I stumbled into my research on the military. One morning, while living in Australia, I happened upon a short article in the newspaper entitled “Troops Give Cash to Afghan Victims” (Banham, 2009). The gist of the article was that new legislation had been passed that would allow senior officers in Afghanistan to make cash payments of up to AUD 250,000 to ‘inadvertent’ civilian victims of the Australian Defence Forces. I was immediately intrigued. Surely it was not usual practice for soldiers to carry wads of money on the battlefield? Other questions came quickly to mind: How were distinctions between civilians and insurgents being made? Why were these monies being paid out? And what were the effects of these payments?

These questions dogged me. I had already undertaken a considerable amount of research on money, but it mainly had to do with the nationalization and deterritorialization of currencies. I had never researched the military and I was a bit hesitant to do so. Frankly, the idea was daunting. But I could not stop being interested in these payments. I found myself pushing further ahead with the research, sifting through government documents and media reports. As I learned more about the Australian case, a more complex picture began to emerge. Other militaries were also making payments. Indeed, compensation had become widespread across the international forces in Afghanistan in Iraq, and had even been taken up by NATO and the UN. The US, however, was the most heavily invested, with thousands of payments having being made, totalling millions of dollars. And while monetary payments were proliferating during the ‘war on terror’, it turned out that they actually had a longer genealogy.

What started as a nagging research question thus soon developed into a full-blown research project that is still ongoing. This transition was largely made possible by coming across thousands of pages of documents on military compensation made available through Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests in the US. This raw data provided a rich archive for analysis. In this chapter I will discuss the sources that I have used, the method of analysis, and my reflections on doing research on the military and what makes it unique. My background in thinking differently about money lent itself well to an analysis of the ways that money is being weaponized and the military is becoming monetized. But to get to the point where I was able
to make an informed critique, I had to overcome my hesitancy in taking up research on the military and move away from ingrained assumptions that I had about the civilian-military divide.

The Archive

The data used in the early stages of this research consisted of thousands of pages of declassified documents, dated between 2003 and 2006, which were released in April 2007 as the result of an FOIA request made by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). A second request was made by the ACLU in 2010. Altogether, over 35,000 pages of documents have been released, much of which is publicly available on the ACLU website. This includes original records on compensation sought through the Foreign Claims Act (FCA) and through the Commander’s Emergency Response Fund, as well as in criminal investigations and courts martial. The ACLU has organized the documents according to the cases to which they refer, and has provided summaries of each case. The stacks of paper and data from CD-ROMS that were provided by the government were organized into distinct records in an online database, much as a traditional archive would be organized into folders and boxes. The sorting of the information was undertaken to make the materials more easily accessible and understandable to the public, with short summaries for each to help explain the context of the documents. Not every case file contains the same information, but among the documents that might be included are incident reports, witness testimonies, photographs of the incident, and army records regarding how much compensation has been approved and paid out. These original documents provide rich insight into the army’s documentary practices, but they also contain moving accounts, particularly those by witnesses, of the violence of war.

The ACLU’s interest in acquiring this data was, in the words of Nasrina Bargzie, one of their attorneys, so that they could “pull back the veil of secrecy on the issue of civilian casualties and to try to bring some transparency and accountability to this realm.” Indeed, the documents provide poignant testimony about civilian deaths and casualties which are otherwise notoriously difficult to acquire in wartime. Obtaining the records was not straightforward, however. While the US Army did make documents available when requested, the ACLU had to file a lawsuit with the Defense Department to ensure compliance. Many of the documents that were eventually provided are redacted (although there is still quite a lot of information that can be gleaned from them, as will be discussed in more detail in the following section).

Subsequent attempts to gain access to this information have been even more fraught. Reporters working with the Nation, a left-leaning weekly journal, submitted a follow-up request through the FOIA that would cover the period between 2008 and 2011. Although over 1,000 pages were eventually released, this time the documents were so heavily redacted that the information included was “neither inclusive nor comprehensive” (Turse, 2013).

