researcher will not attempt to generalise the truth of reality. An interpretivist researcher aims to get inside the minds of the research subjects and to see the world from their perspectives (Veal, 2006); reliance is placed on them to provide explanations of their behaviour or beliefs. In the case of this study, the research subjects will provide their individual reflections of their experiences on personal online travel blogs. A qualitative approach to research focuses on emotions and experiences (Altinay & Paraskevas, 2008), thus it will be appropriate in understanding tourists' reflections of their experiences at dark tourism (battlefield) sites.

3.2.3 Qualitative research strategy

A qualitative researcher aims to obtain a deeper understanding of the subject and setting that they are studying. This naturalistic approach to research seeks to understand a specific phenomenon (Gray, 2009). Several of the earlier forms of influential tourism research were qualitative in design (Boorstin, 1964; Cohen, 1972, 1973, 1979 & MacCannell, 1973), however rather than being tourism focused they were primarily seen from a sociological perspective (Riley & Love, 2000).

Qualitative research designs involve subjective individual constructions (Scotland, 2012), and as a result interpretive research has been criticised for having limited transferability (Scotland, 2012); and generalisations cannot be made. Due to this issue qualitative research is often used to form a basis for future quantitative studies. Concepts or theories generated through qualitative studies can be used by other researchers to test such theories or to investigate similar situations (i.e. qualitative inductive reasoning, leading to quantitative deductive reasoning).

An interpretive qualitative approach to research will result in the collection of data richness and detail as the focus is on words rather than numbers (Jackson et al., 2007). The participants' words are relied upon to provide their experience, this allows for a greater understanding of the specific phenomenon that is being studied. The aim of qualitative research is to understand the meanings of human thought and behaviour by describing the intrinsic human experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). A research outline is provided in Table 4.

Table 4: Summary of research outline

Research Philosophy	Inductive
Research Ontology	Based upon a *being* ontology – Interpretive
Research Epistemology	Constructivism
Research Strategy	Qualitative
Research Methodology	Case study – Narrative Inquiry
Data Collection	Unobtrusive data collection (online travel blogs)
Research Analysis	Thematic analysis

3.3 Research methodology

3.3.1 Case Study research

Becker (1970) states that case study research refers to the detailed analysis of a specific case. The intense investigation of a case leads the researcher to acquire knowledge of the phenomenon that is present within the context of the studied case (Becker, 1970). A case study approach is strongly linked to qualitative research designs (Gray, 2009); this is due to the acceptance of multiple realities. Yin (1981), on the other hand, asserts that case study research is not bound by any specific form of research design or method of data collection. The design process can also be inductive or deductive, understanding

prior theoretical principles will help to guide the research process, yet it is important to allow case studies to generate findings which will add to the development of new theory (Gray, 2009). Yin (2003) suggests that conditional research questions should be developed before data collection takes place, it is suggested that research questions are linked to prior knowledge. The term 'conditional' is given as research questions should be open to modification during the research process.

Case studies involve the investigation of a specific 'bounded system', such as a person, corporation or country (Stake, 1995). The comparing and contrasting of different case studies will result in the accumulation of a detailed understanding of a particular context (Gray, 2009). Case study research does not simply aim to describe a situation, but to gain an understanding of the context being studied. For this research the context of the two case studies are battlefield tourism sites and the objective is to explore the reflections of the tourists who visit one of the case study sites (WWI or Vietnam War sites). Case study approaches have specific 'units of analysis' (Gray, 2009), in this case the units of analysis relate to historical events. By selecting two relatively different case studies it is possible to investigate whether there is a relationship between the two different cases in relation to the concept of dark tourism and mortality mediation. Nonetheless, it must be noted that the two case study sites will not be directly compared to one another due to their significant differences. The objective is to draw insights from the two case studies, not to attempt a straight comparison between the two. The reason for this is that WWI and the Vietnam War have key differences that make it inappropriate to make direct associations.

The diverse backgrounds of the two wars which prevent direct comparisons include the factor of a historic timeline. The beginning of WWI occurred 100 years ago while the Vietnam War began in 1956 and ended in 1975. This means that the Vietnam War is still in living memory, while WWI has fallen to third generation memory whereby survivors of the war are no longer around. Society and culture during WWI was different to what it was during the Vietnam War. Social memory of WWI in Europe is closely tied to the concepts of sacrifice and remembrance which has a reference to religion as the sacrifice made by soldiers was often compared to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Lloyd, 1998). This connection reflects the culture and beliefs of the time and

was expressed in the traditional style of war memorials and commemorational ceremonies of the day which would often involve prayer.

In Vietnam, uniform martyr graves and monuments have been constructed to memorialise the soldiers who died during the Vietnam War, although this is a contested issue since soldiers of South Vietnam are not represented in official public spaces (Schwenkel, 2009). This indicates a direct difference between WWI and the Vietnam War as soldiers from the same country (Vietnam) are not honoured in the same way that those from WWI are. Another key difference is that WWI was a global war that affected many countries and had a lasting impact in how the 20th century would be shaped. WWI saw the decline of powerful empires, the rise of new powers and revolution in Russia which went on to form the USSR, changes to countries' boarders and the construction of new national identities.

In contrast the Vietnam War was limited in the number of countries involved, and was essentially a proxy war between the US and the Soviet Union during the Cold War (Mumford, 2013). Although the Vietnam War did have an impact on society (Anti-war movement, migration of South Vietnamese and ongoing health problems from the war) it did not have the same global impact that resulted from WWI. Furthermore, since the Vietnam War occurred in the mid to late 20th century technological advances allowed people from around the world to view events of the war on their televisions. This resulted in the term the "living room war" (Hallin, 2006) and the rise in the role of the media and what is known as the fourth and fifth estates. This was significant in the US as it resulted in American citizens questioning their government's actions and accordingly a sentiment of distrust developed.

3.3.2 Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry will be utilised as a method to analyse online travel blogs; the approach used to conduct narrative analysis will be thematic analysis. Narrative inquiry is useful in capturing the experiences of the research subjects (Gray, 2009); it provides an insight into their thoughts and interpretations (Chase, 2005). Thomas (2012, p. 209) states that narrative is one of the "most fundamental ways of making meaning from experience." Narrative can refer to entire life stories or to brief, specific stories organised around a particular setting (Riessman, 2004). Narratives can

be written or oral and can encompass life history, personal narrative, performance narrative and oral history (Chase, 2005). Time is also significant when gaining an understanding of narrative, as narrative is a "representation of the human experience of time" (Thomas, 2012, p. 209). Essentially, narrative is an account of a human experience at a certain point in time. This representation can shape or configure time and create order to past events (Chase, 2005). Collecting data for narrative inquiry can occur through unstructured interviews or exploring written texts, one of the challenges of narrative inquiry is deciding how the information gathered will be interpreted (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007).

Narrative inquiry is a common and popular form of methodology when analysing travel blogs (Banyai & Glover, 2012). Within the spectrum of qualitative research, narrative inquiry is situated within the constructivist-interpretivist position (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007). Bochner (2001) states that narrative inquiry is a subjective, rather than objective, research methodology which relates more to discovering meanings than finding facts. In the context of travel blogs this form of analysis allows researchers to gain insights into how tourists generate meanings and identities based on their travel experiences (Banyai & Glover, 2012). Travel blog research using narrative inquiry provides researchers with the ability to identify underlying patterns across travel experiences (Banyai & Glover, 2012). This makes narrative inquiry an appropriate method of analysis, as the researcher is able to discover the experiences of the tourists, including rich details of feelings, thoughts and sensory experiences (Smith, 2000), all presented in textual form.

3.4 Research analysis

3.4.1 Thematic Analysis

The method that will be adopted in analysing the travellers' blog narratives will be thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research approach which includes the analysis of data to discover emerging themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006); it requires involvement and interpretation from the researcher (Guest et al., 2011). Codes are identified from the bloggers' narratives which are utilised to form themes. The constructed themes are then employed to form higher level concepts. Themes that are deemed important should relate to the research question/s and also have some

pattern in terms of response or meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The underpinning element behind this approach to narrative inquiry is the philosophy of language (Riessman, 2004). An advantage of thematic analysis is the ability to theorise across different cases (Riessman, 2004); this includes identifying similar and contrasting elements across research participants and their context or setting. This will be useful when comparing the different dark tourist sites (battlefields) in relation to tourist experiences identified in this study (WWI and Vietnam War sites).

Conducting thematic analysis for this research project may have a relatively 'theoretical' approach in terms of analysing tourists' experiences with mortality mediation. This is due to the fact that there are possible themes that could emerge based on theoretical subtypes defined by Stone (2012a) (i.e. haunting memory, memento mori). However, in regards to understanding the overall personal experiences held by tourists at sites of historic warfare, the approach to thematic analysis will be highly inductive, as the themes identified will be strongly linked to the data collected. Inductive thematic analysis means that identified codes emerge through the data and are not being forced to fit a pre-existing coding framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach to thematic analysis is advocated by Joffe (2012) who states that it is pointless to conduct thematic analysis if the researcher does not take note of new naturally occurring themes in the data that do not relate to previous theories, concepts or frameworks. It is highly important to incorporate both deductive and inductive forms of thematic analysis. The researcher should study previous literature, yet remain open to new themes and theories that may emerge during the process of analysis (Joffe, 2012).

Themes which will be formed based on codes will be identified at the latent interpretative level (Boyatzis, 1998). This means that analysis will go beyond the semantic descriptive level and will examine conceptualisations, postulations and underlying ideas (Braun & Clarke, 2006); this relates to the constructivist paradigm which looks at theorising themes and interpreting how meaning came about. A theme which is generated from the data can be directly visible, something which is clearly seen or mentioned in the data set (Joffe, 2012) or it can relate to references in the text that may point to underlying meanings.

Braun and Clarke (2006) and Attride-Sterling (2001) propose six phases in conducting thematic analysis. These are:

1) Coding material

> The first step involves reading and then reducing the data into segments that are meaningful. A coding framework will be created; this can be based on theoretical interests or on words or patterns that are re-occurring. Important text, quotes or segments will be placed under a relevant code.

2) Identify themes

> Once the codes have been created the process of forming themes begins. Within the coded segments important themes should be identified. This process involves refining themes to ensure that they are specific and not repetitive. The data should be reduced into a more manageable size.

3) Construct the thematic network

> Themes should be placed into similar groups to form the thematic network. These groups can be based on actual content or theoretical similarities. The different groups will form a global theme which comprises the basic initial themes. This process can be illustrated in a web diagram. An example of a thematic analysis web diagram is presented in Figure 7.

4) Describe and explore the network

> At this point the researcher will re-read the original text so that the deeper meanings in the data can be analysed and understood. This stage of interpretation allows the researcher to re-read the text in a different light as the researcher will now have the constructed refined themes in mind.

5) Summarise the network

> This stage involves summarising the main themes and pointing out the patterns that emerged during the exploration of the data.

6) Interpret patterns

> The interpreting stage includes bringing the findings together. The researcher should be able to relate their findings back to their initial research question/s and the early theoretical concepts which provided the basis for their project. Final outcomes of the analysis, which answer the research question/s, should be supported by themes and patterns that emerged from the data. Compelling extracts from the research subjects (blogs) should enable the construction of higher level concepts.

A web diagram which is often used in thematic analysis to show the progression from codes to themes to concepts is also called a thematic network (Attride-Sterling, 2001). Thematic networks are not a new method of conducting thematic analysis; they are used to demonstrate the procedures as to how the researcher went from the data set through to text interpretation. In other words, how the researcher arrived at their final higher level concepts. This is an important process to describe as it enhances the research findings by outlining how the researcher conducted their research and also the research techniques are described for other researchers to utilise in their own projects.
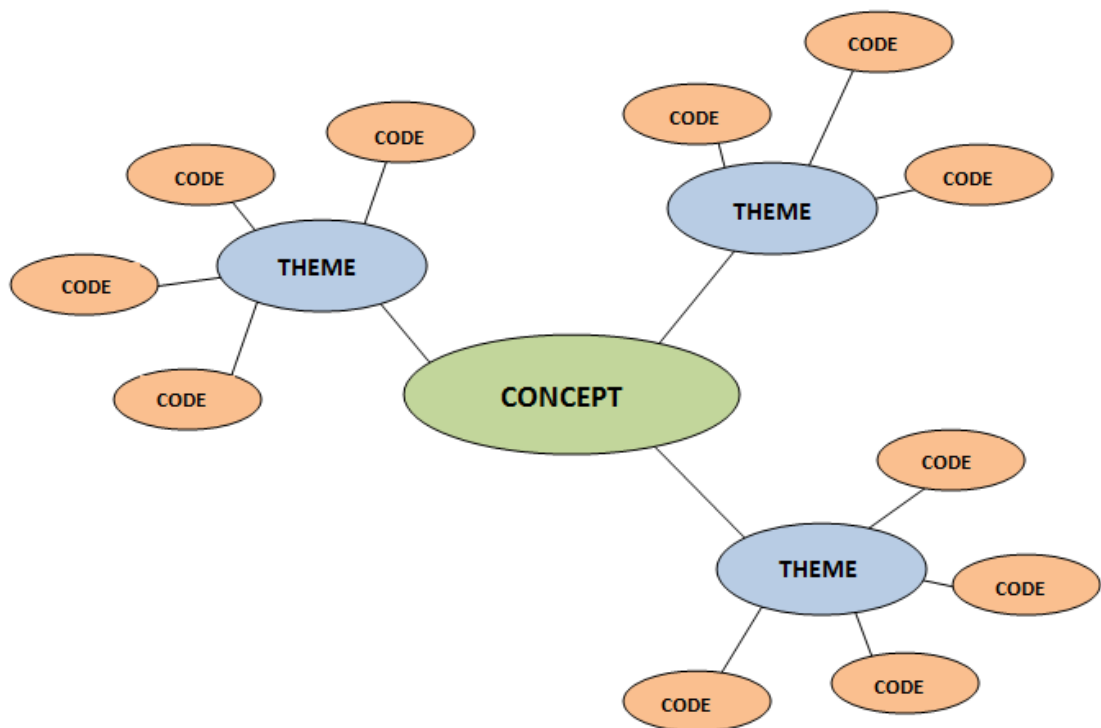
Figure 7: Example of web diagram. Adapted from Basit (1997)

Ultimately there is no one way of conducting thematic analysis; each researcher tends to have their own specific technique. However, the phases outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) and Attride-Sterling (2001) illustrate the basic process which should be followed. This involves reading the data thoroughly to create codes based on

theoretical interests and emerging patterns. These codes will then be utilised to form themes which are based on the information (data) related to each code. Themes should be refined after a process of re-reading the original data set. Once this process is complete the constructed themes will lead to higher level concepts based on in-depth analysis and interpretation which will be supported by patterns, text segments, blog quotes and theoretical concepts. Thematic analysis is similar to grounded theory; the researcher is required to become cognitively involved in the data and to interpret and understand meaning from the data set. It is a research process that goes beyond counting words and phrases (Guest et al., 2011); implicit and explicit themes will be derived from the data to form theoretical concepts.

3.5 Data collection

3.5.1 Social Media

Blogs are a segment of social media, also known as Web 2.0 (Sigala, 2012). Social media has increased in popularity due to advances in web tools that enable internet users to interact with one another. This mass collaboration allows users to create, consume and share ideas with other internet users (Sigala, 2012).

Social media is now a large part of consumer's personal and professional lives (Wu et al., 2013); as a result businesses are keen to utilise social media to promote their firms and gain customers. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and blogging applications are popular forms of social media that are used for both personal and business means. The popularity of social media, in all its forms, has generated interest by academic researchers. Giglietto et al. (2012) state that the internet and social media have challenged the traditional methods of conducting social science research. The internet has brought about innovation and change at a very fast pace. It also provides a vast amount of data which has produced a surge in academic studies relating to social media (Giglietto et al., 2012; Wallsten, 2010; Karpf, 2012; Shah, 2010). Social media has essentially provided a new avenue for researchers and advertisers to create and interpret easily available information (Volo, 2012). Volo (2012, p. 149) states that whatever the future holds for social media, one aspect will be a given: "the study of travellers' behaviour and destination marketing practices will forever be changed."

Karpf (2012) highlights the challenges when conducting social science research using the internet. Since the internet is so fast paced the term 'Internet Time' (Karpf, 2012) has been applied. Internet Time refers to the internet's rapid state of ongoing transformation. This rate of change can be illustrated in the following formula designed by Karpf (2012): The internet's impact on social media will be different at 'time X' from 'time X + 1'. This is because within that short interval social media technology will have evolved. As an example, within the space of a couple of years popular forms of social media can easily become outdated and replaced. As a result Internet Time can raise issues when conducting online research. Since the social media environment is changing constantly, could this mean that research findings become obsolete much sooner? There is also the issue of lack of control when selecting research subjects (Kraut et al., 2004); particularly with unobtrusive archival data collection it can be difficult to ascertain the age, gender, nationality or background of the individuals involved. Due to this some aspects of research findings may be limited due to the relative anonymity of the individuals involved, however at the same time anonymity provides safety to the research subjects as they will not easily be recognised.

When an internet researcher is unobtrusive, passive and remains at a distance (no interaction with the research subjects) then the form of research taking place can be compared to that of a traditional archival researcher (Schultze & Mason, 2012), such as a history student. In some forms of social media, particularly blogging, it is common to use a pseudonym. However, online pseudonyms should never be printed in academic reports as a pseudonym can still be linked back to the individual. If someone were to enter the pseudonym into an internet search engine they could potentially be able to track down that individual and expose their identity (Kraut et al., 2004). This is particularly concerning if the online material could bring personal harm or outside harm to the individual. For example, Marcus et al. (2012) studied the blogging community of youth suffering from mental health issues. Due to the sensitive nature of the topic it was imperative that the subjects remained anonymous.

Social media has become an important aspect of travel and tourism; information uploaded by other travellers is influencing how people search for information and make their travel decisions (Yoo & Gretzel, 2012). Travellers are now sharing their experiences with others during and after their trips. Social networking includes the

building of online communities where people with similar interests can share information and interact with one another. Social networking encompasses the ability to search, read reviews, post comments, add friends or followers, create discussion boards, make blog entries, create events, upload videos and more (Nusair et al., 2012). However, in regards to the topic of travel planning and the creation of online content it should be noted that the majority of travellers do not share their experiences on social media (Yoo & Gretzel, 2012); sharing travel plans goes beyond simply sharing photos. Nevertheless, with the growing popularity of online social networks, companies are beginning to recognise their ability to be utilised as effective marketing tools (Nusair et al., 2012). Despite this, Hamill et al. (2012) found that Destination Marketing Organisations in Europe were not fully utilising the potential of Web 2.0 technology by failing to build online communities with customers. This demonstrates that there are still untapped areas between travel and tourism and online social networks.

Yoo and Gretzel (2012) conducted a demographic study to help identify the characteristics of individuals who create travel related social media. The results found that there was no significant difference between genders, however in regards to age social media creators tended to be younger, single and employed full time (Yoo & Gretzel, 2012). Travellers who use internet technology to communicate and search for travel information have been termed 'travellers 2.0' (Parra-Lopez et al., 2012). These travellers look to the internet to share their travel experiences and to acquire travel related information; as a result social media has become increasingly popular with travellers.

The main activities undertaken by travellers 2.0 include searching for travel information and advice on internet search engines, and posting information (Parra-Lopez et al., 2012). This is termed user generated content, it may include uploading personal travel photos or posting comments on review websites or blogs such as TripAdvisor. Personal reviews of travellers' holidays are considered word-of-mouth (WOM) advertising for tourism operators. Personal experiences are more authentic than a tourism brochure or tourism operator's website. Potential travellers have to deal with pre-consumption difficulties (Volo, 2012), they cannot try before they buy, therefore information searches are undertaken to minimise the risk of purchasing a bad travel product/experience. Traditional word-of-mouth communication involved

talking to family members and friends about their travel experiences, however increasingly people are turning to electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) methods to search, read and take on board the travel advice of strangers (Volo, 2012). Electronic word-of-mouth has also enabled researchers to study online conversations to gain a better understanding of how it occurs (Wu et al., 2013); this is significant for marketing and brand researchers.

Due to Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) tourist behaviour has fundamentally changed. User generated content "is the foundation of social media" (Hvass & Munar, 2012, p. 94), it has allowed travellers to share and document their travels with a worldwide audience. Due to this, travel operators and destination marketers have had to keep up with innovative techniques by incorporating social media into their marketing campaigns (Shao et al., 2012). For tourists, web based technologies have impacted on the three traditional stages of consumption.

Including social media involvement these stages may occur as follows: At the *pre-consumption* stage tourists will use the internet to search for travel options and opinions and compare tourism operators (Parra-Lopez et al., 2012). Utilising Web 2.0 technology to search for travel information and advice is considered easier than using traditional methods (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010), such as a travel agent. During the actual experience, the *consumption* stage, the tourist may again use the internet to search for other activities while at the destination (Parra-Lopez et al., 2012). They may also upload photos soon after being taken depending on access and connectivity to Wi-Fi. At the *post-consumption* stage the tourist shares and documents their experiences through Web 2.0 technology (Parra-Lopez et al., 2012). Sharing this experience may then influence other potential travellers. As stated earlier, travel information posted by 'real' tourists is recognised as being more credible than that provided by tourism marketers and operators (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008). However, even though Web 2.0 access and use is growing, relatively little is known about who is using Web 2.0 technology and in what ways are they using it to influence their travel choices (Gretzel, 2012). Due to the fast nature of the internet ongoing research would be required to analyse how people engage with travel information found on social media platforms.

3.5.2 Unobtrusive measures

The methodology of this study involves unobtrusive measures as a form of data collection. Unobtrusive measures use non-reactive sources, since the data is considered 'dead' (not live data); the researcher is unlikely to face reactive measurement effects (e.g. reactivity between the interviewer and interviewee) (Gray, 2009). Reactive data collection methods (such as interviews) can create challenges if participants respond to a question with a socially desirable answer (Hine, 2011), or in the case of informed observation the participant may adapt their behaviour if they know they are being observed. When the topic of interest is sensitive or controversial a research participant may hide their true thoughts and feelings, or in contrast they may provide answers that they believe the researcher wants to hear. Another concern with interviews is the ability of the researcher to unintentionally manipulate or lead the interviewee into answering questions in a certain way or to 'put words' in the interviewee's mouth. Lee (2000) referred to this situation by stating that the researcher often shapes or moulds the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. Unobtrusive research techniques include investigating the physical traces, the evidence that people leave behind (Lee, 2000); in this case the physical traces to investigate are the blog entries made by tourists.

The source of data collection will be in the form of online travel blogs which can be located through internet search engines such as Google (blogs). Travel blogs can be located on websites set up by the individual (e.g. .com sites), or specific blogging websites (e.g Wordpress or Blogger), and also specific travel blog websites which allow users to sign up for free and share their travels with the world (e.g. TravelBlog.org, Travelpod.com). The growth of the internet and the popularity of blogging have made this approach to research possible. The number of blogs on the internet is difficult to ascertain, however today there are millions of blogs present on the internet (Goyal, 2012). Research conducted by Social Guide, a Nielsen/McKinsey company, found that there were 181 million blogs in 2011; this is up from 36 million in 2006 (Nielsen Company, 2012).

3.5.3 Blog research

Social media and the growth in Web 2.0 technologies have enabled travellers to willingly share their adventures with others in a "virtual tourist community" (Volo, 2012, p. 149). Blogs, originally called weblogs, allow users to publish content, upload photos, videos, use hyperlinks and post comments (Liao et al., 2013). This allows for interaction between the blog owner and the blog participants. Blog posts made by the blog owner are presented in similar style to that of a personal diary with each post (reverse) chronologically dated.

Through travel blog applications tourists are able to provide their 'raw' travel experience to others (Volo, 2012). Amateur bloggers who are not paid to promote a destination allow internet users access into the minds and experiences of 'real' travellers. In contrast, professional travel bloggers may be viewed with some suspicion as they have a vested interest in positively reviewing their travel experience. Personal (amateur) blogs have interested qualitative researchers as they provide a backstage opportunity in accessing the thoughts and feelings of the public (Chenail, 2011). Travel blogs are commonly thought to involve only the consumer to consumer (C2C) interaction, however, their purpose can range from business to business (B2B) blogs, business to consumer (B2C) and government to consumer (G2C) (Schmallagger & Carson, 2008).

The majority of travel blogs are related to the C2C interaction whereby an individual wishes to share their travel experience with friends, family and others (Volo, 2012). B2B blogs are usually used for networking purposes and may include tourism organisations, academics, travel operators and other travel professionals (Schmallagger & Carson, 2008). Industry experts are able to share travel trends, developments and research findings (Volo, 2012). B2C blogs are growing in popularity; they allow tourism businesses to market their product and communicate with their customers. This also enables businesses to build a customer base (Schmallagger & Carson, 2008). The G2C blog is often created by a destination marketing organisation (DMO), either regional or national (Schmallagger & Carson, 2008); this enables government run tourism organisations to reach potential international and domestic travellers by providing their own content to a wide

audience. The blogs analysed in this study will be consumer to consumer (C2C) blogs.

Travel blog research has increased in recent years with tourism researchers realising that blog narratives can provide useful information (Banyai, 2012) for areas concerning tourist behaviour and consumption and destination marketing. Blog research can involve both qualitative and quantitative forms of analysis. Banyai (2012) conducted a deductive qualitative content analysis of travel blogs that related to trips taken in Stratford, Canada. The aim was to identify the popular topics discussed and to gain an understanding of tourists' perceptions of the destination compared to the DMO's strategy.

Jeuring and Peters (2013) analysed travel blog narratives that related to the influence of the weather on tourist experiences. The methodology used in this study was 'the spiral of analysis' (Boeije, 2010) which is a qualitative methodology that is based on grounded theory. A study conducted by Bosangit et al. (2012) utilised travel blogs to examine the post-consumption behaviour of tourists. Discourse analysis was used to analyse how travellers reconstruct their experiences (Bosangit et al., 2012). Liao et al. (2013) conducted a quantitative analysis via questionnaires sent to blog users to gain an understanding of the motivating factors that encourage people to engage in blogging activities. A research paper evaluating different methods of analysis in examining travel blogs was authored by Banyai and Glover (2012). This research study reviewed the two most popular research methods used in travel blog studies, which are content analysis and narrative analysis. Banyai and Harvitz (2013) analysed the importance of travel blogs for destination marketers and suggested that qualitative methods of analysis should be utilised to provide meaningful analysis of travel bloggers' experiences. Banyai and Harvitz (2013) suggested that quantitative research methods in blog analysis should be supplemented with qualitative techniques to ensure that both objective and subjective travel experiences are analysed and incorporated into research outcomes.

A significant advantage of collecting data from online blogs is that the problem of location is removed. The researcher is able to gather information from people all over the world without having to travel to a particular destination. This geographically removes the researcher from the blogger. Conducting research in an online context

also means that there is an element of anonymity for the blogger; therefore they may be less self-conscious in what they write (Hookway, 2008). Data collection methods that are sympathetic to the research subject were recommended by Johnston (2013), as studying the topic of thanatourism and the contemplation of death is a sensitive issue, and the use of innovative unobtrusive measures may help in overcoming the reluctance to discuss death.

3.6 Blog collection methods

Potential tourism experiences that are included in this thesis involve any war tourism attraction found at sites connected to WWI and the Vietnam War. Possible warfare tourism sites include monuments, cemeteries, museums, battlefields, beaches, tunnels and memorials.

When searching for blogs on internet search engines (Google), key words are used to locate the appropriate blogs such as 'Western front travel blogs' or 'Gallipoli travel blogs.' This form of search brings up blogs that include the key words. Specific travel blog sites, such as TravelBlog.org or Travelpod.com allow the user to browse the website by geographical location and also through the search field tool. This is a form of stratified purposeful sampling whereby a certain strata is selected and purposeful cases are chosen within the strata (Gray, 2009). For example, WWI sites and Vietnam are the selected strata and within those strata purposefully chosen blogs are selected (these chosen blogs must provide some form of personal reflection, not just informative descriptions of their holiday). Several of the main travel blogging sites utilised to source blog material include: http://www.mytripjournal.com ; http://www.travelblog.org and http://blog.travelpod.com . Blogs with the most in depth and reflective content take preference. The desired sample size for this study consists of 40 travel blogs, 20 for each case study. This sample size is similar to the one used by Sharpley (2012) who conducted blog research on genocide tourism. Sharpley's (2012) research analysed 35 online blogs connected to tourism sites related to the genocide in Rwanda.

The blog search process itself took place from September 2013 to March 2014. The total number of potential blogs that were viewed was not recorded, although it would have been upwards of 200 blogs. The blog search and review process involved reading blogs, firstly ensuring that the blogger was discussing a trip which included a

visit to a war attraction from one of the chosen case studies. Secondly, the blogger
must have given some form of personal reflection in relation to what they had viewed.
Excluded blogs were those that only gave descriptions of their travels, what they saw
and did or solely gave a historic description of what happened at the site concerned
(i.e. military operations, logistics etc). The initial blog selection came to 37 WWI
blogs and 48 Vietnam War blogs. From here the blogs were narrowed down to 20
blogs per case study. This process was done by re-reading each blog and highlighting
the most reflective thoughts provided by the blogger. After the highlighting process
the blogs were re-read again, this time annotated notes were included to identify
emerging patterns and any potential links to the dark / battlefield tourism literature.
Following this process of annotation a review process commenced which focused on
the quality and level of reflection present in the blogs. From here the 20 most
reflective and in-depth blogs were retained per case study for the thesis.

3.7 Travel bloggers

A final total of 40 blogs are included in the thematic analysis process. These 40 blogs
represent 40 different people, some who travelled solo while others travelled with a
partner or group. The approximate age range is from early 20's to mid to late 60's.
Due to the nature of blog research (unobtrusive) it is not possible to know the exact
ages. As a result the age of the bloggers will not be included in the analysis process.
The WWI blog time scale ranges from 2009-2013, and the Vietnam blog time scale
ranges from 2004-2014. Overall this comes to a 10 year time span. Owning to the
nature of the topic a varied time scale does not greatly affect the reflections of the
bloggers as this study is dealing with historic events. Tourism reflections in the 21st
century, even with a 10 year difference do not vary in any considerable way as they
are reflecting on events that occurred in the 20th century, approximately 40-100 years
ago.

Blogger profile - Gender:

WWI			Vietnam	
Women	10		Men	10
Men	7		Women	9
Couple	3		Couple	1

Blogger profile - Nationality:

WWI			Vietnam	
Australian	7		American	10
Canadian	5		British	6
New Zealander	4		Vietnamese	1
American	2		Australian	1
British	2		New Zealander	1
			Czech	1
	20			20

All of the WWI bloggers have a national connection to WWI; conversely this was different for some of the Vietnam bloggers who had no national connection to the Vietnam War (i.e. The United Kingdom and the Czech Republic). This could relate to Lennon and Foley's (2000) theory that dark tourism is "a product of the circumstances of the late modern world" (p. 3); that horrific events such as the Vietnam War are "embedded" into our "mass consciousness through popular culture and media" (p. 10). For older travellers the Vietnam War may be in living memory, for younger travellers there may be a sense of connection to the war through what they have witnessed in documentaries, books, movies and video games, in a sense it becomes everyone's war. However, another reason for there being nationalities not connected to the Vietnam War could be a result of the growth in the Vietnamese tourism industry since its economic change in the late 1980's (Suntikul 2010). International tourists with no national connection to the war may simply be seeking historic sites along with many other tourist activities.

3.8 Data analysis method

The method of research analysis undertaken in this study is thematic analysis. This data analysis process followed an adjusted, condensed version of the thematic analysis structure outlined by Attride-Sterling (2001) and Braun and Clarke (2006). This process firstly involved narrowing the blog count down to a total of 40 blogs which included personal reflection and contemplation on their experience. The thematic analysis process was completed in two parts, the same process for both case studies.

Step 1 – Getting to know the data

During the elimination phase where the total blog count was reduced to 40 blogs a process of reading and re-reading the blogs took place. Important aspects were

highlighted such as re-occurring words, personal thoughts and emotions. Following this, another re-reading of the blogs occurred. This time annotated notes were written inside the page margins to take note of potential patterns and links to tourism and world history literature. After this phase another re-reading of the blogs took place to select the final 40 blogs.

Step 2 – Discovering the initial codes

To construct the initial coding each blog was re-read with interesting or important words noted down in a journal (Examples of code words include 'grief' 'proud' 'shame'). Once completed the entire collection of code words could be viewed as a whole, rather than separate blog posts. From this, important themes could be seen and connected throughout the 20 blogs in the case study.

Step 3 – Constructing initial themes

As noted above the initial codes jotted down in a journal allowed for the construction of initial emerging themes. These initial themes were noted down on paper and were then typed into an Excel Spreadsheet. The initial themes became the titles of the columns in which the relevant code words followed underneath. This process involved re-reading the blogs to ensure that the context in which they occurred was correct and was thus placed under the relevant theme. During this phase new themes emerged with some splitting into two separate themes.

Step 4 – Connecting themes

Once the Excel Spreadsheet was complete with all codes sitting under a relevant theme, the process of connecting the themes began. To achieve this, the Excel Spreadsheets were printed out and a method of review took place. During this phase draft web diagrams were constructed to illustrate how certain themes were connected. At this point some themes stood out as 'main' themes while others were 'basic' themes. Basic themes are essentially sub-themes of the main themes. Themes were connected to one another based on their context and subject matter, for example the themes of nationality and family heritage have a close relation to each other.

Step 5 – Constructing concepts

After the themes had been linked into groups the phase of constructing an overarching concept was needed. To achieve this each theme had to be reviewed to best represent the final concept. This concept would become the heart of the analysis. Initially four concepts were created for each case study, however after advice from the research supervisor the concepts were condensed to three final concepts per case study. This process was carried out by drafting web diagrams and re-evaluating the codes and basic themes to review similarities which allowed for continued condensing. To complement the web diagram, a thematic network was also devised which helps to illustrate how the codes are linked to the basic themes, themes and concepts. Attride-Sterling (2001) states that thematic networks enable the thematic process to work from the periphery, the codes to basic themes, making its way inwards to the larger 'main' themes and finally the overall concept. An example section of the Vietnam War thematic network is depicted in Figure 8 and its corresponding section of a thematic diagram is illustrated in Figure 9.

This example is taken from the Vietnam thematic network, looking at the concept of *Emotional reactions.*

CODES	BASIC THEMES	THEMES	CONCEPT
Difficult day	1) Challenging experience	Negative emotions	Emotional
Unsettling	– facing the reality of war		reactions
Distressing			
Sad			
Grief			
Outraged			
Extremely emotional			
Tears			
Heartbreaking			
Sobering			
Sombre			
Genuinely ill			
Goosebumps			
Heart hurts			
Shivers			
Blessings	2) Reflecting on personal	Positive emotions	
Lucky	situation/Life moves on		
Feel better			

Figure 8: Example section of the Vietnam War thematic network
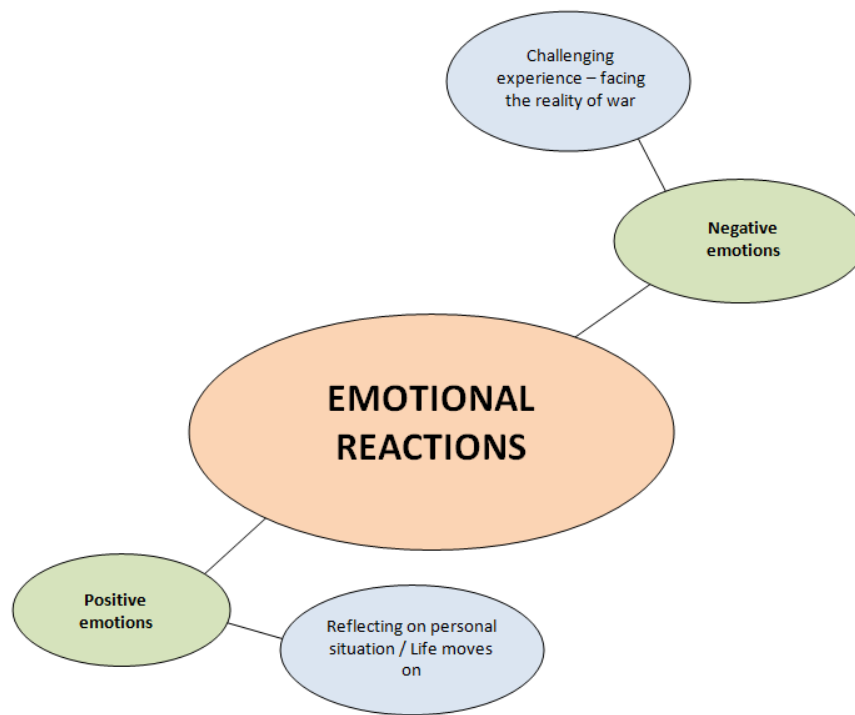
Figure 9: Example section of the Vietnam War thematic diagram

3.9 Ethics

Online research, including blog research, is a relatively new concept and there are currently several opinions regarding ethics. Researchers argue that archived material on the internet is publicly available therefore ethics approval is not required, while others claim that all online postings should be treated as private, and thus approval is needed (Hookway, 2008). Ethics in traditional and online research settings have relatively similar guidelines, both focusing on the rights of the research participants. In relation to the rights of the research participants, Ess (2007) argues that if harm is prevented then a researcher has the right to pursue knowledge. Ess (2002) also states that research in an online setting need not require separate or special ethical procedures than research carried out in an offline environment. Nevertheless, there are several factors that need to be considered when conducting research online. An important factor is the context of the research being undertaken (Eynon et al., 2008). For example: Is the researcher collecting search engine behaviour data? Will this be anonymised? Or is the researcher covertly interacting with people in a social chatroom? Should internet users' pseudonyms be published? Is there such a thing as

'privacy' in a public setting on the internet? These are all new questions which are constantly being debated surrounding the issues of ethics in online research.

