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No man's land?

Veterans' experiences of 21st century warfare and the return to post-conflict life

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ABSTRACT

No Man's Land? Veterans' experiences of 21st century warfare and the return to post-conflict life

This thesis presents original research exploring how serving in 21st century theatres of war impacts on the return to 'civilian' life ('civvy street'). Through a rich analysis of in-depth narrative interviews with former military personnel, this research seeks to better understand the complexities of navigating between military and civilian fields – 'no man's land' – amid the uncertainties, precariousness, and violent politics of modern life in 'civvy street' (Bauman, 2007; Cooper and Whyte, 2017). Significantly, the thesis develops the new concept of 'combat capital' (Wilkinson, 2016, 2017), to provide a novel framework to help make sense of the embodied and symbolic 'value' of war experiences. Used in conjunction with 'field theory' (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990), the theoretical lens of 'combat capital' makes visible a continuum of conflict and 'ordinary suffering' (Bourdieu et al., 1999), deeply rooted in the state and its institutions, that runs throughout the life course of participants in varying degrees of severity. Grounded in the experiences and voices of those currently absent within criminological literature (Walklate and McGarry, 2015a), this thesis offers a rare insight into the lived experience of being employed to deliver violence within the uniquely 'blurred', and ambiguously justified American and British led 'war on terror' (Degenhardt, 2013; Kramer and Michalowski, 2005; Mythen, 2016). Ultimately, this thesis reveals an entanglement of the embodied 'traces of war' (McGarry and Walklate, 2011), with the socio-political contexts of 'civvy street', to argue that a 'post-conflict' life no longer appears to exist. Instead, the continuum of conflict demonstrated in this thesis, suggests that 'civilian life' in the 21st century is a potential 'no man's land' to be navigated.

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DEDICATION

To the 10 former military personnel who took part in this research,
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Part I

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Navigating 'No Man's Land': Returning to 'Post-Conflict' Life in the 21st Century

As friends fall we still March on
Never taking time to reflect if it's
Wrong.

...

We March on through the heat
Through the pain through the Blood
Knowing there is nothing to gain

'Josh', *Not a Metaphor but a Soldier's View*, 2017
(Appendix L)

The words above have been taken from a poem written by 'Josh', a British veteran of the Army, or in his own words, 'an ex-squaddie' who took part in this research. Josh served as a front-line Infantry soldier, most notably in Afghanistan, amid the American and British led 'war on terror'. This poem was sent to me post-interview, in relation to a question I had asked earlier, regarding whether he could think of a metaphor to capture the experience(s) of war – which he could not. Instead, Josh wrote what he referred to as, *Not a Metaphor but a Soldier's View* (provided in full in Appendix L). Josh's words have been chosen to open this thesis, as they so neatly capture much of what will be argued and presented in the chapters to follow. Grounded in the voices of 10 (white, male, British) former military personnel (veterans) – nine who served in a range of combat roles in the Army, and one who served in the RAF as a chef – this thesis draws upon innovative, in-depth qualitative methodology, to provide a rare critical criminological insight into experiences of serving in 21st century warfare, and the return to 'post-conflict' ('civilian') life.

1.1. Research Question and Aims

The research presented within this thesis has been guided by the exploratory research question:

- How do experiences of serving in 21st century theatres of war impact on the return to civilian life?

This question has been designed in response to the significant gaps in knowledge identified and discussed in Part I of the thesis, concerning a current absence within criminological literature of the voices and experiences of veterans – former military personnel (FMP)¹ – who have been employed by the state to deliver violence amid the uniquely ‘blurred’ and legally contested nature of 21st century warfare (Walklate and McGarry, 2015)², namely within the ‘war on terror’ (Degenhardt, 2007, 2010, 2013; Kaldor, 2012; Kramer and Michalowski, 2005; Loader and Percy, 2012). More specifically, there is a lack of critical engagement within the growing sub-field of ‘criminology and war’ with regard to (the majority of) ‘ordinary’, not ‘obviously problematic’ FMP (McGarry and Walklate, 2016) – ‘those who do not have criminal records and are without the diagnosis of a psychological impairment ... who have experienced both the traumatic and residual impacts of conflict in a more commonplace way’ (McGarry and Walklate, 2011: 905).

¹ Abbreviations can be found in the Glossary in Appendix A, which also provides definitions for the words, concepts, and terms highlighted in grey (or blue if reading electronically).