This tightening of control around access is pervasive. In the UK, the Guardian newspaper submitted a Freedom of Information request to the Ministry of Defence for records on military compensation by the British Armed Forces up until 2012. Journalists at the newspaper have commented that the information made available was not very revealing. Ben Quinn notes that “in a change of policy, the MoD has decided against giving details of how much was paid out for individual incidents, despite being criticised in the past for a lack of transparency.
in relation to the payments” (Quinn, 2013). The Guardian has summarized the content of the documents and made the spreadsheets available on its website, but not the original records. Nonetheless, looked at alongside the US examples, there are some rich comparisons that can be drawn across the many cases.

These records have been foundational to the research that I have undertaken. I have also sought to acquire data on Canadian military practices, but have been stymied in my attempts. The Canadian Department of Defence has made it clear that it considers the details regarding compensation to be private matters, and maintains that it does not want to jeopardize the security of recipients (Friscolanti, 2011). Only snippets of information have been leaked out by way of a report to the Receiver General in 2010 which revealed that CAD 650,000 was paid out in Afghanistan between 2008 and 2009 (Moore, 2010). In another media article, Michael Friscolanti has reported that the amount of money that was disbursed increased in 2010, but very little other information is provided. In 2010 I submitted an Access to Information request to the Department of Defence, which was rerouted to the Department of Justice. Over 200 pages of photocopied documents were eventually released to me, but the materials are so heavily redacted that there is barely any information legible (see Figure 3.1).

The difficulties I and others have faced in acquiring access to information on military compensation are not atypical. Matters deemed to be important to national security are often hidden from public view or manipulated, especially during times of war. This has certainly been the case during the war on terror. Joseph Masco illustrates that in the US there has been a dramatic increase in the control over information since the 9/11 attacks. The number of records that have been made classified – and not available to the public – has risen dramatically. Indeed, the cost of classifying information in the US has doubled to more than $11 billion a year (Shane, 2012; see also Crampton et al., 2014). Perhaps even more troubling is the rise in the number of documents that have been designated as noncirculating (Masco, 2010). This designation has the same effect as rendering a document classified, in that it is not available to the public, but the decision to remove an item from circulation is made without the same legal controls and oversight as to why confidentiality has been enforced (Masco, 2010: 446–447). Effectively, Masco argues, the official record is increasingly being censored, with that censorship itself taking place in more and more clandestine ways.

Making information secret and the management of “the public/secret divide through the mobilization of threat” are mechanisms through which state power is constituted (Masco, 2010: 450). The state uses the veil of secrecy to act in ways that might not be palatable if the public were to know what kinds of actions are being carried out in their name. For Masco, these mechanisms are indicators that the state “implicitly recognize[s] citizens as a potential barrier to state security policies” (Masco, 2010: 442). And indeed, when news of compensation payments trickles into the media, there is invariably a negative public response. But why? The military is routinely criticized for not attending to civilian casualties, or worse, for objectifying violence with terms such as ‘collateral damage’. As Judith Butler notes, civilian lives are not recognized, and their injuries are deemed to be “ungrievable” (Butler, 2009). Compensation would seem, on the surface at least, to be an example of the military and the state taking civilian casualties seriously. It is certainly touted by the military as a mechanism for recognizing the harm inflicted in war, and thus as exemplary of its compassion and humanity. Yet, if military payments are so benevolent, why is there the need to keep it quiet? Why has
Thanks again.

Lapierre.MR2@forces.gc.ca wrote:

Hi,

[Redacted correspondence on Solatia.]

I hope this helps you.

Michel

Figure 3.1 “Redacted Correspondence on Solatia.” Document released by the Department of Justice to the author, under the Canadian Access to Information Act.
there been public aversion to these payments when information about them hits the media? These are questions that I have sought to address in my research.