Various professional and academic organisations have discussed ethical issues and guidelines related to online research. These organisations include the Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR), The Information Society, Ethics and Information Technology and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) (Hookway, 2008). The AoIR has produced an ethical decision-making internet research guideline which advocates a process approach to ethics on the internet (Markham & Buchanan, 2012). This method focuses on a case by case approach as each research project has specific needs that can differ significantly. For example, internet research can involve interaction with participants through online chatrooms or it may solely involve archival data collection with no participant interaction. The AoIR Ethics Committee has proposed a list of common internet specific ethical questions which should be considered before and during the research process. These questions are largely related to the access to content issue, i.e. is the material publicly available? (Markham & Buchanan, 2012)

In regards to this study, only blogs that are in the public domain (accessible via internet search engines) are considered as potential source material. Blogs that require usernames and passwords or 'friends only' blogs have not been used. In relation to identity, blog posters will not be identified by their name, only a pseudonym given by the researcher and their gender and nationality. Screenshots or images from travellers blogs are not presented, however quotes are illustrated in the findings chapters. Personal discretion has been used to determine whether any quotes are overly sensitive in nature. Highly sensitive or personal blog quotes have not been presented as there is always a potential risk that harm could be caused if a quote was ever traced back to the original author. Ethical approval from the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) is not required for this thesis. Although the ethics process through AUTEC is not included, this does not mean that ethical standards are ignored. The ethical standards and considerations outlined by the AoIR form an ethical guideline which is followed throughout the duration of this thesis.

As well as privacy there is the matter of copyright law. Ethics and law in online research are becoming more blurred and legal issues have been regarded as a subset of

ethical issues (Charlesworth, 2008). What is different is that while ethical guidelines are what a moral researcher follows, legal issues are mandatory and relate to the matter of content ownership. Legal requirements, such as copyright law, protect the author's work in terms of ownership; however these requirements do not provide enough protection in the form of preventing personal harm (Charlesworth, 2008). This is why ethical guidelines must be combined with legal requirements.

Certain copyright laws protect a range of original work, including blog posts on the internet. If a blogger uploads a post to a specific content management system then that post will be protected by the blog site's copyright (Hookway, 2008). However, copyright laws may only apply to people attempting to use the material for commercial purposes. Blog sites tend to vary on a case by case basis, although overall blog researchers tend to be unrestricted due to the limitations on exclusive rights, known as 'fair use.'

Most countries have a 'fair use' exception: in the United States fair use means that using copyrighted work is not an infringement of copyright if the work is being criticised, commented on, used in news reporting, teaching, scholarship or research (U.S. Copyright Office, 2012). Factors relating to fair use include whether the copyrighted work is used for non-profit educational purposes or commercial purposes, the nature of the copyrighted work, the amount of copyrighted work that is used and whether using the copyrighted work will have an effect on the potential market of the copyrighted work (U.S. Copyright Office, 2012). Canadian copyright law also has a 'fair use' exception; this is called 'fair dealing.' Under the fair dealing exception, works used for the purpose of research, private study, education, parody or satire does not breach copyright law (Government of Canada, 2012). US and Canadian copyright laws has been discussed as the blog sites and their servers used for this research are owned by US and Canadian companies.

Researcher safety in an online context is another feature that differs to traditional data collection methods. Unobtrusive travel blog data collection does not involve any interaction with the bloggers, however this does not mean that researcher safety is exempt. Since the topics of dark tourism, battlefield tourism and mortality mediation are difficult concepts it is important to be aware of any possible negative effects to the researcher as an outcome of reading travel blogs and literature materials that deal with

subjects that are depressing in nature. To enhance researcher safety communication is maintained between the researcher and supervisors.

3.10 Trustworthiness in qualitative case study research

Rigour in quantitative research usually concerns the terms validity and reliability and its ability to generalise. In contrast, qualitative research is often flexible; it does not have to follow one standard methodological approach, and due to its use of small sample sizes qualitative research does not allow for large generalisations, however it does obtain in-depth understandings of small cases. In essence, qualitative research is valued for its differences when compared to quantitative research (Houghton et al., 2013). Due to the considerable differences between quantitative and qualitative research it has been recognised that qualitative research projects cannot be compared to the same values of rigour that are applied to quantitative research i.e. validity and reliability. Qualitative research is subjective rather than objective and thus other approaches to rigour have been formulated.

A variety of criteria has been devised to evaluate the rigour of qualitative research. Tracy (2010) developed the eight 'big-tent' criteria for qualitative research. This covers factors such as: worthy topic, rich rigour, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethical and meaningful coherence. However, the most common approach to rigour in qualitative research is that devised by Lincoln and Guba (1985) which includes the terms credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. These terms come under the umbrella of trustworthiness, which is considered to be more important in qualitative research than the quantitative standards of validity and reliability (Gray, 2009).

Credibility

The factor of credibility would be comparable to internal validity; it examines the study design and methods used (Gray, 2009). Basically it concerns the manner in which the study was undertaken and how the researcher demonstrates credibility. To achieve credibility audit trails are provided in the form of thematic networks which illustrate how the concepts were developed from themes and codes. This enables other researchers to understand how the final concepts have been constructed as it

demonstrates the thematic analysis process. Another aspect of credibility is prolonged engagement or 'time in the field' (Lincoln, 1995). In this case 'the field' is the blogosphere and 'engagement' equates to searching for and reading blogs. The entire blog research process spanned from September 2013 to March 2014 with over 200 total blogs viewed. A total of 85 blogs were considered, this figure was narrowed down to 40 total blogs. Persistent observation and engagement helps to strengthen research credibility. Another method of achieving credibility is to provide 'thick descriptions' of not only the phenomenon but also the context in which it is occurring (Gray, 2009). Providing the context supports the interpretations being made in the findings.

Transferability

Transferability is considered to be the comparison of external validity. It looks at whether findings can be transferred to other similar contexts or situations (Houghton et al., 2013). Since this is a highly qualitative study it can only be compared to case to case transfer (Tobin & Begley, 2004). It is subjective in nature and as such there is no right or wrong interpretation. However, this study does refer to dark tourism, battlefield tourism and heritage tourism literature to back up the findings and meanings of the study. The methods used to conduct this research project can be transferred to other war tourism case study sites. Nevertheless the exact findings will differ as each war site has its own unique history (i.e. how the war started, the countries involved, how the war was conducted, public opinion and how the war ended).

All of these factors will have an impact on how the war is remembered, who comes to visit and how they reflect on the historic sites of war. This is why quantitative measures of rigour cannot be applied to qualitative studies. Research within the social sciences concerns human behaviour and thinking which can take place in similar yet different social situations (Veal, 2006). Laderman (2009) contemplates how the latest Iraq War will be remembered after conflict has ceased and a potential tourism market emerges. Constructed memory of the Iraq War will vary within American memory, Iraqi memory and also global memory. This illustrates the unique features of individual war tourism case studies; however the same methods of analysis can be applied.

Dependability

Dependability is comparable to reliability in quantitative research (Gray, 2009). This factor refers to the dependability of the study's conclusions, and how stable are its findings (Houghton et al., 2013). Collecting and analysing data over an extended period of time can come with the risk of inconsistency as the researcher may make alterations throughout this process which raises questions over stability of data collection (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). Similar to credibility, dependability also relies on auditing to demonstrate reliability. Achieving dependability means that the process of data collection and analysis must be logical and consistent. This was done by firstly searching for appropriate blogs, the entire blog immersion period (September 2013 to March 2014) involved the two case studies all the way through. This was done to ensure that any new blogs that were recently posted would be reviewed and considered for both case studies, thus supporting consistency. The variety of blogging websites searched were the same for both case studies. The thematic analysis process was firstly carried out on the Vietnam War blogs and then the exact process was carried out again on the WWI blogs. Ensuring that the same steps were taken for both case studies helps to achieve consistency over the entire analytic process.

Confirmability

The final factor of rigour is confirmability; this could be compared to achieving some form of objectivity (Gray, 2009). Confirmability assesses the study's ability to be audited and its accuracy of the data. It is strongly linked to dependability as the processes are similar, both relate to the researcher's ability to demonstrate how they went from the data to their interpretations (Skrtic, 1985; Houghton et al., 2013). Confirmability is a way to illustrate how the findings have been derived from the data and have not come from the researcher's imagination (Tobin & Begley, 2004). With blog research an advantage is that the blog posts are written in the bloggers' own words and thus cannot be influenced or guided by a researcher's questions. Of course one researcher's interpretation will differ from how others approach the same topic, and with unobtrusive blog research the researcher cannot confirm exact meanings for further clarity. Nevertheless, quotes from the blogs are printed to confirm how the

findings have come about. Findings are also backed up by theoretical knowledge from other related studies.

3.11 Limitations

A limitation of this study is that due to the sample size it cannot make generalisations about the population at large. This is a common criticism of qualitative research. Qualitative research often lacks the ability to be easily reproduced by other researchers in the same way that quantitative research can (Gray, 2009). Another issue raised is that qualitative research can result in highly subjective and personalised findings and analysis, meaning that another researcher could look at the same data and see it from a different perspective (Mays & Pope, 1995). Nevertheless, this study helps to understand the experiences and reflections of tourists who have visited the case study sites of WWI and the Vietnam War.

Another limitation that relates to scale and scope is that the blogs analysed primarily come from a Western (English language) or Allied perspective. In regards to WWI this means that the bloggers are predominately reflecting on the Allied experience of the war rather than the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria). When analysing the Vietnam War the opposing categories are broken down into Anti-Communist and Communist forces. Bloggers who are primarily from Western countries reflect from a Western Anti-Communist approach, this means that the North Vietnamese perspective is not represented. Another point to make is that the bloggers travelling to Vietnam are mainly of European ethnicity, the result being that the experiences of expatriate South Vietnamese is not included.

It is recommended that future studies include non Western perspectives and reflections from both sides of each conflict. Although this may be difficult at present as blog research requires that travellers have created user generated content. This brings up another limitation to this study and that is the exclusive nature of this research design. The sample of tourists must have travelled to one of the case study destinations and must have blogged about their experience. This limits the study to those who have the disposable income to travel, and who have access to the internet and are willing and able to navigate social media (blogging applications).

3.12 Reflexivity

Another component of trustworthiness in qualitative research is the researcher's evaluation. Evaluation in qualitative research covers the researcher's reflexivity, the context in which the research took place, interpretation, and the flexibility of the research process (Horsburgh, 2003).

In qualitative research, the concept of reflexivity acknowledges the role of the researcher and how their experience of life or view of the world may have an impact on their research decisions (Horsburgh, 2003). As a New Zealander I have a national connection to the case studies, however personally I do not (to my knowledge) have any relatives who served during WWI or the Vietnam War. New Zealand's involvement in WWI was based on being part of the British Empire, and its involvement in the Vietnam War was partly due to feelings of insecurity regarding the ANZUS Treaty (Grey, 2006). The Australian government felt that the ANZUS Treaty (Australia, New Zealand and the United States) was not a secure commitment to protection. Therefore, support for the Vietnam War was essentially a way to 'guarantee' support from the United States if an attack were to happen on Australia or New Zealand (Grey, 2006). In effect the New Zealand government was eager to keep their policy in line with that of Australia even though there were doubts that military involvement would have a desirable outcome (Grey, 2006). New Zealand continues to have a strong link to WWI as the national day – ANZAC Day, April 25 – marks the landings at Gallipoli in 1915. This date is considered to represent the birth of the two nations – Australia and New Zealand. As the researcher I am aware that this national connection has the potential to affect the interpretation of the research process. However, a variety of nationalities are included in the WWI case study – although they all represent the Allied side.

In regards to my position as the researcher I personally have not travelled to the case study sites. This aspect could be viewed in a negative light as I do not have a personal experience of the atmosphere or management of the sites. Conversely, having not travelled to the case study sites I am prevented from applying my own subjective thoughts and feelings on the bloggers' experiences. My position as the researcher remains an integral part of the research process, and total detachment is not possible,

however since I have not travelled to the sites myself my findings are focused on the bloggers' views of the case study sites, thus reducing my own subjectivities.

In saying this, an understandable drawback of unobtrusive blog research is that there is no communication between myself and the bloggers. As a result I am unable to query any statements that would be interesting to probe further into. This especially applies to contested issues, such as the ones apparent in the Vietnam case study. Due to this issue I have found it imperative to read into the history of Vietnam, particularly certain sites such as the War Remnants Museum, to ascertain why these feelings are so apparent in the Vietnam blogs. This highlights the context in which unobtrusive blog research takes place. As the researcher I am required to study the historical aspects of each case study to gain a thorough understanding of historical events and to draw my findings from the bloggers' experiences. In this case I acknowledge that there are limitations in that I cannot confirm my understandings of the blog posts with the bloggers in the study. My findings are based off their published blog posts and my interpretation of those posts.

In regards to interpretation in qualitative research it is known, as noted above, that the researcher will have direct involvement in the analysis process. Due to this it is important that the researcher provides enough detail and context so that the reader is able to interpret how the findings and analysis were achieved (Popay et al., 1998). To meet this need I have provided the thematic analysis steps, outlining how the blog content has been broken down into important codes which have been grouped together to form themes and the overall concepts. Potentially a reader may not agree with my interpretation of the codes to themes to concepts development; however the intention is to illustrate the process of how I reached those concepts (Koch, 1994).

Flexibility in the research process is considered a characteristic of qualitative research (Popay et al., 1998). The emphasis is on variability rather than standardisation. Throughout the thematic analysis process I have enabled flexibility and adaption by not rigidly searching for codes that relate to the literature. This has enabled new findings to emerge from the data. In relation to the blogs selected for the analysis process there is a variation in the bloggers' writing styles and length of posts. My objective during the data collection process was to search for the most reflective blog posts and thus the blog post length was not important, the number of words per blog

entry ranged from approximately 300 to over 2,000 words. Photographs are present on most of the blogs; however these are not included in the analysis process. When beginning this thesis I was uncertain of the number and quality of blog posts that would be 'out there' on the blogosphere relating to this subject. However, there were more than I expected which led to considerable time spent narrowing down the number of blogs which would be used in this thesis. Through my exploration of travel blogs it does appear that bloggers are comfortable with revealing their personal thoughts and feelings in a public forum, something that may be difficult for some to do in a face-to-face interview. Overall, bloggers are able to provide their reflections on their own terms and I am able to gain an insider's view of their experiences.

The bloggers also varied in terms of their prior knowledge of the case study sites. Several bloggers exhibited considerable knowledge of the case study war, while others admitted that they knew very little of what occurred during the war. For the latter individuals the experience was in some ways a history lesson, while for the more informed individuals it was a chance to see the sites they had previously learnt of. Individuals with less prior knowledge were more prominent in the Vietnam case study, possibly indicating that for some of these travellers taking a trip to Vietnam was not based on a motivation to see battlefields or warfare attractions. Thi Le and Pearce (2011, p. 461) who studied international visitors to Vietnam noted that visiting a battlefield in Vietnam "played only a minor role in their decision to travel to Vietnam". Prior to beginning this thesis I had a relatively brief and basic understanding of WWI and the Vietnam War. Therefore to ensure that I have a thorough understanding of past events and ongoing controversies that exist today, I have read several historical texts on the case study wars. This is to ensure that I have not established my findings and analysis based on pure opinion or 'shaky' knowledge of past and ongoing events.

3.13 Conclusion

In summary this methodology chapter has outlined the research position that this thesis follows. The ontology and epistemology relates to a nature of 'being' and meaning is constructed by the research subjects. A qualitative research strategy is utilised as this is the most appropriate in gaining an in-depth understanding of the bloggers' experiences and reflections. Highly emotive subject issues which delve into

the contemplation of war and death require a research design which favours words rather than numbers, as it is not possible to fulfil the needs of this thesis through surveys and statistics. It is also imperative that alternative methods are used to enable the researcher to access sensitive subject matter. In this case, unobtrusive data collection using online travel blogs has been selected as the most suitable form of data collection.

Methodological innovations are needed when the research process involves thanatourism and the contemplation of death. Travel blog research is a sympathetic method in exploring the highly personal nature of thanatourism. Social media and user generated content on the internet is growing in popularity and social science researchers have been quick to respond to the changing nature of how people interact with the world. The internet has not made traditional research methods obsolete. What it has done is create a new avenue for both qualitative and quantitative researchers to access rich data from individuals all over the world. The internet is still a relatively new concept and there are ongoing debates around its use (i.e. guidelines, ethics, principles and privacy), one of the main issues behind this is the fast paced nature of the internet. It is constantly changing and therefore debate is forever ongoing. The ethical guidelines adhered to in this thesis follow the most up to date discussions. The following chapter presents the findings of battlefield tourists who blogged about their experiences and reflections at WWI sites.

Chapter Four

Findings - WWI

4.1 Introduction

The findings for this thesis are separated into two chapters, this chapter presents the findings for the WWI case study and the following chapter presents the findings for Vietnam. In this chapter the reflections of WWI battlefield tourists are presented by the use of direct quotes taken from their blogs. The layout of this chapter is based on the findings from the thematic analysis process. The results from this process are illustrated in a thematic framework. Each concept and theme within the thematic framework corresponds to a heading within this chapter, which is supported by quotes from the blogs.

4.2 WWI bloggers

The bloggers presented in this chapter are given pseudonyms. These are outlined in Table 5. Common names that indicate the gender of the bloggers have been selected. The use of common names helps to prevent assigning other meanings to the bloggers. The nationality of the bloggers is given as this helps to understand why they would be visiting certain sites and what it means to them. The WWI bloggers represent 17 individuals and 3 couples. It is not possible to tell who the writer in the couple blogs is; hence they will be counted as one blogger, however two names (male and female) will be given since the gender of the writer is not known. As a result the total number of WWI bloggers is given as 20. These bloggers travelled to either the Western Front (France or Belgium) or Gallipoli in Turkey.

Table 5: WWI bloggers – name and nationality

WWI Bloggers	Nationality	WWI Bloggers	Nationality
Emma	Australian	Benjamin	Canadian
Olivia	American	Justin and Megan	New Zealand couple
Hailey	Australian	Rachel	Canadian
Sophie	Australian	John and Alyssa	New Zealand couple
Joshua	Australian	Ryan	British
Chloe	Canadian	Jessica	Australian
Charlotte	Canadian	Andrew	New Zealander (living in UK)
Logan	American	Hannah	New Zealander
James	American	Daniel and Samantha	Australian couple
Nicholas	Canadian	Ashley	Australian

4.3 Dark tourism (battlefield) experience

Each of these bloggers participated in a dark tourism (battlefield) experience by visiting sites of historic war. It should be noted that the motivation of the bloggers is not considered in this study, i.e. whether they meet the definition of a thanatourist who travels to a site motivated by the desire to have an actual or symbolic encounter with death (Seaton, 1996). It is probable that many were motivated by a national or historical interest in the case study sites. However, the reason or motivation to visit a site does not prevent the tourist from having a deep or dark encounter while they are there.

The process of thematic analysis of the blog posts enabled three key concepts to emerge. These concepts are related to the blogger's touristic experience, they encompass the main elements of contemplation and reflection of a WWI battlefield experience. These findings were firstly constructed within a thematic web diagram which outlined in detail the key concepts, themes and basic themes. This web diagram went on to form the thematic framework outlined in Figure 10 which demonstrates how the concepts lead to the final outcome of the experience. The labels given in the thematic framework are presented as the headings in this chapter. Each concept and theme is supported by blog quotes to illustrate their importance and reason for selection.

DARK TOURISM (BATTLEFIELD) EXPERIENCES WWI

National or
personal bond

Realities of
warfare

Family heritage

Spirituality

Nationality

Authenticity

Soldiers

Thoughts on warfare

Immersion

Positive emotions

Emotional
reactions

Negative emotions

Contemplation of war & peace (Life & death)

Mortality mediation
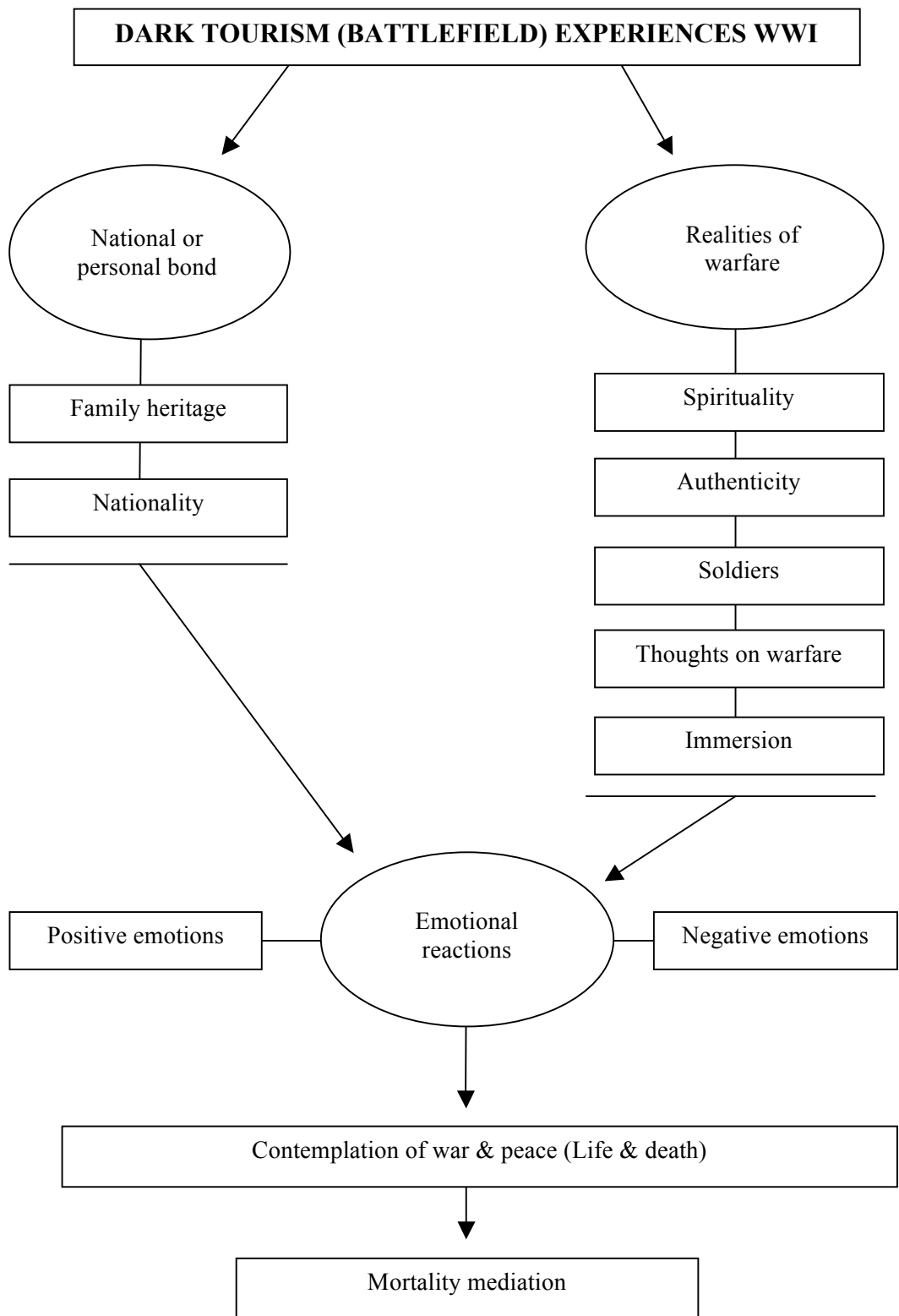
Figure 10: Thematic framework of dark tourism (battlefield) experiences WWI

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4.4 National or personal bond

One of the concepts that emerged from the thematic analysis of the travel blogs was the factor of a national or personal bond to WWI. All of the bloggers had a national connection to WWI, although they also travelled to WWI sites not directly related to their nationality (i.e. American traveller to Gallipoli). As well as a national bond several bloggers did mention a personal family connection, such as a relative who served or died in WWI.

4.4.1 Family heritage

Personal connection / lost family member

The theme *Family heritage* relates to bloggers who have a personal connection to WWI sites. For one blogger the trip was a form of pilgrimage to visit the gravestone of a lost relative of her husband who was buried in Belgium. Chloe contemplated the young age at which the relative died and reflected that she and her husband had surpassed it:

> *"[Husband] emerges from the shop with a dozen red roses; a gift for an unknown family member lost at an age we've both been fortunate enough to surpass." (Chloe – Canada)*

Viewing the gravestone for the first time is a highly emotive experience.

> *"Seeing our surname – etched on the headstone, we both start crying. [Husband] places the flowers on [Great Uncle's] grave, and I leave [him] alone with the Great Uncle he never knew." (Chloe – Canada)*

Seeing their surname on the gravestone brought on a strong reaction as it is a visual confirmation of their familial connection. Chloe then leaves her husband so he can spend time alone with the relative he had never met. This reveals how a connection can be formed with the dead, even with those that were not previously known to the living.

Reflecting on the visit Chloe writes that she *"felt guilty that we'd never visited the final resting places of our [other] family members,"* stating that *"despite never having*

had the chance to know us, died that we may live." Chloe's feelings of guilt relate to a sense of obligation to visit the resting places of her family's dead, she makes note of the concept of sacrifice, that they have died so that *"we may live."*

The Canadian blogger Nicholas, also in Belgium, reflected on his Great-grand father. Nicholas was keen to seek the gravestones of soldiers from his Great-grand father's battalion and also contemplated whether he could do what his relative did. Nicholas noted that *"I am not much different in age than my Great-grandfather."* Nicholas appeared to make a connection with his relative by contemplating himself in the same circumstances.

In contrast to those who had family members serving and dying in WWI battles, Andrew admits to feeling *"disconnected"* from annual WWI commemorations while growing up in New Zealand:

> *"While always respectful of what the ANZACs sacrificed in Gallipoli, I have always felt somewhat disconnected from the annual commemorations that took place every year on ANZAC Day, as I didn't have any relatives who had died for New Zealand during the campaign." (Andrew – NZ)*

Having a personal family connection ties these tourists to the WWI battlefields, and as Andrew stated, not having that family connection can lead to feelings of disconnect. Although Andrew stated feeling *"disconnected"* from WWI commemorations growing up in New Zealand, this factor did not prevent him, and others, without family connections from having a deeply involved experience, as noted in the following section on nationality.

4.4.2 Nationality

Sites of war usually hold importance to several countries and often the same sites have varied meanings for different travellers. Visiting national sites of significance can induce feelings of pride, for example the Allied countries Canada, Australia and New Zealand view certain WWI battlefields as the beginning of their national identities. These same battlefield sites can share just as much importance to other nations, for instance Turkey views the Gallipoli victory as part of the founding of the Republic of Turkey.

Nationality - 'Good Active History'

What occurred during a war will have an effect on how certain nationalities view a particular site. Poria (2001, 2007) conceptualised the theory of good active history which states that certain actions undertaken by one's own social group (nationality) produce positive feelings for that individual. Since the WWI bloggers represent the Allied countries there is a notable expression of good active history. This is especially the case for the Commonwealth countries Canada, Australia and New Zealand, as WWI is viewed as the birth of their national identities.

Australian and New Zealand bloggers expressed national pride in the ANZACs:

> *"I feel proud to be Australian each and every day. But never, ever have I felt more proud of my heritage than when I stood on the shores of Anzac Cove for the very first time." (Jessica – Australia)*

Jessica stated that being abroad gave her a sense of pride in her nation and this feeling of pride was felt considerably more so when she was on the shores of Anzac Cove. This expression highlights the connection between Australian heritage and Gallipoli.

Andrew had a similar experience, stating that he had lived abroad for almost five years:

> *"...visiting Gallipoli and hearing the stories of courage, of hopelessness, and of tragedy lived out by the ANZACs in a place so far from home; my appreciation of their sacrifice is much bigger than it was before. The pride I have in my country has swelled, and I've certainly been reminded about where home really is and where it will always be - New Zealand." (Andrew – NZ)*

Andrew, who had been away from New Zealand for several years, expressed his national connection to Gallipoli through the stories of the ANZAC soldiers. This experience gave him time to contemplate on where home is to him, which was New Zealand. Joshua, who also visited Gallipoli, expressed the importance of the site to Australia:

> *"This site marks the spot of so much loss but also bares the spirit of the Anzac Legend that empowers so much of the Australian way of life. We are a country of battlers and would do anything for our mates." (Joshua – Australia)*

Joshua connected the Anzac Legend to the *"Australian way of life"* expressing this as the desire to do *"anything for our mates."* For Joshua, the experience highlighted the Australian spirit and where it originated.

Jessica explained on her blog post the importance of the ANZAC legend to Australia and how it has shaped *"our national identity"* by *"defining what it is to be Australian."* Jessica stated that *"core Australian values are epitomised by the ANZACs."* Jessica's statement complements Joshua's quote that the current Australian values and national identity are tied to the characteristics of the ANZAC soldiers.

Canadian bloggers spoke of the importance of their national identity and its connection to WWI:

> *"Historians have subsequently written that our Canadian nationhood was solidified through our soldiers' sacrifice on these battlefields in Belgium and France."* (Charlotte – Canada)

Speaking on the Battle of Vimy Ridge, Benjamin stated that *"the recognition the Canadians garnered on that bloody hill is what [fuelled] our national identity."* He concluded that *"its impact on Canada cannot be overlooked."* (Benjamin – Canada)

The Canadian bloggers experienced similar feelings as the Australian and New Zealand bloggers. Certain WWI battlefields hold national significance which emotionally connects the bloggers to these sites. Due to these sites being recognised as the psychological birthplace (Slade, 2003) of their nations, their experiences took the form of Good Active history (Poria, 2001, 2007; Sharpley, 2009a), expressed in feelings of pride for their nations. This leads to the following section on the different sides of war.

The different sides of war

Every war will have at least two sides, most often one side is viewed as the victor and the other the defeated. Depending on what occurred during the war and how it is remembered afterwards can have an effect on how travellers reflect on their experience. This is usually closely tied to the individual's nationality.

Several bloggers referred to war victories and reflected on how they felt that the victor has the right to determine how their dead are remembered. Nicholas thought it was *"interesting, yet fully understandable"* that there were no references to the German soldiers:

> *"While millions of soldiers were killed on both sides of the battlefields there are no memorials to the defeated, killed or missing German invaders. This is a true case of the victors earning the right to pen the history of the war and control who and how its' dead are remembered." (Nicholas – Canada)*

For Andrew the situation was different as he reflected on the Turkish and New Zealand memorials at Gallipoli. To him the sight of drink and ice cream stalls at the peak's entrance made the area resemble *"a circus"* which he felt was *"a bit unfortunate"* since New Zealand's memorial did not have the same sense of *"peacefulness and serenity as the Australian memorial at Lone Pine."* Nevertheless, Andrew felt that this was justified since:

> *"...the recapture of Chunuk Bair from the Allies was ultimately the decisive battle that won the campaign for the Ottomans and thus the Turks have every right to commemorate their victory in the same place." (Andrew – NZ)*

Nicholas and Andrew both expressed how they believed that the victors had the right to determine how a battlefield site should be remembered. For Andrew there was a sense of disappointment that Chunuk Bair did not reflect *"peacefulness,"* however he expressed the importance of the 'other side' of war and that the Turkish have the right to commemorate the campaign in their own way.

John and Alyssa reflected on the differences between the presentation of Allied cemeteries and German cemeteries in France. They noted that the first cemetery for German soldiers that they came across was *"plain and simple"* and that the *"cemeteries for fallen German soldiers tended to be less formal and on lesser roads."*

> *"The [German cemetery] was orderly and tidy but nowhere near as grand and striking as the French and American memorials and cemeteries were and there was no flag flying, perhaps because they were the losers of this insane war and their dead were buried on land they had tried to conquest and had failed."*
> *(John & Alyssa – NZ)*

The observations of John and Alyssa are also connected to the issue of the victors choosing how the dead are remembered. This blogging couple recognised the

differences between the nationalities and their cemeteries and made the conclusion
that this difference was reflected in the position of that country in the outcome of the
war.

Bloggers also referred to moments that represented the 'other side' of war, often one
they are not used to seeing. Andrew expressed his thoughts on the Turkish memorial
in Gallipoli, stating that the Turkish tour guide did not give the group any historical
background of the area and interest from the group was minimal:

> *"...a lot of our tour group didn't really bother looking around the memorial -
> however, there were two sides in the war, and I personally thought it'd be
> disrespectful not to at least look around." (Andrew – NZ)*

Andrew expressed the need to pay his respects to both sides of the war, not just his own.
He felt that the other tourists in his group were disrespectful for not taking the time to
look at the Turkish memorial. This illustrates that most tourists in Andrew's tour group
were interested in memorials related to their own nationality.

Logan encountered the 'other side' of war as he read tombstone inscriptions in Tyne
Cot Cemetery. As he did this he came across the tombstones of two German soldiers:

> *"At the bottom of the tombstone was a small wooden cross with a poppy on it
> with the words written underneath that simply said "You too died with honour."
> (Logan – USA)*

An interesting aspect to him was the message that the German soldiers have also died
with honour. This also represents the passing of time, and how people come to realise
that many regular citizens from both sides were dragged into this war of attrition.

Olivia who visited Gallipoli realised that as an American the experience would hold a
different meaning to her than if she were an Australian, New Zealander or Turk. Olivia
also had prior knowledge of the term dark tourism, stating that dark tourists'
motivations to visit particular sites are *"often tied to a person's nationality and personal
history."*

> *"I knew, then, that visiting Gallipoli as an American would be different. I have
> no ties to the Aussies, Kiwis, Brits, or Turks who lost their lives on these far-off
> shores. But I was still interested to learn more about it." (Olivia – USA)*

As a tourist travelling with prior knowledge of the dark tourism concept, Olivia realised that her motivations and experience of Gallipoli would be different to those of an Australian, New Zealander or Turk. The difference relates to her lack of national connection to Gallipoli. Although Olivia experienced deep emotions at Gallipoli, which were related to the loss of lives and the aspects of the 'Gentleman's' war (opposing sides befriending each other), she did not experience the feelings of Good Active history, since her nation (the US), does not have its national identity tied to Gallipoli. Conversely this does highlight the emotional importance in being present at a historic site of war which includes the confronting aspects involved in facing the realities of historic warfare.

4.5 Realities of warfare

War can often be romanticised in popular culture such as movies or novels, and also within the stories of national identity. At times the harsh realities of war can be glossed over as the focus is on the camaraderie of soldiers at war or the national pride of a military victory. However, being physically present at a site of historic war enables a tourist to face the costs of such a war. The *realities of warfare* formed another key concept in the process of thematic analysis.

4.5.1 Spirituality

Spirituality came across as a theme within the realities of warfare concept. Bloggers reflected on their experiences in a spiritual nature, either in reference to the war dead or the atmosphere of their environment.

Spiritual connection to the dead

A sense of spiritual connection to the dead came across in the writings of several bloggers. Nicholas found that walking through a war cemetery enabled him to *"understand the vast extent of the sacrifice"* made by the soldiers.

> *"As I walked up and down the rows of white stone marble markers I realized that the green grass and the vivid flowers were being fed by the remains of thousands of heroic youth. One tends to rethink each step when they traverse upon such revered land." (Nicholas – Canada)*

For Nicholas there was a connection to the dead when he realised that the ground beneath him had been fertilised by the war dead. He then felt that he must be extra careful when walking on such land. He also took the time to reach over and touch one of the monuments, a physical link between him and the dead. Continuing his walk through Tyne Cot Cemetery, Nicholas wrote on his blog that as he *"walked among the dead"* he felt it was important to *"read aloud the names"* of the soldiers. For him this *"was the least"* he could do to remember them.

