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How Military Landscapes Work.

Contribution to exhibition catalogue: Ingrid Book and Carina Hedén, Military Landscapes

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This is an essay about how military landscapes work. Written with reference to the photographs of Ingrid Book and Carina Hedén, it suggests a way of thinking about military landscapes. My arguments in this essay revolve around two ideas. One of these is the role of geographical space in the exertion of military power and control. The other idea is the significance of space and place in the making of the soldier as an individual granted the right by the state to exercise legitimated violence. In this essay, I argue that by thinking of military landscapes with reference to these two ideas, we can start to map out and understand how military power both shapes and is shaped by places, landscapes and environments.

These photographs suggest an attitude or approach to military landscapes that resists easy recourse to iconic images and thus to over-simplified ideas about military power. They indicate instead a more nuanced, subtle and complex interpretation of military landscapes and the forces that shape them. This approach is complementary to my own,¹ because both argue that to understand military power and control, we need to consider it not just in its most spectacular manifestations but also in its more commonplace and subtle operations. Ultimately, it is the seemingly mundane, prosaic military activities – activities around the maintenance of the military potential to exercise lethal force – that indicate with greater precision than the spectacular how military power and control actually work through social relations and across geographical space.

Military activities require land. Military land uses inscribe themselves on landscapes. These inscriptions are literal, in that they have a material, tangible reality. They are

¹ Most of the arguments which follow in this essay are explored in Woodward, R. (2004) *Military Geographies*. Oxford: Blackwell.

visible – one of the reasons why photography offers such possibilities for engaging with military landscapes.² These inscriptions are an expression of military power. Most obviously, they are evidence of presence, of simply being there. Military landscapes contain military artefacts, military matériel, military personnel. This simple fact of presence is fundamental to the expression of military power. This fact is confirmed for us all, daily, through the quantity of imagery in global circulation showing the impacts of military activities in the contexts of armed conflicts. In the photographs of Book and Hedén, we see that presence differently, in non-conflict situations. These are clearly not dramatic images of the destruction wreaked by armed violence. However, they remain as photographs about the expression of military power, and this starts, prosaically, with the fact of military presence. It follows from this that these inscriptions of military activities are evidence of the controls exerted by militarism across space.

Militarism is defined here as a process through which military influence is extended beyond the immediate structures and activities of military forces. Most usually, we identify militarism as the extension of that influence into civilian economic, political, social and cultural life.³ Militarism, as the prioritising of military objectives, may be more or less apparent, more or less influential, may be understood as more or less benign or malign, depending on one's position in relation to its outcomes. What is most significant here, in the context of the inscriptions of military land use, is that they suggest how militarism, as that extension of influence, is not only geographically expressed through the scribbles on the landscapes, but is also itself constituted by those landscapes. Landscapes, in both the material and representational senses of the word, shape how militarism is and what we understand militarism to be. Militarism is a geographical process.⁴

This essay uses the *Military Landscapes* photographs to expand on these ideas about how military landscapes work. Three successive sections explore the ways

² See for example John Kippin's (2001), *Cold War Pastoral: Greenham Common* (London: Black Dog Publishing) and Richard Misrach's *Bravo 20: The Bombing of the American West*.

³ This definition draws on the work of Thee and Johnson: Thee, M. (1980) 'Militarism and militarisation in contemporary international relations', in Adbjorn, E. and Thee, M. (eds) *Problems of Contemporary Militarism*, London: Croom Helm, pp.15-35. Johnson, C. (2004) *The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy and the End of the Republic*, New York: Metropolitan Books.

⁴ For those interested in the engagement of the academic discipline of anglophone Geography with militarism and military activities, see Woodward, R. (2005) 'From Military Geography to militarism's geographies: disciplinary engagements with the geographies of militarism and military activities.' *Progress in Human Geography* 29 (6), 718-740.

that military landscapes exist in states of being, becoming and remaining. The essay then looks at these landscapes as places for the production and reproduction of the soldier. It concludes with some observations about the connections that define military landscapes as the basis for the exercise of lethal force.