² Last names placed in a round bracket – i.e. (Walklate and McGarry, 2015) – indicate the author(s) of a piece of work, the year of publishing, and often a page number to the location of the information being discussed. The last name will appear in the Bibliography, which is presented in alphabetical order and includes the full reference - found at the end of the thesis

Further, this research question directly addresses the current lack of attention within criminological literature surrounding where, and what, FMP return to. Although the promising area of criminology and war often makes reference to the return to 'civilian' life, or 'civvy street' (McGarry, 2015; Murray, 2015; Treadwell, 2010*a*, 2010*b*), along with renewed attention emerging within the literature concerning issues of military to 'civilian' transitions (MCT) (Albertson et al., 2015, 2017; Ashcroft, 2014; Brown, 2011, 2015; Cooper et al., 2016) – what 'civvy street' means, looks like, and feels like to FMP, is yet to be explored and/or 'unpacked'. The literature therefore appears, albeit unintentionally, to treat MCT as a homogeneous experience, failing to capture how 'civilian life' may be experienced differently by individuals and/or by certain groups.

This gap in knowledge resulting from the lack of attention paid to specifically exploring how 'civilian' life is experienced, is of particular importance when considered alongside what is currently known in the literature – that FMP are overrepresented in the criminal justice system (NAPO, 2009; Howard League, 2011, Murray, 2013), the homeless population (Johnson et al., 2008; Treadwell, 2010*a*), and are more likely to suffer with mental health problems, in addition to experiencing higher levels of alcohol and/or drug misuse than the general population (Johnson et al., 2008; NAPO, 2009; Howard League, 2011; MacManus et al., 2013). Furthermore, issues around MCT are overwhelmingly framed in relation to employment (see Iverson et al., 2005: 181), likely stemming from the dominant (state) narrative, where 'successfully transitioned' FMP are defined by the sole indicator of being employed within six months after leaving the Armed Forces (MoD, 2014, 2015*b*, 2017, 2018*a*; Ashcroft, 2014).

Failing to explore or consider 'civvy street' as being worthy of its own analysis, therefore has the power to potentially obscure and remove the wider, 'macro level' socio-political contexts, including the role of the state, from the known individual, 'micro' level struggles experienced in MCT (McGarry and Walklate, 2011) – such as identity and cultural transitions, relationship difficulties, and barriers to help and support. In addition, very little exists by way of *theorising* MCT in the 21st century. There is thus a distinct need for qualitative research to also *theoretically* explore potential differences of FMP's experiences, specifically with regard to 'ordinary suffering' (Bourdieu et al., 1999), amid the pressures of adjusting to a modern 'civilian' life, characterised by 'fluidity', uncertainty, and precariousness (Bauman, 2000, 2002, 2006, 2007). The thesis carves out a crucial gap in knowledge here and breaks new ground, arguing that in order to make sense of the complexities of MCT and returning from theatres of war to a 'post-conflict' life in the 21st century, both the socio-political context(s) of warfare *and* of 'civvy street', must be firmly brought together as a core focus of research, analysis and discussion.

In order to address these prominent gaps in knowledge and answer the exploratory research question, the thesis adds novel contributions to the field of criminology and war by achieving three main aims, to:

- a) provide a theoretical framework, including the new conceptual tool of 'combat capital', to better understand military to civilian transitions.
- b) explore what 'civvy street' means and looks like for British veterans, and whether a 'post-conflict' life exists in the 21st century.
- c) understand and explain how British veterans make sense of their identities post-service.

1.2. Methodology

As the research question and aims demand an exploratory insight into lived experience, a flexible methodology was required that could generate rich qualitative data in the form of narratives (story telling). In-depth interviews, incorporating the free-association narrative interviewing (FANI) technique (Holloway and Jefferson, 2008) seemed the most appropriate methodological tool to generate a 'relatively unstructured' approach to data collection (Beardsworth and Keil, 1992: 261) – used recently by Murray (2016), with 'veteran offenders' imprisoned in England.

In a bid to disrupt time linear frameworks in which narratives are often recounted, and to connect with the bodily experiences of 'being there' within theatres of war, the research design also built in a visual aspect to the method, in the form of photo and object elicitation (Collier and Collier, 1986; Harper, 2002; West, 2013). This aspect of the methodology sought to anchor experiences in time, place and space, through the items participants brought with them, influenced by the successful use of photo elicitation within research exploring veteran identities (Jenkins et al., 2008; Woodward and Jenkins, 2011).

Driven by the current absence within the literature of FMP who are not 'obviously' identifiable as 'criminal' and/or 'victim' (McGarry and Walklate, 2011), sampling and recruitment led to a core sample of eight participants representing currently 'invisible', 'unproblematic' FMP – all of whom served in various 'active' combat roles within the Army. A small sub-sample of two 'visible' (criminalised) participants who had recently left prison was also generated – one who served in the Army Infantry, and the second who served as an 'active' chef in the Royal Air Force (RAF). 'Active' is used here to refer

to being posted to an area of conflict in which the delivery of violence (fighting) was required – including tours of Afghanistan, Bosnia, Iraq, Kosovo, and Northern Ireland. Participants had also completed a wealth of ‘non-active’ tours, such as postings to America, Canada, Cyprus, the Falkland Islands and Germany. All 10 participants were white males, who initially entered the military in low ranks – nine from a range of locations in England, and one who lives in Brussels, Belgium³. A total of 12 interviews were conducted, with two participants being interviewed twice.