Rachel, also from Canada, expressed how special it was to find cemeteries in remote places as the dead buried here would probably be *"overlooked"* and therefore would not receive many visitors. In this way Rachel was ensuring that the dead would not be forgotten:

> *"I feel like because those were so remote not many people probably visit them [...] it really was so special to be able to go see the graves that are often overlooked."* (Rachel – Canada)

Daniel and Samantha from Australia wrote of the dead making *"their peace"* and sharing their stories with those who visit, they also stated that their day was *"extremely moving"* yet *"brought a strange comfort"*. This demonstrates a spiritual connection between the living and the dead; the dead are happy to share *"their stories"* with the living:

> *"All of the fields and memorials and even the trenches had an amazingly calm feeling to them, as though all of those that lay there have made their peace and are sharing it with everyone who comes to visit to learn and hear their stories."* (Daniel & Samantha – Australia)

For these bloggers there is a strong spiritual nature to their battlefield visits. The dead are not entirely gone; they have a presence on the battlefields which is felt by these bloggers. This is expressed by Nicholas in the way he takes care when walking through the cemetery, and by Rachel who does not want the remote gravestones to be completely overlooked, and finally by Daniel and Samantha who expressed having a *"calm feeling"* while visiting the memorials, that the dead are able to rest in peace and share their stories with those who will listen. A spiritual connection to the dead is also linked to how bloggers interpreted the atmosphere of their environment, either positive or negative.

Positive and negative atmosphere

As well as a spiritual connection to the dead, the WWI bloggers also made reference to the atmosphere felt at the sites they visited. Battlefield sites either gave a positive or negative feel. Several bloggers felt that the German cemeteries or graves had a negative atmosphere:

> *"Unlike the other cemeteries we had visited, which seemed to offer solace, this one [German] was stark and felt grim." (Benjamin – Canada)*

Rachel also noted this, stating that *"the French did not give the Germans"* much land *"to bury their dead."* As a result *"each cross represented four soldiers."*

> *"I found this cemetery especially moving because it was so large and it was so sad. Each cemetery has a different feel; I found the Commonwealth graves very peaceful, but the dark German crosses felt very sombre." (Rachel – Canada)*

The physical differences between the cemeteries were noticed by Benjamin and Rachel; they interpreted this difference in the atmosphere and vibe that the cemeteries emitted. For them the German cemeteries were *"grim"* and *"sombre."* This aspect can be related back to how the dead are remembered and the victors of war choosing how this will be achieved. As a result the German cemeteries present a negative atmosphere, while the Commonwealth cemeteries present a positive atmosphere which *"offer solace."*

Jessica felt that the atmosphere at Gallipoli was positive, despite what had happened there in the past, stating that *"it's a remarkably beautiful place. Quiet. Serene. Peaceful."* Jessica found it *"almost impossible to believe"* that it was once the site *"of such violence and suffering." (Jessica – Australia)*

In contrast to a positive atmosphere emitting peacefulness and serenity, James found that the ambience at the Menin Gate ceremony was ruined by the use of mopeds:

> *"Every evening the Menin Gate stages a ceremony where buglers sound the Last Post. When I was there it was blown by a couple of men from the town fire brigade who unromantically rolled up on mopeds…" (James – UK)*

The mopeds destroyed the quiet romantic atmosphere of the ceremony, adding noise pollution which interrupts the Last Post and the laying of wreathes. For James this episode ruined the overall experience of the commemorational ceremony. The atmosphere as recorded by these bloggers is an important feature of historic battlefields. The dead and how they are remembered, including the actions of the living, can have a strong effect on the overall atmosphere of the environment.

4.5.2 Authenticity

Authenticity is an important feature in tourism attractions. With a wide range of available travel documentaries and travel pictures all over the internet, some may wonder why there is still a desire to travel since you can discover destinations remotely. Although this is technically true, nothing can be compared to actually being there. Several tourists made note of the importance in being physically present at the site where history took place.

Authenticity of 'being there'

A reoccurring feature that the bloggers mentioned was the fact of actually 'being there,' where the war had taken place. The authenticity of being there was reflected by the following bloggers:

> *"As I dipped my toes into the turquoise Aegean, I was acutely aware of how many young men [...] lost their lives in these waters; on this sand."*
> *(Olivia – USA)*

Olivia, who visited Gallipoli, contrasted the turquoise sea (something of beauty) with the thoughts of how young men lost their lives in that water and on that sand. Jessica, who visited Gallipoli on Anzac Day, found the experience of 'being there' *"incredibly moving"*:

> *"Being there, in that place, remembering those that fell, it was just incredibly moving. I sang our National Anthem with more gusto than I've ever done in my life." (Jessica – Australia)*

For Joshua being at Gallipoli on April 25th (the anniversary date of the ANZAC soldiers landing on the shores of Gallipoli in 1915) added to his appreciation and

understanding of Anzac day. He stated that *"once you have been to the site where it all happened you will never look at another Anzac Day the same way again."*

> *"...I couldn't help but be overwhelmed by where I was and what had happened here. The place fell quiet as we stood in silence and all I could do was imagine what is was like for the soldiers to storm the beach here and be faced with huge cliffs and raining bullet fire. A true moment of realisation I guess you could say." (Joshua – Australia)*

The realities of warfare become apparent to these bloggers as they experienced the authenticity of 'being there', present at a site of death. They were faced with contemplative thoughts of what happened at this very site and what it would have been like for those who experienced it. When combined with national identity both Jessica and Joshua from Australia expressed the importance in 'being there.' For Joshua this connected him to the experiences of the ANZAC soldiers and for Jessica it brought on feelings of national pride. However, feelings of discontent can occur if a tourist feels that the 'authentic' is in fact inauthentic.

Conflict with 'authenticity'

Since WWI is a historic war dating from 1914-1918 it is expected that original sites will be difficult to maintain. For tourists who prefer truly 'authentic' sites this can cause conflict. One blogger, James, did bring up this matter in relation to Diksmuide, known as the 'Trench of Death:'

> *"...a slightly bogus trench nowadays, since all the sandbags have been replaced with concrete. But it did enable us to see all the normal trench and dugout features: machine-gun nests and so forth." (James – UK)*

There is a sense of disappointment that the trench is not presented in its original form; however James mentions that the use of concrete still enables one to see what it would have been like. James also notes on his blog that Hill 62 is an *"evocative site"* as it has been relatively well maintained (for tourists):

> *"On the hill an enterprising farmer soon after the war refrained from disturbing the trenches in the correct belief that they would attract tourists..." (James – UK)*

As a tourist, James desires the truly 'authentic' experience. He expressed mild disappointment in the presentation of the 'Trench of Death.' This illustrates the difficulty in balancing the maintenance requirements of historic sites and the desire to keep sites 'untouched.' Although for other tourists the importance is not in the debate of authenticity but in their connection to the soldiers.

4.5.3 Soldiers

The soldiers of WWI are in many ways considered the key features of battlefield tourism. Without them there would be nothing to commemorate. Nations often have folk stories that recognise heroic actions or highlight certain characteristics of their soldiers. These aspects were noted by several of the bloggers.

Characteristics and reflections of the soldiers

The age of the soldiers was a common point of reference for the bloggers. The horror at how young they were and the bravery that was required was expressed in the following ways:

> *"...I don't think anyone can [truly] begin to comprehend what these brave boys [...] faced when they landed on the beaches." (Emma – Australia)*

> *"The Gate is inscribed with the names of nearly 55,000 missing men who have no known graves. [...] it is impossible to not be moved when viewing row upon row of names, and imagining that these were once men, or often, just teenage boys." (Charlotte – Canada)*

Emma and Charlotte were struck by the large numbers of those killed and the age at which they died. For tourists from Western nations living in the 21st century it is difficult to contemplate that happening today.

Andrew reflected on how WWI was viewed as the last 'gentleman's war.' That the soldiers fighting at Gallipoli did not harbour hate for one another, and although they *"were trying to kill each other"* both sides *"respected each other as decent human beings."*

> *"Both sides knew that there was no true evil intent on either side. The Allies were fighting to protect freedom, the Ottomans were fighting to defend their homeland. Cease fires were agreed so that each side could gather up their dead for burial." (Andrew – NZ)*

When reflecting on the soldiers, bloggers expressed shock at their age and the numbers that died. This highlights the moment of confrontation with the realities of WWI warfare. Andrew's reflection centred on the characteristics of the soldiers and what they were fighting for, that there was no *"evil intent"* against one another. Connecting to the soldiers was also expressed through feelings of empathetic understanding.

Shared empathy with the soldiers

Understanding between tourists in the present and soldiers from the past was felt by Justin and Megan in France who sensed a shared emotional connection between themselves and the New Zealand war dead:

> *"As a couple of Kiwis, away from home for five months, standing there, we too had that feeling of being a very long way from home and missing family that the soldiers would have felt." (Justin & Megan – NZ)*

The reality of warfare becomes clearer to the bloggers as they connect with the characteristics and experiences of the soldiers. This includes the large death toll, their young ages, how they related to one another (even from opposing sides), and an understanding of how they would have felt being a long way from home and family. Connecting to the soldiers and their experiences led bloggers to express their own thoughts on warfare.

4.5.4 Thoughts on warfare

Within the concept of the *realities of warfare* is the theme of *thoughts on warfare*. This involved reflection on other wars that have followed and contemplation on the understanding of historic warfare and how time has passed.

Lessons learnt?

Lessons learnt relates to the fact that WWI was referred to as the *"war to end all wars."* Since it was not, several bloggers made references to other wars:

"The final installation at the museum was a series of banners; the war to end all wars, followed by a list of the hundreds of conflicts that have followed in the last century. What a shame we didn't learn more from it." (Hailey – Australia)

"...we took the opportunity for some discussion about World War I in general with our children [...] It was a conversation well worth having. A more difficult question to explain to one's children is how, just over 20 years later, it all began again with World War II." (Charlotte – Canada)

For these bloggers, visiting the historic battlefields of WWI brought up the inescapable fact that warfare has continued ever since. In this sense it compounds the depressing and difficult nature of visiting the battlefields. In many ways the horrific events of WWI have continued into the present although they manifest in different ways, i.e. modern warfare.

Andrew who had learnt about WWI being the last 'gentleman's war' from his tour guide reflected on this point and compared the actions of the ANZACs and the Ottomans (exchanging food and letters with one another) against the conduct of other soldiers in wars that have followed:

"Can you imagine that happening in war today? Compare it to the ethnic cleansing and the torture committed during World War II and the urination on Afghan corpses by American troops recently." (Andrew – NZ)

For Andrew there is a feeling that humanity has changed for the worse since WWI, despite the horror and large death toll that resulted from this war. Andrew notes that soldiers in modern warfare from opposing sides do not befriend each other, and the sense of respecting *"each other as decent human beings"* has been lost. Overall these bloggers have reflected on thoughts that humanity has not learnt from the lessons and loss of the past, and as a result we have only repeated them.

Understanding historic warfare and the passing of time

Since WWI is entering its centenary it can be difficult for tourists to contemplate what it was actually like and how time has changed the landscape. Charlotte noted how the *"distance of time"* has made the battles and their place names seem almost *"mythic."* (Charlotte – Canada)

For Justin and Megan in France it was a *"very peaceful scene looking"* out over the cemetery which was *"vastly different to the pictures displayed in Visitors Centre"* illustrating the *"battles that raged here nearly 100 years ago." (Justin & Megan – NZ)* Due to the passing of time photographs are one of the only ways to connect with the reality of WWI battlefields. The peaceful scenery of the cemetery today is a stark contrast to the reality of warfare. Justin and Megan were also confronted with the reminders of the dead when they described the *"sobering experience"* of standing in front of *"thousands of white crosses." (Justin & Megan – NZ)*

For Sophie who spent Anzac Day on the Western Front, being at a commemoration ceremony was not about celebrating war or victory, but about remembering those who died:

> *"We were not rejoicing in war. We were not there to laud a victory over the Germans. We were not there to celebrate the defeat of another nation or the tragic loss of so many wasted human lives. We were there to remember the young men..." (Sophie – Australia)*

With the passing of time and the changing landscape tourists can find it difficult to connect the environment with the battlefields of WWI. Viewing the rows of white crosses and conditions of the trenches enables them to gain some understanding of the realities of warfare. The passing of time also produces different meanings for remembrance and commemoration. As Sophie stated, she was not *"rejoicing in war,"* being present at Anzac Day on the Western Front was not about celebrating a national victory but about remembering the dead. Attempting to understand historic warfare can also involve the contemplation of the self at war.

4.5.5 Immersion

Immersion goes beyond simply being there or taking in the facts of history. Immersion into the wartime experience involves a deeper contemplation of what war was like for those involved and also the contemplation of the self in war.

Integrating into the wartime experience (contemplating the self at war)

Bloggers expressed difficulty in understanding what it would have been like for the soldiers. They often tried to imagine the physical environment of WWI and also what they would have done if they were there during war. Hannah who visited Gallipoli expressed that it *"was hard to imagine the horrors and desperate battle that was forged almost 100 years ago."* She went on to state:

> *"I imagined myself landing here beside my comrades, struggling through the water to the shoreline only to be met with the constant whistling of sniper bullets or machine gun fire, the wails of fallen friends and the sheer terror of thinking you'll be next whilst scampering to make higher ground."* (Hannah – NZ)

Hannah's immersion into the wartime experience was in no way glorified or naive. She imagined it as *"sheer terror"* contemplating how her life could be taken at any moment. The desperation felt while trying to survive to get to higher ground. Her experience of immersion included the *"wails of fallen friends,"* highlighting the dark nature of her engagement with the battlefield experience.

Emma, who also visited Gallipoli, wrote on her blog that *"standing on that beach and looking at what they faced"* she would have turned and ran, she noted that *"they could have shot me for desertion."* (Emma – Australia)

While standing at Anzac Cove, Emma immersed herself in the wartime experience and imagined that if she were there she would not have followed orders to fight. She would rather face punishment for desertion, which in this case would likely have been death. She later stated that *"even when you stand in the trenches"* it is *"hard to imagine what they went [through]."* This comment indicates how difficult it is to truly understand the experience of the soldiers.

Nicholas attempted to fully immerse himself into the wartime experience. As he walked along the remaining German trench lines he put himself in the shoes of a Canadian soldier and contemplated whether he would have joined the war:

> *"Following the troops, I walked atop the remains of the trench line. [...] At one point, I reached down and grabbed a handful of dirt. Immediately, I ported myself 'back in time' to share the experience of Flanders, 1916."*

Nicholas visualised what it would have been like under shellfire:

> *"After the last burst, I was tossed into the mud wall from the force of the explosion. That tin cap protected my skull from flack. Smoke and the stench of death encapsulated me."*

After his experience of the trenches he contemplates whether he would be capable of joining the war effort:

> *"Could I do it? To eat, to sleep and spend four long years 'living' in a glorified ditch? Impossible. Heck, looking back I skipped along the overgrown parapet in a T-shirt and shorts. However, I am not much different in age than my great-grandfather. He heeded the call, quit his job, left his newly married wife and joined the lads. Would I?" (Nicholas – Canada)*

Nicholas concluded that he would heed the call *"in a heartbeat."* For him the experience of immersion was tied to that of his Great-grandfather. In some way exploring the trenches and imagining himself at war in 1916 may have brought him closer to his Great-grandfather by following his footsteps and contemplating his experiences. Nicholas ultimately felt that if his Great-grandfather could do it then he could too. Immersion is not only limited to the battlefield and the imagination, but extends to popular culture and media, as seen in wartime history.

Wartime history (media)

For several bloggers, immersion into the wartime experience extended beyond their battlefield excursions during the day. Finishing the day with wartime history was mentioned by the following bloggers.

Justin and Megan stated that they *"finished off the day"* by watching several episodes of a *"BBC docudrama series on the evacuation of Dunkirk."* Essentially they had spent their day indulging *"in a lot of wartime history." (Justin & Megan – NZ)*

Benjamin completed his day in a similar way, opting to skip the Menin Gate ceremony and instead return to his room where he *"listened to an audio book (The First World War, John Keegan)." (Benjamin – Canada)*

In Andrew's case it wasn't about watching wartime history while away, but about being reminded of specific media. His visit to Gallipoli brought back memories of the 1981 film *'Gallipoli:'*

> *"If the story of The Nek sounds familiar to you, then you've probably watched the 1981 film Gallipoli, where the Battle of The Nek provides the film's climax. I have always vividly remembered the final few minutes of the film, it has stuck with me forever…"* (Andrew – NZ)

Immersion into the wartime experience involving media highlights how the visitation to battlefields is not a shallow last minute decision. Their experience of wartime history extends into the evening, there is a desire to understand and learn more. For Andrew being at Gallipoli reminded him of the final minutes of the film *'Gallipoli'* in which the protagonist, an ANZAC soldier, is killed by bullet fire in the final frame. In this way the film provides Andrew with some realism of the Gallipoli experience. Contemplating battlefield experiences not only leads to immersion, but also certain emotional reactions, as seen in the following section.

4.6 Emotional reactions

In connection to the key concepts of *national or personal bond* and the *realities of warfare* is the concept of *emotional reactions*. In essence, a tourist's reflections and contemplative thoughts at historic sites of war are linked with emotional reactions, either positive or negative. Sites of historic warfare (places of death) are emotive locations to visit and thus emotional reactions are inevitable.

4.6.1 Positive emotions

It is expected that sites of historic war will produce negative emotional reactions; however they also generate positive emotions. The bloggers expressed positive thoughts on the setting and the overall experience and also hope for the future and their own life position.

Reflecting on the setting and experience

Visiting a site related to war can be considered depressing; it is not viewed as a typical 'enjoyable' tourism attraction. However, such sites do attract tourists and having a good experience is still important. Several of the bloggers expressed this.

Hailey *(Australia)* who visited the Western Front stated that she was *"so glad"* to have had the *"opportunity to spend time absorbing"* WWI history. While Ryan *(UK)* concluded his blog by saying that he had a *"humbling experience"* which gave him *"an opportunity for quiet contemplation"* in a *"truly lovely setting."*

While in Belgium, Ashley reflected on the beauty of Hill 60:

> *"...if there were no signs saying it was a memorial, I could easily have mistaken it for Ireland's fairy glen, so many years on it is a beautiful place."*
> *(Ashley – Australia)*

Although these tourists have visited dark tourism locations they have still experienced positive emotions. In the cases above their expressions of positive emotional reactions include the physical beauty of the battlefields today, the opportunity for quiet contemplation and the chance to learn about the history of the landscape. Positive feelings also extend to their own life positions.

Reflecting on their own life and hope for the future

Another aspect of positive emotional reactions relates to bloggers reflecting on their own life and also a sense of hope for the future for all people.

Olivia from the United States visited Gallipoli, and although she did not have a direct national connection to the site, she still had a deep experience on a personal level. She was also aware of the 'dark' element in visiting a site where such mass death had occurred:

> *"Visiting Gallipoli wasn't boring for me. It was a part of history that I ashamedly had known nothing about, and now could appreciate for what it was — a heartbreaking tale of war and loss. A tale I'm glad I heard, because it helped remind me — as all "dark" places like this tend to do — how precious life is, and how lucky I am to still be living mine."* (Olivia – USA)

Olivia reflected on the horrors of past warfare and was reminded of her own position in the world – thankful to be living her life.

While in Gallipoli for the Anzac day commemorations, Jessica reflected on the collaborative effort between Australia, New Zealand and Turkey:

> *"The whole event was a joint collaborative effort from all three countries and it was lovely to think that peace and friendship is possible after so much suffering. I felt a great sense of hope for all the worlds' peoples as we left Anzac cove that day. May peace be with you and me always." (Jessica – Australia)*

For these bloggers the experience of being present at historic battlefields gave them an appreciation of their own life position and also a sense of hope for the future of the world. By visiting Gallipoli on Anzac Day Jessica saw the message of hope and peace through the collaborative effort of Australia, New Zealand and Turkey. That Australians and New Zealanders are welcomed today to the shores of Gallipoli is a sign to Jessica that there is hope for the world through friendship, forgiveness and peace. Although, as expected sites of historic warfare also provoke negative emotional reactions.

4.6.2 Negative emotions

Since sites of historic warfare deal with stories of mass death and suffering it is expected that negative emotions will be felt by those who visit. Negative emotions were split into general negative thoughts on warfare and society, and also challenging physical emotional reactions such as crying.

Negative thoughts on warfare and society

Several bloggers made references to the large numbers of dead and missing during WWI, and questioned the decisions made during this war, they also reflected on the overall waste of human life.

Emma reflected on the landing made by the ANZACs at Anzac Cove:

> *"It illustrates how the combination of some poor and some downright stupid decisions and mistakes can lead to the unnecessary loss of so many lives." (Emma – Australia)*

Olivia, who also visited Gallipoli, contemplated on how the opposing sides befriended each other and then by order of their commanders would kill each other:

> *"...the young men from opposing sides befriending each other in between skirmishes — the Brits, Aussies and Turks would all play football together; trade cigarettes; share laughs. And then, when their commanders told them to, they would pick up their guns and — I don't know how — kill each other." (Olivia – USA)*

Another blogger who visited Gallipoli was Joshua who reflected on the waste of life at the battle of The Nek. To him it was *"perhaps better described as sending men to be murdered and not battle."*

> *"Due to a series of failures some 300+ men leapt from their trench and were killed or injured within a 10 minute timeframe [...] so many men lost their lives so so senselessly." (Joshua – Australia)*

After Andrew had learnt about the friendships formed between the ANZACs and the Ottomans he reflected on society's values then and now, he blogged:

> *"People had different values back then - good, selfless values that are rare in today's individualistic and consumption-driven society." (Andrew – NZ)*

Ashley who visited WWI memorials in Belgium was shocked at the number of war dead and felt the depressing nature of such a visit. She found herself *"surprised and horrified"* that none of the names in the memorials are repeated. She noted that the *"sheer number of people who had died was horrifying."* After this experience she expressed the need to *"change the mood."*

> *"We had an afternoon stop in town and to stave off depression and change the mood, our group headed to the nearest waffle house for our first taste of Belgian waffles." (Ashley – Australia)*

Discovering the number of soldiers who had died was described by Ashley as *"horrifying."* This experience had impacted on her overall mood and she mentioned the need to *"stave off depression"* which she did by engaging in a more common tourist pursuit of tasting the local food which was Belgian waffles. This illustrates the contrast between a dark tourism encounter and the usual 'fun' tourism activities,

which Ashley felt the need to counteract her negative experience with something positive.

Challenging physical and emotional reactions

Learning about and reflecting on death can not only produce negative thoughts, but also negative reactions as a way to deal with the situation. Several bloggers wrote of having physical reactions such as tears or goose bumps.

Olivia expressed her feelings on the matter after she had heard the details of the *"botched attacks, stalemates, and dismal conditions that characterised the Gallipoli campaign."*

> *"I could feel that uneasy feeling in my stomach growing — that feeling that often accompanies things that [appal] me. It never ceases to amaze me how terrible war can be." (Olivia – USA)*

After attending one of the ceremonies at Menin Gate, Logan later reflected on the experience while writing his blog stating that he was *"getting goose bumps"* just by *"thinking about the buglers playing the last post."* (Logan – USA)

Ashley who took part in a Flanders Fields tour visited a museum and reflected on the haunting sound of the Last Post being play through speakers:

> *"Even as I write this now (a month later) I recall the sounds and the way that melody is so haunting and I get shivers up my spine." (Ashley – Australia)*

However, as the tour neared its end, finishing at a field hospital, Ashley reflected that there was not much more war history she could take:

> *"By this time I was unable to absorb much more war and I was looking forward to a quiet night of happy thoughts. I was so glad I got to experience this, but 9 hours of war in one day was very sad and was leaving me [feel] like I had been through the washer and wrung out to dry." (Ashley – Australia)*

Being present at sites of historic warfare had a strong emotional effect on these bloggers. Learning about the lives and living conditions of the soldiers and hearing the Last Post all triggered an emotional reaction. For Ashley a full day of war history was enough, leaving her feeling *"wrung out,"* as a result she expressed the need for a night

of *"happy thoughts"* indicating the emotional toll that visiting historic battlefields produces. Such experiences can ultimately lead to the contemplation of war and peace in general and as a result life and death.

4.7 Contemplation of war and peace (life and death)

The thematic framework for WWI bloggers outlines that the concepts of *national or personal bond, realities of warfare* and *emotional reactions* lead to an overall contemplation of war and peace, which relates to life and death. Several bloggers expressed their reflective thoughts on war and peace (life and death) following their battlefield experiences.

Chloe, who had travelled to Belgium with her husband to visit a relative's grave, experienced an unexpected moment when she came across a German couple in the Flanders Field Museum. Chloe could not understand the language, yet she found herself crying, *"the sudden well of tears"* catching her off-guard:

> *"I wipe the tears from my face, surprised by the surge of emotion and the juxtaposition made possible by the passing of time: here we are, Germans and Allies, less than one hundred years later, passing a rainy day in a museum housed in a building rebuilt from rubble." (Chloe – Canada)*

For Chloe this encounter highlighted to her the *"pointlessness"* of war, particularly this war. Countries and their citizens now at peace and sharing the same space where there was once so much death and suffering felt by all sides.

Ryan, while visiting Verdun, also contemplates the waste of life in war and reflects that there can be *"no winners in war"*:

> *"Visitors today walk the gravel stone paths with bowed heads and silent lips, absorbed in the intense horror that so many young lives should be wasted; the lives of brothers and lovers, sons and fathers, lost. There are no winners in war." (Ryan – UK)*

Although in military terms there are victors, Ryan asserts that in reality there are none as each side suffers from significant loss, felt long into the future.

Nicholas contemplated on how visitors to WWI battlefields can understand what the soldiers went through. He reflected that many visitors today will not be able to make a connection with the dead, stating that to *"contemplate what those young boys experienced"* and to have any *"chance at understanding"* one must look beyond their *"own comfortable existence."* Nicholas concluded that most would be unable to achieve this:

> *"...most tourists are relatively naïve, protected from the reality of our past, cushioned from the fact that humans could have been so destructive and inhumane. To them, it was a forest with some ditches. To others, it was the only thing that protected them from certain death." (Nicholas – Canada)*

Benjamin, from Canada, contemplated himself being the Canadian Unknown Soldier, and reflected that if he had the choice after death he would prefer to remain in the Cabaret Rouge cemetery in France rather than be returned to Canada:

> *"...his remains were returned to Canada to [lie] in state in the Canadian Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. In all honesty though, given the choice (or the desire to make the choice after death) I would prefer to stay in Cabaret Rouge. It has a unique and very pleasant layout [...] with rolling hills in every direction it was really beautiful." (Benjamin – Canada)*

The contemplation of war and peace (life and death) involved a deeper reflection on warfare, particularly the waste of human life and our ability or inability to try and comprehend the events of the past. Nicholas felt that many tourists are *"protected from the reality of our past"* and Chloe questioned the *"pointlessness"* of the war itself. For Benjamin, contemplation extended to his own hypothetical death and his desire to not return home but to remain in the *"beautiful"* grounds of Cabaret Rouge. The experience of death contemplation can take the form of mortality mediation, reflecting on one's own mortality.

4.7.1 Mortality mediation

The contemplation of war and peace (life and death) can for some tourists lead to the experience of mortality mediation. The tourist can encounter a mediating relationship between the living and the dead, which can occur via war narratives, gravestones or photographs. This experience can potentially involve the contemplation of one's own mortality.

While in Belgium visiting Hill 62 (Sanctuary Wood), James reflected on the horrors of the wartime conditions of trench life. During his visit the weather was fine, which led him to contemplate how horrible it would have been *"under bombardment and in pouring rain."*

The terrible conditions were reinforced via wartime photographs at the museum which in effect connects the living to the dead:

> *"This was reinforced by the little museum at the gate, which featured a stereoscopic viewer of old photographs, including some exceptionally grisly wartime scenes." (James – UK)*

The importance of photography was also apparent in Rachel's blog post. She realised that a wartime photograph of Canadian troops in a trench was close to where she was standing. In essence this photograph forms a connection to the dead, separated only by time:

> *"In the photo is a bunch of Canadian soldiers in a trench and in the background is a graveyard, the same one we were standing right next to, so we were standing exactly where that trench used to be." (Rachel – Canada)*

While leaving Tyne Cot cemetery, Nicholas noticed the remnants of a machine gun nest. For him this was a *"chilling"* experience as it confronted him with the fact that some of the war dead buried in Tyne Cot may have been killed by machine guns from those very remnants he was now looking at:

> *"Nestled amongst the stones are the battered remnants of machine gun nests. It is quite chilling when you think that some of these boys may have actually been killed by guns fired from within the very machine gun nests which consecrate their eternal resting places." (Nicholas – Canada)*

After finding a battlefield visitor guestbook Chloe reads through the comments left by relatives who have made pilgrimages similar to her own. Upon reading these comments she notes that many of the relatives are not direct descendants, this reflects the young ages at which these men died:

> *"Most of the comments are not from sons, daughters, or grandchildren, but from nieces and nephews and their children; these men didn't live long enough to have their own families." (Chloe – Canada)*

Nicholas reflects on how tourists can try to *"understand and contemplate the hellish experience that our forefathers endured."* To achieve this, Nicholas writes that we *"must try to walk in their shoes,"* although, he ultimately believes that we will never be able to fully understand the experience of war:

> *"Feel the dirt. Smell it. Peak your head over the parapet. Take the tour when you are hungry. Go in late November, when the rain is cold and your clothes have not been washed in two weeks. Imagine that the trees you are surrounded by have been blown to smithereens. I am not sure we can ever fully understand the experience. I don't think we can ever recreate the smell, the atmosphere, the fear." (Nicholas – Canada)*

Nicholas concludes that we will never be able to recreate *"the fear"* that they would have felt. Although we may be able to contemplate our own mortality at historic sites of war it could never match the horror experienced by those who actually faced their mortality on the battlefield.

While reading the inscriptions on gravestones at Gallipoli, Andrew reflected on the home towns of the New Zealand soldiers and also the ages at which they died. The familiarity of the place names *"Wellington, Auckland, Otago and Canterbury"* were names that Andrew *"grew up with."* For him *"the fact that these soldiers had come from these places really hit home."* This gave Andrew the realisation that *"these really were our guys slain so far from home."* What also captured his attention were the young ages of the soldiers:

> *"...it was staggering to see the number of teenagers and young men that died. It would have been like going to war with your schoolmates, something I almost can't comprehend. If I had died here aged seventeen, I would have died a boy, not a man." (Andrew – NZ)*

Due to the familiarity of the place names, Andrew created an instant connection with himself and the dead. They *"were our guys"* who died *"so far from home."* Andrew also noted the young ages of the men and contemplated himself going to war aged 17 with his school mates. He reflected that if he had died at such a young age, he would have *"died a boy, not a man."* This statement illustrates the moment that he contemplates his own mortality if he had been an ANZAC soldier.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the WWI case study findings based on the WWI blogs. The key concepts that emerged through the use of thematic analysis are: national or personal bond, realities of warfare and emotional reactions. Each of these concepts along with their corresponding themes have been supported by blog quotes. These concepts have gone on to form the final concept of the contemplation of war and peace (life and death), which enables tourists to experience mortality mediation.

Being present at historic WWI battlefields has enabled these tourists to form a connection between themselves and the war dead. This is achieved in a number of ways, including learning about the narratives of the dead, viewing gravestones and cemeteries, attending commemorational ceremonies, seeing wartime photographs, walking through the remnants of trenches, using their imagination and being present with others. These factors either on their own or in combination have enabled these tourists to contemplate the deeper meanings behind war and peace, which ultimately equates to life and death. Through this deeper reflection they are able to experience mortality mediation in which the living can connect with the dead, and in some cases they will contemplate their own mortality.

Consequently, visiting WWI battlefields can for some tourists result in a profound experience whereby the living are confronted with the past actions of humanity, essentially they are confronted with the dead. Visiting these sites facilitates the contemplation of past actions on both a large and small scale, that is, reflection on WWI as a whole, right down to the life and living conditions of an individual soldier. Connecting with the war dead is important at a societal level as tourists are confronted with the realities of warfare, leading to remembrance and questions over the actions of the past. On an individual level the contemplation of mortality is important as it reminds people of their own existence. Within this case study it is also evident that tourists from Canada, Australia and New Zealand experience feelings of good active history as the formation of their country's national identity is linked to the battlefields of WWI. As a result their reactions involve a combination of both sadness and pride, grief is felt while reflecting on the loss of life yet they are proud of the past actions of their country and its soldiers. The following chapter presents the findings and analysis for the Vietnam War case study.

Chapter Five

Findings - Vietnam

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the Vietnam case study's findings and analysis. The reflections of tourists to warfare attractions in Vietnam are presented by means of direct quotes taken from the blogs. The layout of this chapter follows the findings presented in the Vietnam thematic framework, which has been constructed through the use of thematic analysis.

5.2 Vietnam bloggers

The Vietnam bloggers are presented in Table 6; the names given are pseudonyms to protect their anonymity. Common names have been selected to ensure that any cultural meanings have not been accidently assigned. The bloggers' nationalities are provided as this helps to understand their reflections upon visiting historic sites of war. These bloggers visited a range of war sites in Vietnam, including the Cu Chi Tunnels, the War Remnants Museum, My Lai Memorial, Vinh Moc Tunnels, the former De-Militarised Zone (DMZ), the former Khe Sanh Combat Base (KSCB) and other war cemeteries found throughout Vietnam.

Table 6: Vietnam bloggers – name and nationality

Vietnam bloggers	Nationality	Vietnam bloggers	Nationality
Nicole	American	Matthew and Emily	British couple
Amanda	American	David	American
Maria	American	Chris	American
Cameron	British (living in Vietnam)	William	American
Rebecca	American	Paul	British
Charles	American	Jonathan	New Zealander
Kimberly	Vietnamese	Robert	British
Michelle	American	Jenny	American
Paige	British	Alex	Czech
Mary	British	Adam	Australian

5.3 Dark tourism (battlefield) experience

The bloggers all visited sites associated with the Vietnam War and were all aware of the war in general, however their knowledge of the reasons and events of the war varied substantially. It is impossible to know the bloggers' motivation for visiting Vietnam, although it is noted that several bloggers did appear to be highly interested in Vietnam War history, visiting a number of different war sites throughout the country, while for others it appeared to make up a smaller component of their visit to Vietnam.

Following the process of thematic analysis of the blogs, three key concepts emerged. These three concepts are related to the blogger's tourist experience, which are based on their contemplation and reflection of their historic warfare experience. The findings of this thematic process were firstly constructed within a thematic web diagram which helped to form the concepts, themes and (basic) sub-themes. The structure of the web diagram was then used to form the thematic framework seen in Figure 11, which illustrates how the concepts and themes lead to the final outcome of the experience. The titles outlined in the thematic framework help to form the headings and sub-headings presented in this chapter. All concepts and themes are supported by blogger's quotes to illustrate how they have come about.

DARK TOURISM (BATTLEFIELD) EXPERIENCES VIETNAM

Confronting historic warfare

Looking toward the future

Current events & comparisons

Factors of nationality

Contested issues

Morality of war & warfare tourism

Conflict with commercialisation

Feelings towards others ('victims & perpetrators')

Moral reflections & contemplation of warfare

Positive emotions

Emotional reactions

Negative emotions

Contemplation of war & peace (Life & death)

(Contested) Mortality mediation

Figure 11: Thematic framework of dark tourism (battlefield) experiences Vietnam

5.4 Confronting historic warfare

One of the concepts that emerged from the blogs was that of *confronting historic warfare*. This concept illustrates how the bloggers were confronted with and reflected on issues related to the Vietnam War. The themes within this concept include: looking toward the future, current events and comparisons, factors of nationality and contested issues.

5.4.1 Looking toward the future

The theme of *looking toward the future* included the reflections of bloggers who after visiting war sites hoped for a world without war and also contemplated on a promising future for Vietnam.

Hope for a world without war

A reflection mentioned by several bloggers highlighted their hope for a future without war. This was expressed by Jonathan who believes that people are beginning to look beyond war as a solution to world problems:

> *"...we live in a world [where] hopefully more and more people oppose war and violence as a solution to our troubles." (Jonathan – NZ)*

When reflecting on the issue of Agent Orange and the lack of funds and attention given to Vietnamese victims, Chris states that humanity's *"disconnect"* with the issue could be caused by an *"apathetic"* element of society. Or it could be due to our *"increasingly complex and busy lives"* whereby important global matters can be overlooked. Chris contends that:

> *"If the latter is the case, then I believe it is at least possible to hope for a more just, compassionate and ultimately sustainable world - should we choose to free our own minds." (Chris – USA)*

For these bloggers, confronting sites of historic warfare gave them the chance to reflect on the world and humanity and felt hope that people may be turning against warfare and violence to solve world problems. Chris contemplated the possibility that our increasingly *"busy lives"* may be a reason why societies can become disconnected

from world events, and that if we *"free"* our minds we might become a more empathetic world.