Being

Military landscapes start with the fact of military presence, an attribute which these photographs reflect. In these photographs, the military presence is quietly stated, simply being. Military activities are shown to exist, to be in place, to occupy space. The fact of military presence, in these photographs, is not denied, even though of course it is often camouflaged.

The fact of military presence and the controls that follow the fact of occupancy, are a visible feature of armed conflict. Iconic images of the soldier occupying territory and of the physical aftermath of armed violence, sustain their meaning because they speak to this simple fact.⁵ The fact of military presence, however, is also a feature of non-conflict situations. Chains of military bases encircle the globe, stating preparedness for military operations through the occupation of sovereign territory – think of the way that the armed forces of the USA and the UK assert military power through a presence stretched around the world.⁶ The fact of presence is expressed through the use of sovereign territory by other national forces, usually for training (the use of Canadian and Norwegian training areas by British armed forces is a good example). The fact of presence is least remarkable but no less significant when domestic forces are home on the range. Military training areas occupy space. In the UK, 1% of the land area is used for military purposes, and three-quarters of this is used for training, a figure broadly consistent across Western nation states. UK military forces also train overseas, in Belize, Brunei, Kenya, Canada, Germany and Cyprus, locations where British geopolitical interests are consolidated by a military presence made visible through the exercise of military muscle. That these large expanses of Norwegian territory are used for training, by the Norwegian armed forces and by other NATO states (particularly the UK) is not in itself unusual.

⁵ For an engaging discussion about the problems and possibilities of the iconic image, including images of military presence, see Hariman, R. and Lucaites, J.L. (2007) *No Caption Needed: Iconic Photographs, Public Culture and Liberal Democracy*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

⁶ Lindsay-Poland, J. (2004) US military bases in Latin America and the Caribbean. *Foreign Policy in Focus* 9 (3). Grossman, Z. (2002) New US Military Bases: Side effects or causes of war? *Counterpunch*, February 2002.

What is perhaps more noteworthy is how this use of national territory for military training has to be constantly legitimated and justified by armed forces. Land is a resource over which there is always competition, and land uses always require justification. Military land use is legitimated through strategies of naturalisation. The military presence becomes naturalised in the landscape through visible, material means – most obviously through the use of camouflage to mute the visible presence of structures and personnel.⁷ In Book and Hedén's photographs, this idea is immediately apparent (*ISTAR/Iron Sword; Camouflage with Stairs; Landscape, UXO Clearance*). The blue helmets of the UXO clearance party are almost visible, a little subversive in that they can be seen quite easily. Other things cannot be seen until they are looked for.

The naturalisation of military land uses is also discursive, in that it is asserted, argued for, through representational strategies which justify and legitimate the military presence. Military control over space is as much a strategic task of representation as it is a physical act. It is exerted through the ways that landscapes are portrayed by military institutions, in the images and texts of publicity materials that provide information about military land use (although this is strictly regulated – see below). These representational strategies will vary enormously with national context, but some core ideas echo between national military forces and their institutions. One such idea that certain iconic types of landscape, that inform widely-shared national cultures of identity, are suitable and somehow naturally appropriate for military use. Consider, for example, the way northern British moorlands, characterised within the national imagination as enigmatic, unchanging and potentially dangerous are portrayed as the rightful place for military training, or the way that the military establishment's presence within the economic and governmental heartlands of the south-east of England is equated with the idea of a natural home at the centre of UK economic and political life. For all national military forces, ideas about national identity are implicit within military representations of landscape, and complicit in their construction. These strategies of material and discursive legitimation construct armed forces as the rightful occupant of space.