Policies around national secrecy, however, pose enormous challenges to researchers, perhaps especially those who wish to research the military, as its actions are regularly construed as matters of national security (see also Anaïs, 2013; Howell, 2013; Salter, 2013). This is especially troubling given the growing interoperability between security and military agencies, but also the greater role of private sector and public institutions such as universities. These extended assemblages mean that a wider net of secrecy is being cast. As Crampton et al. (2014: 203) caution, “the mixture of interests and secrecy represented in this nexus threatens the liberal democratic principles of US political life” – principles such as accountability, transparency and conflict of interest. Although some information might be made available through freedom of information policies, this process has its own challenges. As already noted, the records that are released might be redacted. There can also be significant delays in getting the documents. In my own case, I waited nearly a year to receive my data, delays which became common practice in Canada under the Conservative government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Indeed, the country recently was ranked 55th in the world (out of 93 states) for upholding freedom of information, falling behind Mongolia and Colombia (Beeby, 2013).

Soliciting information through a freedom of information request can also be tricky because it can be difficult to know what one is looking for, and what documents to request. How does a researcher know what she wants before she sees what documents are available? How can she predetermine what information might be relevant? And how can she ever be sure she has received the documents that are most important to the research? Those with any inclination towards paranoia might also wonder whether information is deliberately kept hidden, even when a request is made. These are issues that all researchers involved in questions to do with national security must struggle with. In my case, being able to sift through the ACLU documents was enormously important, as it gave me an understanding of what kinds of records I might be looking for in the Canadian context. Key terms such as ‘condolence’ and ‘sola-tia’ were also helpful, even though it turned out that the Canadian Armed Forces uses the designation ‘ex-gratia’. My original request for information was made to the Department of Defence in Canada, because that is the division responsible in the US; it turned out that the right Canadian institution was the Department of Justice. Still, I found as I continued to push forward with my research that even glimpses of otherwise hidden information can provide a valuable foundation for analysis, especially when read alongside public documents, government reports, media analyses, and other kinds of information, as I discuss in the following section.

### Analysis

In *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*, Laura Ann Stoler makes an argument for attending to the documentary traces that accompany state rule. Her focus is specifically on the colonial rule of the Netherlands Indies in the nineteenth century, but her arguments for exposition ring true in the contemporary moment. She describes her project as working to “identify the pliable coordinates of what constituted colonial common sense
in a changing imperial order” (Stoler, 2010: 3). Archives are repositories that can reveal the truth-claims of a moment in time. The very process of archiving functions as “a force field that animates political energies and expertise, that pulls on some ‘social facts’ and converts them into qualified knowledge, that attends to some ways of knowing while repelling and refusing others” (Stoler, 2010: 22). Through the gathering of information these truth claims get legitimized and reinforced: the archive itself thus becomes a site of power. As noted earlier by ACLU attorney Nasrina Bargzie, the compilation of the ACLU archive was undertaken in precisely this same spirit: as a mechanism for making visible the number of civilian casualties in war. Thus, as a response to the lack of disclosure of information by the state, we might consider the ACLU as a counter-archive, even if the materials that it contains were all made available by the state.

Collected materials – whether in an archive or counter-archive – should not be approached as having a fixed ontological essence. Rather, researchers need to be attentive to the ways that archives seek to fix dominant narratives in ways that might not correspond to acts or events (Stoler, 2010: 4). Mining the archive is thus as much about tracing the said as the unsaid, examining what is taken for granted and ruminating on what is overlooked or omitted (see also T onkiss, 2004). Furthermore, in addition to reading the archive along the grain, it is also important to read against the grain. Edward Said describes this approach as a contrapuntal reading. In an oft-cited quote he suggests that archivists must have “a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts” (Said, 1993: 51). This means attending to the voices that are distorted or are rendered silent in any trove of documents. The invocation of a contrapuntal reading is not just an appeal to plurality, but an attempt to draw out articulations of power in the constitution of the archive. Inasmuch, there is a strong echo with Michel Foucault’s genealogies of power/knowledge and his excavation of history to render visible the processes that make something sayable or legible (Gordon, 1991). For while he attended to the ways that practices become normalized and normative, Foucault also strove to identify the contingencies through which truths cohere, and thus to denaturalize their very taken-for-grantedness (Foucault, 1980).