A promising future for Vietnam

Looking toward the future also included hope for Vietnam and the Vietnamese people. A number of bloggers reflected on the horrors of the past and the promising future for Vietnam.

After visiting the site of the My Lai massacre, Charles blogged that Vietnam is a country *"poised between a violent history and a potentially bright future."*

> *"While they remember the past they don't dwell on it and, if our experience is any indication, they certainly don't hold a grudge. We left Vietnam with warm feelings for all the people we met. They have replaced the pain of the past with hope for the future." (Charles – USA)*

Charles concluded that the Vietnamese *"are forging new footprints,"* in essence they are moving on from their painful past. This sentiment was expressed by Matthew and Emily *(UK)* that the Vietnamese do not dwell on the past. The couple noted how *"encouraging"* it is to see that *"very few remains and relics of the war have been preserved."*

A Vietnamese national who also visited My Lai, reflected on the My Lai War Memorial and what its meaning is to her:

> *"...to me it shows the people that died in the massacre from young to old, female to male but the village and Vietnamese will rise from the event and become stronger." (Kimberly – Vietnam)*

Meeting the Vietnamese people, seeing the remaining remnants of war and viewing war memorials gave these bloggers a sense that the Vietnamese people are moving on from war. This is a comforting reflection for the bloggers as it symbolises strength, the spirit to survive and a potentially positive future for Vietnam.

5.4.2 Current events and comparisons

The *current events and comparisons* theme looks at how bloggers compared the war in Vietnam to current warfare and military operations in other countries. It also looks at the differences in how sites of atrocity are presented.

Reflecting on current wars and other sites of atrocity

While visiting sites of warfare in Vietnam, several bloggers made references to other wars and sites of atrocity.

After visiting the War Remnants Museum in Ho Chi Minh City, Amanda from the US wrote on her blog that her visit to the museum *"was particularly poignant"* since *"our country is at war once again."* She went on to state:

> *"It's abundantly clear that the war in Iraq, just like in Vietnam, should never have begun. And I'm even more afraid for the civilians in Iraq than I was before." (Amanda – USA)*

Amanda went on to note how shocked the world was when the Abu Ghraib scandal came to light, this made her question the scope of the Iraq War, asking *"Who knows the extent of what's going on there?!"*

William, who also visited the War Remnants Museum, reflected on US military actions since Vietnam:

> *"What have we learned since then? Nothing, as we continue to have our military fight in optional wars driven by economics throughout the globe."*
> *(William – USA)*

William's statement regarding war and economics was also echoed by Alex who felt that the reason given for war; to prevent the spread of Communism was a cover and that the same strategy has been used once again:

> *"...Vietnamese and Americans alike, suffered and died for commercial interests - now where have we seen similar circumstances recently?"*
> *(Alex – Czech Republic)*

Another blogger who visited the War Remnants Museum was Maria; she compared the presentation of the museum to the Peace Park in Hiroshima stating that they are *"polar"* opposites:

> *"The Peace Park in Hiroshima is [...] a monument to what was lost, a (fair) explanation of what happened and a plea to make sure it never happens again. I think that ultimately had far more impact on me [than] the smear-fest in Saigon." (Maria – USA)*

For Maria, the presentation of the Vietnam War at the War Remnants Museum was not objective in its portrayal of events. This meant that it lost its impact on Maria as a visitor. Her reflections of the Peace Park in Hiroshima were that it was a *"fair explanation of what happened"* but the same could not be said for the War Remnants Museum. As for the other bloggers, the War Remnants Museum brought up feelings connected to ongoing wars, such as the Iraq War, and the belief that the same mistakes have been repeated. Contemplating on actions of the past has the potential to provoke negative feelings.

5.4.3 Factors of nationality

The *factors of nationality* theme includes the western view of death and national or personal identity, including 'Bad Active History.' Bad active history is a concept developed by Poria (2001, 2007) which looks at historical occurrences and the feelings that are associated with those events. In short, bad active history is described as: Past actions undertaken by one's own social group which inspires negative feelings (Poria, 2001, 2007; Sharpley, 2009a). In this case study of Vietnam, the nationality of bloggers who experienced bad active history was those from the United States.

Western view of death

One American blogger reflected on the western view of death while stopping to have a look at a Vietnamese war cemetery:

> *"Visiting a cemetery has always seemed a gloomy and somber affair where we come from - perhaps the way we are socialized to view death, but this place seemed more like a park welcoming us to have a look round..." (David – USA)*

David contrasted the western view of death – visiting a cemetery as *"gloomy and sombre"* with the welcoming park like nature of the cemetery itself. David wondered whether it was *"inappropriate"* for him to walk around taking photographs; however he contended that it felt *"right at the time"* and would not be disrespectful to the dead.

National / Personal identity - 'Bad Active History'

Feelings brought on by 'Bad Active History' were reported by a number of American bloggers. This concept developed by Poria (2001, 2007) states that a social group with bad active history will feel a sense of discomfort at being reminded of past actions.

After visiting the War Remnants Museum, Amanda expressed her discomfort on her blog. She opened with a rhetorical question asking how her country could *"do something so vile and unconscionable?"* She went on to state:

> *"I've never felt so much shame for my government. While the government has compensated American soldiers exposed to Agent Orange […] nothing has been done for the Vietnamese." (Amanda – USA)*

Amanda noted that it was *"a difficult day"* for her, especially since she was the *"lone American"* among her friends. She felt that the others would not understand the level of emotions she was going through, particularly *"the shame and guilt I felt and continue to feel on behalf of my country."*

William expressed similar feelings of bad active history after visiting the War Remnants Museum:

> *"I am a proud American and a veteran, and honor others who have served nobly, but I walked out of the museum depressed and embarrassed and disgusted of my country and our sense of self-righteous indignation."* (William – USA)

Another visitor to the War Remnants Museum was Nicole; during her experience she found herself feeling *"embarrassed"* and *"confused"* and expressed herself in the following way:

"I think most Americans would find it difficult to travel through Vietnam and not have some bit of identity crisis. I found myself thinking we had no business getting involved in the first place, while simultaneously outraged at the US's lack of interference during the Khmer Rouge occupation of Cambodia."
(Nicole – USA)

Charles, who visited the site of the My Lai massacre, also experienced difficult feelings, stating that *"My Lai is an emotionally tough place for anyone to visit, let alone an American."*

While at My Lai, Charles was asked by some Vietnamese locals where he was from:

"I hesitated. Considering where I was standing it was the first time I was tempted to say I was Canadian, but I said "US." What happened next surprised me. The family surrounded me, shaking my hand and asking to take photos together. We were standing at the site of the worst American massacre of the war and they were greeting me like a long-lost friend." *(Charles – USA)*

Visiting My Lai triggered feelings of bad active history for Charles; this experience was made even more emotionally difficult when he received a warm welcome from the Vietnamese locals. Charles was hesitant to state his nationality and once he did he was surprised by the reaction. Being greeted as a friend was unexpected and highlights the attitude of many Vietnamese, which is to forgive and move on, not to dwell on the war. The friendly forgiving experience may have heightened Charles' feelings of bad active history as it illustrates the nature of those affected. Interactions such as this highlight the forgiving side of humanity, however not all of the bloggers had peaceful experiences; others were angered by the contested nature of some war attractions in Vietnam.

5.4.4 Contested issues

The theme of *contested issues* includes the sub-theme of the two narratives of war – the Vietnam War (Western view point) and the American War (Vietnamese view point). The Western perspective of the war views the outcome as the 'fall of Saigon.' While the (North) Vietnamese perspective views the outcome as the 'liberation of Saigon.' These two different perspectives can cause contested feelings for some tourists as the second sub-theme looks at the issue of objective truth and that 'truth' cannot be found in Vietnam. For some Western tourists visiting Vietnam there is an element of distrust

with the Vietnamese government and how they have presented the narrative of war. This relates to Sharpley's (2009a) analysis of battlefield interpretation involving politics - often governments wish to portray a particular nationalist message.

Two narratives of war

Contested issues were apparent in a number of the blogs. Several bloggers pointed out that there are two sides to every war, and that only one side was being presented at various attractions in Vietnam.

Mary left the War Remnants Museum feeling that only one side of the war being told to visitors was preventing the experience from being *"truly effective:"*

> *"The downside of the museum is that it only tells the story from one point of view, it doesn't give enough information about how the US got involved and no stories from the US side. I think for a museum to be truly effective it needs to tell both sides of a story. I left the museum [feeling] very sad and wanting to know more." (Mary – UK)*

In contrast, Paige who visited the Cu Chi Tunnels felt that visitors should not be shocked that the Vietnamese present a different version of the Vietnam War. Each visit to the Cu Chi Tunnels begins with a screening of an old wartime Communist video. This video has been described as *'one-sided anti American propaganda'* by Westerners on Tripadvisor. Paige expressed her feelings on the issue:

> *"What do these people expect?! They have been fed the US version of the war. Do they really expect the Vietnamese version to be the same?" (Paige – UK)*

Throughout Paul's holiday it became apparent to him that the Vietnamese Government was only presenting one side of the war. For him there was a desire to *"know what [the Vietnamese] people really thought the war was about."* Paul reflected that once arriving in Hanoi everything *"seemed to be a starting point for a debate on perspectives, politicisation and retelling of history."* Paul went on to comment on the government's position:

> *"The Vietnamese Communist Party have vested interests in maintaining that the war was a simple struggle of independence after years [of] being under the French colonial yoke. Thereby removing any mention that the country was divided; for the most part along ideological lines." (Paul – UK)*

One of the attractions Paul visited was the location of the former Khe Sanh Combat Base (KSCB). There at a small museum located onsite a guest book revealed the comments left by other tourists. Paul felt that other guests were not questioning the events presented to them:

> *"The guest book of the museum was filled with the facile remarks of those taken in hook-line-and-sinker by one version of events." (Paul – UK)*

From Paul's perspective the Vietnamese government has produced a one-sided view point of the Vietnam War. His frustration grew further after reading the comments written in the guest book, which to him illustrated how tourists were being *"taken in"* by one side of events, which in this case is the Vietnamese perspective, known as the American War. The two narratives of the Vietnam War have enabled some Westerners to have a contested experience in Vietnam. This leads to questions surrounding objective truth in warfare, and the questioning of the dominant narrative of war in Vietnam.

Objective truth cannot be found (Questioning dominant narrative of war)

In regards to contested issues, bloggers also reflected on the dominant narrative of war which is present at war attractions. Several bloggers questioned this narrative, stating that objective truth of the Vietnam War cannot be found.

Nicole, who blogged about her visit to the War Remnants Museum, expressed that *"a huge part of the story is left untold."* She wished that the *"museum had taken time to explore the horrors of war from both sides,"* noting that war does not exist *"in a vacuum."* Nicole concluded that *"by putting all the blame and atrocities on one group, the museum in the end comes off very strongly smelling of propaganda."*

> *"...I felt an indignation boiling up at the biased and propagandized views being fed to Vietnamese nationals and international tourists. War is a two-sided hell, but the atrocities of the Viet Cong against the South and yes, against Americans, were completely absent from the discussion. But as they say, history is written by the victors." (Nicole – USA)*

Another visitor to the War Remnants Museum was Maria; she also felt that the museum was presenting propaganda on behalf of the Vietnamese government, stating *"the*

museum is run by the government, so of course its sole purpose is to booster the party line."

> *"In Vietnam, like everywhere else, history is written by the victors. What I was looking at wasn't the actual beliefs of the majority of the people in Vietnam- it was pure propaganda. Once I grasped this the entire museum experience became less emotional and more academic." (Maria – USA)*

Michelle, who visited the War Remnants Museum, found that the one-sided nature of the museum was not particularly shocking, indicating that most countries do this by saying *"obviously the material is bias, we are in their country after all..."*
(Michelle – USA).

Paul, who visited various war sites in Vietnam, felt that although he was *"able to witness the remnants of this war,"* international tourists cannot *"expect to receive any truths"* while searching for war history in Vietnam.

Paul also noted the lack of information provided on the South Vietnamese who lost the war alongside the Americans, stating *"there's never any mention of the defeat of the South Vietnamese who fought and suffered more losses." (Paul – UK)*

At the conclusion of Paul's blog he reflects on what he has learnt during his visit. For him, the visit largely unchanged his prior perspective of the war:

> *"Despite the propaganda - I'm not sure what I've learnt about the war in Vietnam. If anything the one-sidedness of it all [...] has struck me and almost unchanged anything I believed before. I still believe that the war in Vietnam was a tragic Cold War conflict rather than America versus poor Vietnam."*
> *(Paul – UK)*

The experiences at Vietnam War sites for these tourists were heavily contested. Interestingly, it was not only American nationals who felt this way. For some the contested nature of the attractions was put down to the actions of the Vietnamese Communist government producing propaganda or as a case of the 'victors writing the history'. The overall sentiment was that objective truth of the war could not be found in Vietnam, especially the War Remnants Museum. Conflict not only relates to the war narrative but also in the way it is presented in terms of commercialisation as seen in the following section.

5.5 Morality of war and warfare tourism

The concept of the *morality of war and warfare tourism* highlights the core moral issues and reflections that are contemplated after visiting a site of historic warfare. This includes the sub-themes of conflict with commercialisation, feelings towards others and the moral reflections and contemplation of warfare itself.

5.5.1 Conflict with commercialisation

The *conflict with commercialisation* theme addresses the sensitive matter of balancing commercial interests while maintaining respect for historical events including those who died and suffered as a result. The use of live weaponry at a site of historic war can be viewed as distasteful by some tourists while for others it adds to the atmosphere of war. Another concern with commercialisation is the loss of authenticity. Over development of historic sites can result in a loss of authenticity leading to a less enjoyable experience. However, authenticity is a subjective matter and what is acceptable for some is not for others.

Management and maintenance of war sites – loss of authenticity

For one blogger the lack of authenticity at the Cu Chi Tunnels was a major drawback to the overall Vietnam experience. Robert stated that it was *"one of the big let-downs"* of his trip around Vietnam, and that the Cu Chi Tunnels *"had become a mass tourist trap"*. Robert further reflected on his tour, writing:

> *"Together with the amateur looking mock soldiers in uniforms, fake wax dummies in the tunnels, plus the now manicured and cleared jungle tracks the whole place had become a bit of a parody. All sense of remoteness and of a stealthy unknown secret base had been well and truly lost." (Robert – UK)*

Robert also gave a warning to his blog readers, stating:

> *"...if this is the way that tourism is going in Vietnam then my only advice is to get to the country quickly, very quickly because it's going to change fast and not in an entirely good way either." (Robert – UK)*

Rebecca, another visitor to the Cu Chi Tunnels, found that the process of touring the tunnels was tedious as each person wanted to take a photo:

"Each person from our group then took turns jumping into the hole, crouching inside, and posing for photos. We all had to stand there and watch a series of at least 20 trap door photos being taken. I opted out of the trap door photoshoot." *(Rebecca – USA)*

For Rebecca and Robert a sense of the authentic is important, and at the Cu Chi Tunnels this has been lost and a historical site has become too commercialised for their enjoyment. The levels of commercialisation and management practices undertaken at the site have decreased the importance of the location and the events of the past. The remoteness of the area has disappeared and the atmosphere now projects a kitschification of life in the Cu Chi Tunnels during the war.

Commercialisation of historic warfare and morality of live weaponry (Tourists and providers)

A conflict between historic war sites and commercialisation was also apparent in the blogs. Several bloggers expressed concern that such sensitive sites are being used for profit.

Jenny, who visited the Cu Chi Tunnels, expressed her feelings about this matter on her blog. To her the use of live weaponry at a site of death is not appropriate:

"We had [the] opportunity to shoot the guns that took lives over 30 years ago. I was having a hard time swallowing it all and the idea that you could shoot a gun that killed someone's father, brother, uncle, sister, mother, aunt, grandmother with was unreal to me. I couldn't understand why anyone would want to do that and why it was being commercialized for profit." *(Jenny – USA)*

Another blogger who visited the Cu Chi Tunnels was Rebecca. For her, the conflict was with the behaviour of tourists and also the general management of the site and operation of the tours:

"...people took turns climbing up onto the [American] tanker and smiling for the camera. At this point, I was just so fed up with the whole thing. I'm sorry, but it's just not funny to run around posing with a cheesy smile in front of things that were used to massacre a nation. I don't understand why it's a thing that tourists do here. Am I missing something?" *(Rebecca – USA)*

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Paige, who also visited the Cu Chi Tunnels, first thought it was disrespectful to fire live rounds at the site; however she considered that it did add to the atmosphere of the location:

> *"At first it seemed very disrespectful for tourists to have 'fun' firing guns at this site, considering the horror and deaths that had occurred here. However, after hearing the guns being fired and the noise they made, it did give a very good impression of what it might have been like to be holed up at the [Cu] Chi tunnels." (Paige – UK)*

Matthew and Emily *(UK)* commented on the use of war related products as a source of commercial opportunity, noting that *"it is remarkable how quickly such atrocities have become a source of commercial opportunity."*

During Paul's travels he encountered hawkers selling war memorabilia. He reflected that if the items were genuine then it was *"certainly macabre"*:

> *"Outside the museum two hawkers were selling Vietnamese war medals and even American soldiers' dog tags. I had a look and thought even though they were probably fake, it was certainly macabre if they were not and so backed away..." (Paul – UK)*

For Westerners sites of historic warfare are traditionally considered as sacred places, therefore the presentation of the Cu Chi Tunnels may be conflicting with their expectations. The Cu Chi Tunnels present an economic opportunity and the use of live weaponry can give an indication as to what warfare sounds like, however from the reflections of these tourists the commercialisation of the site is hard to accept as it comes across as being disrespectful to the dead. In relation to this, many of the bloggers did express their empathy to the war dead and survivors.

5.5.2 Feelings towards others ('victims and perpetrators')

Feeling towards others - looks at how tourists perceive the Vietnamese then (during the war) and now. This theme also includes how tourists empathise with the war dead and survivors, both those who are viewed as the 'victims and the perpetrators.' According to Ashworth and Hartmann (2005a, p. 2) victims are those who are considered innocent and have suffered at the hands of perpetrators who have "engaged in a mindful" action. In the case of Vietnam, the roles of victims and perpetrators can

vary depending on the observers' lookout or perspective of the war, although in saying that, victims are usually viewed as the civilian population.

Perception of the Vietnamese (then and now)

Reoccurring comments throughout the blogs are related to the perception of the Vietnamese during the Vietnam War and how they are perceived today. A number of bloggers expressed their admiration for the Vietnamese in regards to their determination to survive the war.

After a trip to the Cu Chi Tunnels, Adam expressed his thoughts of the Vietnamese on his blog:

> *"I could not help [but] feel immense admiration for the resourcefulness & determination of the Vietcong...determination necessary to protect their homeland and fight for independence..." (Adam – Australia)*

Another blogger who visited the Cu Chi Tunnels was Paige; she expressed similar sentiments, stating:

> *"What an amazing experience and what respect it gave you for the endurance and bravery of the Vietnamese who could spend weeks down there hiding from the enemy. A vivid testament to the ingenuity and [perseverance] of the Vietnamese people…" (Paige – UK)*

Paul similarly reflected on his perspective of the Vietnamese people, saying that he has *"ultimate respect for ordinary Vietnamese who […] to their credit do not judge the United States as harshly as we ourselves in the West do." (Paul – UK).*

Charles, a tourist from the US, reflected on an encounter he had with a Vietnamese local. For him, the local Vietnamese people were very friendly:

> *"In halting English a local visitor asked where we were from. Upon hearing my response he stopped and said, "US-Vietnam friends" before going on his way." (Charles – USA)*

Despite some tourists having contested experiences there appeared to be a strong sense of respect given to the Vietnamese people and their determination to survive the war. This included their methods of survival, such as living in underground tunnels, and their

present day feelings towards Westerners, particularly Americans. It is likely that the average Vietnamese person is held in high regard by the bloggers; while the contested feelings are aimed at those in power, such as the government.

Empathising with the war dead and survivors

Included in the *"feelings towards others"* theme is the aspect of empathising with the war dead and its survivors. Several bloggers expressed empathy towards the Vietnamese civilians caught in the war and also the soldiers from all sides, North and South Vietnamese and Americans.

Nicole, who visited the War Remnants Museum, expressed her feelings on her blog after viewing the exhibits:

> *"I found myself sympathetic to the terrorized civilians of Vietnam, while at the same time empathizing with the terrified young American soldiers, many of whom fought a war they didn't believe in."*

> *"Mostly, nationalities aside, I found myself mourning the fact that so many humans on this Earth suffered so deeply for so long." (Nicole – USA)*

Michelle, who visited the Cu Chi Tunnels, reflected on *"the fear that soldiers from both sides must have faced"* stating that it is *"impossible to grasp." (Michelle – USA)*

While taking a private tour to the DMZ and the Vinh Moc Tunnels, Jonathan found himself empathising with his tour guide, stating that he was *"devastated to hear"* his guide's story of his own personal losses from the war:

> *"I see the tears well up in his eyes, and as we stand in this cemetery I can almost begin to feel the hurt and the sadness that he must feel, I say almost, but I am totally devastated. This war may have ended 40 years ago for Vietnamese people but it is still part of everyone's life in some way here, and the scars are still raw." (Jonathan – NZ)*

Nicole and Michelle expressed empathetic feelings to those from both sides of the war; coming from the US they would have been aware of the pain that the war caused at home. For Nicole the experience led her to grieve for all people who suffered from the war. Jonathan's experience involved a highly personalised tour which enabled him to

feel profound loss on behalf of his tour guide. This highly emotional experience illustrates the depth of dark tourism encounters and how unexpected they can be.

5.5.3 Moral reflections and contemplation of warfare

For the Vietnam bloggers visiting historic sites of war it is apparent that many contemplated the war itself and deeply reflected on the moral implications of war. This contemplation and moral reflection extended to the atmosphere experienced at historic sites of war, confronting the costs of war, attempting to comprehend war and contemplating the self in war and also questioning the reasons for the Vietnam War.

Atmosphere at historic sites of war

The bloggers gave references to the atmosphere at the sites they visited. Often this involved reflecting on how peaceful the site is now, and how difficult it is to imagine the past events.

Cameron reflected on the *"peaceful forest"* at Cu Chi and tried to imagine what it would have been like during wartime:

> *"...it's hard to imagine that this peaceful forest could just forty years ago have been home to so much death and destruction." (Cameron – UK)*

Kimberly, who visited My Lai, felt that the atmosphere was *"completely eerie,"* this feeling was intensified after seeing the remnants of family homes of the victims which included *"a sign with their name and who didn't survive the massacre."*

> *"...it's just completely eerie walking around the sanctuary reading the signs – it really makes you think about it all – and yes very deep." (Kimberly – Vietnam)*

After visiting a Vietnamese War cemetery, David *(USA)* reflected on the *"beautiful"* and *"enchanting"* atmosphere of the environment and the colour scheme of the tombstones.

While visiting the former DMZ, Alex reflected that there is not much to see, describing the area as a *"desolate landscape."* However, he noted that it is *"interesting to link"* the landscape to Vietnam War media and movies:

> *"Apart from a US bunker in one of the old 'firebases', memorials and mass graves, there's not much to see, but it was interesting to link this desolate landscape to the images we all know from the media and films."*
> *(Alex – Czech Republic)*

Being present at historic sites of war enabled the bloggers to reflect on the atmosphere at the sites they visited. For some it was hard to imagine the violence of the past compared to the *"peaceful"* and *"beautiful"* surrounds of today. For Kimberly it was an *"eerie"* experience to be present at the site of the most well known massacre of the war. For the different bloggers each site appears to emit a different atmosphere based on the events of the past and what is present today. To Alex the landscape was *"desolate",* however he was able to link it to media and film images he had seen previously which gave him a feel of the atmosphere of war.

Confronting the costs of war

Within the theme of *"moral reflections and the contemplation of warfare"* is the sub-theme of *"confronting the costs of war."* This relates to moments where the bloggers were faced with the outcomes of warfare.

While Charles was visiting My Lai he noticed *"bare footprints"* along the pathways which were *"interspersed randomly with imprints of army boots."* During the construction of the memorial these imprints were made to represent what had happened. For Charles, this aspect of the memorial was confronting as it symbolises the horror of the massacre:

> *"The effect is that of the Guernica painting come to life on the ground. The imprints reflect the slaughter that took place that day; barefoot civilians being led to their death by booted soldiers. It's a thought-provoking touch that effectively takes a visitor back to what happened here."* (Charles – USA)

Another visitor to My Lai was Kimberly. For her the confronting aspect of the memorial was the list of the 504 victims, detailing their names, age and gender:

> *"...the first thing you see is the list of the 504 names of victims killed on this day. It has their name, age and their sex. And trust me – it brings you to reality very quickly and at 504 victims – wow."* (Kimberly – Vietnam)

Chris' confronting moment emerged when he came across a young Vietnamese woman working in the local markets who was a victim of Agent Orange. Chris had recently visited the War Remnants Museum which details the destructive effects it has had on its approximately 150,000 victims in Vietnam. After purchasing market items from the woman Chris reflected on his blog that he would *"never forget the imprint that the moment made"* on him:

> *"I had just come across one of the 150,000 Vietnamese people who suffer birth defects - now into the third generation."*
>
> *"I had tried to wrestle with that number in my mind for many years, but seeing this one young girl in front of my eyes, it helped me to understand the power of the tragedy that even one single person was forced to endure a life so destructively hampered by forces unleashed well before she had even inhaled her first breath." (Chris – USA)*

Confronting the costs of war can occur in unexpected ways. For Charles it was a piece of memorial artwork on the ground which brought him to the reality of what happened in My Lai, and for Kimberly it was seeing the list of victims' names. Chris' confronting moment came when he encountered a victim of Agent Orange and was left to contemplate the fact that she was one of many who live daily with severe disabilities.

Attempting to comprehend war / contemplating the self in war

After visiting warfare attractions, several bloggers attempted to comprehend the events of the war and also contemplated themselves in war and how they would handle it.

During a visit to Cu Chi which included a crawl through the tunnels themselves, Michelle *(USA)* concluded that she *"would not survive a day down there"* with claustrophobia setting in within a couple of metres.

While at the Cu Chi Tunnels Adam reflected on how he was nearly sent to fight in Vietnam:

> *"I could not help but be reminded that I was in the next group to be conscripted to fight in Vietnam when Australia pulled out of that insane war...yep...my birth date had been selected in that lottery that changed lives...to fight in a foreign land where the "enemy" was more determined than we were."*
> *(Adam – Australia)*

For Adam, contemplating himself at war was highly personal as it could easily have been a real possibility. He notes that the Vietnamese would have been *"more determined"* to fight and win since it was their land.

After viewing the booby traps used by the North Vietnamese forces at Cu Chi, Cameron contemplated how people can bring themselves to design and administer such deadly traps:

> *"[The tour guide] explained the mechanics of the fourth trap, with its downward-pointing barbs designed not to kill but to trap your leg until you bled to death, I pondered just how depraved you'd have to be to design such a thing."*
>
> *"Then I realised, are the people behind these traps really different from us in any fundamental way? I don't think so." (Cameron – UK)*

Cameron then considered whether he himself would have acted any differently had he been involved in the Vietnam War:

> *"It's incredible what human beings are capable of doing to each other, given the right (or wrong) circumstances. Who's to say that I'd have acted any better if I'd had to go through the horrors that so many Vietnamese went through in the 60s?"*

Looking at his own country's history Cameron realised how easily he could have ended up fighting in a war had he been born at a different time in history:

> *"If I'd been born a few generations earlier, I'd surely have ended up in one war or another, if not against the Germans then against the Ottomans, the Boers, the French, the American revolutionaries, or any of the other countless nations that England has battled over the years. Who knows what depths I might have sunk to if it had been my life on the line? It's an unsettling thought. Once again: I count my blessings." (Cameron – UK)*

Contemplating the *"depths"* that he may have sunk to if he had to fight for his life was an *"unsettling thought."* This illustrates a moment where Cameron experiences dark tourism; he contemplates what he as a person could be capable of if his life was on the line. Cameron essentially reflects on the fact that given the circumstance, he too is

capable of taking life. Contemplating warfare can be a troubling experience, which leads some to question why it began in the first place given the pain and destruction it caused to so many.

Questioning the reasons for war / moving on from war

Aspects that related to questioning the reasons for the Vietnam War and about moving on from war were mentioned by several bloggers.

Amanda ended her blog post stating how she felt about politicians and the need to prevent future wars:

> *"I will never support a politician who is quick to encourage war. I'm proud to support President Obama, who spoke out against the Iraq War before it began, and who is keenly aware of the many costs of war. We can't let this ever happen again." (Amanda – USA)*

After taking a tour to the DMZ, Alex reflected on his blog about the reasons for the Vietnam War, stating that it was fought for motives based on *"power and resources"* by the United States, the Soviet Union and China:

> *"Stopping the 'spread of Communism' was the publicised reason for the war, but it was the threat to South East Asia's trade and oil resources that was the real reason. And the Soviets and Chinese supported North Vietnamese for the same reasons of power and resources." (Alex – Czech Republic)*

Paul's tour of Vietnam was fraught with frustration at the one-sided nature of the war presented in museums. He reflected on the high death toll that the Vietnamese suffered, and questioned whether it was worth it for the Communist cause of liberation and unification:

> *"It is ironic that the need for bloodshed to "liberate" a country in the name of communism, and is it even communist today? Unification perhaps but at what cost? And for what cause exactly? [...] a burgeoning Market Economy makes me think that even Uncle Ho would not recognise it as a Communist state he lived his whole life working towards and fought a savage 15 year war to create." (Paul – UK)*

The moral reflections and contemplation of warfare experienced by these bloggers involved questioning the motives of each side and also the assertion that it must not

happen again. For Alex and Paul there is evidence of scepticism concerning the reasons for war. Alex felt that the motives were a cover designed to encourage worldwide acceptance of the war and for Paul the questioning related to the fact that Vietnam now has a growing market economy, therefore rendering the Communist liberation 'pointless.' Contemplating and reflecting on warfare, as expected, provokes a range of emotional responses.

5.6 Emotional reactions

The key concepts of *confronting historic warfare* and the *morality of war and warfare tourism* are connected to the concept of *emotional reactions*. As seen in the WWI findings chapter, contemplative thoughts and reflections experienced at sites of war are in essence related to emotional reactions. Emotional reactions experienced by tourists include both positive and negative emotions. Reflections and contemplative thoughts on warfare are often based on emotive feelings.

5.6.1 Positive emotions

When discussing warfare attractions it can at first seem unlikely for a tourist to experience positive emotions. However, this is not true as several tourists reflected on their own life situation, feeling *"lucky"* or *"blessed"* that they have not had to live through war. Positive emotions were also connected to the feeling that life was moving on for the Vietnamese.

Reflecting on personal situation / Life moves on

Positive emotions expressed by the bloggers are related to reflections on their own personal situation in life and also the realisation that life is moving on for those in Vietnam.

After visiting the Cu Chi Tunnels and hearing real accounts of war from a South Vietnamese veteran, Cameron reflected on his own life and realised how fortunate he is to have been born in England in the late 20th century:

> *"... I count my blessings that I was born in England in 1990, and not – well, almost anywhere else, at almost any other point in history. Not a day goes by where I don't remind myself how lucky I am. Today especially."*
> *(Cameron – UK)*

Jonathan, who learnt about the personal tragedies experienced by his tour guide, also contemplated on his fortune at living in a country without war:

> *"I can't even imagine what it must be like to be in a country with such violence and such a huge amount of death, and I count my blessings now that I live in NZ..." (Jonathan – NZ)*

During a visit to the Cu Chi Tunnels, Adam was reminded of his luck at missing the Australian conscription. A change in Australian politics prevented him from being sent in the next group to fight in Vietnam, as he stated, *"thus I am still around to tell this story." (Adam – Australia)*

Kimberly, who visited the My Lai Memorial, reflected on the children laughing and playing nearby. For her, this was a positive sign as it symbolised that the local people are moving on with their lives:

> *"...hearing children laugh as they are playing makes you realise that the village has picked up and [is] getting on with their lives. After going through the images in my mind, hearing the children laugh – made me feel a lot better."*
> *(Kimberly – Vietnam)*

Reflecting on their personal situations and the fact that life is moving on in Vietnam produced positive emotions for these bloggers. Seeing and hearing about the effects of war led several bloggers to reflect on their own fortunate situations as they have never had to experience warfare. For Adam the experience enabled him to reflect on his luck at missing out on being involved in the war. Adam's experience of Vietnam would have been particularly emotional as he would have contemplated what could have been.

5.6.2 Negative emotions

As expected the bloggers experienced negative emotions while visiting warfare attractions. For the many who expressed negative emotions these were related to the challenging nature of war and its realities, the realities of war are of course the victims

of war. Facing this reality includes the statistics of those who died and also the confronting and graphic photographs which are presented to tourists.

Challenging experience – facing the reality of war

Expressing negative emotions was common among the bloggers. Negative emotions were often brought on by a challenging experience where they were faced with the reality of the Vietnam War.

During Jonathan's personal DMZ and Vinh Moc Tunnel tour he was taken to a national memorial which holds one of the many cemeteries from the war. For him, it was an emotionally challenging experience to view *"tomb stone after tomb stone"* described as *"an endless sea of sadness."* His first encounter with the cemetery was *"overwhelming:"*

> *"The next stop sends shivers down my spine. The cemetery is vast - 35,000 buried here - what a staggering number - it's overwhelming and so very very sad." (Jonathan – NZ)*

Michelle, who visited the War Remnants Museum and the Cu Chi Tunnels in the same day found the experience emotionally challenging. She opened her blog post with the comment that *"today was one of the rougher days, honestly. Very emotional."* While reflecting on the images in the War Remnants Museum, she remarked that she *"got more than a little teary." (Michelle – USA)*

Another blogger who visited the War Remnants Museum was Nicole. Nicole's experience was *"extremely emotional,"* for her the images were something that she would not be able to forget, and found it difficult to come to terms with how events occurred. Stating that it left her *"filled with grief and questions about how everything went so horribly wrong."* She went on to describe her experience of the museum:

> *"I barely raised my camera from my limp arms during my visit, which I spent mostly in a blur of tears, as I knew there was no way the images I was seeing would leave my memory anytime soon. The human suffering and in some cases, depravity, that is depicted here is on a level I've never seen before. The room dedicated to Agent Orange victims, still suffering today, left me outraged."*

> *"My reaction to the sites and museums we visited was extremely emotional. Half the time I found myself genuinely ill about the horror America has helped cause in Vietnam." (Nicole – USA)*

When facing the reality of the Vietnam War the bloggers experienced challenging negative emotions. Being confronted by war graves and the shocking images of war are hard to forget or dismiss, several bloggers described it as highly emotional and distressing. This illustrates the truly dark nature of war related attractions, which can result in disturbing experiences.

5.7 Contemplation of war and peace (life and death)

The concepts of *confronting historic warfare*, *morality of war and warfare tourism* and *emotional reactions* lead to an overall concept of the contemplation of war and peace (life and death). This concept relates to how bloggers reflect on the general impacts of war and some of the underlying philosophical issues that are not always noticed at first glance. Several bloggers expressed their contemplation of war and peace in the following ways.

After visiting the War Remnants Museum, Michelle reflected on the graphic images she had seen of the victims of war. For Michelle it was an emotional visit, and she felt that the exhibits displayed in the museum were biased. However, she accepted this stating *"we are in their country after all."* Furthermore, she expressed her beliefs on war and justice:

> *"...considering each soul in an eternal perspective causes in me deep sadness. I am glad that I believe in a God of justice-that people pay for their mistakes, and a God of love-that He loves all His children. My heart hurts thinking of how much He must have cried for the loss of life during those times. His children (of all nationalities) killed and tortured." (Michelle – USA)*

Michelle stated that God would cry for all of those killed during the Vietnam War, inclusive of all nationalities. In this regard, Michelle feels that in the end all will "*pay for their mistakes"* and justice will be served.