The naturalisation of military presence can ultimately prompt the question: is this a military landscape? We would not ask this question about military training areas if

⁷ For a comprehensive guide to the art of camouflage, see *DPM: Disruptive Pattern Material*, [author, publisher]

the military activities played out upon them accorded with our iconic (perhaps stereotyped) ideas about what military impacts look like. The photographs in this exhibition engage directly with that idea. In these landscapes, there are no impact area craters, no hulks of metal used for artillery practice. On first sight, the photographs can be read either as 'military' or as 'non military', a reflection as much of familiarity as of anything. Reflecting my non-military background, I was slow to pick up the military features, so I had to look carefully. They are military landscapes, but they are also rural landscapes, and there is an exchange or an interplay between these two categories in these photographs which readily illustrates this point about the naturalisation of military activities in rural space. The photographs in the '*Military Landscapes 1—11*' series can be read simultaneously as showing military and rural pursuits. Fishing (*Landscape with Ground Reinforcement*) is a rural pursuit, as is fitness training (*Landscape with Concrete Block*), shooting (*Bridging Work*), walking (*Landscape with Cars and Rampart*), off-road driving (*Tank Field Track*), quarrying (*Main Battle Tank Firing Area*), road-building (*Tank Maneuvre Training Area; Landscape with Instrumented Impact Test Area; Landscape with Ramparts and Gravel; Bridge and Archaeologists*) and exploring (*Landscape UXO Clearance*). The photographs play on the idea that there may be similarity between rural and military pursuits and get us to consider how the latter become normalised and naturalised with reference to the former. Most significantly, the photographs remind us that although there may be echoes within military pursuits of long-established and benign rural pursuits, this equation is purely superficial. Access to military training areas is always strictly controlled, and civilian observation of military activities always limited. The rural pursuits that the photographs suggest cannot take place in these spaces, because these are spaces under military control where civilian pursuits are forbidden. Furthermore, even the chance observation of military activities may be explicitly prohibited. Looking beyond the photographs, it is possible to identify this naturalisation and normalisation across north European military training landscapes.⁸ This process is helpful in consolidating and legitimating the military use of space; if it is natural, how can it be a problem?

The representation of military land use as essentially unproblematic, a strategy pursued by many of those responsible for the management of military training lands,

⁸ An example would be the naturalisation of military activities at the Otterburn Training Area, located in the Northumberland National Park in north-east England. See Woodward, R. (1999) Gunning for rural England: The politics of the promotion of military land use in the Northumberland National Park. *Journal of Rural Studies* 15 (1), 17-33.

raises a further question: are the impacts of military activities in (particularly rural) landscapes any better or any worse than the impacts of other human activities? Are military impacts any more or less destructive, any more or less repairable than those of extractive and primary industries? After all, mud dries, grass grows over, trees self-seed, holes can be filled. Again, military land management discourse makes the point that military uses are in many ways just like any others in marking territory, a natural outcome of a naturalised process. This idea is also raised by these photographs, which play on the idea of the armed forces as simultaneously environmental protector and despoiler. In raising this idea, they flag up a further question about military specificity and difference. Ultimately, many national armed forces assert the right to pursue potentially environmentally damaging military activities on training lands in the interests of national defence and a trained military strength. The assertion of military difference, of the need and the right to be different, is in turn a key point of contest and debate within civil-military relations. As the state-sanctioned institution with the monopoly over the use of legitimate violence, arguments about the need for military difference in order to carry out this function lie at the core of a range of debates including those about military land use and military landscapes.⁹ Furthermore, the assertion of military difference is a strategic act which has to be continually worked at. One strategy through which this is managed is through the military control of even the most basic information about military land uses, for example about the hectareage of land and numbers of properties owned and used for specific military purposes. Control over information, over data about environmental impacts is critical; in the absence of information that accords with scientific norms for the establishment of knowledge, alternative interpretations of environmental impacts become possible.

