

## About Hell's Bottom

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers officer Leslie Groves orchestrated the Manhattan Project, which began in 1942 and culminated in the Atom Bomb. But, as history would have it, ushering the whole of humanity into the Atomic Era wasn't his most destructive contribution. A year before he blueprinted the Manhattan Project, Groves was at the helm of an enterprise that's responsible for more damage than the A-bomb. In 1941 he spearheaded the construction of the largest office building ever planned<sup>1</sup>, a construct that's facilitated violence the world over, ever since.

It saturates American consciousness and reigns supreme in the international arena. With limitless resources and unthinkable hubris, it presides over clandestine megaprojects and unchecked violations of international law. It is an unmatched mass poisoner<sup>2,3</sup>, institutional polluter<sup>4</sup>, and weapons wholesaler<sup>5</sup>. It administers experiments whose impacts are measured in geologic time units<sup>6</sup>. It is the Pentagon.

But how did the Pentagon achieve worldwide predominance in the span of an average human life? This is an important question without a simple answer. To address it we must converse with history, and in so doing we stand to uncover truths about the present.

Before it cemented itself as an unassailable aspect of American culture and influence, an assortment of dissidents and watchdogs interpreted the Pentagon as a product and instrument of U.S. capitalism. Their analyses are educationally indispensable and morally significant, but neglected and obscured. Hell's Bottom is a compendium of their research.

The homepage links to accessible summaries of texts, and introductions to resources, that have in common three characteristics: one, they investigate the Pentagon under one of its modalities; two, they date before 2000; and three, they are insightful. Updates and edits are bound to occur sporadically.

Senator J. W. Fulbright observed<sup>7</sup> in 1970 that the “complacent acceptance of things military is one of the most ominous developments in modern America”. Glorified militarism has, fifty years on, corroded our collective moral compass. American civilians, insulated from the grisly realities of combat and saturated with pro-war messages<sup>8,9</sup>, mistrust principled dissent more than hawkish national security narratives. Leveraging this social psychosis, the Pentagon — i.e., one of the wealthiest organizations in the world — uncontestedly pickpockets each and every taxpayer, each and every year, to the tune of thousands<sup>10</sup>. Hell's Bottom serves to combat the historical erasure and selective omission that enable the Pentagon's brand of militarism.

## About 'Hell's Bottom'

The first casualty of the Pentagon was an impoverished neighborhood nicknamed 'Hell's Bottom'<sup>11</sup>. People lived there before it was swiftly razed to make way for the Department of Defense headquarters. Unless we curb the material and immaterial power of the Pentagon, we all risk going the way of Hell's Bottom.

- 1 It remained the largest office building in the world through 2022:  
[https://web.archive.org/web/20220615112800/https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_largest\\_office\\_buildings](https://web.archive.org/web/20220615112800/https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_largest_office_buildings)
- 2 [https://web.archive.org/web/20230606025252/https://law.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/hamilton\\_0.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20230606025252/https://law.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/hamilton_0.pdf)
- 3 <https://web.archive.org/web/20250105200906/https://www.propublica.org/article/military-pollution-open-burns-radford-virginia>
- 4 <https://web.archive.org/web/20230719213015/https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/Pentagon%20Fuel%20Use%2C%20Climate%20Change%20and%20the%20Costs%20of%20War%20Revised%20November%202019%20Crawford.pdf>
- 5 [https://web.archive.org/web/20230821151943/https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/2303\\_at\\_fact\\_sheet\\_2022\\_v2.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20230821151943/https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/2303_at_fact_sheet_2022_v2.pdf)
- 6 [https://web.archive.org/web/20230610013828/https://www.geosociety.org/GSA/Publications/GSA\\_Today/GSA/GSAToday/science/G538A/article.aspx](https://web.archive.org/web/20230610013828/https://www.geosociety.org/GSA/Publications/GSA_Today/GSA/GSAToday/science/G538A/article.aspx)
- 7 <https://archive.org/details/pentagonpropagan00fulb>
- 8 <https://web.archive.org/web/20230601213824/https://previous.ncra.ca/dspProgramDetail.cfm?programID=279390>
- 9 <https://archive.org/details/operationhollywo00robb/mode/2up>
- 10 <https://web.archive.org/web/20230606120512/https://www.nationalpriorities.org/pressroom/articles/2023/04/19/ordinary-americans-subsidize-military-industrial/>
- 11 <https://web.archive.org/web/20221124083248/https://pcad.lib.washington.edu/building/5004/>