Foucault, Said and Stoler all focus their attention on historical archives. Their reflections, however, are equally relevant to contemporary documents, and the techniques that they use to interrogate their materials are equally relevant. These techniques are often characterized as ‘critical discourse analysis’, which involves an analysis or written or oral texts “and their power to shape ‘situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people’” (Anaïs, 2013: 196). Drawing from theories of deconstruction, this involves a close analysis of texts (and images) for the devices that they employ (e.g. metaphors, rhetoric, syntax), and the conditions around their production and consumption. This might include exposing the ways that a single text is burdened with assumptions, contradictions and/or silences, or interrogating the relationship between texts – their intertextuality – and the ways that discourses rub up against one another. Whether the focus is on one text or many, the point is to dwell on the texts to understand what kinds of social and political effects they produce and reproduce, what they legitimize, and what they make possible. It also means, as Seantel Anaïs astutely observes, addressing the text to understand what kinds of questions it presumes and what kinds of solutions it offers (Anaïs, 2013: 196).
These techniques are more difficult to mobilize when dealing with redacted documents. Details are hidden. Whole sections might be blacked out. Fragments of information are disconnected. Yet although redacted documents can be frustrating for their lack of transparency, they are also, as Anjalie Nath argues, productive of critical reading practices. They “change how you read, what words you dwell on, [or how you] infuse a mundane word with suggestions” (Nath, 2014: 25). Nath suggests that a redacted text necessarily propels a kind of contrapuntal reading that theorizes “beyond words” as “[w]e look for logical continuities and wonder what lies beneath the redacted space” (Nath, 2014: 26). Leaps of logic may be required to guess at what no longer can be seen, but this is not much different from other archival analysis, in that the archive is always incomplete, and the researcher is always engaged in a process of reconstruction. It does, however, make the triangulation of sources and the search for intertextuality all the more necessary so that the researcher is able to decipher whatever clues are legible on a redacted document.

In my research, one type of document in the archive proved to be particularly telling: the “Purchase Order-Invoice-Voucher” form. This is a standard US government form (SF 44), which is multipurpose and pocket-sized, and which is regularly used to record small purchases. In this case, it is used to record the payment of $2,500 made upon the death of someone’s father (see Figure 3.2).

The name of the “payee” has been redacted: all that is known is that the location was in Yusifiyah area, Baghdad. This is affirmed in the memorandum issued by senior command which approved the payment, and which has been included alongside the SF 44 form in the online ACLU archive. The payment was made at Al-Mahumudyah, a Sunni city south of the capital, which was the central focus of counterinsurgency campaigns. We can also locate the general area of the incident in that the payor is identified as the “15th FIN BN, North Victory” – the 15th Financial Battalion, at Camp Victory North in Baghdad. We know that the payment was made swiftly after the memorandum was issued: the memorandum is dated March 18, 2005, and payment is recorded on March 23, 2005. The memorandum, however, shows that the incident occurred on January 8 of that year, so over three months passed before a decision was rendered. We thus also get a sense of how the military administration works slowly.

The value accorded to the father is unsettling: is $2,500 all that a life is worth? Yes, as it turns out, that is the standard amount the US pays for a civilian death, as is set out in government accountability reports (see Gilbert, 2015a). But it also the use of the SF 44 form to record this amount that is unsettling. The generic form highlights the stark commensurability that is being made, as death is recorded under “supplies and services.” The SF 44 does not contain any further information on the individuals to whom it refers, the incident that led to death, or the reasons why the payment is being made. Some of this information, however, can be gleaned by the accompanying memorandum. We learn that the claimant’s father was shot in the return of fire of a US convoy. Payment is justified as an expression of “sympathy for the unfortunate loss. Support will positively influence both the community and local Iraqi leaders.” The payment is thus being rationalized as an expression of the compassion of the MNF (multinational forces), so as to help win the ‘hearts and minds’ of the local population.