Photography as a medium, and these photographs specifically, work well as a means of raising these questions. What these photographs avoid doing is casting hasty moral judgements about the rights and wrongs of the military use, inscription and control of rural space. They ask us to take a look at this visual representation of this moral argument, and to draw a conclusion. What I myself conclude is that the photographs make problematic this naturalization of the military presence by showing impacts that are profound, in ways that draw our attention to the vast and

⁹Another example of the assertion of military difference is found in arguments on social diversity within armed forces. See Dandeker, C. and Mason, D. (2001) The British Armed Services and the participation of minority ethnic communities: from equal opportunities to diversity? *The Sociological Review* 29 (2), 481-507.

simultaneously human scale. They raise questions about being in space, and the military control of space, that more obviously dramatic imagery misses. By doing this, they prompt inquiry about military responsibility for the scratches on the landscape, marks that are more than just a few sets of tank tracks on the mud.

Becoming

Military landscapes are constructed, made by people with the purpose of asserting military control. As well as asserting a right to be – to exist – in the landscape, that construction process asserts also the right to control that space in the future. Military landscapes are constructed with intent. The assertion of future intentionality to continue to shape such spaces in the military's image confirms that right to be.

The process of creation of a military landscape requires strategies of legitimation through which the authority to control space is consolidated, and one way in which this happens is through play on the question of whether these military landscapes are temporary or permanent. The scratches and bumps, scars and bruises meted out by military activity write the institution and its practices onto the landscape. This process of creation through inscription leads to some interesting questions about military activities and their environmental impacts. A common strategy of most NATO forces is to assert how military activities in non-conflict situations – primarily training – have either benign or positive environmental effects.¹⁰ Military environmentalist discourses explain any environmental impacts on areas valued for their ecological and environmental qualities as essentially non-invasive. A powerful military argument, frequently present in the discourse of military institutions, is that it is fundamentally against the interests of military forces to have deleterious impacts upon the landscapes upon which they train; to destroy a training area would be to destroy the opportunity to train armed forces to undertake the roles they perform. The argument then proposes that training areas require not just protection but also active management, often through the construction of features such as impact areas, hard-standings, metalled tracks and berms. These arguments are made for these spaces on the grounds of both military necessity (to train a future army), and environmental necessity (to protect the future training area). These changes to the features of the landscape, installed for military purposes, are shown vividly in the

¹⁰ See Woodward, *Military Geographies*, Chapter 4, and also Woodward R. (2001) Khaki conservation: an examination of military environmentalist discourses in the British Army. *Journal of Rural Studies* 17 (2), 201-217.

photographs taken in summer 2007 at Regionfelt Østlandet (*Rampart, Military View, Launching Platform; Landscape with Ramparts, Evening; Battlefield, South*). The landscape is in the process of being transformed into something else; the rubble and curves of new forms and structures show a new military landscape in the process of construction. The youth of these structures is visible; there are fresh marks on the ground and the organic forms of these new developments have not yet started to soften, mature and slip into the landscape. This is a landscape in the process of becoming.

Questions always hang over the future of military training areas. Pressures from other land users and uses, and objections to the militarization of space make the assertion of the future legitimacy of military training areas a priority for those charged with their management. Maintaining training areas is hard work. They have to be argued for and their futures assured. This is a landscape arguing for its own future, in a way. What these photographs reflect is a key idea about military landscapes as multi-dimensional in their meaning, which in itself is never secure and has to be worked at.¹¹

Remaining

Military claims to the use of space (primarily but not exclusively for training) rest, then, on the fact of presence and on legitimacy strategies that confirm and consolidate those claims across time. In many national contexts, those claims to space are made against varying degrees of protest. Where land is a scarcer resource, or where land has other values, those claims are questioned.¹² Other values may include both environmental value in terms of a landscape's aesthetic qualities as defined in national and regional cultures, as well as environmental value in terms of a landscape's ecological qualities. Across Europe in particular, there has been a constant and on-going debate since the end of the Second World War, about whether military forces actually need all the land that they own and use for military purposes.¹³ As a consequence of contested claims to space, some training areas

¹¹ See Woodward, *Military Geographies*, Chapter 5 for a longer discussion of these ideas, and also Tivers, J. (1999) 'The Home of the British Army': the iconic construction of military defence landscapes. *Landscape Research* 24 (3), 303-319.