During Mary's trip to the Cu Chi Tunnels she was asked by her tour guide to consider why the Vietnamese did not seek *"revenge after the war"*. Mary found her guide's answer to be *"very thought provoking"* and something to consider in our own lives:

> *"He explained that being happy and enjoying life [is] true revenge. We thought about this and I think he is right. The Vietnamese people have left the past in the past and have got on with their Independence and have rebuilt their communities. Showing that they are happy now and enjoy their lives makes others feel guilty I suppose. I think we all could learn from the Vietnamese and just get on with life and enjoy it."* (Mary – UK)

Mary found her tour guide's answer to be the right approach to life. That if others have caused harm to us in the past we should not dwell on it and seek revenge, but to move on and enjoy our lives, in essence it is a different form of revenge. It is revenge that does not bring harm to others, but betters ourselves by not harbouring hatred.

Paul found many contested issues throughout his visit stating that *"you can't expect to receive any truths."* Despite how difficult he found the presentation of the war he understood the extent of the suffering. Acknowledging that seeing the *"bare mountain sides"* was a relief. Coming across the victims of war would be something else:

> *"I was thankful that I only saw the bare mountain sides that were deforested by chemicals such as Agent Orange and not the civilian victims who suffered horrible injuries and disfigurement. This can never be forgotten."* (Paul – UK)

After Chris' visit to the War Remnants Museum he was able to connect the tragedy of the use of Agent Orange to the country that he was now standing in. He stated that *"the statistics and images"* he had viewed were not *"necessarily new"* however that did not prepare him for the:

> *"...feeling of standing amongst some of the god's most artistic renderings of natural aesthetic beauty with the knowledge that your own country deliberately sprayed upwards of 100 million liters of toxic chemicals over these lands…"* (Chris – USA)

Chris articulated on his blog that what we read from books or learn from films is nothing compared to actually *"setting foot"* in a country and making contact with the environment and its people:

> *"No matter how much we know from books and films, there is something about setting foot in a place, gazing out across the landscape and breathing the air, making confused but earnest and genuine eye-contact with a stranger in a strange land, and perhaps sharing a smile - all of which is necessary if we are to truly affirm the place's existence…"* (Chris – USA)

The contemplation of war and peace (life and death) involved deeper reflection into the bloggers' surroundings, particularly their thoughts on the effects of warfare. For Michelle, this included the belief that in death people will pay for their mistakes during their time on Earth. In contrast, Mary's experience provoked thoughts on life and enjoyment and that moving on from a bad experience is something to learn from the Vietnamese. For Chris the reality of *"setting foot"* in Vietnam was integral in acknowledging its existence and the suffering that took place on behalf of his country.

5.7.1 Contested mortality mediation

The contemplation of war and peace (life and death) has the potential to lead to mortality mediation. In the situation of this case study, the Vietnam War, mortality mediation is evident, yet there is a contested element to it brought on by the one-sided nature of the attractions. For international tourists, especially those with a national connection to the Vietnam War, there is a form of disconnect occurring due to the other side being absent from the war narrative. Therefore, a mediating relationship between the living and the dead can be a contested one.

After visiting the War Remnants Museum and viewing the exhibits, Nicole expressed that she was *"filled with grief"* over what had occurred during the Vietnam War and felt *"genuinely ill"* over the horrors of war. However, she also felt *"indignation"* over the one-sided portrayal of the war, thus causing a contested form of mortality mediation. At the end of her blog post, Nicole concluded:

> *"Visiting Vietnam gave me a perspective on war I didn't previously know I was missing, and made me reflect deeply on the war my country is involved in today. It seems to me that the wounds of the Vietnam (or American) War are still very fresh despite the decades that have passed. I hope as time begins to heal them we can all learn from a more balanced, two sided story of a war gone horribly wrong; and that we can move forward into the future and learn from the mistakes that were clearly made."* (Nicole – USA)

Nicole's reflection notes a need for *"a more balanced"* interpretation of the war so that all can move forward into the future and mistakes can be acknowledged. This illustrates how a contested issue (perspective of the narrative) has clouded the narrative of the dead, thus reducing or preventing a relationship between the living and the dead.

Jenny visited a former Vietnam War photographer and was able to learn about his experiences during the war. This interaction enabled Jenny to connect with his emotions as he showed her wartime photographs, most of which were very confronting:

> *"It was emotional to watch him talk. We had a translator but you could still see his face and understand his emotion if not his words. He said that although the war is over and is getting further and further away from people's minds he still feels it in his heart." (Jenny – USA)*

Through this meeting Jenny is connected to the dead via the photographs and the photographer's real life experiences of the war. Jenny noted on her blog that he was *"one of the few [photographers] that were not killed."*

Kimberly's visit to the My Lai Memorial was one that she found *"very interesting."* She acknowledged that *"it's only being told from one side of the war,"* but reflected on the importance of the memorial, that *"it takes you back to the reality of the victims of war."*

At times the civilians who die in war can be overlooked; therefore the My Lai Memorial enables their voices to be heard. The statues presented at My Lai portray the events of the massacre, one of these statues caught Kimberly's attention; she mentioned that it depicted a *"mother trying to protect her baby." (Kimberly – Vietnam)*

This statue represents the horrors of the My Lai massacre and reminds the visitors of whom the victims were – innocent civilians. This physical representation of the dead enables visitors to connect with the victims of war.

As noted earlier, during Paul's visit to Vietnam there were many contested moments related to the one-sided presentation of the war. For him this resulted in episodes of contested mortality mediation. While visiting the Vinh Moc Tunnels Paul recognised the conditions the Vietnamese lived and died in, however the experience became contested when Paul expressed on his blog that the interpretation was not providing enough context of the situation:

> *"People hid there, held meetings, stored arms and even gave birth in there and all the while being bombarded from above - and the evidence of the bomb craters was clear to see. Mind you, there was a little bit too much of the "Americans" simply bombing the shit out of things, you know as if for the sake of it, a little context wouldn't have gone astray." (Paul – UK)*

For Paul it was difficult to connect with the victims of war as the one-sided nature of the attraction was too strong for him to ignore, accordingly he experienced a contested form of mortality mediation.

Another example of contested mortality mediation occurred at the former Khe Sanh Combat Base. Paul reflected on the large death toll during the siege of Khe Sanh and concluded that the battle was ultimately a waste. However, while visiting a museum on site Paul thought that the photographs had been falsified and therefore prevented him from connecting with those who had died during the siege:

> *"It's an infamous battle not only due to the number of American casualties but also because the base was defended and then subsequently abandoned. The base is practically gone now, which rather underlines what an utter waste the battle was…"*
>
> *"On the site there was now a small 'museum' with lots of doctored photos from the battle accompanied by propagan-tastic captions…" (Paul – UK)*

For Chris, his experience at the War Remnants Museum not only connected him to the war dead, but also to the surviving victims of war who now live with disabilities:

> *"When I left the museum, I no longer understood the statistics, so much as I felt them […] these weren't statistics, they were and they are life itself, a complex web which envelops and integrates us all, whether or not we choose to view it in this way." (Chris – USA)*

Chris had encountered a victim of Agent Orange at the local markets and began to contemplate what her life could have been and reflected on the entirety of the victims as a whole:

> *"I wondered what the story of the Market Girl had been - what were her dreams and aspirations. […] It was only then that I began to glimpse the enormity of the number 150,000 as it relates to real people born after the war with birth defects, themselves only a tiny fraction of the greater horrors of the war."*

> *"We should view it as an opportunity for self-reflection to consider that face to face with the number [150,000] as it relates to real living people with disorders too horrible to describe in writing, many of us just shake our heads, and others seem not to care too much at all." (Chris – USA)*

Since the Vietnam War is within living memory and the herbicides used still affect people today there is a confronting nature to the environment of Vietnam where tourists can actually see the victims of war. Not only are tourists connecting to and mourning for the dead, but they are also mourning for those who are alive and still suffering. Chris also reflects on the lack of action in helping those who continue to suffer the consequences of war, stating that we don't *"seem to care that the manufacturers of these poisons and the government that unleashed them will not divert a small trickle of funds"* which would *"help relieve those who continue to suffer unimaginable hardships."* Chris notes that this is especially important since *"even if well intentioned but ignorant"* we have *"allowed the crimes to be perpetrated in our name."*

> *"...there is the Market Girl, and thousands of others - they continue to exist, even though we can't see or even imagine them. If we could, I think we might reach out a hand." (Chris – USA)*

Chris asserts that since many of us do not see the ongoing victims of war they become forgotten, and if we were more aware of them we may be more willing to help. This issue highlights a distinctive element of tourists visiting war sites in Vietnam. They are able to view the atrocities in wartime photographs and wartime narratives, but they are also able to view the atrocities in reality, within the living civilian population. As a result a relationship is formed not only with the dead, but also with the living who continue to suffer. Although, as previously noted, mortality mediation in Vietnam can also be contested. The disagreements and contested nature of the narratives of the Vietnam/American War has the potential to interrupt a mediating relationship between the living and the dead. The focus that would be given to the dead is lost behind anger and indignation at what various tourists have described as biased propaganda.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the Vietnam War case study findings based on the Vietnam blogs. The key concepts that emerged through the use of thematic analysis are: confronting historic warfare, morality of war and warfare tourism and emotional

reactions. Each of these concepts along with their corresponding themes has been supported by quotes. These concepts have gone on to form the final concept of the contemplation of war and peace (life and death), which enables some of these tourists to experience a form of (contested) mortality mediation.

For international tourists visiting Vietnam there is a possibility that they will have a contested experience. Travelling through Vietnam exposes these tourists to the other narrative of war (American War) which differs from the Western view (Vietnam War). Although a connection between the living and the dead can be achieved, this is somewhat reduced or in some cases prevented due to the belief that the presentation of war is biased or propagandised. In this way, contested feelings act as a barrier between the living and the dead, making mortality mediation difficult. Although this was the case for a number of bloggers, others were still able to achieve a connection with the dead. This was evident in their perceptions of the Vietnamese people, their empathy towards the war dead and their reactions when confronted with the costs of war.

Learning about life in the Cu Chi Tunnels, the extent of the My Lai Massacre, the effects of Agent Orange and personal stories of loss enabled mortality mediation to take place. Within this case study it was apparent that a connection was also formed with the war survivors, particularly those who have been affected by Agent Orange. Bloggers expressed feelings of anger and frustration that sufficient compensation has not been given to the Vietnamese people. Since the Vietnam War is within living memory tourists can encounter the long term effects of the war, and thus emotions run high. This was apparent in the factors of nationality theme where American bloggers expressed feelings of bad active history. The past actions of the US government in Vietnam inspired negative feelings in a number of US bloggers, even those who had a contested experience. Being confronted with the horrors of past warfare led to feelings of discomfort, shame and guilt in American tourists who disagree with their government's handling of the conflict in Vietnam. The subsequent chapter will discuss the findings from both the WWI and Vietnam War case studies.

Chapter Six

Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the main research findings from chapters four and five. In this discussion a theoretical model (Figure 13, page 183) is provided which outlines the battlefield experiences and the final outcomes of these experiences which emerged through the process of thematic analysis and discussion based on the blog posts. This chapter does not attempt to provide a comparative analysis of the case studies as they hold significant differences; however it does draw insights from both cases which at times do share some similarities. The research philosophy of this study has followed a qualitative interpretivist approach. This has enabled an inductive approach to knowledge whereby the generation of theory is the result of the research; while at the same time the examination of existing theory has not been neglected. In this way prior knowledge has been examined to help understand the fields of dark tourism and battlefield research and to aid in the formation of the research aim and objectives, however this study has not been bound by the prior literature and the findings were open to new understandings.

Tourism literature that is linked in this discussion includes dark tourism, thanatourism, battlefield tourism, pilgrimage tourism and heritage tourism, aspects from these fields relate to tourist behaviour, interpretation, management and authenticity and also thanatology. The outline of this chapter is structured on the theoretical model of battlefield experiences, presented at the end of this chapter. This model firstly outlines the battlefield experiences seen in the findings chapters which lead on to the final outcomes of the bloggers' experiences, a deeper understanding of battlefield tourism. These experiences and their deeper meanings are discussed along with the relevant literature.

6.2 WWI – case study

The WWI battlefield experiences are grouped into the three concepts of national or personal bond, realities of warfare and emotional reactions. These experiences are based on the Allied perspective of WWI, and due to the historical timeline of the event there is no living memory of the war today. The following segment discusses the bloggers' tourist experiences at WWI sites.

6.2.1 National or personal bond

6.2.1.1 Family heritage

Having a national or personal bond to WWI sites was an important aspect for the WWI bloggers. All of the bloggers had a national connection to WWI and several had a relative who served. Pilgrimage to WWI sites has occurred since the end of the war. Lloyd (1998) notes that the "act of making a pilgrimage was an instinctive spiritualism which expressed itself in the belief that it was possible to get closer to the spirit" of the dead (p. 5). For one couple finding the gravestone of a relative was an important cathartic experience. Seeing the surname etched on the headstone brought on a strong emotional response. Iles (2008) notes that people often take the time to interact with the dead while visiting gravestones. This situation was recognised when the blogger stated that she gave her husband some time alone for him to connect with his lost relative. This indicates the importance that is given to the dead and the living family member, time and space for private interaction. The journey for this couple was to achieve a family goal by locating this relative's gravestone.

Locating the dead does not always have to be those of family members. Visitors to the Western Front will track their ancestor's movements and experiences, but also those of others which they have no relation to (Miles, 2013). This has been described by Dunkley et al. (2011) as a form of vicarious grief or vicarious pilgrimage. Examples of vicarious pilgrimage were noted in bloggers who had no relatives who served or died in WWI. Instead, these tourists located the graves of soldiers who served in the same battalion as their ancestor or they located graves of individuals from their country. There is a sense of connection by visiting the gravestone of someone who may have fought alongside their relative.

According to battlefield tourism research (Lloyd, 1998; Winter, 2011), those who seek an ancestors' grave are considered pilgrims, rather than tourists. Following WWI, pilgrims visiting the battlefields were viewed with respect as it was believed that they valued the dead highly and during their visit they were attempting to understand the meaning of the site (Lloyd, 1998). Conversely, tourists (those who were not visiting a dead relative), were originally viewed as vulgar and unthinking, it was feared that their presence would trivialise the war experience, and that their motivations to visit were morbid (Mosse, 1990; Lloyd, 1998). This contrast between pilgrim and tourist is no longer the case today. Through battlefield tourism research, Winter (2011) has found that the lines have blurred between pilgrims and tourists, and that both can have a meaningful experience. Gatewood and Cameron (2004) state that visitors to battlefields can begin as tourists and during their visit they can transform into pilgrims. An ancestral connection is not necessary in order to have a deep and meaningful experience. As Gatewood and Cameron (2004) state, battlefields can be a place of pilgrimage for any visitor if that journey involves "paying homage, personal renewal, connecting with spiritual ideas, contemplation, or prayer" (p. 210).

A New Zealand blogger who visited Gallipoli expressed feeling disconnected from the annual WWI commemorations while growing up in New Zealand since he never had a relative who died during the war. However, upon visiting Gallipoli he found that his appreciation of the sacrifices made by the ANZAC soldiers was much greater than before. This illustrates the point that a personal family connection is not a vital component for having a respectful experience. A tourists' visit to the battlefields is more likely to deepen their understanding and contemplation of the war, rather than to trivialise it. Pilgrims and tourists often share many of the same characteristics (Winter, 2011), this includes involvement in understanding what happened during the war and in commemorating those who died. For a Canadian blogger, who was visiting a war cemetery in Belgium, the journey appeared to be centred on finding a relative's grave. In this respect the trip is largely considered a pilgrimage when viewing tourists and pilgrims on a continuum (Winter, 2011). The focus of the trip was mainly on the war experience of the blogger's relative. However, in her final reflections she stated that the battlefield experience gave her a new appreciation of the many sacrifices made during war. This is a similar sentiment as the New Zealand blogger who had no relatives die in the war, highlighting the shared feelings between tourists and pilgrims. The haunting nature of the battlefields and cemeteries presents a thought-provoking image for visitors

with or without a personal (family) connection to the war. Conversely, there remains a national connection to the battlefields which is often linked to nationhood and national identity.

6.2.1.2 Nationality

All of the WWI bloggers represented the Allied side of the conflict, as a result of this; their experiences involved feelings of national pride at the Allied victory of the war. Even in the case of defeat, such as Gallipoli, the bloggers from Australia and New Zealand experienced positive thoughts on their countries and their soldiers as the Gallipoli experience led to their nation's national identity. The concept of a new national identity was also important for Canada, and this was noted by several Canadian bloggers. Feelings of pride and positive thoughts in general for one's own social group, which can be categorised as a group which one belongs to, is described by Poria (2001, 2007) as good active history. These positive feelings are inspired by the actions of one's social group, such as the soldiers of WWI. These positive thoughts were most notable in the blog posts of the Canadian, Australian and New Zealand bloggers. This sense of pride is tied in with the symbolic nature of WWI and the birth of their nations, viewing themselves as separate to the British Empire.

The experience of WWI was viewed as a rite of passage to achieve nationhood (Lloyd, 1998). Slade (2003) suggests that for Australians and New Zealanders a visit to Gallipoli enables these tourists to see the landscape where their nation building mythologies began. Sharpley (2009a) states that Gallipoli holds powerful reminders of the sacrifice of the ANZACs, however, Gallipoli also holds multiple messages, for it is not just the "psychological birthplace" (p. 157) of Australia and New Zealand, it also marks the victory for the Turkish and the eventual collapse of the Ottoman Empire at the end of WWI. Sharpley (2009a) notes that traditionally, the ANZAC narrative has dominated over other stories which share in the tragedy of the Gallipoli Campaign.

When strong narratives of national identity are formed it appears to quiet questions of the reasons for war and the battles that took place. The bloggers from Canada, Australia and New Zealand focused their thoughts on nationhood and what it meant to be a citizen from their respective countries. This emphasis on national identity tended to override questions on why their nations were required to fight, which often resulted in high death

tolls. Also, for the Australian and New Zealand tourists to Gallipoli there is little reflection on the Turkish soldiers who died defending their lands. At first glance one might think that an Australian or New Zealander visiting Gallipoli would experience bad active history (shame at their social groups' actions), however in this case it is the opposite due to the myth making of the ANZAC legend. Scott (2014) questions at what point will sufficient time have passed, so that the Gallipoli Campaign will be viewed with dispassionate objectivity. Scott (2014) notes that the ANZAC narrative does not recognise the heroism and bravery of the Turkish soldiers, despite Turkey's goodwill to Australian and New Zealand tourists who come to visit the graves of their dead.

Gatewood and Cameron (2004) state that sites of commemoration, such as battlefields, exist not only to commemorate the dead but also to sustain nationalistic feelings among visitors. By studying tourists at the Gettysburg battlefields, Gatewood and Cameron (2004, p. 207) found that US visitors tended to "gloss" over the events of war, searching for positive statements, rather than making judgements or questioning either side of the conflict. This behaviour is similar to that of the Australian and New Zealand bloggers, there is little questioning over the events of the war itself, instead the bloggers' focus is on national identity, sacrifice and the ANZAC legend. According to Gatewood and Cameron (2004) this would be considered a success by those who construct the mythology of such a site, as the visitors' responses have been shaped in a way that supports nationalistic impulses. Once a site becomes part of a nation's identity the narrative is shaped around this concept and future visits by nationals enable them to connect to their nation's past (Park, 2010). This was most apparent in the expressions of Australian and New Zealand bloggers who emphasised the concepts of the 'ANZAC legend' and referred to the notion of 'our national identity.'

Visiting the battlefields of Gallipoli for Australian and New Zealand tourists can also be related to heritage tourism as they are connecting to a part of their nation's history, there is a sense of national belonging which can occur through both material remnants (tangible) of the past and socio-psychological (intangible) factors (Park, 2010). Palmer (1998) states that heritage tourism is important in maintaining and communicating national identity. In the case of Gallipoli the tangible remnants of national heritage that Australian and New Zealand tourists seek are the gravestones of their countrymen and the memorials at Lone Pine and Chunuk Bair. The intangible remnants relate more to individual, subjective meanings given to national heritage; however they will be based

on a collective social memory (Park, 2010). Australian bloggers referred to Gallipoli as the site which gives power to the Australian way of life and the actions of the ANZACs helped to define 'what it is to be an Australian.' For these bloggers, visiting Gallipoli enabled them to connect with and reaffirm their heritage and national identity.

Reflection on the 'other side' of war was noted by several of the bloggers. One blogger reflected on the lack of German graves and stated that this was expected since the victors had earned the right to portray the history of war. Other bloggers noted that the German cemeteries did not seem to be as striking as the Commonwealth memorials. For these tourists, this was considered understandable as they did not win the war. This was also the case for a New Zealand blogger visiting Gallipoli. He felt that the New Zealand memorial at Chunuk Bair did not have the same sense of serenity or atmosphere of peacefulness as the Australian memorial at Lone Pine. Although he felt this was unfortunate, he reflected that Chunuk Bair was highly important to the Turkish since they won the campaign and as the victors they had the right to commemorate their victory in the same location. There is a belief expressed by the WWI bloggers that the victors of war have won the rights to commemoration. This New Zealand blogger who visited Gallipoli also found that the tour guide did not explain the historical background of the Turkish memorial and much of the tour group did not explore the area. He reflected that it was somewhat disrespectful to not at least visit the Turkish memorial. In his opinion he did not feel it was right to only commemorate the ANZAC dead, but to also acknowledge the deaths of the 'other.'

When dealing with war heritage, Henderson (2000) proposes three questions to consider: Whose history is being depicted, how is it being depicted and how are different visitors judging it? Visitors will have their own set of values and beliefs which they bring to sites such as battlefields, which are comprised of many different narratives. It appears that for many tourists who visit sites of national significance the journey is largely about confirming the narratives that they already know and bring with them. This is especially the case for Gallipoli where the ANZAC narrative of building nationhood is strong in Australia and New Zealand, and the 'other side' of the campaign (Turkey) is often forgotten. As Sharpley (2009a) states, the ANZAC narrative in Gallipoli dominates over other tragic stories, and this includes other battles that involved ANZAC soldiers in the Western Front.

6.2.2 Realities of warfare

6.2.2.1 Spirituality

Spirituality, relating to a spiritual connection to the dead and a sense of atmosphere appeared to be an important reflection for the bloggers. The dead were viewed as being able to understand that they were being visited and remembered, and that the land they were buried under was viewed by one blogger as revered, almost untouchable. In this respect visiting the battlefields today still hold some of the qualities from the past, as Lloyd (1998) notes, a key feature of battlefield tourism is an "interrelationship between the sacred and the profane" (p 7). Being there at the cemeteries, reading the inscriptions, touching the headstones and walking through the grounds, the visit for some tourists becomes a sacred experience as the soldiers who died are often portrayed as heroes, their deaths form certain narratives around the idea of sacrificing yourself for your country. One blogger contemplated the surrounding grass and flowers, realising that the remains of the dead had fertilised the grounds he walked on. He then stated a need to rethink his steps, to be careful where he walked, not wanting to disturb or disrespect the dead.

Iles (2008) states that many tourists visiting the Western Front will perform some form of commemorative ritual. This could include a visit to the Menin Gate nightly ceremony, or it could simply involve placing a poppy at a headstone. Battlefield sites are said to be saturated with an intangible sense of presence, such as a spirit (Miles, 2013). This explains why the bloggers felt some form of comfort while visiting the cemeteries, where the dead were said to have had made their peace. Spiritual connections with the dead point towards a "numinous" experience (Gatewood & Cameron, 2004, p. 208), this can involve feelings of empathy and the belief that there is a spiritual or holy presence. One blogger reflected on the importance in reading aloud the epitaphs inscribed on the gravestones, and also the act of physical touch, to touch each headstone as an act of acknowledgement of the dead. He felt that this was the least he could do for the dead. This appears to be a form of giving back to the dead, a mark of respect and gratitude. Another blogger expressed how special it was to find graves that were normally overlooked. In this respect, the tourist feels that the dead are not being forgotten and a form of obligation of the living is being fulfilled. An Australian travelling couple expressed a form of communication between the living and the dead;

they felt that the dead were sharing their stories with visitors who had come to learn. This reflection demonstrates an interaction between the living and the dead, the dead are perceived to have a spiritual being which can communicate with visitors who are open to receiving it. Spiritual reflections of this nature relate to how people view life after death. For these tourists, death (on the battlefield) does not end in 'nothingness,' it leads to some form of existence after death, either real or symbolic.

The atmosphere of the battlefields was another important aspect that was referred to by the bloggers. The sense of atmosphere was described in either a positive or negative light. The positive features of the atmosphere highlighted the physical beauty of the battlefields despite what had occurred there long ago. An Australian blogger visiting Gallipoli found it difficult to comprehend the contrast between the site today and its violent history; it was hard to believe that Gallipoli had witnessed such mass death. She found Gallipoli to be a physically beautiful location which provided a serene atmosphere to its visitors. This considerable contrast illustrates the difficulty tourists have in imagining and understanding the events of the past. However, this feeling also demonstrates the nature of the site today, which sees positive and welcoming feelings between people from all nationalities who visit. As Lloyd (1998, p. 112) states, the battlefield landscapes today are largely "imaginary," what attracts tourists today are their associations, meanings, atmosphere and imagination.

Negative descriptions of the atmosphere were related to the chilling nature of the minute's silence standing in front of so many graves. Tourists find themselves confronted with the dead, an experience they are unlikely to have at commemoration ceremonies at home. Additionally, comparisons were also made surrounding the feelings or different 'vibes' felt at the different cemeteries. Commonwealth graves gave a positive atmosphere of solace, or of being peaceful, while the German graves were described as having a negative atmosphere which was expressed as being stark, grim or sombre. These remarks reflect the physical differences between the graves, such as the shared, dark coloured German crosses versus the light coloured individual headstones of the Commonwealth graves. The comparisons also reflect the outcome of the war and how these tourists view that through the representations of the different cemeteries.

6.2.2.2 Authenticity

The authenticity of simply being present at a WWI site was recognised as being highly important to several of the WWI bloggers. Since WWI has now reached its centenary of the beginning of the war, there is often little left to view besides the monuments and the gravestones dedicated to the dead. The majority of the physical impacts of the war have now largely recovered and what has been preserved does not represent what it truly looked like during the war. As Lloyd (1998) states, the landscape of WWI which attracts travellers is "largely an imaginary one" (p. 112). This is because imagination is now required to try and visualise what it was like. The fields, trees and buildings no longer bare the mud and ruin. Schwenkel (2009) notes that the wish for authenticity is largely a Western desire, and if a site does not look authentic, then the tourist experience may be considered a failure (Skinner, 2012). A level of discontent was noted by one blogger who felt that the 'trench of death' at Diksmuide was rather false in its presentation. Looking at early pilgrimage to WWI sites (prior to WWII), Lloyd (1998) states that the scenes of death and destruction on the battlefields were the main attraction for early travellers. Such scenes were highly authentic and they "provided both excitement and horror" (p. 114). This statement points towards an early experience of dark tourism and also highlights the strong appeal of authenticity on the battlefield, to get a glimpse of what it was really like.

Over time the battlefields underwent reconstruction and tourists continued to visit. The focus and motivation for the experience was no longer on what could be seen, but on being present at the locations which names held great meaning (Lloyd, 1998). For several bloggers it was important to reflect on what had occurred at those sites. Just imagining what took place, the horror of being in battle, the significance of being there now and how many had died on that land was enough in regards to authenticity. This was particularly the case for the Australian tourists visiting Gallipoli on Anzac Day, as Gallipoli is tied to the ANZAC legend and the myths which surround the "creation and sustenance" of the nation (Slade, 2003, p. 792). The characteristics given to the ANZAC soldiers were based on their actions in Gallipoli, and this is what helped to form the ANZAC legend. For Australian and New Zealand tourists travelling to Gallipoli, being on those shores and hillsides is as authentic as it can get, in terms of connecting with their national identity and the ANZAC legend.

As Miles (2013) states, being at the authentic place where history was made is very significant. Ground that would usually be considered unremarkable becomes important when it has cultural meaning attached to it. Gatewood and Cameron (2004) who studied battlefield tourists in Gettysburg National Military Park found that some visitors had a strong resonance with the physical landscape; it enabled them to appreciate what they had previously learnt of the site and also added a sense of realism, that the battlefield is real. Walking on a historic battlefield can for some tourists provoke an awareness that soldiers had died at that very spot. An American tourist visiting Gallipoli expressed this sentiment as she dipped her toes into the water at Anzac Cove. As she did this she was struck by the realisation that many young men had died on this beach. Gatewood and Cameron (2004, p. 211) describe experiences like this as "transcendental" reactions, a sense of awe and also horror at what occurred at this location. This experience was also felt by an Australian blogger at Gallipoli, he found himself feeling overwhelmed by where he was and what had happened there. He expressed the experience as being a moment of realisation that changed the way he would look at future Anzac Days. Being at Anzac Cove gave him the perspective of an ANZAC soldier, arriving on the beach and facing the large cliffs. This experience gives some form of realism to Gallipoli which he would have previously known from media and books alone.

6.2.2.3 Soldiers

When the bloggers focused their thoughts on the soldiers, it was often their young age which was mentioned and also the bravery that was needed to go to war. One blogger discussed the features of the Gallipoli Campaign and how it was considered the last 'gentleman's war.' The early pilgrimages to WWI sites often emphasised the qualities of the fallen as sacred, and that it was an obligation to respect and remember their sacrifice (Lloyd, 1998). In many respects this idea has continued into the 21st century as the bloggers reflected on the soldiers' sacrifice, bravery and young age. Miles (2013) states that battlefields which focus on the individual narratives of soldiers are much more relatable than interpreting full military battles. Battlefields are often full of human interest stories, including narratives of "bravery, sacrifice and even cowardice" (p. 224).

One travelling couple from New Zealand reflected in a Commonwealth cemetery in France, this couple noted how far they were from home and expressed missing their

family. At this point they linked their own feelings to what they believed the soldiers would have felt, also missing home. According to Iles (2008) this is connected to the tourists desire to seek out an empathetic awareness of not only the landscape, but also the experiences of the soldiers. Gatewood and Cameron (2004) view this expression of empathy as numen, an experience that can stir an emotional response and can be nonreligious in context. The empathy dimension of the numen concept proposed by Gatewood and Cameron (2004) involves an affective experience whereby the tourist tries to imagine the thoughts and feelings of those who lived before them; this includes the suffering experienced by those who died. Having a sense of shared emotions between the living and the dead creates a connection and greater understanding of what it would have been like. The New Zealand couple do appear to experience shared empathy with the New Zealand soldiers, the feeling of being far from home. This occurrence may provide a sense of comfort to the New Zealand tourists as they do not feel alone in their experience of missing home and family, as the soldiers would have felt this way too.

6.2.2.4 Thoughts on warfare

Facing the realities of warfare enabled the bloggers to reflect their thoughts on the lessons learnt from WWI and the understanding of historic warfare and the passing of time. In relation to lessons learnt, several bloggers reflected on the statement that WWI was initially considered the 'war to end all wars,' this was followed by contemplation of the wars that came after. According to Ashworth and Hartmann (2005b) presenting heritage in order to prevent recurrence is simply not working. The early travellers to WWI battlefields, prior WWII, believed that the sights of all the gravestones would provide enough evidence of the horrors of war and the need for peace (Lloyd, 1998). Although individual tourists may share these thoughts, it does not go far enough to prevent war. Nevertheless, an important concept at war heritage sites is to maintain a promotion of peace and education for the generations that follow (Leopold, 2007). A Canadian blogger expressed that discussing WWI with her children was an important conversation to have however she noted the difficulty in explaining how war broke out again with WWII. Nonetheless, her sentiments highlight the opinion of Leopold (2007) that education for future generations is an important aspect when presenting war heritage sites, as this method tends to minimise the contested elements of war and also the glorification of war.

Contemplating the changes in the landscape and the pervasiveness of the war was a reoccurring theme in the bloggers' posts. Many found it difficult to imagine what took place almost 100 years ago. A Canadian blogger described the place names as having a mythic element to them; this is related to the factor of passing time and also the mythologies that have developed over the years, making WWI sites almost unreal. The 'unreal' nature of historic WWI sites could lead tourists to feel disengaged if they cannot make the connection between the modern landscape and the landscape of the past. This is where photographs of the war can be utilised to provide a link to the past. Photographs in a visitors centre enabled a New Zealand couple to connect the scenes of war from the past to the present peaceful scenes of the cemeteries.

Seeing the rows of crosses and the remains of trenches gave the bloggers an idea of the conditions. One blogger made it clear that commemorating Anzac Day on the Western Front was not about celebrating a victory for the Allied side, but about remembering the dead. In regards to WWI battlefields, meaning has often shifted back and forth between a focus on heroism and sacrifice and the awareness of the horrors of war and a desire to remember the dead and prevent a repeat of the past (Lloyd, 1998). Understanding of the WWI battlefields will most likely continue to change as time goes on; Iles (2008) contends that the level of interest in WWI is unlikely to last forever. When looking at Weaver's (2000) war-distorted destination life cycle it is hypothesised that once the remaining veterans have passed on, visitation becomes associated with periodic commemorations, such as November 11 (Remembrance Day) or April 25 (Anzac Day). These specific commemoration dates now "serve to sustain the mythological status" of these places (p. 157). This is also related to the generations of remembrance, whereby WWI is now into the third generation and later (Walter, 2009). This means that knowledge of WWI is learnt from media and books rather than from someone who has personally experienced it. If we do not possess personal memory of an event, the event will turn "into remembrance or history" (Walter, 2009, p. 47).

Also, as wars move out of living memory, they lose their emotional sting (Ballantyne & Uzzell, 1998). This could be a reason why people commemorate wars of the past and have an interest in the lives of the soldiers, as Miles (2013) notes, more recent conflicts do not see the same level of commemoration as historic conflicts. This could be due to the 'emotional sting' factor (Ballantyne & Uzzell, 1998), that it is too early to commemorate the dead when the relatives and veterans are still alive and the conflict

concerned is still heavily debated. This theory also relates to Tunbridge and Ashworth's (1996) assertion that a conflict must pass through living memory before it can be viewed through a dispassionate or objective lens. Although 100 years has passed since the beginning of WWI, it appears that some aspects of the war have not yet reached the point of being viewed in an objective or dispassionate manner. This is largely the case for sites which are connected to national identity such as Gallipoli, for Australia and New Zealand. Gallipoli holds a strong national connection for the two countries which heightens emotions over its memory and remembrance. The coming centenary of the 1915 landing at Gallipoli and the commemorations that follow may bring a renewal to its interpretation.

6.2.2.5 Immersion

The act of immersion involved integration into the wartime experience (contemplating the self at war), and also the consumption of wartime history (media). Immersion into the wartime experience occurred when the bloggers contemplated what it would be like as a soldier during the war. This is similar to Sharpley's (2009b) dark tourism as integration where the tourist may integrate "into the object of consumption" (p. 18). In the case of WWI sites this included several tourists (Australian and a New Zealander) who had visited Anzac Cove and were looking at the beach and imagining themselves as soldiers undertaking the Gallipoli Landings of 1915. One blogger contemplated on what a horror it would have been, not knowing whether you would make it to higher ground, contemplating a theoretical mortality.

As Sharpley (2009b) states, the fascination is not in the concept of death, but the context in which death occurs. These bloggers are attempting to understand the experiences of the soldiers, and due to their nationality they are trying to comprehend the past actions of their countrymen. The process of immersion provides them with some form of insight "into the atmosphere and experience of the soldiers" (Lloyd, 1998, p. 117). Winter (2009) notes that many tourists to WWI battlefields are not passive onlookers, they are actively trying to understand the past, either that of relatives or their countrymen. Iles (2008) also supports this theory, stating that retracing an ancestor's movements can be an attempt to "reinforce their sense of family pride and acquire some kind of affirmation of their own self-identity" (p. 150).

This was certainly the case for one blogger who immersed himself into his surroundings, imagining that he had gone back in time to 1916. For him it was to connect with the Canadian soldiers and also his Great grand-father who had served during the war. According to Gatewood and Cameron (2004) this immersion experience would be viewed as a dimension of the numen concept. The reason being is that it involves "deep engagement or transcendence" (p. 208). If the experience is highly engaging then the tourist may lose sense of time passing as their concentration is fully immersed in the experience. In this case the experience is war on Flanders Field. The blogger described the point of immersion as being able to port himself back in time, to share the experience with the soldiers of 1916. This description illustrates Winter's (2009) point, that there is a desire to understand a relative's experience. For this blogger, he described it as sharing the experience of war. In some way he is attempting to connect with, and share the experiences of his Great grand-father. At the end of his immersion experience he notes that his age is similar to that of his Great grand-father during the war, at this point he questions himself whether he would have followed in his Great grand-father's footsteps and joined in the war effort. His answer was that he would have in a heartbeat. This answer could be coming from a desire to be like his ancestor, whom he views as a hero and also to serve his country.