On the redacted SF 44 form that has been made public, the names of all US personnel are blocked out. The victims and the perpetrators are made anonymous. The incident is thus

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUPPLIES AND SERVICES</th>
<th>QTY</th>
<th>UNIT PRICE</th>
<th>AMOUNT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Death of Father</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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depersonalized. We do, however, know that the file passed through the hands of many. The money was ordered by a project purchasing officer (PPO), who oversaw the case, and it was approved by a commanding officer. Each of these individuals signed the forms. The accompanying memorandum also reveals that the file was reviewed by a military judge advocate who would have determined whether a payment was appropriate according to military procedure. The signatures, despite being blacked out, render a small bit of liveliness to an otherwise standardized form, in which most of the information appears to have been typewritten in advance. A few other snippets of other information are written in hand, such as the date, the location of Baghdad, and a double affirmation of the amount, which were probably noted by the PPO.

The overall effect of the generic SF 44, with its predetermined entries and bureaucratic accounting, is to emphasize the routinization of death in war. But what is also apparent from these forms is that compensation for injuries and/or death is also being routinized in war. While some very limited forms of compensation have been in operation since World War I, the use of condolence and solatia payments has increased significantly during the counterinsurgency operations in the war on terror (Gilbert, 2015a). Moreover, it is not only the US, the UK, Canada and Australia which are making claims, but also Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and Poland – although much is less known about these countries. NATO and the UN are also promoting compensation as a way to make war more humane. This denotes a significant shift in how victims are being dealt with in contemporary military operations. Yet, as I have argued elsewhere, while victim payments can provide much-needed short term assistance to victims and their families, the payment of money may actually help to legitimize the ‘collateral damage’ of war. While there is bureaucratic accounting for the loss of life, there is no accountability for the damage that has been incurred (Gilbert, 2015a).

Understanding the turn to victim payments has required an analysis that extends beyond the records available in the ACLU archive. As Claudia Aradau has argued, widening the archive enables one to think “both synchronically and diachronically” (Aradau, 2013: 183). In my broader work on this project this has meant a detailed examination of other materials, such as media reports; film; blogs; parliamentary hearings and speeches; government policy; policy papers by partisan and nonpartisan think tanks; government accountability reports; papers and statements by nongovernmental organizations; and some narratives by former military personnel (e.g. Tracy, 2008). The work of legal scholars who have examined the preliminary documents that were released has also been very helpful (Witt, 2008; Sitaraman, 2009). There is also a rich array of military documents that are in the public domain, including doctrinal statements, blogs and journals, annual accounts and financial reports, and even some training materials. Even information released by WikiLeaks has been helpful because it has affirmed many of the fragments found in the archive. These other sources have provided a crucial corroborating and contextual backdrop for interrogating the ACLU files, and for understanding their importance in the war on terror. Indeed, victim payments are so interesting precisely because they are but one poignant example of how the military has been turning to monetary solutions in its counterinsurgency operations (Gilbert, 2015b).

Analyzing records – whether historical or contemporary – is a productive encounter. The researcher does not simply seek to describe the contents of the archive, but to draw upon the
documentary traces to conjure up a more fulsome account of their meaning, their relevance and their political implications. As Luis Lobo-Guerrero describes,

archival research is not a neutral practice. The researcher is not there to depict objectively what he/she reads and observes since an archive becomes a mediated space between the records and the researcher’s imaginary. It demands a creative attitude to understand why and how events were recorded and why they were recorded in their specific manner.