¹² See, for example Valerie Kuletz's work on the arguments about the use of large areas of the south western United States for military training: Kuletz, V. (1998) *The Tainted Desert: Environmental and Social Ruin in the American West*. Routledge, London.

¹³ See, for a good introduction, Childs, J. (1998) *The Military Use of Land: A History of the Defence Estate*. Peter Lang, Bern.

will be returned to non-military uses (although this is not a particularly frequent occurrence; once armed forces have acquired suitable tracts of land for their activities, they are usually reluctant to relinquish them).¹⁴

This issue, of the maintenance or return of militarized landscapes, revolves primarily around the environmental remediation work required to return a military space to non-military use. Armed Forces' activities are environmentally destructive, requiring the extraction and use of finite mineral resources, and causing the release of toxic materials into environments. Both these cause both superficial and more lasting alterations to the physical geography of the spaces in which they take place.¹⁵ In some examples, the damage caused by military activities is sufficient to remove the possibility of their non-military re-use; national sacrifice zones in the USA are an extreme example. There is often a question, then, about whether in fact military landscapes must always remain so.

In the series *Soldiers, UXO Clearance 1-7*, this question is engaged with quite explicitly. These photographs show soldiers clearing up the landscape. They are engaged in acts of care, of custodianship, of stewardship of the landscape. They are portrayed in the act of deploying techniques of looking after the land, of managing it (again, the rural analogies persist). The photographs portray soldiers engaged in clearance activities at Hjerkinn, picking up the pieces of former military training exercises, as part of the land remediation strategy at that site. The soldiers wear pale blue UN helmets whilst gathering the fruits of their labour, a heavy harvest. Spent red cartridges lie on the ground waiting to be picked. This is dangerous work. The soldiers wear safety goggles. They are armed with sticks and they have scrap metal carriers on their backs of the same colour as their uniforms. This is environmental remediation. The photographs, in showing this, also point to an idea of increasing prominence in defence and security debates, about environmental security as a new and legitimate function of military forces. The idea of military forces as environmental guardians is widely contested, of course.

At this stage, it is appropriate to introduce the second idea around which this essay revolves. This is the significance of space and place in the making of the soldier. In

¹⁴ Exceptions here include Vieques, Bikini and Subic; for further reading see Woodward, 2004.

¹⁵ For an introduction to military environmental issues, see Woodward, *Military Geographies* and Middleton, N. (2003) *The Global Casino: An Introduction to Environmental Issues*. Third Edition. Arnold, London.

the iconographies of the figure of the soldier, which circulate in the cultures of advanced Western democratic nation-states, the soldier is almost invariably portrayed as heroic, as male, and as armed. Furthermore, this heroic figure is invariably seen as either subjected to challenge, or in a state of transcendence of that challenge (sometimes, ultimately, through death).¹⁶ In the photographs in this exhibition, the representations of the soldiers clearing scrap metal from old training areas works to subvert this iconic heroic figure; they are not shown facing challenge or adversity, they therefore have to need to triumph (or to be shown to triumph) over it. They just quietly go on on, cleaning up the landscape.

These photographs, then, are about being, becoming and remaining in the landscape. They engage with the idea of the role of geographical space in the exertion of military control, and in doing so speak to ideas about how military power over space operates. There is a subtlety to these photographs that seems crass to point out. This subtlety, though, is useful because it encourages engagement with this idea of the significance of space and place in the making of the soldier. The photographs in this exhibition are as much about the people undertaking military activities in the landscape, as they are about the landscapes themselves. It is to the ordinary and extraordinary performances of soldiering in geographical space to which I now turn.