Lloyd (1998) notes that after the reconstruction of the WWI battlefields there was a division over how the landscape should be remembered or portrayed to visitors. Opinions ranged from an appreciation of heroism and sacrifice and the horrors of war. It was believed that cleaning up the battlefields might sanitise or possibly glorify war. It could be that this blogger is contemplating on joining a more hypothetical sanitised version of WWI. As researchers have noted (Scates, 2006; Seaton, 2000; Winter, 2009), the natural process of time and nature have converted much of the former battlefields into green fields, most of the physical evidence of war has been removed, this makes it almost impossible to truly imagine the horrors of WWI. In addition to this, Ryan (2007a) notes that with the passing of time and a growing distance between war and the present there can be an atmosphere of romance attached to conflicts of the past. Recent wars are raw with survivors still alive dealing with the aftermath, there may also be unresolved contested elements. Conversely, with historic wars there are no longer any living survivors, thus people rely on the myths of warfare which are presented through films, novels, games, the media and folklore (Wight, 2007). Often

these myths are laden with meaning and over time historic war sites can become viewed as hallowed and sacred ground (Gatewood & Cameron, 2004; Wight, 2007).

Several bloggers complemented their battlefield tours with wartime media at the end of the day. One couple watched a war themed docudrama, while another listened to an audio book of WWI. This level of interest demonstrates how immersed they became in their war experience. The day becomes consumed with wartime history and heritage education. For some tourists the battlefield experience is not simply a tour to fill in time, or to see the area, but an encompassing experience that takes the tourist into a form of 'wartime bubble' where they are focusing their day on all things war related. For one blogger, visiting Gallipoli reminded him of the 1981 film called *'Gallipoli.'* The final segment of the film had stuck in his mind; this was the moment when the protagonist left the trenches to charge towards the enemy and was shot in the final frame of the film.

Lennon and Foley (2000) view the film *'Gallipoli'* as a revisit to WWI, a sign of modernity which brings critical reflection and a "message about the savage and brutalising effects of war" (p. 8-9). Through the film *'Gallipoli'* the tourist is able to bring war movie 'memories' with him, immersing himself into the present day real environment of Gallipoli, combined with the images from the film. Appadurai (1996) refers to this situation as 'mediascapes' where there is a blurring between what is realistic and what is fictional. Expanding on this concept, Appadurai (1996) states that people have the ability to induce 'imagined nostalgia,' this is when a person feels nostalgic over something which they have no actual memory of. Historic war sites can evoke 'imagined nostalgia' because visitors have no living memory of the battlefields, yet they can feel a connection of having been there before, due to the consumption of visual media.

6.2.3 Emotional reactions

6.2.3.1 Positive emotions

Following their tours of WWI battlefields various bloggers expressed positive emotions on their experiences. These reflections were connected to their overall experience and also on their own life and hope for the future. Several bloggers were glad to have had

the opportunity to learn about the history of WWI and to have experienced moments of quiet contemplation in pleasant settings. Another blogger recognised her own life position, and noted that it made her aware of the value of life. There is a sense of feeling lucky that she is safe and able to live her life without the threat of death during battle. This relates to Walter's (2009) idea that dark tourism experiences portray human mortality that is often out of the ordinary. These are deaths that most of us will never have to face. Through dark tourism we are confronted with the dead, but this confrontation is only with a certain type of mortality. Walter (2009) goes further to state that dark tourism does not challenge us with the type of deaths that most of us face, but with the deaths that challenge the collective narratives of nations. Battlefield tourism is a good example of this as wars challenge the actions of nations and the ongoing narratives of war which can be contested and subject to ongoing debates.

Hoping for a future without war is an important aspect of battlefield tourism. It has been argued that visiting rows and rows of gravestones would lead to a desire for peace. Early visits to WWI sites emphasised a moral and educational purpose, similar to the dark tourism concept of moral instruction (Stone, 2012a). The idea was to encourage people to visit the former battlefields so that they could gain some sense of understanding at the level of death and suffering, and hopefully lessons could be learnt (Lloyd, 1998). It was believed that the sight of all the gravestones would be viewed as such a horror, that the need for peace would be stronger than the need for war (Lloyd, 1998). Wartime heritage is still viewed as a potential driver of world peace, if handled sensitively it is believed that war heritage can raise awareness of the horrors of war, and thus can potentially help in avoiding its repetition (Henderson, 2000). In contrast, Ashworth and Hartmann (2005b) state the theory that lessons can be learnt by presenting the horrors of the past to people today is "global humanitarian propaganda" which is driven by well-meaning intentions (p. 260). To them, the idea that presenting atrocity in order to prevent it has failed, due to the fact that "historically it has not worked" (p. 261), i.e. atrocity and war continue. Although this is true, in that war and atrocity have not ceased, it is hard to say whether individuals who have experienced dark (war) tourism have not changed their own personal opinion on war. Often it is those on the extreme ends that over shadow the more moderate voices.

6.2.3.2 Negative emotions

Looking at the bloggers' negative emotions these were separated into either negative thoughts on warfare and society and challenging physical and emotional reactions. Most of the bloggers reflected on the vast numbers of the dead and missing and how it was a waste of human life. Their reflections confirm what Miles (2013) has found at war sites, visitors often express shock and feelings of sadness when they are faced with the scale of loss which results from war. For a number of tourists who visit battlefields the experience can be overwhelming and thus they are left speechless and withdraw into themselves to reflect on what has occurred (Miles, 2013). Iles (2012) also confirms that battlefield experiences usually involve some form of emotional engagement. The experience for some can even bring on a feeling of depression as was noted by one blogger. After a morning of visiting battlefields an afternoon stop was required to shake off her feelings of depression. This involved a more 'normal' tourist pursuit of trying the local food.

One blogger noted the values of the past and compared them to the values of today. In this situation the values of the past were looked upon favourably, they were viewed as being selfless values, which the blogger considered to be rare in modern society. This comparison to the past is not uncommon. Iles (2008) states that tourists sometimes view the soldiers of WWI as having simpler values. They are often viewed as putting their country before the individual, reflected in the motto 'service before self'. The era of WWI is often romanticised through the stories of sacrifice and honour, which can lead some to question the morals of today. This issue was also mentioned by Seaton (2000), that people hold a fascination with WWI because they want to connect with an era that they believe had better values than the present, which to them have been lost along the way. This yearning for a better time is most likely the result of wartime mythologies which highlight the unity of nations and comradeship, individuals who view this as a favourable time are likely to be self selecting certain aspects of the past they wish to 'remember.' In effect they are looking at the past with 'rose tinted glasses.' The fact that such a large global war took place, with such little regard to life itself should remind people that serious issues were present in that era as well.

The bloggers also expressed experiencing challenging physical and emotional reactions. This included feeling physically exhausted, crying, having goose bumps and also

shivers. One blogger described hearing the haunting melody of the Last Post and experienced a shiver up her spine. The Last Post was considered a focal point of early battlefield tourism, it was important to travellers as it "symbolically stopped time" (Lloyd, 1998, p. 127), and enabled the living to connect with the dead. The belief was that it reassured the dead that they were not forgotten. This reflects the blogger's words when she described the melody as haunting. Expressions of a haunting nature can also be related to Stone's (2012a) mediating relationship with the dead – dark tourism as haunting (memories). The melody of the Last Post is haunting as it reminds people of the collective dead of WWI. The following segment discusses the Vietnam case study.

6.3 Vietnam – case study

The Vietnam War experiences are grouped into the three concepts of confronting historic warfare, morality of war and warfare tourism and emotional reactions. These experiences are based mainly on a Western perspective of the war, and due to the historical timeline of the event the war is still within living memory. The following segment discusses the bloggers' battlefield experiences in Vietnam.

6.3.1 Confronting historic warfare

    6.3.1.1 Looking toward the future

Confronting historic warfare comprised the theme of looking toward the future which included hope for a world without war and also thoughts on a promising future for Vietnam. Hope for a world without war was also present in the WWI blogs. This relates to the theory that experiencing dark tourism may lead people to support peace in the future. After seeing the horrors of the past tourists hope for a different future. Henderson (2000) believes that if a war site is presented with care it can play an important role in raising awareness of human suffering, potentially helping to avoid its repetition. Stone (2012a) labelled this concept moral instruction; moral narratives are utilised to provide "ideas of hope, tolerance and peace" (p. 1581). However, as mentioned earlier not all heritage academics agree that this is working. Ashworth and Hartmann (2005b) assert that this message could be used to try and justify former sites of atrocity becoming modern day tourist attractions. This message of peace could be there simply to reassure tourists that dark tourism attractions are not profiting from the

dead because they are putting forth a message of education and hope (Ashworth &
Hartmann, 2005b). This could be the case for some kitsch attractions, however many
dark tourism attractions, and particularly war attractions, focus on attempting to
understand and interpret historic events, and also to provide a location for present day
mourners. For example, the My Lai Memorial records all the names of the civilian
victims so that they are not forgotten and there is a space for people to visit and mourn
the dead.

Several bloggers reflected on the promising future for Vietnam. Bloggers felt that the
Vietnamese people do not dwell on the past and are keen to move on. One couple
thought it was encouraging to see so few remnants of the war. This is in contrast to
what many returning US Vietnam Veterans feel, which is a disappointment at the lack
of physical reminders of the war (Schwenkel, 2009). For this couple it was encouraging
to see that the Vietnamese were moving on. This idea of moving on is one that is
strongly felt in Vietnam. The view is that Vietnam should not dwell too heavily on the
past and to look toward the future (Henderson, 2000). While living and conducting
research in Vietnam, Schwenkel (2009) came across the saying "Vietnam looks to the
future, while the United States remains haunted by the past" (p. 42). This sentiment
could be a reflection of the war itself, since the US withdrew from Vietnam they
effectively lost and as a result many questions have since been raised in the US about
what went wrong. For the Vietnamese a victory means that moving on is still painful,
however it is easier than if the result were a defeat.

6.3.1.2 Current events and comparisons

While visiting various Vietnam War attractions, several bloggers reflected on current
wars and other sites of atrocity. One blogger made a comparison between the Peace
Park in Hiroshima and the War Remnants Museum in Ho Chi Minh City. She felt that
the two attractions were complete opposites, with the Peace Park providing a message
of 'never again' while the War Remnants Museum focused on one-sided interpretation.
This blogger's opinion supports Henderson's (2000) belief that if interpretation is not
handled sensitively the effectiveness of the message is reduced. This diminishes the
goal to raise awareness and understanding of the victims of war. Although, not all
tourists have this dissonant experience at the War Remnants Museum as each person
brings with them their own prior values, attitudes and experiences (Tunbridge &

Ashworth, 1996). In this case the blogger's prior experience of the Hiroshima Peace Park impacted upon her impressions of the War Remnants Museum.

While in Vietnam, several bloggers made a connection between the Vietnam War and current wars, such as the Iraq War. One blogger felt that the situation has been repeated and that the Iraq War, like Vietnam, should never have begun. Laderman (2013) states that Americans often have difficulty coming to terms with what the US government did to the Vietnamese people, and time will tell how the Iraq War will be interpreted. Laderman (2013) believes that it too, could be looked back upon as a "mistake" (p. 29). From the blogs it appears that several tourists have already made the connection and feel that the mistakes of the past have been repeated in the Middle East. One blogger expressed concern for Iraqi civilians, questioning whether similar atrocities that occurred in Vietnam have been repeated in Iraq without our knowledge. A US blogger questioned the continuing actions of the US government and military, his viewpoint of the Vietnam and Iraq Wars were that they were optional and determined by economics. Being present at the emotive War Remnants Museum, enabled this blogger and others to express their perspectives on modern warfare and what drives it. The bloggers expressed sentiments of distrust in the actions of government that we are not given the truth for the reasons for war, as a Czech blogger described it, Vietnamese and Americans had died for commercial motivations. This is an alternative perspective compared to that experienced by tourists at more historic war sites, i.e. feelings of sacrifice, pride and commemoration. More recent wars such as Vietnam tend to provoke anger directed at those in charge of the conflict, a growing distrust towards governments and their possible agendas.

6.3.1.3 Factors of nationality

Ashworth (1995) and Timothy and Boyd (2003) note that social groups or nationalities who feel discomfort at their national history may form a disinheritance, this theory has been labelled by Poria (2001, 2007) and Sharpley (2009a) as bad active history. Bad active history is essentially the opposite of good active history. In this case, bad active history concerns past actions undertaken by one's own social group which incites negative feelings such as shame. Experiences of bad active history were solely mentioned by American bloggers. This is related to the actions of the US government during the Vietnam War. Interestingly, other bloggers who did have a

national (social group) connection to the war, namely Australia and New Zealand, did not express feelings representing bad active history. This could be due to the Vietnam War largely being expressed through an American narrative via popular culture, and thus other nations do not feel a strong connection, also the troop numbers for Australia and New Zealand (including causalities) were small in comparison to those of the United States (Grey, 2006). Another factor is that it was largely the US government which made the decisions regarding the direction of the war.

Bad active histories are not usually included in heritage interpretation (Poria, 2007), thus visits to the highly graphic and confronting War Remnants Museum may have come as a shock to some of the American tourists. Photographs detailing the horrors of the Vietnam War are displayed; these photographs often highlight individual war atrocities or crimes. Photographs such as these are not normally included in traditional Western narratives of the Vietnam War, hence the confronting images provoke strong feelings of shame and anger at what occurred. These strong feelings also tie into Walter's (2009) description of haunting memories, whereby the collective dead (Vietnamese civilians) can haunt society (US society) if it is believed that these people have died in vain or through a meaningless or unfair cause. A US blogger who visited the War Remnants Museum found that it was a challenging day for her, and she expressed discomfort at being the only American among her friends. For her she felt that her friends (of other nationalities) would not understand her feelings, especially those of shame and guilt on behalf of her country. This experience demonstrates bad active history and how it can be defined by social groups and actions of the past. As an American, this tourist feels shame and guilt based on a connection to her nationality, despite her not being responsible for the events of the war itself.

Another US blogger who visited the War Remnants Museum expressed that he was proud to be American and a veteran (not of the Vietnam War), however his experience of the museum left him feeling depressed, embarrassed and disgusted at the actions of his country. As Alneng (2002) states the War Remnants Museum puts forth a narrative that is the direct opposite of Vietnam War Hollywood films. Many Americans may be used to a narrative of the US soldier and military as the 'good guy' heroes, however, the portrayal of the war at the museum presents an entirely different narrative. Another US visitor to the War Remnants Museum described the situation

as an identity crisis and that most Americans would find it difficult to travel through Vietnam without questioning their identity as an American. Whitbourne (2012) states that an identity crisis can occur at any stage of life when an individual is faced with an event that challenges their sense of self. In this respect these American travellers who have experienced bad active history may be undergoing a minor identity crisis as American nationals. Their identity as Americans is being challenged by the events of the war, and most importantly the events of the war may have been unclear to them prior to visiting Vietnam. Thus, they are unexpectedly challenged by the confronting exhibits in the War Remnants Museum, evoking an identity crisis.

An American blogger who visited the site of the My Lai massacre found it difficult to first admit his nationality to some inquiring Vietnamese locals, a sign of bad active history and also apprehension on how he would be received. However, upon stating that he was from the US the Vietnamese family greeted him by shaking his hand and asking for photos. This encounter highlights the act of forgiveness and the ability to move on from the events of the past. One of the WWI bloggers mentioned having a sense of hope for the world after experiencing the collaborative effort between Australia, New Zealand and Turkey at an Anzac Day commemoration ceremony. She found it was a significant moment to find that friendship and peace is achievable after such destruction. This WWI blogger's sentiments complement the experience of the American blogger in Vietnam. That after so much hardship experienced by both nations, peace and friendship can develop between the two nationalities. To be able to truly move on from war there must be some form of reconciliation to initiate peace between future generations. This encounter also ties into how tourism can be viewed as a 'peace maker' since it connects people from different nations and cultures and encourages tourists to view themselves as being part of the 'Global Village' (D'Amore, 1988), whereby people see that deep down "what unites us as human beings is much stronger than what divides us" (Lisle, 2000, p. 93). The American blogger's encounter had certainly made enough of an impact on him to recount the moment on his blog. He further noted that this experience was repeated throughout Vietnam. Friendly encounters such as this help to further heal the wounds of the past.

6.3.1.4 Contested issues

A number of Vietnam bloggers expressed feelings of frustration and anger at what they perceived as a conflict with the war narrative. This conflict relates to the 'two narratives' of war that exists in the interpretation of the Vietnam/American War. Table 7 outlines the differences between the two narratives. Essentially, the Vietnam War narrative is generally the Western perspective of the war, and the American War narrative is the Vietnamese viewpoint. For the bloggers there was an element of dissonance in their experience of certain Vietnam War sites as the war narrative was one-sided. After visiting the War Remnants Museum one UK blogger thought that the museum needed to provide stories from both sides of the war in order to be effective in interpreting the war to tourists. Another UK blogger expressed his thoughts on the matter stating that the Vietnamese government has engaged in a retelling of history. As Sharpley (2009a) notes, conflicts through their presentation can be used to convey political messages. Lunn (2007) believes that in Vietnam the political message that is communicated to domestic and international visitors is a simple message, but it is communicated very methodically from site to site. This message is of independence, solidarity and triumph over superior military technology (Laderman, 2013; Lunn, 2007). For several of the bloggers there was a feeling that the war narrative was only coming from one point of view and this, for some, led to a questioning of the dominant narrative of war presented in Vietnam. In essence, it came down to a belief that objective truth cannot be found in Vietnam. Gatewood and Cameron (2004, p. 207) who studied the American Civil War battlefield of Gettysburg; state that sites of commemoration have a "not-so-hidden agenda" which is to communicate national patriotism through the landscape. Gatewood and Cameron (2004) assert that national landscapes and their narratives are not simply about educating the people, but also to fuel nationalistic feelings among the visitors. In this respect, the cultural landscape of Vietnam is no different to that of the US, both countries utilise monuments, landscapes and narratives to sustain feelings of patriotism. The difference here is that Western tourists are encountering the 'other' narrative ('winner' narrative), which they may not be familiar with.

The War Remnants Museum, the Cu Chi Tunnels and the former Khe Sanh Combat Base are a selection of locations which provoked questioning of the war narrative by the bloggers. The bloggers' reactions and reflections ranged from questioning the absence

of the atrocities caused by the National Liberation Front (NLF), to stating that the Vietnamese government are continuing to fight a propaganda war long after the war has ended. One blogger referred to the saying that 'history is written by the victors,' and another stated that this is to be expected since most attractions are run by the government. A common theme running through the bloggers' reflections was that the material presented to them was 'biased propaganda.' Schwenkel (2009) agrees that the history of war presented in Vietnam is selective, however she feels that accusations of propaganda have more to do with Westerners not wanting 'their' perspective of the war challenged. Laderman (2013) supports this theory that there is little mention of the North Vietnamese (NLF) regimes' atrocities, and also little mention of the South Vietnamese who supported the US. However, Laderman (2013, p. 33) believes that much of the discomfort stems from the fact that a US (Western) narrative is not at the forefront, and that the Vietnam War is an "American tragedy" and if Western suffering is not acknowledged then the information presented is considered biased propaganda. Laderman (2013) rightly questions why tourists hold the War Remnants Museum to a different standard than that of most Western museums; since most museums *are* selective in their interpretation and will usually leave out the atrocities committed by their own and highlight the atrocities that have been committed by others against them.

Schwenkel (2009) believes that when tourists in Vietnam cry 'propaganda' they are denying the suffering felt by the Vietnamese and at the same time minimising the accountability of the US government. It also highlights the continued friction between Communism and non-Communism, with those from a democratic country not trusting what is presented to them; it becomes 'Communist propaganda.' One blogger who visited the War Remnants Museum expressed that is was pure propaganda and that once she realised this the museum experience became less emotional and more detached. This example highlights how the suffering that the Vietnamese experienced becomes diminished when the exhibits are reduced to government propaganda. Alneng (2002, p. 475) believes that most tourists to Vietnam are ignorant of the ideological differences that existed and still exist in Vietnam, and that most fall back to a Cold War mentality or Hollywood mythological view of a "monolithic evil Communist foe." Alneng (2002) contends that the narrative at the War Remnants Museum is deliberately one-sided which clashes with the US Hollywood narrative of the Vietnam War. Schwenkel (2009) believes that part of the contested elements surrounding the Vietnam War may be related to Fassin's (2007, p. 519) assertion that the value of life on the battlefield is

often unequal; that the life of a Western soldier is viewed as more important than the "expendable life" of the enemy troops and also their civilian population. Alneng (2002) points to the fact that Western films and media often highlight the 58,000 dead American soldiers, but rarely mention the 3 million Vietnamese killed; the uneven casualty numbers can often come as a shock to visitors.

It is clear that many war attractions in Vietnam are contested for international travellers. Sharpley (2009a, p. 148) notes that many 'darker' sites are filled with political debate and meaning, this is especially the case when there are "competing claims to ownership" as seen in Vietnam. According to Ashworth and Hartmann's (2005b) concept of 'dissonant heritage,' Vietnam would be included. Dissonant heritage can be politically motivated, often to enhance national identity, celebrate a (military) victory or to ignore a certain past. For Western visitors to Vietnam these elements often stand out as they are in contrast to the Western narrative, thus a level of dissonance takes place. Sharpley (2009a) states that in order to minimise feelings of dissonance a new narrative should be formed which embraces each perspective and is conducted in a co-operative manner. Sharpley (2009a) asserts that the re-writing of narratives does not mean that complete and equal representation must be given, but to at least give recognition of the different perspectives. This makes interpretation more inclusive and may lower feelings of dissonance and disconnection to the narrative. Leopold (2007) supports this theory, stating that sites which have contested histories or political ideologies should attempt to display events in an un-biased manner so that bridges can be formed between other nations which promote peace.

In this way, tourists to Vietnam may feel greater empathy towards the suffering of the Vietnamese as the experience becomes less contested and more inclusive. As Sharpley (2009a, p. 163) states this will encourage "harmony, reconciliation" and understanding. Conversely, the narrative of the Vietnam War presented in Vietnam, would be considered 'hot interpretation' (Uzzell, 1989), which recognises that visitors to heritage sites do not simply have a cognitive experience, but one that is often emotional and selective, and based on our past experiences. Ballantyne and Uzzell (1998) note that people are often concerned that hot interpretation could be utilised for propaganda purposes, however, they state that all visitors should be encouraged to question any viewpoint, and to explore different understandings. As they put it, all 'truth' is contestable. Ballantyne and Uzzell (1998) raise an important fact that no interpretation

is values free, and that possibly the employment of a hot interpretational approach makes the point that it is taking a particular stance. Ballantyne (1998, p. 7) concludes that hot issues should encourage visitors to question "their accepted views and understandings on controversial issues." Presenting hot interpretation can have the ability to promote reflection, and to provide a different viewpoint to visitors. Some of the Vietnam bloggers reacted with anger to the interpretation that was presented to them; however others did not see a problem in its presentation.

Table 7: Two narratives of war - Vietnam

Two narratives of war

• Vietnam War	• American War
• 'Fall of Saigon'	• 'Liberation of Saigon'
• Western narrative (US)	• (North) Vietnamese narrative
• War to support the Republic of Vietnam (South)	• War to stop US imperialism (invaders) & support reunification
• Capitalism / Democracy	• State Communism
• Vietnam Veterans memorial in Washington D.C.	• Martyr cemeteries (North Vietnamese soldiers)

Both
• Missing voices of the South Vietnamese

It appears that prior personal beliefs and knowledge do have an impact on how people react to certain narratives. Either way, the Vietnamese narrative presented to Western tourists certainly enabled them to see the war from a different viewpoint. They either accepted this viewpoint as a new or different interpretation, or as a contested one that was not objective. Frost (2007) believes that battlefield interpretation managers should embrace the different perspectives that exist in warfare and this should include provocative and dissonant heritage. Frost's (2007) rationale is that this method could increase visitor numbers and also lead to greater satisfaction since each point of view is mentioned. This is important when considering the fact that 'truth' in battlefield interpretation is subjective, and visitors should always question 'whose truth?' is being presented to them (Smith, 2007), as each side will have their own meanings and perspectives of the war, which will likely be selective of historical events. Ryan (2007b) asserts that seeking authenticity in battlefield interpretation at tourism sites is probably not the best approach, instead visitors should think about how the site is interpreted, who did the interpretation and what aspects of history have been left out.

Heavily contested sites can produce a dissonant response; however sites that provoke the visitor to question what they are viewing, are according to Ryan (2007b) an effective form of learning.

6.3.2 Morality of war and warfare tourism

6.3.2.1 Conflict with commercialisation

A conflict with commercialisation was mentioned by several of the bloggers. This was something that was largely specific to the Vietnam case study. The conflict concerned related to the management and maintenance of the Cu Chi Tunnels, and discontent at the loss of authenticity of the attraction. The other factors related to the commercialisation of the war itself and the morality of using live weaponry at the Cu Chi Tunnels. Several bloggers were not happy with the commercialisation and operation of the Cu Chi Tunnels, they found that the site had lost its authenticity and was now over run with tourists who were after the next photo opportunity. Henderson (2000) believes that there is potential for conflict when education and entertainment are combined. This is especially the case when the attraction is based on a sensitive issue, such as war. Although, when looking at authenticity, it is noticeable that authenticity of place is definitely subjective, as other Vietnam bloggers did not, according to their blogs, have a problem with the presentation of the Cu Chi Tunnels. This relates to Eco's (1986) assertion that in a postmodern society a replica can be just as acceptable as the real thing. Most of the bloggers were accepting of the adjustments made to the tunnels as the originals are too small for most Westerners to crawl through, therefore to experience the tunnels they must be modified.

Greater concern was focused on the use and morality of the live weaponry at the tunnels. The tunnel attraction seeks to educate and entertain its guests. Questions have been raised as to whether this is appropriate at a site which saw significant suffering and death. Henderson (2000) states it may be difficult to get tourists responding with "feelings of solemnity and quiet reflection" (p. 278) at a site that focuses so strongly on entertainment. Miles (2014) notes that battlefield sites lose an element of their 'darkness' when entertainment is included in the site interpretation. This relates to Stone's (2006) conceptualisation of the dark tourism spectrum of supply; that an entertainment orientation and a perceived inauthentic product will

make a site appear 'lighter' on the dark tourism continuum. Alneng (2002, p. 474) contends that the Cu Chi Tunnels are presented in a "theme park context" and that tourists who visit are transformed into "kitschy icons" of the Vietnam War. Interestingly, tourists are given the role of a National Liberation Front (NLF) soldier (known by many in the West as the Viet Cong), Alneng (2002) states that this is "undeniably ideological" (p. 474). This aspect, taking on the role of a NLF soldier, was not acknowledged nor contested by the bloggers. There appeared to be no issues of dissonance, apart from the short film shown before the tour which was labelled by one blogger as anti-American propaganda.

Understanding the serious nature of a war site and being respectful of what occurred there is usually the aim of most war attractions in the West. Westerners who were uncomfortable with the presentation of the Cu Chi Tunnels may not have expected this form of edutainment. It could be that the Vietnamese have a different view of war attractions than the West, or it could be that the Vietnamese may feel that this is an effective way to attract Western tourists, as Westerners cannot participate in these activities at home. One tourist mentioned that the firing of the guns did give a good impression of what it would have been like in the war. In effect, the use of live weaponry may be an attempt at authenticity, there is no disrespect to the dead intended, but an attempt to show tourists how loud and confusing it would have been during the war.

A separate encounter experienced by one blogger involved hawkers and the selling of war memorabilia. This war memorabilia includes medals, dog tags and Zippo lighters. These items are often fakes; however they have been labelled 'souvenirs of death' by Stewart (1993). The reason for this is that the buyer does not know the fate of the 'owner.' It is assumed that the owner was a soldier who met their fate on the battlefield. The blogger who encountered war memorabilia hawkers found the situation to be unquestionably macabre if they were in fact genuine items.

6.3.2.2 Feelings towards others ('victims and perpetrators')

One of the American bloggers in Vietnam mentioned the friendly nature of the Vietnamese and the lack of resentful feelings. This blogger's experience was not the exception, Schwenkel (2009) notes that American tourists who return from a trip to

Vietnam frequently mention being "deeply moved" by what they found to be a "welcome reception in Vietnam." (p. 45). This reaction has been connected to the traditional philosophy of Buddhism (forgiveness), and also the notion that hate is between the governments of nations and not the ordinary people (Schwenkel, 2009). It also relates to what Lunn (2007, p. 90) describes as a "collective moving-on from the horrors" of the war. Bloggers also expressed feelings of admiration and respect of the Vietnamese who fought against an enemy with military superiority, and also amazement at the lengths they went through to survive the war. This feeling was most apparent after a trip to the Cu Chi Tunnels. The Vietnamese who lived in the Cu Chi Tunnels were mainly members of the National Liberation Front (or Viet Cong); this illustrates how dissonant feelings felt by some tourists did not impact on their overall feelings of admiration and respect for what they went through. A British blogger who struggled with dissonant feelings throughout his trip found that despite not believing what was presented to him, he had ultimate respect for the Vietnamese people.

Several bloggers expressed feelings of empathy for the war dead and survivors, this included people from both sides, Vietnamese and Americans, soldiers and civilians. Ashworth and Hartmann (2005a) assert that sites of atrocity will have a human perpetrator and a human victim, and the 'empathy argument' can often be viewed as an acceptable way to present atrocities. In this case the visitor must identify with the individuals related to the atrocity. In most cases visitor empathy is with the victims (i.e. civilians), however, it can just as equally be with the 'perpetrators.' For example, with the Vietnam War, a Vietnamese perspective views the US soldiers as perpetrators, while in contrast, US visitors may view the US soldiers as victims of the US government draft policy. Therefore, it depends on the background of the individual and what feelings and beliefs they bring with them. Several American bloggers did in fact express empathy for individuals from both sides of the war as they were aware of the controversial nature of the draft policy; one US blogger noted that many US soldiers were forced to fight a war they themselves did not believe in.

6.3.2.3 Moral reflections and contemplation of warfare

The atmosphere at historic sites of war is a feature that was referred to on several of the Vietnam blogs. In this case it mainly related to a comparison between the peaceful nature of the sites today and the imagination of what they would have been like during

wartime. One blogger described the My Lai memorial of being eerie, while another found it interesting to link the environment of the former DMZ to the images seen in media and films. The belief that an environment is 'eerie' is not uncommon at sites of death. Smith (1996) notes that visitors to battlefields often feel that the atmosphere is eerie; there is a sense of the supernatural. The belief is that the spirits of those who died remain present in the area. The comment about linking the Vietnamese landscape to the images we associate with media and film highlights the initial theory of dark tourism proposed by Lennon and Foley (2000); their theory centers on examples of dark tourism events becoming "embedded in mass consciousness through popular culture and media" (p. 10). Interest in dark tourism would be initiated by global communication technologies; this includes real footage of the war, Hollywood films, novels, memoirs and video games. This blogger found it fascinating to see the landscape and 'remember' the war through media images and films that he had seen prior to visiting Vietnam.

Confronting the costs of war in Vietnam involved seeing monuments, memorials, photographs, museum exhibits and living victims of the war. For many of the bloggers this was a thought-provoking and challenging experience. This can be related to Stone's (2012a) dark tourism as haunting (memories) institution, where the unquiet collective dead of the Vietnam War haunt society, including tourists that visit. One blogger encountered a young victim of Agent Orange, which led to contemplative thoughts on the morality of the Agent Orange compensation given to US veterans versus that given to the Vietnamese. Since this blogger was American there was an element of anger and frustration at the lack of action from his government, and also haunting feelings combined with bad active history that it was his government that did this. Several bloggers found the War Remnants Museum to be highly confronting in its display of war photographs. This form of interpretation uses the shock factor to highlight the horrors of war. Ballantyne and Uzzell (1998) raise the question as to whether interpreters have a responsibility for their visitor's reactions to 'heritage that hurts' which has the potential to be traumatising. In the case of the War Remnants Museum, bloggers did comment on being in tears at what they saw and that the experience at times was quite distressing. Although, Ballantyne (1998) rightly states that it would be strange if emotive heritage interpretation did not have a strong emotional effect on the visitor.

The War Remnants Museum has undergone several name changes over the years, and its original purpose was to highlight the atrocities committed by other nations against the Vietnamese. It was originally called the 'Exhibition House of American and Chinese War Crimes,' and then the 'Exhibition House of Aggression War Crimes' (Laderman, 2009). Due to a normalisation in the diplomatic relationship between the US and Vietnam in 1995, the museum underwent its final change to what it is called today: The War Remnants Museum (Schwenkel, 2009). The end of the US embargo in the mid 1990's saw an increase in foreign tourists travelling to Vietnam, this increase in international tourism brought with it complaints regarding the use of the words 'war crimes' (Schwenkel, 2009). This propelled the museum managers to make the name change to ease the relationship between foreign tourists and their experience of Vietnam. As seen in the contested feelings of the bloggers, this name change has not completely removed feelings of dissonance. Although the museum is highly confronting to tourists, it is carrying out its original purpose, which is to present the shocking reality of war.

Another factor connected to moral reflection and contemplation of warfare relates to tourists attempting to comprehend war or contemplating the self in war. Several bloggers found it too difficult to almost impossible to imagine living in a war zone. The Cu Chi Tunnels were one location that tested the bloggers' imagination in trying to comprehend what it would have been like to live in the tunnels long term. Attempting to understand what soldiers or civilians go through during wartime is not a new or uncommon motivation. Lloyd (1998) states that a persistent theme in battlefield tourism is the desire for tourists to gain "an insight into the atmosphere and experience of the soldiers" (p. 117). Fortunately, most people will not have to experience war; however there appears to be a desire to see what it is like, but within a safe environment. This is likely to be part of the reason why the Cu Chi Tunnels are so popular. The tunnels present a reproduced atmosphere of being in a war zone with gun fire nearby and a dimly lit tunnel system to crawl through. However, as Schwenkel (2009) notes safety and comfort come first with emergency exits throughout the tunnel system for those who want to exit early, and guns are locked down so they cannot be removed. This gives the feeling of being a 'VC guerrilla' yet being completely safe at the same time.

For one blogger the displays and interpretation at the Cu Chi Tunnels led to contemplative thoughts on how depraved a person would have to be to design booby traps that maim people. After reflecting on this, the blogger questioned whether the people behind the traps were really different from him or any of us in any fundamental way? This blogger felt that we may look upon people who design such things as 'evil,' yet would we behave any differently under the same circumstances? He then contemplated what depth he may have sunk to if it was his life on the line; to him this was an unsettling thought. This situation highlights the nature of dark tourism, a tour that is considered relatively light in its interpretation, according to Stone's (2006) dark tourism spectrum, has led to a very dark experience in terms of his thought process. It is not only the death and suffering of others that can challenge tourists, but also their own potential actions if they were in similar circumstances. This raises theoretical and challenging questions that most of us in everyday life never consider, and that is: could the self be capable of taking another life if their own life is on the line? The blogger who contemplated this question felt that he would behave no differently, and the answer to his own question left him feeling unsettled. In this situation a battlefield tourism experience has overlapped into a dark tourism encounter. Dark tourism has the potential to touch on subjects that we often don't think about. These subjects are within our consciousness waiting for a trigger to engage in these thoughts, i.e. to contemplate the extent of human survival and the will to live, whether we would harm others in order to save ourselves.

Several bloggers raised questions surrounding the reasons given for the Vietnam War, both of the US government's actions and also the North Vietnamese. Some of this questioning related to political ideologies. One blogger expressed a belief that the reason for war was not over the domino theory or any threat of Communism, but about strategic plans to control South East Asian resources. Another blogger questioned why the war was fought for Communism when not long after the war ended the Vietnamese economy shifted to one of neo-liberalism. Laderman (2013) asserts that this has been a large misconception of the Vietnam War. Many Americans believed that those who supported the North Vietnamese were hardened Communists, when in reality they gave their support to a side that wanted all foreign intrusion out and reunification of the country. Also the US strategy of 'search and destroy' missions, which involved destroying peasant's homes and moving them into camps, only led to discontent and

essentially many peasants turned to the North for help (Karnow, 1997), these peasants also had little understanding of political ideology.