(Lobo-Guerrero, 2013: 121)

Archival research is thus a creative practice that animates the flattened remnants that have been recorded while also attending to the liveliness, the voices, that have been silenced. Given the active and pivotal role played by the researcher, it is important that she is reflexive as to how her positionality can influence the research results.

Reflexivity

If archival research is not neutral, as Lobo-Guerrero argues, then how are we to understand the partialities out of which it arises? We can begin to do so by better understanding the positionality of the researcher, that is, the social and ethical values that shape the researcher’s perspective. This demands a self-conscious reflexivity of the research process that situates the researcher within the field and the project, not as separate from them. This thoughtful awareness of and reflection on research questions, methods and analysis has become relatively commonplace across the humanities and social sciences. Notably, however, as others have remarked, there has been a tendency for social research on the military to be less reflexive, with a few notable exceptions (Higate and Cameron, 2006: 219).

The reasons for this lack of reflexivity in military research are not clear. But I concur with Paul Higate and Ailsa Cameron that reflexivity can bring transparency and accountability to the research project (Higate and Cameron, 2006: 220). In my own case, reflecting on my early disinclination to embark on this research project has been crucial to unpacking some of the preconceptions that I brought to it. To be honest, my disinclination arose out of ardent antiwar politics and, at best a suspicion of, and at worse an antipathy to, the military as an institution. I saw the military as an institution separate and distinct from civilian life, and I wanted to maintain this separation. Naively, I even thought that the less attention directed towards it, the less of an influence it would exert on the rest of society. This may be a particularly Canadian approach of a privileged class, since the military has tended to be downplayed— until recently.

As I was contemplating embarking on this research, things began to change. My naive conceit of the military’s relative lack of influence in Canadian society began to fray. Over the last decade the country has become increasingly militarized. The federal Conservative party, in office from 2006 to 2015, successfully galvanized public support, in part through the jubilant militarism that it promoted. Canada has played a significant military role in Afghanistan and Syria, and more surreptitiously has provided support to the invasion of Iraq. At home, the military has explicitly targeted activists and Aboriginal peoples as potential threats to
infrastructure. Academics have punctured holes in the benign narratives of peacekeeping that had infused the national imaginary (McKay and Swift, 2012). Sherene Razack’s book on the disastrous Canadian military role in Somalia is but one example (Razack, 2004). These events and accounts forced me to acknowledge and confront the interpenetration and interdependence between military and civilian spheres that I had sought to deny.

At the same time, it also became evident to me that academics have played a special role in the war on terror. For example, the US military’s Human Terrain System – a project tasked with providing local, cultural knowledge in areas of deployment – enrolled university anthropologists on foreign missions (e.g. González, 2009; Price, 2011). Geographers have also participated in data gathering for the war on terror, particularly with respect to the Bowman Expeditions, which were funded by the US Army’s Foreign Military Studies Office, to monitor indigenous peoples in Oaxaca, Mexico (Bryan, 2010; Cruz, 2010; Wainwright, 2013; see also Crampton et al., 2014). These blatant examples of academic conscription have resulted in considerable pushback regarding the dangers of placing civilians in the field, and the ethics of research that will be used to subjugate populations. Yet to suggest that this complicity is new is disingenuous. During World War II and the Cold War, universities and academics were key players in military research and development, as part of the military-industrial-academic complex (Giroux, 2007). With the turn to the war on terror and the identification of new security threats such as climate change, this complex has deepened and extended in new and troubling ways (Gilbert, 2012).