Reproducing the soldier

Military landscapes are the places where soldiers are made. Soldiers are trained in military landscapes. In these spaces, soldiers are inculcated into the organisational and operational cultures of the armed forces to which they belong. This process of making the soldier is transformative, of civilian into soldier. It is continual, in that the making of the soldier requires not just the physical and mental transformation of the individual into a person with the required skills and attributes for his or her military role, but also the maintenance and development of that soldiers' skills. The transformative process is gendered, in that it involves the construction, negotiation and reproduction of identities that conform to established social conventions which define what it means to be a man or a woman. This transformative process is spatial

¹⁶ For a fuller exploration of contemporary military masculinities, see Woodward, R. and Winter, T. (2007) *Sexing the Soldier: The Politics of Gender and the Contemporary British Army*, London: Routledge; and Higate, P. (2003) (Ed.) *Military Masculinities: Identity and the State*, Praeger, Wesport.

in that it takes place in specified locations, the qualities and attributes of which reinforce the development of required soldierly qualities. Two examples illustrate this; think of the regulation of the physical body that is inculcated in recruits and in soldiers in the domestic spaces of the barracks and the parade ground. Think also of the physical and mental shaping of the soldier undertaking exercises in challenging environments, whether they be cold northern uplands, dry deserts or humid tropical rainforests. The soldier is made in military landscapes, and military landscapes impact upon the soldier.¹⁷ The making of the soldier requires the inculcation of new ways of being in landscapes, which includes new ways of seeing landscapes. Fieldcraft, the art of survival on the battlefield, requires in the soldier the ability to read the land in specific ways, to use techniques of camouflage, concealment and unobserved movement. It requires a tactical reading of landscape, a reading that is rationalistic, that has to be taught and learnt according to the conventions laid down by the cultural codes of the military.

The process of the construction of the soldier has, in many national cultures, become associated with the iconic model of the soldier hero already mentioned. The transformation of the soldier into hero, in this iconic model, is about the triumph over adversity, whether faced through physical environmental challenge or through the demands of the military culture in which that change takes place. This iconic model is almost invariably gendered as male, an indicator of the strength of the association between military institutions and models of embodied masculinity. The link, indeed, is so strong as to have become frequently essentialised.¹⁸ What is interesting about these photographs is the way in which they focus attention not just on the embodied, masculine soldier and his or her development through training, but also on the spaces and places which facilitate this.

These photographs portray the performances that are essential to becoming and remaining a soldier. They do this by showing the soldier in poses that suggest deliberate avoidance of the iconic, heroic model, but which (crucially) still represent the soldier in poses that are common and expected within military practice. Soldiers are seen getting dressed (*The Dressing*), ironing (*In the Basement*), folding and

¹⁷These ideas are outlined in more detail in Woodward R. (1998) 'It's a Man's Life!': soldiers, masculinity and the countryside. *Gender, Place and Culture* 5 (3), 277-300; and Woodward R. (2006) Warrior heroes and little green men: soldiers, military training and the construction of rural masculinities. In Bell, M.M. and Campbell, H. (Eds.) *Country Boys: Masculinity and Rural Life*, Penn State University Press.

¹⁸ See Woodward and Winter, *Sexing the Soldier* for a fuller discussion.

shelving clothing (*The Closet*), getting ready to do something, with some applying camouflage cream to each others' faces (*Preparation*), sitting in a classroom, learning (*Leopard*), and tidying up after exertion (*Olympia*).