6.3.3 Emotional reactions

6.3.3.1 Positive emotions

The positive emotional reactions expressed by the Vietnam bloggers were similar to those who visited WWI sites. They reflected on their own personal situation and how life moves on in Vietnam. After visiting sites related to the Vietnam War, several bloggers expressed feeling 'lucky' and counted their 'blessings' at being born in a time without war or living in a country without war. One Australian blogger had narrowly avoided being sent to serve in the Vietnam War, and thus was able to reflect on the battlefields that he could have been sent to. For veterans returning to the battlefield, it is often about revisiting the past, which can include cathartic motivations, to undergo a process of emotional healing (Schwenkel, 2009); in this case, however, it is about contemplating what could have been. The Vietnamese blogger, who visited the My Lai Memorial, expressed how she felt a lot better after seeing and hearing young children laugh and play in the surrounding sanctuary. For her this demonstrated how the local village is moving on with their lives, the children represent the next generation who have not witnessed the war with their own eyes. This experience of feeling troubled then comforted can be related to Walter's (2009) theory of a similarity between the mass media and dark tourism. Walter (2009) questions whether dark tourism could function like the news media, first the viewer is scared or troubled, and then by the end of the encounter they are comforted by a positive ending. Although this may be the case sometimes, Walter (2009) warns that dark tourism experiences will not always end with the participant feeling comforted. This situation was reflected in some of the negative experiences which brought on negative emotions. At times these negative emotions concluded the bloggers' experience.

6.3.3.2 Negative emotions

Similar to the WWI bloggers, there were also, as expected, negative emotions felt by the Vietnam bloggers. Their emotions were challenged when they faced the reality of the Vietnam War; this included the large war cemeteries and also the thought-provoking

War Remnants Museum. This museum appeared to be the most emotionally challenging of all the war attractions in Vietnam. An explanation for this would be the highly graphic nature of the war exhibits within the museum. Ballantyne and Uzzell (1998) state that most heritage managers will pursue the "line of least resistance" (p. 165), meaning that they will usually present displays that do not challenge, shock or offend the viewer too much. Presentations involving war and conflict are often sanitised for the tourist to not cause upset (Ballantyne & Uzzell, 1998). The War Remnants Museum essentially does the opposite; the goal is to present an un-sanitised view of the war to domestic and international travellers so that people cannot forget the horrors of the Vietnam War. Ballantyne and Uzzell (1998) assert that most heritage attractions do not encourage an emotional response, especially one that goes beyond superficial feelings. In contrast the War Remnants Museum aims for a strong response from its visitors.

Through Schwenkel's (2009) exploration of transnational remembrance and representation in Vietnam, she discovered through a War Remnants Museum employee that US Vietnam Veterans have upon seeing the displays dropped to "their knees to repent" (p. 26). This illustrates the powerful effect the exhibits can have on visitors. A drawback, however, is that if the interpretation is considered to be selective, which is the case for the War Remnants Museum, there is a risk that the displays will have less of an emotional impact on certain visitors (Miles, 2013). This situation occurred for the bloggers who found the museum to be too one-sided, and thus had an emotional reaction which was not what the museum was aiming for. Instead of feeling empathy or anger for the events of war itself, the contested experiences led tourists to direct their frustration at the presentation of the exhibits.

Nonetheless, this was not the case for all of the bloggers visiting war attractions in Vietnam. A US blogger visiting the War Remnants Museum expressed feeling grief over the events of the Vietnam War, and also outraged at the level of suffering that continues today due to the use of Agent Orange (VAVA, 2014). Although this blogger felt that the War Remnants Museum was one-sided, these feelings did not prevent her from experiencing negative emotions that the museum aims to evoke.

Facing the reality of war in Vietnam also includes visiting war cemeteries. A New Zealand blogger who travelled with a personal tour guide found the large war

cemeteries overwhelming and upon seeing them he experienced the physical sensation of shivers down his spine. His tour guide explained the inscriptions on the tomb stones which made the visit more personal, giving him the rank, gender and age of those who died. The cemetery he visited was large, approximately 35,000 buried, he described this sight as an endless sea of sadness. Although this blogger had no national or personal connection to the dead, he felt the pain of those who lost their lives and also the suffering which his tour guide had personally experienced. This level of involvement highlights the deep emotional engagement that sites of death can provoke, and also the emotional connection that can occur between people when personal stories of grief are shared. Interactions such as this have the ability to trigger deeper contemplative thoughts on life and death which extend beyond thoughts of the battlefield.

6.4 Contemplation of life and death (war and peace)

Following the outcomes from the findings chapters, WWI and Vietnam bloggers both experienced contemplative thoughts on war and peace (life and death). When their experiences and reflections are investigated in a thorough way it becomes clear that their contemplative thoughts are less about war and peace and more related to life and death itself. Thus the emphasis is placed on the words life and death and war and peace follows. The reason for this is that the WWI and Vietnam bloggers began to move their thoughts away from the narratives of war and began to focus their thoughts on the deeper concepts hidden behind war history and warfare. These contemplative thoughts centred on the waste of human life caused by warfare, the afterlife and the personal belief in justice after death and the reflective thoughts on the enjoyment of life.

The WWI bloggers expressed contemplative reflections on the overall pointlessness of war and the waste of human life. Their thoughts touched on the personal, human side of loss, rather than military loses. The dead were viewed as individuals who once had families of their own. Rather than being viewed solely as soldiers they were seen as sons, brothers or fathers. This reflection moves beyond the contemplation of war towards the contemplation of life and loss of individual people. Attempting to understand the experience of war would require tourists to undertake a numen-seeking experience (Gatewood & Cameron, 2004). This involves putting themselves in the shoes and minds of the soldiers to try and comprehend the environment of WWI. In this case the use of imagination is needed to 'transcend' the present day world and enter the

past. Bloggers who were able to imagine the horrors of the past expressed the sense of loss and waste of life following their visits. Being confronted with numerous gravestones at war cemeteries was one of the key locations where WWI bloggers expressed their thoughts on the pointlessness of war and its resulting loss of life.

For the Vietnam bloggers the contemplation of life and death focused on the personal beliefs of life after death and the concept of justice in the afterlife. Reflection also extended to the enjoyment of life and the belief that it is better to move on from the past rather than to dwell on it or to seek revenge against others. The battlefield experience enabled these bloggers to think about life and death beyond the Vietnam/American War narrative. They were able to engage with their own thoughts on a deeper level, expressing their own religious and philosophical beliefs on God and justice and the futility of revenge. For one blogger, her take away message from the Vietnamese locals was to learn to move on from past events and to focus on enjoying life in the present. This reflection relates to Stone's (2009) statement that dark tourism (including battlefield tourism) may have more relation to life and the living, than to the dead. The reason for this statement is that battlefield experiences enable the living to be confronted with the narratives of the dead; however these narratives have the potential to aid the living in their understanding of life on Earth. Consequently, although the focus is placed on the dead, it is the experiences of the living that is at heart and what life means for these individuals.

Contemplative thoughts on war and peace were found throughout both of the WWI and Vietnam blogs. These reflections which centred on the horrors of war and the hope for peace were somewhat expected after visiting such confronting sites. Conversely what is interesting is how these reflections developed into deeper beliefs on life and death itself, which at times extended beyond thoughts on warfare. As evident in the theoretical model, Figure 13, contemplative thoughts on life and death (war and peace) had the potential to lead to mediating factors which enabled the bloggers to experience mortality mediation.

6.5 Mortality mediation

Engaging in a deeper contemplation of life and death enabled both WWI and Vietnam bloggers to experience some form of mortality mediation. This translated into one of

three forms of mortality mediation: the living are able to connect with the dead, the living contemplate their own mortality and lastly the living are able to view death statistics as real people. Mortality mediation was made possible via certain mediating factors which are similar between the two case studies. These factors are as follows:

- Narratives of the dead
- Narratives of war
- Gravestones and cemeteries
- Wartime photographs
- War remnants
- Imagination

Mediating factors act as triggers which help to facilitate the experience of mortality mediation. They are similar to what Walter (2009) describes as relationships with the dead, which are achieved through different mediating institutions such as guidance, information, care, remembrance, education, entertainment, memento mori and haunting factors. The WWI and Vietnam bloggers revealed the mediating factors which triggered their experiences of mortality mediation. For some it was their own imagination of life in war, for others it was seeing wartime photographs which enabled them to connect with the experiences of the dead. Gravestones and cemeteries had the ability to trigger the contemplation of one's own mortality and also the chance to view mass graves (the dead) as individuals. A blogger in Vietnam was able to have the individual gravestone inscriptions interpreted to him, which enabled him to see the dead as individual people. An experience such as this facilitates a connection between the living and the dead (empathy), one that may not have occurred if he could not understand the inscriptions.

Seeing the gravestones of one blogger's countrymen in Gallipoli was the physical trigger which enabled him to contemplate his own mortality if he had been in the soldiers' shoes. This individual was able to contemplate what it would have been like dying at such a young age and never being able to reach adulthood. Although this sounds like a morbid and depressing thought, Ben-Ari (2011) states that confronting death should not always mean feeling in despair, through his own research he has found that the confrontation of death has the potential to extend the meaning of one's own life, leading to a more fulfilled life.

From the information presented by the bloggers it is clear that the contemplation of one's own mortality is rare. This supports Mile's (2014, p. 134) findings that thanatopsis (mediation upon death) "is a rare feature of tourist visits". Although it was rare to contemplate one's own mortality, it appeared to be more prevalent for the living to be able to connect with the dead. I.e. they were more likely to contemplate the experiences of the dead, rather than contemplate their own death. This could be due to the uncomfortable nature of contemplating one's own mortality or because the focus is placed on the dead and *their* experiences. Ben-Ari (2011) who studied the meaning of life and death found that individuals who were exposed to death reminders and had higher levels of self-esteem, tended to see higher meaning in life, while those with lower self-esteem tended to view less meaning in life. Ben-Ari's (2011) conclusion is that people must be made aware of their mortality in order to find meaning in life, however this reminder of death must be somewhat repressed so that life can be lived in a meaningful way and not in fear of death. There is also an emphasis on the perception of self-worth.

Battlefield tourism can help in this situation as it reminds people of death; however it is a form of death that they themselves are unlikely to experience, hence they should not be overly fearful. Stone (2009, p. 33) states that this is the way in which dark tourism can "minimise the intrinsic threat" of death. For that reason battlefield experiences have the potential to help tourists find or develop their meaning in life through the dead. They are able to learn about the experiences of the dead and the lengths some went to, to survive. This connection with the dead may help to add meaning to the lives of the living by viewing everyday life in a more meaningful way.

Battlefield tourism experiences, similar to dark tourism, tend to be shaped by the personal beliefs, perspectives and experiences of the individual. This is regardless of how a site is presented in terms of the dark tourism spectrum of supply (Stone, 2006). According to this spectrum, sites *of* death and suffering are the darkest in nature, while those that are highly commercialised for edutainment purposes are considered the lightest in nature. When looking at the Cu Chi Tunnels in Vietnam it is potentially positioned at both ends of the spectrum. It is a site *of* death and also one that is highly commercialised. The expressions of the Vietnam bloggers were a reflection of their personal beliefs and interpretations. Some had no problem with the site's management and presentation, while others found it to be highly emotional to walk on the ground

where people before them were killed, and also outraged at the use of live weaponry on the site. Imagination combined with the physical experience of crawling through the tunnels enabled the living to connect with the experiences of the dead, and to understand and reflect on the human will to survive, some stated that they would not have lasted longer than a day.

The experience of mortality mediation centred primarily on a connection with the dead, mainly in the form of attempting to understand the experiences of the dead (imagination and empathy). There appears to be a long standing fascination with warfare which draws people in, a desire to try and understand it. For the bloggers who experienced mortality mediation a link was made between themselves and the dead. However, this situation was predominately seen in the WWI blogs. The Vietnam bloggers, in contrast, were more likely to experience either contested mortality mediation or a connection with the living.

6.6 Contested mortality mediation

A form of contested mortality mediation was present in the experiences and reflections of the Vietnam bloggers (including Americans and non Americans). Contested mortality mediation occurred when the bloggers experienced a dissonance with the 'American War' narrative presented to tourists in Vietnam. Essentially Vietnam has two narratives of war, one seen from the Western perspective and the other from the North Vietnamese perspective (Table 7). Being confronted with an entirely different narrative of war was difficult for some of the Vietnam bloggers to accept. This led to accusations of propaganda and bias, and also the assertion that 'victors write the history' therefore this is to be expected (negative view). Interestingly the statement that the 'victors write the history' was also made by the WWI bloggers, however in this context it was viewed as acceptable and justified (positive view). This outcome may be due to the fact that the WWI bloggers are from the Allied side of the conflict, i.e. the 'winners' of the war, while the Vietnam bloggers are mainly coming from a Western perspective, who are considered the 'losers' of the Vietnam War. It could be that facing up to a 'loss' is harder for people to accept and thus there is more resistance to the narrative of war, while in the case of WWI the narrative is accepted.

There is also likely to be an element of 'time' to consider in the cases of WWI and Vietnam. Since WWI has reached its centenary the factor of pain, loss and suffering will have reduced. Ballantyne and Uzzell (1998) state that this is the case when wars move out of our living memory, as they become more distant in time the emotional 'sting' that they have on the living diminishes. In contrast, the Vietnam War ended in 1975, thus the memories are painful and survivors from the war are still alive. This provides an environment where events of the war become heavily contested and the use of modern media during the time of the war highlighted atrocities from all sides, leaving people with their own perspectives of the war. For some people this may lead to a narrow focus on certain atrocities while ignoring others as it suits their own interpretation or narrative of the Vietnam War.

Expressions of anger and dissonance aimed at the interpretation of the Vietnam War were expressed mainly by American and British bloggers in Vietnam. The unfortunate result of this discord is that the focus is taken off the dead and is centred on the narrative of war. Consequently, a disconnection is formed between the living and the dead; the contested experience effectively acts as a barrier (Figure 12). This reduces the opportunity to learn about the narratives of the dead and feelings of empathy given to the dead. Conversely the Vietnamese government has attempted to silence the voices and stories of the South Vietnamese war dead who did fight alongside the US forces. In this respect it is difficult for international tourists not to question why the other side of the Vietnam War is not being presented to tourists. The Vietnam bloggers expressed feelings of the Vietnam War still being 'raw' and that time will be needed for the wounds to heal and accordingly in time there may be more stories added to the 'American War' narrative. Sharpley (2009a) states that this is the most desirable outcome.

The majority of wars and battles will have multiple narratives and histories and usually one will be more dominant than the others. Bad active histories which produce negative feelings are usually left out of heritage interpretation (Poria, 2007), and for the Vietnamese government the atrocities committed by the NLF soldiers are acts which they would rather not remember, therefore the bad active history committed by the US forces is highlighted. Sharpley (2009a) believes that to minimise feelings of dissonance and political ideology, all forms of 'histories' both good and bad should be presented to tourists. Vietnam bloggers who expressed having a contested experience did call for

more balanced interpretation of the Vietnam War narrative. This supports Sharpley's (2009a) theory that presenting a variety of narratives from each 'stakeholder' will result in a less dissonant tourist experience. Reducing the dissonance experienced by tourists may then allow for a connection to form between the living and the dead. Rather than time and energy being spent on the contested narrative of war, tourists will be able to focus on the narratives of the dead.

In regards to contested mortality mediation, instead of experiencing mediating factors which connected the living to the dead, Vietnam bloggers who had dissonant experiences were confronted by the two narratives of war, government propaganda and the missing voices of the South Vietnamese. These factors acted as triggers which produced the contested experience. As such, a disconnection formed between the living and the dead, although they were able to have empathy with the dead and were able to learn about their stories, this was somewhat reduced since their focus was primarily centred on the narrative of war. This outcome was in contrast to the WWI bloggers, who did not express any dissonance with the narrative of war and thus their time and energy was first and foremost centred on the dead and *their* experiences of war. If, in time a more balanced interpretation is provided of the Vietnam War it may be possible that the emphasis on the overall experience will be centred on the dead and their narratives.
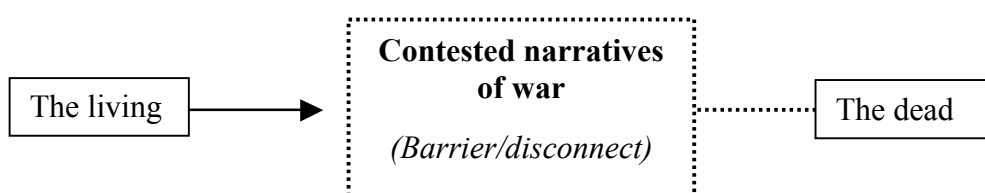
Figure 12: Contested experiences in Vietnam

Nevertheless, the Vietnam bloggers were not limited to only experiencing contested mortality mediation. They also expressed meaningful moments of how they connected with the local Vietnamese people (the living). These local people were often survivors of the war (who experienced it themselves) or those who were born after the war who have suffered from the consequences of Agent Orange. Again, these experiences were specific to the Vietnam case study, as the WWI bloggers did not discuss or reflect on any interactions with the Turkish, French or Belgium locals.

6.7 Connecting with the living

Connecting with the living is an outcome of the battlefield experience that is specific to the Vietnam case study. This is attributed to the fact that the Vietnam War is still within living memory, thus war survivors and ongoing victims of Agent Orange can be seen by tourists. This factor made the battlefield experiences more challenging and highly emotional as the bloggers were able to see the physical effects of war on the human body, on the physical environment of Vietnam and also in their interactions with local people, including hearing their personal stories. This outcome is in contrast to the experiences of the WWI bloggers who did not discuss connections with the local people (Turkish, French or Belgium). Their experiences and connections tended to focus on the dead and those they travelled with. For the Vietnam bloggers the opportunity was there for the living to connect with the living.

This outcome is determined by the factor of time and Walter's (2009) interpretation of remembrance, referring to first and second generation memory. Due to the timescale of when the Vietnam War occurred (1956-1975) it is placed within first generation and second generation memory. This means that those who personally witnessed the events of the war are considered first generation memory, and second generation memory refers to those whose parents witnessed and experienced the war. The second generation individuals learn about the war from their parents and are also those who continue to be affected by Agent Orange. First generation and second generation memory present the potential for a challenging visit to Vietnam for international tourists and along with it, the opportunity for meaningful interactions with those who have stories to tell.

Although contested issues were a key factor in the experiences of the Vietnam bloggers, there were also moments of meaningful connections between people of different nationalities and backgrounds. The concepts of forgiveness and humanity were a considerable outcome for one US blogger who received a friendly greeting from a local Vietnamese family. Since this interaction happened at the site of the My Lai Massacre the blogger felt surprised and touched by their welcoming response and lack of bitterness held against him due to his national connection to Vietnam. Interactions such as this highlight the emotional depth of a battlefield experience for tourists in Vietnam, especially those from a background who may experience bad active history. For US

travellers in Vietnam there may be a fear or hesitation in how they will be received by locals, however for this blogger and others they received positive interactions. Situations such as this highlight the ability to forgive and move on from the events of the past. Receiving warm welcomes such as this also aid in healing relations between the two countries, which as stated earlier is part of the concept of tourism as the 'peace-industry' or 'peacemaker' (D'Amore, 1988; Lisle, 2000). Genuine connections made with the living are likely to be highly memorable, and have the potential to serve as a 'highlight' of the trip due to the importance behind them, i.e. forgiveness and friendship.

Conversely, interactions with the living did not necessarily lead to comforting feelings. For one of the US bloggers confronting and connecting with the living involved facing a victim of Agent Orange and also acknowledging the damage caused to the physical environment of Vietnam. People often think about the human victims of war; however for this blogger stepping foot in Vietnam confronted him with the ecological damage, and the realisation that the environment was a victim of war which is also in the process of heal and repair. For him, importance was placed in making eye-contact with local people and in sharing a smile, he viewed this as an important step in affirming the country's existence, to look beyond the books and films he had previously read or seen. A chance encounter with the Agent Orange victim made the statistics of war real and unavoidable. Seeing pictures in a museum is one matter, but to stand face to face with a victim of war is on another level. This situation also exacerbates the feelings of bad active history, and as a result the blogger took time to self-reflect on the circumstances. Self-reflection enabled him to see the entirety of the victims of the Vietnam War and the belief that people have turned a blind eye to the situation in Vietnam. Connecting with the living enabled this blogger to go beyond the statistics of war presented in the War Remnants Museum; it presented him with the physical, real life consequences of war which cannot be ignored or passed off as propaganda. This interaction facilitated a human connection involving feelings of empathy and the need for justice for the ongoing victims of war.

Creating connections with the living is also possible via the dead. The New Zealand blogger, who took part in a personal war tour which included a military cemetery, found that he shared a deeply emotional experience with his tour guide via the narratives of the dead. The Vietnamese tour guide shared his personal stories of the war and his own

losses which he felt very deeply. This blogger found himself confronted with real life grief and described on his blog how he felt the pain of his tour guide, and the immense empathy that he had for him. This situation illustrates how different the battlefield experience can be for tourists in Vietnam, who can be confronted with the physical effects of war and the ongoing emotional toll of war. In the case of the WWI bloggers this intense atmosphere is absent. The physical environment has largely recovered from the destruction of war and the emotional pain is one of remembrance, 'remembering' those who died and the paying of respects. This can be a powerfully personal and emotional process, however it does not have the same 'emotional sting' (Ballantyne and Uzzell, 1998) as the more recent Vietnam War which includes those who hold personal memories and grief of their (recently) lost family members. As a result, battlefield experiences are not only about connecting with the dead, but also about connecting with the living who now have to continue on without the dead. The living must carry the burden of grief and the task of re-building their lives and the physical environment after war. Connecting with these individuals will make the battlefield experience a highly emotional journey as tourists are confronted with the outcomes of war for the living, which in many ways is harder than the outcomes of the dead.

6.8 Understanding battlefield experiences

The outcomes and meanings behind battlefield experiences, both WWI and Vietnam relate to the overall understandings of battlefield experiences. This essentially comes down to the deeper implications which are evident after investigating the more obvious experiences and self reflections. It is understandable that battlefield tourists will experience both negative and positive emotions, reflecting on the horrors of war or the pride in their own nation's role. However it is the meanings behind these emotions and reflections that reveal the profound outcomes of battlefield experiences. The theoretical model (Figure 13) places these outcomes as the final segment of the battlefield experience, for both the WWI and Vietnam case studies. These final understandings of the battlefield experience come down to:

6.8.1 The meaning of life and humanity

Connecting with people

A key feature of the bloggers' battlefield experiences came down to the greater meanings in life and humanity and the opportunity to truly connect with people (both living and dead). Battlefield tourism, similar to dark tourism, is unlike traditional tourism experiences. The potential exists to engage in a deeply meaningful experience (Prideaux, 2007), and to contemplate on some of the more profound questions on life and humanity. For the WWI bloggers, their journeys were often about paying respects to the dead and trying to comprehend the nature of WWI. For the Vietnam bloggers it was often about trying to understand what happened and why, and to see how the country is today. However, their experiences often went well beyond these 'surface' reflections.

Contemplative thoughts extended to their own beliefs on warfare, justice and humanity. They were able to contemplate their own hypothetical actions in war, and also the extent of the human will to survive and overcome difficulties. WWI bloggers were faced with death on a mass scale and were able to view these soldiers as individuals who once had their own lives and families. This confrontation with the (mass) dead led to deeper thoughts on human behaviour and how it was allowed to happen. Fingers were not pointed to blame any one side, there was simply a general questioning and disbelief across the WWI bloggers in how such mass death and killing had taken place. For some this led to low mood and depressive thoughts, while for others it highlighted the importance in treasuring life and one's own privileged position – living in a country without war. This reasoning supports Ben-Ari's (2011) statement that exposure to death reminders can help individuals to view life in a more meaningful way, as they do not want to waste their opportunities on Earth, or take them for granted, as others (young soldiers) have not been able to achieve theirs.

The Vietnam bloggers were faced with a different environment, the atmosphere was intense due to feelings of bad active history and dissonance to the war narrative. However, what is most apparent is the opportunity to connect with the living, the survivors of war. Dark tourism, which focuses on the dead and how the living can connect with the dead, was clearly visible in the reflections of the WWI bloggers; in

contrast, the Vietnam bloggers expressed connections with the living. This could be due to several factors, one being that the war dead in Vietnam are not 'their own' i.e. their nationality, the contested nature of the war narrative preventing them from connecting with the dead and also the factor of time which enables tourists to interact with war survivors. Meeting war survivors may also be seen as an 'authentic' experience, for example, taking a guided tour with someone who has lived through the war may be viewed as more genuine. Conversely, profound moments which involved connecting with local people in Vietnam appeared to happen by chance or accident. Encountering a victim of Agent Orange, or being greeted by a Vietnamese family were moments that were unplanned, however they emerged to be some of the most reflective moments of the Vietnam case study. This is because they represent the factors of humanity and the ability to forgive and move on from the past, they also signify the emotions of bad active history which continues through subsequent generations and the desire for justice when something is seen to be unjust.

6.8.2 The passing of time

The writing of history (of winners and losers)

Another key outcome of the battlefield experiences expressed by the bloggers is related to the concept of the passing of time and the writing of history. Time is an important factor when looking at the two case studies. Stone (2006) who constructed the dark tourism spectrum states that darker sites are shorter in timescale from the event, while lighter sites are longer in timescale. This can also be related to Ballantyne and Uzzell's (1998) statement that wars lose their 'emotional sting' over time. It should be noted that emotional pain will still be felt by those who visit more historic sites, such as WWI battlefields; however it will be pain associated with the paying of respects to those who died, a sense of remembrance connected to third generation 'memory' (Walter, 2009). The Vietnam War however is closer in timescale, equating to a heightened 'emotional sting,' a greater sense of the battlefields being darker in nature and for some the memories are within first and second generation memory (Walter, 2009). This environment, as noted earlier allows for international tourists to encounter local people who lived through the war.

6.9 Theoretical model – WWI and Vietnam

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┌──────────────┐                                        ┌──────────────┐
│     WWI      │────────────────────────────────────────│   VIETNAM    │
└──────────────┘                                        └──────────────┘

┌────────────────────────────────┐          ┌────────────────────────────────┐
│ Battlefield experiences        │          │ Battlefield experiences        │
│   • National or personal bond  │          │   • Confronting historic warfare│
│   • Realities of warfare       │          │   • Morality of war & warfare   │
│   • Emotional reactions        │          │     tourism                     │
│                                │          │   • Emotional reactions         │
└────────────────────────────────┘          └────────────────────────────────┘

┌────────────────────────────────┐          ┌────────────────────────────────┐
│ Good Active History            │          │ Bad Active History             │
│ Sense of national pride and    │          │ Anger, shame & guilt over      │
│ identity                       │          │ national actions               │
└────────────────────────────────┘          └────────────────────────────────┘

┌────────────────────────────────┐          ┌────────────────────────────────┐
│ Acceptance of the war narrative│          │ Rejection of the war narrative │
│ – "Victors write the history" –│          │ – "Victors write the history" –│
│ Positive view (by Allied)      │          │ Negative view (By Westerners)  │
└────────────────────────────────┘          └────────────────────────────────┘
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Battlefield experiences
- National or personal bond
- Realities of warfare
- Emotional reactions

Battlefield experiences
- Confronting historic warfare
- Morality of war & warfare tourism
- Emotional reactions

Good Active History
Sense of national pride and identity

Bad Active History
Anger, shame & guilt over national actions

Acceptance of the war narrative – *"Victors write the history"* – Positive view (by Allied)

Rejection of the war narrative – *"Victors write the history"* – Negative view (By Westerners)

Two narratives of war

Western narrative	North Vietnamese narrative
Vietnam War	American War
'Fall of Saigon'	'Liberation of Saigon'

Both
Missing voices of South Vietnamese (losing side)

Contemplation of life & death (war & peace)
- Waste of life
- Afterlife (justice)
- Enjoyment of life

Contested mortality mediation
- Two narratives of war
- Propaganda (bias)
- Missing voices
- Disconnect between the living & the dead
- 'Raw wounds'
- Balance desired (interpretation)

Mediating factors
- Narratives of the dead
- Narratives of war
- Gravestones & cemeteries
- Wartime photographs
- War remnants
- Imagination

Mortality mediation
- Living connect with the dead
- Contemplate (own) mortality
- (Death) statistics as (real) people

Connecting with the living
- Local people
- War survivors
- Forgiveness

Understanding battlefield experiences
- Meaning of life and humanity
  - Connecting with people
- The passing of time
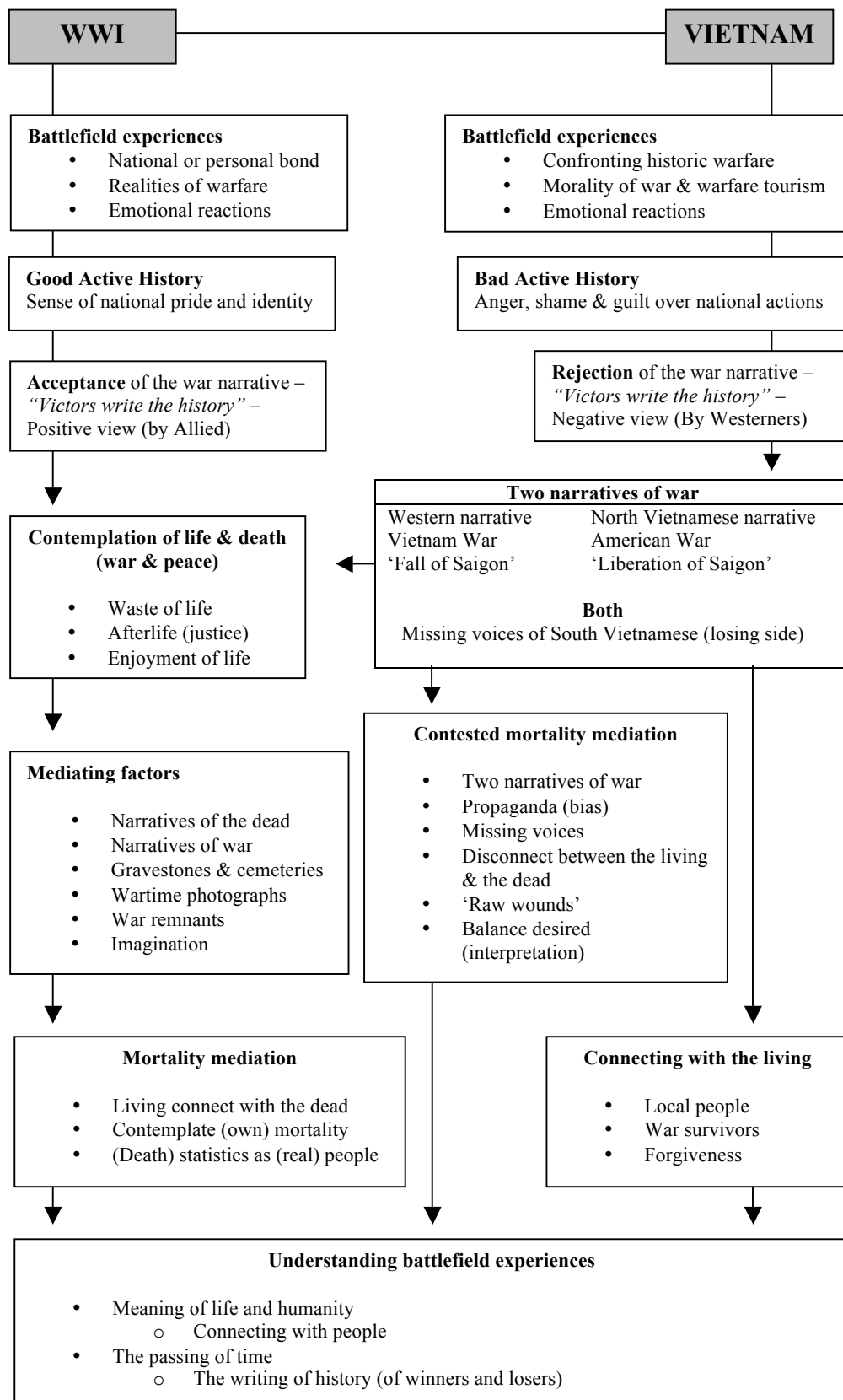 - The writing of history (of winners and losers)

Figure 13: Theoretical model of battlefield experiences (WWI & Vietnam)

Emotions can run high when feelings of bad active history and dissonance to the war narrative combine. Feelings of shame, guilt and anger create highly contested experiences which demonstrate the intense and 'raw' environment of Vietnam for some international tourists. The general belief expressed by the bloggers was that time will be required for the 'wounds' of the Vietnam War to heal. Overtime the war narrative in Vietnam may develop and evolve to include the missing voices (South Vietnamese), and as Sharpley (2009a) recommends, both of the relevant narratives of war should be available to visitors (good active history *and* bad active history), which can be hidden due to political influence. This also relates to one of Tilden's (1957) six principles of interpretation: The aim should be to present a whole, rather than just a part. This theory not only applies to the Vietnam War, but also to the narrative of WWI. Although it was not as apparent as the Vietnam bloggers, several WWI bloggers did reflect on the 'other' side of war such as the atmosphere of the German cemeteries and the Turkish memorial.

The writing of history became a running theme throughout the two case studies. With WWI the narrative of war was not questioned, and the history written by the victors was seen as fair, such as the physical lack of German graves. The emphasis of the bloggers' reflections was strongly focused on the dead and their experiences of war. While for the Vietnam case study the narrative of war was frequently discussed and objected to, meaning that the dead were often overlooked. The notion that the 'victors write the history' was seen as typical and unfair. The Vietnam War is not only still painful for the Vietnamese, but also for many of the US bloggers who travelled there. The factor of time may be the only element that will improve this situation, as the Vietnam War will move further and further into history, going from memory to remembrance. Nguyen (2013) believes that the application of 'ethical memory' is important when looking at war and remembrance. Ethical memory refers to memory work that recalls our own nation's memories as well as the 'others.' Ethical memory can be applied to both the WWI and Vietnam case studies. Nguyen (2013, p. 162) concludes that "submitting to one memory, at the exclusion of the other, will never be enough." This relates to the humanity side of remembrance, that regardless of nationality we are all human beings, and thus the narratives of the dead should have an equal voice.

6.10 Conclusion

This chapter has presented a discussion on the battlefield experiences of WWI and Vietnam bloggers. Their thoughts and reflections have been illustrated in a theoretical model which outlines the different elements that encompass battlefield experiences. The main themes presented in the findings chapters have been discussed against relevant battlefield tourism, dark tourism and heritage tourism literature, demonstrating how current knowledge has been linked to the research findings. Both case studies show evidence of good or bad active history, which can have a profound effect on the emotions of the tourist, i.e. feelings of pride in their social group, or feelings of guilt and shame. In regards to dark tourism and the concept of mortality mediation there is confirmation of an emotional connection to the dead and also evidence of the battlefield experience triggering the contemplation of one's own mortality. This was mainly evident in the WWI case study. The Vietnam case study revealed fewer connections with the dead, and instead there were instances of the living connecting with the living (local people), which were not seen in the WWI case study.

The Vietnam case study included the important factor of time, the war is within living memory, allowing for connections with war survivors and also the issue of dissonance expressed towards the contested war narrative. Battlefield experiences expressed by both the WWI and Vietnam bloggers involved reflective and profound thoughts and encounters which are related to the deeper concepts of life and death and humanity. As a consequence battlefield experiences extend well beyond the battlefield; tourists are confronted with some of the best and worst actions of humankind, this can provide the opportunity to contemplate the meaning of life and death, which can have a profound impact on the individual. The conclusion chapter which follows addresses the research questions, limitations of this study and potential future research.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify and understand the reflections held by battlefield tourists after visiting one of the case study sites. An insight into the thoughts and experiences of both WWI and Vietnam battlefield tourists was achieved through the use of online travel blogs. This chapter will address the main aim and objectives of this thesis, a reflection on the use of travel blogs as a form of data collection, lessons for the future for historic battlefield sites, a summary of what the findings suggest, the researcher's reflection, limitations of this study and potential future research.

7.2 Research aim and objectives re-addressed

The main aim behind this research was:

To gain an understanding of the personal reflections held by tourists after experiencing a historical site of warfare.

Through the examination of online travel blogs it was possible to gain an understanding of the personal reflections held by WWI and Vietnam tourists. The process of thematic analysis revealed three main concepts for both case studies regarding tourist experiences at historic sites of war. These are summarised as:

WWI battlefield experiences were grouped into the concepts of:

National or personal bond

- Reflecting on their national or personal connection to WWI. Including good active history (feelings of pride).

Realities of warfare

- Facing the costs of war, including a spiritual connection to the dead and immersion into the wartime experience.

Emotional reactions

- Expressions of both positive and negative emotions as a result of the battlefield experience. This included positive reflections on one's own life, and negative thoughts on warfare and society.

Vietnam battlefield experiences comprised the concepts of:

Confronting historic warfare

- Involving factors of nationality such as bad active history (feelings of shame) and contested issues which related to the two narratives of war in Vietnam.

Morality of war and warfare tourism

- Issues relating to the commercialisation of battlefields and the contemplation of warfare itself – attempting to comprehend it.

Emotional reactions

- Expressions of positive and negative emotions. Positive reflections on the ability of the Vietnamese to move on from war and gratitude at one's own position in the world. Negative reflections expressed at the physical and emotional human costs of war.