It became increasingly obvious that my assumptions that the military and civilian spheres are distinct is a liberal conceit. Indeed, as Celso Castro observes, “The civilian is a military invention. I am only a civilian in relation to the military and when I am classified by them as such” (Castro, 2013: 11). This not only prompted me to rethink my presumptions, but also provoked me to better understand the centrality of the military to civilian life by taking up research that was explicitly focused on soldiers and war. The decision, however, did not suddenly make the project easy. I continued to find the task daunting. I was deeply anxious about how little I knew about the simple aspects of military life (e.g. military chains of command, weaponry, historic battles). And I was nervous that my lack of knowledge would be immediately apparent in my research and writing. And even as I recognized the central role of the military in contemporary society, I continued to think of the military as a black box, and of soldiers as different from me. I had no idea about whom to contact about setting up an interview, or how to approach this process to better ensure their interest and participation.

These fears and apprehensions have affected my research. Even though the original framing of my research included interviews with military personnel, I have been slow to get going with this. The mystification that I continued to have about the military was paralyzing. Rather than moving forward with the interviews, I sought to read every scrap of relevant materials first so that I would not look foolish. Only now, after several years of arms-length research, do I feel comfortable with the thought of interviewing people about the practices of military compensation. I have been fortunate to have had some unanticipated conversations with military personnel along the way. But whether I am able to find soldiers willing and able to speak with me in formal interviews is as of yet unknown. But I know that not having access to first-hand accounts of how military compensation is made, its rationale,
and its practices (e.g. training) is a limitation of the research that I have completed thus far. Starting interviews earlier would also have likely saved countless hours of looking for and chasing after information and reading between the lines. It might also have opened up new avenues of research that would have pushed the research forward in different but productive directions.

Conclusions

The military is a fascinating site for research. As an institution it has its own logics, routines and ideals that infuse those who are within it. But it is not separate from the rest of society. In fact, our militaries are constitutive of how we understand what it means to be a civilian, just as war governs our understanding of peace, even as all of these taxonomies are becoming more blurred and harder to sustain. On a personal level, my research on the ways that lives are valued (or not) by the military apparatus in times of war has helped me to understand the blurring of combatant and civilian, and war and peace. More broadly, this research has shed light on the violence that is inflicted on civilians in war and the mechanisms that are being deployed to alleviate the harm that is incurred, as militaries seek to refashion themselves as humanitarian organizations. As I have suggested, however, compensation has a particular valence when distributed by soldiers, and can actually work to devalue life precisely through its monetization, and through the lack of accountability that is attributed to the cause of the damage (Gilbert, 2015a). I suspect that this is why the military and the state have resisted making information about victim compensation public.

In the early decades of the twenty-first century, militaries around the world are rising in importance in response to new geopolitical fractures. In light of the globalization of militarism, much more attention needs to be directed towards the armed forces and the power that we accord them. To this analysis, researchers and others ought to bring with them all of their critical tools along with a recognition of their own responsibility for what takes place in the military and in the name of the military. For academics, this means paying special attention to the ways the institutions that we are embedded in, such as universities, are playing a significant and troubling role in the global military-industrial-academic complex. Only in so doing will we be able to better understand the reach of military power, but also the more nuanced ways it is sustained within broader society. This does not require an abandonment of antiwar politics. Indeed, I continue to remain suspicious of and apprehensive of military bureaucracy, hierarchy and authority. It does, require, however, coming to terms with one’s own complicity in the constitutive role that the military plays in everyday life, on and off the battlefield.

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Notes

1 The documents are available on the ACLU website, ‘The Human Cost: Civilian Casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan’: http://www.aclu.org/civiliancasualties.

2 The FCA is available to foreign nationals who have suffered injury, death or property damage as a result of a noncombat scenario. The Commander’s Emergency Response Fund is used to make condolence or solatia payments, and is often used when a FCA claim is denied. For more information on these funds and the payments see Gilbert, 2015a.

3 Interview with attorney Nasrina Bargzie and Iraq Body Count: https://www.iraqbodycount.org/analysis/qa/aclu-ibc/.

4 Ibid.

5 The documents acquired by the Guardian are available here: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0AonYZs4MzlZbdE9hbTh3LTBVVExickZKMnBvVENIOWc#gid=0.

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