Two points follow from this. The first is that these soldiers, doing ordinary tasks, are humanised. This is an important point. Although they are not individually recognisable, the figures in the photographs are immediately identifiable as people undertaking soldierly tasks. The mass iconography of the contemporary professional soldier, rooted so clearly in the heroic warrior mode, constructs that soldier as something Other and different. That oppositional binary between civilian and non-civilian, or military and non-military, has its own logic of course, and one that is used in military and civilian discourses alike to variously account for, justify or reject the idea of military specificity and difference. What these photographs do is side-step that binary by humanising the soldiers. They perform acts that have universal resonance – learning, dressing, preparation, relaxation. They just happen to be doing this in a military context. The only time weapons are shown, the soldier portrayed is figuring out how to use one (*Bazoka*).

The second point is about the spaces in which these soldiers are seen to be doing these ordinary activities. In some of these photographs (*In the Basement* and *The Closet* for example) these are interior barracks spaces, spaces of a type frequently associated in non-military contexts with the reproductive work which in turn is often socially constructed as feminised – the domestic labour of household reproduction, the domestic work of social care, the care of the physical body. It is extremely unusual to show military landscapes – domestic interiors – and their engendering work represented in this way. In other contexts, the landscapes in which these reproductive tasks take place are more clearly militarised. The key point, though, is that these humanised figures are seen taking part in the necessary transformative process that is required of the soldier. Furthermore, these acts take place; they happen in geographical space which may or may not accord with the challenging environments in which the iconic figure of the warrior hero is made. The photographs are innovative in the way in which they then open up a question about the appropriate place for the reproductive work that is required to make and maintain an armed military force.

Connecting military landscapes

Military landscapes are places in which military forces are produced. Military landscapes may appear (to the viewer) and feel (to the user) very different to one another. They have in common only the imprint of military activities.

We see that military imprint most frequently through the images that circulate globally of the results of the spectacular, the dramatic, the violent and the explosive. My argument here is that we need to recognise that imprint also in the little things, the small, seemingly unobtrusive, seemingly safe activities that get sidelined by the spectacular. These, too, are military activities which inscribe themselves on the landscape. Indeed, it could be argued that it is the unobtrusive undramatic activities that ultimately are the more significant for study when it comes to trying to understand how military power operates over space. The little things are, collectively, part of the base of a pyramid, upon which the capacity to use lethal force rests. The deployment of controlled violence – particularly legitimated, state-sanctioned violence by national armies – is impossible without the chains of activities and equipment that facilitate an efficient fighting force. What is interesting about military landscapes is the way in which they can be read as the origins or basis for that use of force which constitutes the uppermost point of the pyramid. What is interesting about these photographs is the way in which they underscore this point. They show not pillboxes, barbed wire, camouflaged vehicles and the rubble of urban destruction, but rather the training areas, parade grounds, barracks blocks and utility rooms where preparation for the deployment of force takes place. They emphasise that military violence is not random and unplanned, but controlled and prepared for.

Two arguments, by way of conclusion, follow from this. The first is that military landscapes have to be seen as connected, all as part of that same base. This is a simple point; the linkages between the military practices undertaken in places such as Rena Leir and the activities of the Norwegian armed forces in their domestic and overseas roles have to be recognised and accounted for in our viewing of these landscapes. Seductive as many of them are, as remote, sparsely populated, quiet and peaceful areas, they have to be recognised as a necessary constitutive part of the preparation for the deployment of lethal force. The photographs in this exhibition give us a visual vocabulary to describe, explain and understand these connections.

The final point is about the photographs themselves, and how they offer an approach to understanding military landscapes. The photographs avoid easy, snap judgements about the military. These are not pro-military photographs. Neither

could they easily be categorised as anti-military. They are, through their subtleties, at times ambiguous, sometimes ambivalent and frequently equivocal. This quality is useful, though, because it prompts not mute acceptance or incomprehension of what is going on in these spaces, but rather questioning of how military power works. The military control of space and the militarisation of landscapes, when seen in a seemingly quiet and remote corner of northern Europe remote from zones of violence, seems almost inconsequential. With their subtlety and ambiguity the photographs prompt a more complex response to the extension of military influence into valued, culturally significant environments.