By achieving the following research objectives it was possible to address the main aim.

O1: Gaining a better understanding of the experiences held by tourists at sites of warfare

By investigating the battlefield experiences of WWI and Vietnam bloggers it was possible to discover their deeper reflections on life and death (war and peace). Their personal thoughts and experiences led to reflections on the waste of life from warfare, contemplation on the afterlife and justice (after death), and the philosophical reflection on the importance in enjoying life in the present.

This research also revealed mediating factors that enabled the experience of mortality mediation. This is to connect the living with the dead, contemplate one's own mortality and also to view death statistics as real people. Mortality mediation was evident in the reflections of both WWI and Vietnam bloggers.

Although the Vietnam bloggers also presented alternative reflections and experiences which included contested mortality mediation and the ability to connect with the living. These two narratives of war in Vietnam had an influencing factor on how the bloggers interpreted the war narrative. The recentness of the war also made it possible to connect with the living, a factor that was not present in the WWI case study.

The overall understanding from the bloggers' battlefield experiences related to the deeper meanings of life and humanity, and the ability to connect with people. It also related to the passing of time, and subsequently the writing of history which is portrayed as the winners and losers of wars.

O2: To understand whether the factor of a historic timeline has an influence on tourist reflections

From the reflections of the WWI and Vietnam bloggers it would appear that the factor of a historic timeline *does* have an influence on tourist reflections. Wars do tend to lose their emotional sting over time (Ballantyne & Uzzell, 1998) and the narratives or mythologies of war become ingrained. As Walter (2009) states, historic WWI events move into third generation memory or later and eventually what is memory turns into remembrance or history. This is how certain narratives or myths become ingrained as they are passed down generations, and those who witnessed the war have passed on.

In contrast, more recent wars such as the Vietnam War are within living memory and thus the event is considered 'raw' as many of those who lived through it are still alive. Tourists are not only confronted with gravestones, but also war survivors. This factor did have an influence on tourist reflections.

WWI bloggers expressed fewer contested feelings over the war narrative than the Vietnam bloggers. In addition, they did not describe connections with local people. In contrast the Vietnam bloggers were vocal on the subject of the war narrative and several did write about highly emotional encounters with war survivors. Therefore, the factor of a historic timeline did have an influence on battlefield tourist reflections.

O3: To discover whether nationality or personal connection to the war site affects factors of haunting memory, memento mori and moral instruction

Stone (2012a) describes haunting memory, memento mori and moral instruction as several mediating relationships of the dead within dark tourism. These factors were found to be affected by a bloggers' national or personal connection to a particular war site.

Haunting memory relates to individual or collective deaths which can haunt society (Stone, 2012a). In the case of Vietnam it was recognised that several US bloggers were haunted by the deaths of the Vietnamese and the ongoing issues due to Agent Orange. These haunting feelings led to experiences of bad active history where they expressed shame and guilt at their nation's actions during the Vietnam War. WWI bloggers were also haunted by the collective dead as they were confronted with rows and rows of gravestones and were left to reflect on the past. The bloggers who made a pilgrimage to a relative's grave in Belgium were haunted by the individual death of a relative and the idea that many died without being able to have families of their own.

Memento mori (reminders of death) were also influenced by national or personal connection. A New Zealand blogger at Gallipoli was able to experience mortality mediation – contemplating his own death, after viewing the graves of ANZAC soldiers. Seeing the gravestones of his countrymen enabled him to contemplate himself in their position. This was also evident in an Australian Vietnam blogger who

narrowly avoided being drafted to Vietnam. He was reminded of his personal connection to Vietnam and what might have been if he had not been as lucky.

Moral instruction relates to moral narratives which provide messages and ideas of hope and peace (Stone, 2012a). From both the WWI and Vietnam case studies it was evident that regardless of national or personal connection there was an acceptance and belief in the messages of hope and peace at sites of historic warfare.

O4: To identify similarities and differences between tourist reflections at WWI sites and Vietnam War sites

Although this was not a direct comparative study, there were several similarities and differences that were noticed between the reflections of the WWI and Vietnam bloggers.

Similarities

Both of the WWI and Vietnam bloggers expressed similar emotional reactions relating to positive and negative emotions. Positive reactions centred on hope for a world without war, the ability to move on from war and also the positive aspects of their own lives. Negative emotions involved reflection on the realities of warfare and the resulting physical acts of crying. Similarly, both case studies revealed a sense of atmosphere at certain war sites and the desire to try and imagine the environment of war, also extending to contemplation of the self at war. An additional factor was the recognition of the 'missing voices' in warfare. For the WWI bloggers this involved reflection on the lack of serene atmosphere at the German graves, and for the Vietnam bloggers this was related to the South Vietnamese being missing from the war narrative.

Differences

Differences between the case study reflections were to be expected as the case study wars are considerably different. For instance the WWI bloggers did not reflect as much on the reasons or causes for war as the Vietnam bloggers did. The Vietnam bloggers appeared to be seeking an understanding of why and how the war began,

while the WWI bloggers tended to emphasise the issues of remembrance and the paying of respects. A reason for this could be that WWI bloggers, who represented the Allied side, are already knowledgeable on the events leading to WWI. While the Vietnam bloggers, representing the Western perspective may not have learnt about the reasons or history behind the Vietnam War, particularly as told by the Vietnamese.

Due to the nature of the bloggers' nationalities, the WWI bloggers expressed feelings of good active history related to pride in their national identity, while the (US) Vietnam bloggers expressed feelings of bad active history related to (shameful) national actions. Therefore, both of the case studies bloggers experienced intense feelings related to the past actions of their social groups, however they expressed these feelings as complete opposites. Another important difference was how the case study bloggers viewed or interpreted the quote 'victors write the history.' For the WWI bloggers this quote was accepted and seen as 'a right.' While for the Vietnam bloggers there was a belief that this concept was typical and expected, however it should not be accepted as truth. These reactions are related to *who* is viewing the war narrative i.e. the 'winners or losers.'

7.3 Reflection on travel blogs

The method of data collection for this study was unobtrusive and in the form of online travel blogs. At the beginning of this thesis there was an element of uncertainty in what blog content would be available online. This uncertainty was related to the level of depth and reflection articulated by bloggers. Nevertheless, when using specific search terms, and viewing a variety of blog providers it was possible to find a surplus of relevant blogs which presented contemplative reflections on battlefield experiences.

The findings and analysis presented in this thesis may add support to the use of travel blogs as a form of data collection in qualitative studies. Online blogs provide a space for tourists to share their thoughts and experiences with the world and it would appear to be a missed opportunity if overlooked. It is especially important for tourism managers to be aware of what tourists are writing on their blogs, so that they can gauge the feelings and opinions of their customers. For tourism researchers it is important to follow tourist trends, and with the continued growth in the use of blogs (Nielsen Company, 2013) it is essential to keep up. As Hookway (2008) states, blogs

provide people with an element of anonymity which can allow bloggers to be less self-conscious in what they write. This lack of self-consciousness provides researchers with a glimpse into the thoughts and reflections of the public. Johnston (2013) notes that blogs can also help people to express their thoughts on sensitive topics, ones which people may ordinarily find difficult to discuss face to face. This issue is relevant for this thesis, as battlefield tourism does deal with the issue of death and how people interpret war narratives. In this case the bloggers were able to express themselves in their own time on their blogs, sharing what they felt comfortable to share, and at the same time they are not being given leading questions that could influence their responses as face to face interviews can.

Since the internet and online etiquette (netiquette) is forever evolving it is also vital to follow the most up to date online research ethics guidelines. Privacy online is a contested issue and although there are no set rules regarding online research, as it varies considerably there are organisations such as the Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR) which provide an ethical decision-making guideline. This guideline aids online researchers in making informed decisions regarding their treatment of research subjects. Guidelines presented by the AoIR (Markham & Buchanan, 2012) have been followed throughout this research process.

7.4 Lessons for the future

The findings of this thesis illustrate the importance placed on interpretation of battlefield sites, and also on how sensitive sites are presented to tourists. Interpretation of the war narrative is relevant to both the WWI and Vietnam case studies. Although it was most notable in the quotes of the Vietnam bloggers, WWI bloggers did comment on the lack of German graves and the disinterest shown by others in the Turkish memorial at Gallipoli. Comments such as this show that (Allied) tourists are aware of the other side of war and the use of selectivity in what aspects of war are remembered and interpreted. This, of course, was most apparent in the Vietnam bloggers' reflections who expressed feelings of dissonance at the one-sided war narrative. Feelings of dissonance also had an effect on the educational aspects of interpretation, with bloggers stating that the museum experience could be enhanced if it addressed the other war narratives. This desire for the entire war narrative relates to Tilden's (1957) principle of presenting a whole, rather than just a part. A similar view

is held by Nguyen (2013); known as 'ethical memory' where although it is important to remember and present our own history, we should also include the memories of the other, in other words the whole rather than a part.

In addition to the war narrative there is also the aspect of how a war site is managed and how it is presented to tourists from a variety of backgrounds. In the context of the Vietnam case study several bloggers did express their discomfort at the presentation of the Cu Chi Tunnels. Their discomfort centred on the use of live weaponry at a former site of war (death), and also the belief that the site is kitsch in presentation style. Since this opinion was not expressed by all of the bloggers who visited the Cu Chi Tunnels, it is clear that individual perspectives guide how people view what is acceptable and what is not. Some felt that the live weaponry gave an authentic atmosphere, while others found it disrespectful to the dead. As a result of these findings, the following conceptual lessons are proposed regarding the management and interpretation of battlefield (dark) tourism sites:

1. *Inclusive interpretation*

   As stated by Sharpley (2009a) attempts should be made by battlefield site managers to recognise all relevant histories at any given site. This ideally should include both good and bad active histories for all parties concerned. In this way, tourists of all backgrounds will feel included in the interpretation of history, and feelings of dissonance may be reduced. Although the 'victors write the history' is likely to be an enduring and relevant statement, there should at least be recognition of the missing voices (i.e. the losing side of war).

2. *Sensitivity to the dead*

   Methods of interpretation and presentation should take into account the different views of acceptance held by tourists. At times the fusion of education and entertainment does not have an effective outcome on the visitor. The entertainment factor places the Cu Chi Tunnels at the lighter end of the dark tourism spectrum (Stone, 2006); however several of the Vietnam bloggers did not have a light experience. This could be a mixture of personal perspectives and also a potential mismatch in how the site is being presented.

Due to the serious nature of the site's history it may be more appropriate to present the Cu Chi Tunnels with a stronger educational focus. This may also help to connect the living with the dead.

3. *Focus on the facts*

Since national identities can be constructed around actions on the battlefield certain national myths can be formed. Myths on the battlefield are classified by Ryan (2007c) as mythic-site specific rather than factual-site specific. Although myths are important in the narratives of national identity, it is also imperative to include factual interpretation which is viewed as being more objective. In saying that, it is subjective as to what narratives or histories are considered objective. That is why it is important to include multiple war narratives (the different points of view).

7.5 Concluding remarks - What it all means

Battlefield tourism and dark tourism are segments of the tourism industry which present interesting insights into tourist reflections and also how contested sites and histories are presented. This thesis has utilised a qualitative research strategy involving thematic analysis and unobtrusive measures in the form of online travel blog research.

By investigating travel blogs related to the WWI and Vietnam case studies it was possible to see that not all tourism pursuits are centred on relaxation, leisure and hedonistic behaviour. For the bloggers in this study, their travel journeys involved deeper experiences, provoking reflection and contemplation. Their thoughts focused on aspects of humanity, life and death, pilgrimage, discovery, nationalism, education, history, spirituality and philosophy. Travel and the circumstances that it can present have the potential to provide deeply meaningful moments. Examples of this were seen in the WWI case study with the pilgrimage to the relative's grave, or the blogger who contemplated his own death while viewing the gravestones at Gallipoli. The Vietnam case study also presented highly meaningful moments. These were reflected in the interactions with the living, such as the US blogger being greeted by the Vietnamese locals, or another US blogger who reflected deeply upon his encounter

with a victim of Agent Orange. Moments such as these appear simple and from the outside an onlooker may not see or understand the significance behind it. Since these tourists shared their journeys with the online world it is possible to gain an insight into their battlefield experiences, and to see and understand the level of engagement and reflection held by these tourists.

Through the process of thematic analysis it was possible to draw insights from the blogs, leading to the construction of the theoretical model of battlefield experiences (WWI & Vietnam). This model illustrates the differences and similarities of the two case studies, the outcomes of the battlefield experience and also the final understandings of the battlefield experience. This comes down to the statement of 'what does it all mean?' The final understandings are: the meaning of life and humanity and the passing of time.

These final statements reflect the deeper meanings behind battlefield tourism. The bloggers engaged in contemplative thoughts that extended beyond war and the battlefield, this involved reflection on the enjoyment of life and to treasure what opportunities they had been given. It also enabled the bloggers to reflect on justice, and the desire to correct the mistakes made in the past, such as compensation for the victims of Agent Orange. Reflections such as this illustrate the connection to humanity which is achieved through battlefield tourism. Tourists are able to physically and emotionally connect to their environment and the people around them. Battlefield tourism presents an opportunity for people to seek something meaningful, a journey through the past which involves the deaths of others, but also helps the living to understand the past, the present and humanity itself. Being confronted with the dead challenges people with the worst acts of humankind, and also confronts them with some of the best, including the ability to forgive and move on from the past. In this way battlefield tourism exposes tourists to the raw nature of the world and how humans relate to one another. For many of these bloggers their journeys would have been memorable, and may even have made a lasting impact on their perspectives and beliefs of the world.

Related to the passing of time factor is the statement that time will allow the wounds of war to heal. In this respect the environment of Vietnam would be considered darker in nature than the WWI battlefields due to the timescale of the war and the

survivors who are still alive today. This illustrates how as events move from memory to history (Walter, 2009) people are somewhat less emotionally impacted. The more recent the event, the more likely it is that the narrative will be contested and debated, and the distance of time may be required before the narrative can be put up for discussion. In this way battlefield tourism forces tourists to be confronted with narratives of war they may not agree with. This provides the opportunity for contemplation, discussion, reflection, the view of different perspectives, and essentially challenges the narratives that they are most comfortable with. As a result the battlefield experience can be a highly challenging and emotional experience for the individual.

In relation to tourism literature, this study has contributed to the knowledge of battlefield tourism and dark tourism. An analysis of the experiences held by tourists at historic sites of war (WWI & Vietnam) has been provided. This study presents evidence of engaged experiences which are highly emotional, contemplative and reflective in nature. The reflections of the bloggers illustrate how connections are made between the actions on the battlefield and the deeper thoughts behind those actions i.e. humanity, life and death, sacrifice, pilgrimage, forgiveness, justice, peace and enjoyment. The findings of this study have also shown that it is not only a connection with the dead that is possible, but also a connection with the living, who have been affected by war. In this way the dead can be reached via the living as they are able to share their stories of the war, including personal losses. This can be linked to Ma-Kellams and Blascovich's (2012) findings, that in Eastern philosophy death is viewed as being linked to life, hence the dead can be reached through the living. This study's findings also point to the individual nature of battlefield experiences and how people react to and interpret death on the battlefield, including the narratives of war. Being faced with the outcomes and consequences of human behaviour presents complex emotional reactions and at times ethical issues regarding the presentation of war sites. As such battlefield tourism presents an opportunity for people to challenge themselves and their thoughts on life and death.

7.6 Personal reflection

During this research journey I have learnt about the complex nature of battlefield tourism, including aspects of heritage tourism connected to the narratives of war. This has made me aware of how emotional certain sites can be for people. Visiting a cemetery can lead to transcendental (Gatewood & Cameron, 2004) moments whereby a tourist will immerse themselves into the battlefield experience. In contrast, visiting a museum can provoke contested feelings of dissonance towards the war narrative. By reading the personal tourist accounts of their experiences I have been able to gain an insight into how historic sites of war can enable people to connect with their spiritual side, and also to connect with the living and share, at times, an unexpected bond; such as the US blogger who received a warm welcome from the Vietnamese locals. This illustrates the emotional depth in such experiences, and how harmony and peace can be made between ordinary people sharing an experience.

The research journey has also shown me the importance of blogging as a form of data collection, and how it can enable researchers to gain an insight into tourism (human) experiences. Blogging provides an outlet for people to express themselves and their encounters with other people and the world around them. It was a revealing process to read through the travellers' blogs and see how they reflected on their experiences. I expected to read about feelings of good and bad emotions, and reflections on warfare itself, however I did not predict the level of contemplation that went beyond the battlefield, such as justice, the afterlife, aspects of humanity and forgiveness. As a result I have expanded my knowledge on topic areas that I was not too familiar with before, such as philosophy, and the management aspects of battlefield tourism involving political influence and feelings of dissonance.

Overall, the content of the blogs have shown me that for these bloggers battlefield visits are not always just about taking in the sights and stories of war, viewing the remnants, taking photos and then leaving. The blog content has revealed the deeply reflective thoughts and experiences that have taken place. Physically seeing someone visit a battlefield may not always reveal the reflective and emotional journey that they are undertaking. However, by gaining an insight into their mind (via blogging) it is possible to see what information is being processed and what contemplative and reflective thoughts have taken place. The bloggers' experiences have illustrated how

(Western) tourists reflect on historic wars, and how they cope with feelings of bad active history (in the case of the US bloggers). Although WWI began 100 years ago people continue to feel a connection to the battlefields and the dead, including the paying of respects. It was also interesting to see how the US bloggers coped with their nationality (identity) while travelling in Vietnam. It appears that having a national connection can cause feelings of guilt and shame (for some). Although the individual expressing these feelings is not personally responsible for what happened in the past, the association with their identity connects them to those prior actions, leading to feelings of bad active history. I find this to be a fascinating and complex aspect of international travel, dealing with past actions in the present day.

7.7 Limitations

As with any research project there are limitations. The main limitation of this thesis relates to the background of the bloggers and their nationality. As stated previously, the WWI bloggers all came from an Allied perspective, and the majority of the Vietnam bloggers came from a Western (English language) perspective. This meant that the WWI bloggers reflected mainly on the Allied experience of war, rather than a German or Turkish experience. When viewing the Vietnam case study it is clear that the majority of the bloggers reflected on the Western perspective of the Vietnam War. The outcome of this is that the bloggers' reflections and experiences are relatively one-sided, and the opportunity to compare both sides of war within each case study is lost. Attempts were made to search for travel blogs representing both sides of war; however these searches were unsuccessful and may have been due to language barriers. It is recommended that future studies of this type include experiences and reflections from both sides of war so that contrasts and comparisons can be made between the 'winners and losers' of war.

Another limitation relates to the fact that this is a qualitative study, and as a result broad generalisations cannot be made about battlefield tourists. Most tourists will not blog about their battlefield visits and also may not have a deep experience. Due to the sample size of 40 bloggers, the findings are specific to this group and cannot be applied to all battlefield tourists who will have different experiences and may even prefer aspects of entertainment (lighter dark tourism) that is particularly present in the Vietnam case study (Cu Chi Tunnels).

7.8 Future research

As stated in the limitations section it is recommended that future battlefield tourism studies, which focus on tourist understandings and experiences, represent both perspectives of war. Attention is often centred on the Allied/Western tourist experience (Iles, 2008; Winter, 2009; Dunkley, Morgan & Westwood, 2011), and it would expand battlefield tourism knowledge to include the experiences and reflections of each side. It would be revealing to investigate how each side interprets the war narrative and whether both experience good or bad active history.

Research into tourist experiences could also be applied to other battlefield sites, particularly ones that are contested in nature to gain a greater understanding about how and why people view certain sites and what influences their perspectives of history. It is also recommended that blog research, as a qualitative research method, be considered more readily by tourism researchers. As more people turn to the internet to express themselves online it is imperative that researchers keep up with these changes. Although traditional research methods will always be needed, it is important that other methods are not ignored. Online travel blogs present an endless amount of information from people of varying backgrounds and experiences, taking part in a variety of travel adventures around the world. Blog content varies considerably, however there are numerous blogs presenting in-depth thought and reflection, and it would seem to be a missed opportunity to overlook what is out there.

Battlefields present a challenging emotional and thought provoking experience for tourists, one which confronts people with the realities of war and human behaviour. Unfortunately, 100 years on from WWI warfare has continued into the present day. As a result there will be future sites to commemorate, multifaceted war narratives that will be debated and survivors and veterans who will have to heal from the experience of war. By continuing to research battlefield tourism there will hopefully be a better understanding of how best to manage battlefield tourism experiences in the present and future.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Brief chronology of the key events of WWI

1914	
28 Jun	Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife are assassinated at Sarajevo.
28 Jul	Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia.
1 Aug	Germany declares war on Russia.
3 Aug	Germany declares war on France and invades Belgium.
4 Aug	Britain declares war on Germany.
6 Aug	Austria-Hungary declares war on Russia and Serbia declares war on Germany.
10 Aug	France declares war on Austria-Hungary.
12 Aug	Austria-Hungary invades Serbia and Britain declares war on Austria-Hungary.
14 Aug	Battle of the Frontiers begins.
23 Aug	Battle of Mons.
27-31 Aug	Battle of Tannenberg.
5-10 Sep	Battle of the Marne.
13-27 Sep	Battle of the Aisne.
17 Sep	The race to the sea begins.
18-30 Oct	Battle of the Yser.
19-30 Oct	First battle of Warsaw.
20 Oct-22 Nov	First battle of Ypres.
2 Nov	Russia and Serbia declare war on Turkey.
5 Nov	Britain and France declare war on Turkey.
7-17 Nov	Second battle of Warsaw.

1915	
19 Feb	Bombardment of the forts at the Dardanelles by the Allied fleet.
10-12 Mar	Battle of Neuve Chapelle.
22 Apr	First use of poisonous gas on the Western Front by Germans.
22 Apr-25 May	Second battle of Ypres.
25 Apr	Gallipoli campaign begins.
23 May	Italy declares war on Austria-Hungary.
5 Aug	Third battle of Warsaw, Germany takes Warsaw.
20 Aug	Italy declares war on Turkey.
25 Sep	First use of poisonous gas by the British at battle of Loos.
14 Oct	Declaration of war between Serbia and Bulgaria.
19 Dec	Evacuation of Allied forces at Gallipoli.

1916

27 Jan	Conscription for men in Britain becomes law.
21 Feb	Battle of Verdun begins.
25 May	British conscription law extends to married men.
31 May-1 Jun	Battle of Jutland (Naval battle).
1 Jul	Battle of Somme begins.
27 Aug	Romania declares war on Austria-Hungary.
15 Sep	Tanks are used for the first time by the British at the Somme.
18 Nov	Battle of the Somme ends.

1917

12 Mar	Beginning of the Russian Revolution.
26 Mar	First battle of Gaza.
6 Apr	US declare war on Germany.
17 Apr	Second battle of Gaza.
2 Jul	Greece declares war on the Central Powers.
31 Jul	Third battle of Ypres begins.
6 Nov	Passchendaele captured by Canadians.
7 Nov	Bolsheviks take power.
10 Dec	Armistice between Romania and the Central Powers.
17 Dec	Armistice between Russia and the Central Powers.

1918

3 Mar	Russia signs the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, leaves the war.
21 Mar	German offensive begins in Picardy.
28 Sep	Allied offensive begins in Flanders.
9 Nov	German Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicates.
11 Nov	Armistice signed between the Allies and Germany to end the fighting.

1919

28 Jun	Treaty of Versailles is signed.

(O'Neill, 2013; PBS, 2014c)

Appendix 2: Key WWI Battlefields

<u>**Western Front**</u>

Battle of the Somme

The Battle of the Somme took place around the river Somme in northern France from 1 July to 18 November 1916 (MCH, 2012). The plan was for an Allied offensive to take on the German forces that held the territory. It was believed that this offensive would help relieve the pressure on the French troops at Verdun (PBS, 2014d). The British Commander in Chief Sir Douglas Haig called for a bombardment on the German lines; however the German troops were in fortified bunkers so when the order was given on 1 July 1916 for Allied troops to leave their trenches a battle of attrition began. The Somme was the first battlefield where the tank was utilised by the British, although overall it was not very effective. One of the factors that made the battle so difficult was the weather. Constant rain turned the battlefield into mud and later a snow fall made conditions even worse. By the end of the battle the Allied forces had advanced 12 kilometres since 1 July (MCH, 2012). The Battle of the Somme was a victory for the Allies, yet the strategy used to win the battle is still debated today, this is because the loss of life was massive. The estimated human cost was 204,000 casualties from the French forces, 360,000 casualties from the British forces and 450,000-600,000 casualties from the German forces (MCH, 2012). The Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme commemorates more than 72,000 missing British and South African soldiers (CWGC, 2014).

Battle of Verdun

The Battle of Verdun took place from 21 February to 18 December 1916 and was fought between German and French forces in north-eastern France. The Battle of Verdun was the longest battle of WWI. Verdun was protected by a ring of underground forts and the German Chief of Staff Erich von Falkenhayn believed that by winning the war the focus should not be on the Eastern Front but on the Western Front (Duffy, 2009a). Falkenhayn saw Verdun as the best French target and if the French could be defeated then the British would be forced to make a deal with Germany. The French were victorious at the Battle of Verdun as Verdun held psychological significance to the French people. Politically a withdrawal from Verdun was seen as impossible (Duffy, 2009a). However, the French were struggling

to hold out and a withdrawal was considered, although this was soon dismissed as German forces were withdrawn and sent to the Eastern Front. Falkenhayn was replaced by Paul von Hindenburg and Hindenburg did not wish to continue the attack on Verdun as he had originally been critical of Falkenhayn's strategy (Duffy, 2009a). By the end of the battle the front lines had hardly changed and over 300,000 French and German troops had been killed (PBS, 2014e). The remains of French and German soldiers who died during the Battle of Verdun are contained at the Douaumont Ossuary in France. Skeletal remains of approximately 130,000 soldiers are held in alcoves which are visible through small windows (Douaumont Ossuary, 2013).

The Battles of Ypres

Ypres is located in western Belgium and was the location of three battles during WWI. These are known as the First Battle of Ypress, the Second Battle of Ypres and the Third Battle of Ypres which is also known as the Battle of Passchendaele. The first battle began in October 1914 with the German Chief of Staff Erich von Falkenhayn planning a series of assaults on Ypres. The German forces were initially successful in breaking the British lines, although a pause in action enabled the British forces to assemble more troops (McEvoy, 2009). The fighting continued until 22 November when the coming winter weather made combat impossible to sustain.

The Second Battle of Ypres took place in early 1915 with Falkenhayn using it as a way to distract the Allies from the fighting that was taking place on the Eastern Front (Duffy, 2009b). This battle is well known today as the point at which poisonous gas was first used in WWI. The use of gas was effective for the German infantry as it was unexpected by the Allied troops and this enabled them to advance into the Allied lines. As the fighting continued the Allied troops were forced to withdraw and eventually the German forces had to end the offensive due to supply shortages (Duffy, 2009b). Following the gas attack the Allies were quick to develop their own; this ultimately led to gas warfare.

The Third Battle of Ypres (also known as the Battle of Passchendaele) began in July 1917 and ended in November 1917. Unlike the pervious battles of Ypres, this battle was planned by the British Commander Sir Douglas Haig. The battle ended with the fall of Passchendaele on 6 November. The Allied forces made gains during this battle, although it did not result in the success that was planned. The Third Battle of

Ypres was the last major battle of the war of attrition, and similar to the Battle of the Somme, the tactics of this battle are still debated today (Duffy, 2009c). The French Nivelle Offensive was a failure and mutiny was occurring within the French forces, on top of this the US was on its way to the Western Front but Haig did not wait to launch his campaign (Duffy, 2009c). Initially the Allied offensive was successful as the German positions were disrupted, although this did not last due to a turn in the weather (PBS, 2014f). The heaviest rainfall in years turned the battlefield into a muddy swamp. The Canadian forces eventually captured Passchendaele village and as a result Haig called an end to the offensive. Haig stated that it was a victory, although this has been questioned as it came at a very high cost to human life and it is believed that the offensive could have been called off earlier (Duffy, 2009c). Soldiers killed during the Battles of Ypres are either buried or commemorated at the Tyne Cot Cemetery or memorial, which are located near Ypres. The Tyne Cot Cemetery is the largest Commonwealth war cemetery with 11,956 servicemen buried or commemorated (CWGC, 2014). Nationalities represented at Tyne Cot include: the United Kingdom, Canada, Newfoundland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, British West Indies, France and Germany.

Mediterranean Front

Gallipoli
The Gallipoli Campaign began on 25 April 1915 and ended on 9 January 1916. The objective was to secure the Dardanelles, a strait that provided a sea route to the Russian Empire. The plan was to organise an amphibious landing on the Gallipoli peninsula (Ottoman Empire) and eventually seize Constantinople the Ottoman capital (Duffy, 2009d). British, French, Indian, Australian and New Zealand troops took part in this offensive (PBS, 2014g). For the Allies this campaign was a disaster from the beginning. The Gallipoli landing itself was not successful due to incorrect intelligence resulting in the amphibious forces landing two kilometres north of their planned landing spot (MCH, 2013). Along with this mistake there was also an underestimation of how difficult the terrain would be and the Turkish soldiers' strength and will to defend their homeland. During the August offensive the New Zealand troops managed to take the summit of Chunuk Bair, however it could only be held for two days as the Turkish soldiers launched a counter attack (MCH, 2013). Overall the August offensive was a failure and the weather only made matters worse

with water flooding the trenches. The authorities in London felt there was no choice left but to withdraw from Gallipoli. As a result the Allies evacuated after suffering 250,000 casualties (PBS, 2014g). Historians continue to debate the Gallipoli Campaign, with Hart (2013) stating that the entire campaign held back the important objectives of the Allies, which was to defend the Western Front. The Gallipoli Campaign was one of the Ottoman Empire's greatest victories and today it is viewed as a defining moment in Turkey's history. For Australia and New Zealand the events at Gallipoli promoted a sense of national identity, which is still commemorated today every 25 April (Anzac Day).

Appendix 3: Brief chronology of the key events of the Vietnam War

1955	Ngo Dinh Diem (Anti-communist) becomes the president of the Republic of South Vietnam. US provide aid to the Saigon government.
1956	US Military Assistance and Advisory Group (MAAG) train South Vietnamese forces.
1957	Fighting between Diem's forces and the Viet Minh (Communists).
1959	North Vietnamese move troops and supplies down the Ho Chi Minh Trail.
1960	The National Liberation Front is formed, called the Viet Cong by South Vietnamese. North Vietnam makes military conscription universal.
1961	President Kennedy approves of the 'secret war' in Laos.
1962	US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) is formed in South Vietnam. The Strategic Hamlet Programme begins.
1963	Viet Cong defeat South Vietnamese forces at the Battle of Ap Bac. Monk Thich Quang Duc commits self-immolation to protest against Diem's regime. Diem is overthrown and murdered in a military coup. President Kennedy is assassinated.
1964	Gulf of Tonkin incident occurs – North Vietnamese patrol boats attack an American destroyer in the Tonkin Gulf. US Congress pass the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. Viet Cong attack military bases in South Vietnam.
1965	Operation Rolling Thunder – sustained bombing of North Vietnam. First US combat units arrive in Da Nang. American forces defeat North Vietnamese units in the Battle of Ia-Drang Valley.
1966	Operation Attleboro begins northwest of Saigon (Search-and-destroy) US troop numbers reach 385,000 by the year's end.
1967	North Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh says that North Vietnam will talk when bombing has stopped. McNamara states that bombing of North Vietnam is ineffective. US forces reach 500,000.

1968	77 day siege at Khe Sanh US Marine base.
	Beginning of the Tet Offensive.
	US victory of Tet Offensive – 206,000 additional troops requested.
	My Lai massacre.
	Peace talks begin in Paris.
	Anti-war protests rise in America.
	US troop numbers at 540,000 by year's end.
1969	Nixon begins secret bombing of Cambodia.
	Battle of Hamburger Hill.
	The Vietnamisation policy begins – first US troops to leave Vietnam.
	Ho Chi Minh dies.
	Massive anti-war demonstrations take place in Washington.
	The My Lai massacre is revealed to the public.
1970	US and South Vietnamese forces invade Cambodia.
	Anti-war protests spread across the US.
	Four anti-war protesters are killed by US National Guard forces at Kent State University in Ohio.
	US forces in Vietnam are down to 335,000 by year's end.
1971	South Vietnamese forces invade Laos in Operation Lam Son 719.
	Lieutenant Calley convicted of premeditated murder at My Lai.
	Pentagon Papers published by the New York Times.
	US troop numbers down to 156,000.
1972	North Vietnamese Easter Offensive.
	Operation Linebacker I – concentrated bombing of North Vietnam.
	Peace treaty is rejected by South Vietnamese president Nguyen Van Thieu.
	Operation Linebacker II – continued bombing.
1973	Peace agreement is signed – America ends its involvement in Vietnam.
	Final US troops leave Vietnam and US POWs return home.
	War Powers Act is passed by US Congress.
1974	South Vietnam's president Thieu declares that war has begun again.
	US Congress announces large cuts in support of South Vietnam.
	North Vietnamese prepare for fighting in the coming dry season.
1975	North Vietnamese take over Phouc Long Province.
	North Vietnamese launch an invasion into South Vietnam.
	Battle of Xuan Loc – Won by the North Vietnamese. The last line of defence before Saigon.
	Operation Frequent Wind – evacuation of remaining Americans in Saigon.
	April 30 – Communist forces capture Saigon.

(Karnow, 1997; Wiest, 2006).

Appendix 4: Key Vietnam War sites

Demilitarised Zone (DMZ)

The demilitarised zone (DMZ) was established in the 1954 Geneva Accords, it divided North and South Vietnam at the 17ᵗʰ Parallel (Spencer, 2011). The DMZ was a major battlefield during the Vietnam War with the US Khe Sanh Combat Base (KSCB) located nearby, and also 'The Rock Pile' which was used by US forces as an observation post and artillery base (Thi Le & Pearce, 2011).

War Remnants Museum

The War Remnants Museum is the most popular museum in Ho Chi Minh City for Western tourists (Lonely Planet, 2014a). This museum documents the atrocities committed by French and US forces during the French Indochina War and the Vietnam War. There is some debate and upset by Western tourists as to whether the displays are simply showing the Vietnam perspective of the war or if it is purposeful government propaganda (Schwenkel, 2009).

Reunification Palace

The Reunification Palace is the location where on 30 April 1975 the Communist tanks came to push through the palace gates. A North Vietnamese soldier carrying a Liberation flag went into the building and up to a balcony to wave his flag (Isaacs, 2006). This was the mark of the fall of Saigon.

Hue and the Citadel

Hue and the Citadel was the location of the Battle of Hue (1968). This was a large vicious battle that the US and South Vietnamese forces were not prepared for. The battle of Hue was part of the Tet Offensive and involved intense fighting in an urban area which eventually led to a victory for US and South Vietnamese forces (Isserman, 2010). However, the death toll was high for all involved and the city of Hue was basically destroyed (Isserman, 2010). These factors began to change America's perception of the war.

Hoa Lo prison 'Hanoi Hilton'

The Hoa Lo prison was built by the French in 1896 (Lonely Planet, 2014b). It was originally used to house Vietnamese anti-colonists and communists. During the Vietnam War it held US POWs (Schwenkel, 2009). Today the prison presents exhibits on the Vietnamese fight for independence against the French and famous American POWs who spent time in the prison, such as Senator John McCain.

Cu Chi tunnels

The Cu Chi Tunnel Historical Remains are a popular war attraction for Western tourists (Schwenkel, 2009). The 200 kilometre underground tunnel network was used by the Viet Cong to evade the US forces. Today tourists can enter the tunnels to experience what it was like.

Vinh Moc tunnels

The Vinh Moc tunnels are located just outside the DMZ. They were essentially used to house an entire community underground, this was necessary due to the extensive bombing (Frommers, 2014). The multilevel tunnels included kitchen facilities, living spaces for families, hospitals and meeting rooms (Frommers, 2014). Tourists are able to venture through parts of the tunnels that have been maintained.

Khe Sanh

Khe Sanh is the site of the Khe Sanh Combat Base (KSCB) which was a US Marine base during the Vietnam War. It is located close to the DMZ and in 1968 it was under siege for 77 days in the Battle of Khe Sanh (Karnow, 1997). The North Vietnamese managed to take control of the base; however both sides claimed victory as the North Vietnamese lost far more lives than the US forces.

My Lai

The village of My Lai was the location of the My Lai Massacre (1968) where US Army soldiers from Company C murdered between 347 - 504 unarmed Vietnamese civilians (Karnow, 1997). A museum dedicated to the people who died in the massacre is located in Quang Ngai Province.