The rich data gathered from the interviews was transcribed full-verbatim, including false starts and pauses (see Appendix I), and analysed in-depth using a grounded approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1992), drawing upon techniques of thematic network analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001). This method of analysis was specifically chosen in light of the current absence of FMP’s experiences within the literature, allowing the data (i.e. the voices of participants) to guide the themes and theories which emerged, in an aim to capture issues and discussions that are meaningful to those who took part.

In the empirical chapters presented within Part II of the thesis, large sections of the data have been included wherever possible – firstly to create a clear space in which the voices of FMP can be heard, and secondly to allow the reader to gain a better sense of interactions and arrive at their own conclusions regarding my interpretations. Although the thesis raises limitations to the methodology adopted, the successes of the methodological tools and research approach are evident in the richness and depth of

³ Biographies have been provided for David, Gavin, Harry, Josh, Kelli, Liam, Mike, Oliver, Simon, and Tom (all pseudonyms) in Appendix B

the narratives presented within this thesis. The research presented within these chapters therefore provides a much-needed (critical) criminological insight in to the lives of 10 FMP who have served in 21st century conflict, 'who may be on the fringes of the discipline but are nonetheless very much within its capacity to understand'. (McGarry and Walklate, 2011: 913).

1.3. Thesis Structure

Part I of the thesis begins with Chapter 2 tracing war within criminological literature from the post-World War I period. The chapter identifies the significant gaps in knowledge which this thesis addresses, in addition to highlighting the (re)focusing of the discipline on issues of war, security and crime in the aftermath of the events of September 11th, 2001 (9/11). Chapter 2 also traces a further shift in criminological literature, which followed the production of the reports by the National Association of Probation Officers (NAPO, 2008, 2009) and the subsequent media attention – which identified over 20,000 veterans serving a prison sentence in England and Wales.

Chapter 3 moves to trace the emergence of the widely acknowledged and theorised 'newness' of 21st century warfare that runs throughout recent literature in the post-9/11 context. Significantly, the chapter makes a notable shift to 'transgress the [criminological] borders' (Walklate and McGarry, 2015*a*), turning 'outside' of the discipline to consider wider theoretical debates and frameworks for exploring and making sense of the uniquely 'blurred' nature of 'new' warfare – particularly within the 'war on terror'. The chapter culminates by (re)placing 'new wars' within the wider socio-political landscape of 21st century society, drawing upon the influential work of Zygmunt Bauman.

Chapter 4 then presents the main theoretical framework of Bourdieu's (1977, 1990) 'field theory' used within the thesis. Following the natural progression of the research, the chapter initially connects with literature from the drugs sphere, regarding the 'value' of social capital within transitions. The currently under-researched 'dark side' of social capital is explored, where social networks can hold exclusionary and potentially detrimental powers for those who 'do not belong' or find themselves on the 'outside' (Wilkinson and Weston, 2015; Wilkinson, 2016). The chapter then (re)places social capital within the wider framework of 'field theory', explaining the core 'thinking tools' of *habitus field, capital, doxa* and *hysteresis*, which originally emerged from Bourdieu's own experiences of war⁴.

Significantly, Chapter 4 documents the creation of the new concept of 'combat capital' developed through this research (Wilkinson, 2016, 2017). Briefly, 'combat capital' draws attention to the embodied and symbolic 'value' of war experiences, recognised both 'inside and outside' of the military institution. The concept of 'combat capital', along with 'field theory' (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990), firmly breaks new ground within the literature. Combat capital provides a rich framework in which the complex and entwined 'micro' level of individual experiences of physical (battle)fields (embodied combat capital), can be clearly understood with regard to the state, and to the 'macro', socio-political landscapes of war and society in the 21st century (symbolic combat

⁴ Bourdieu served with the French military amid the Algerian War of Independence (Bourdieu, 1958, 1961, 1962; see also Grenfell, 2006, 2012). Field theory is therefore deeply anchored in notions of conflict and struggle, providing a sophisticated framework to make sense of *experience* – the collision of the social and physical worlds ('fields'), through the human body ('agent'). Each concept is explained and supported in detail within Chapter 4, and brief explanations of these terms can also be found in the Glossary (Appendix A).

capital). This thesis therefore offers a novel contribution to knowledge, speaking directly to the earlier calls of Jamieson (1998, 1999) and Walklate and McGarry (2011, 2015a), for a critical criminological approach to war, which holds the state to account for its role in the violence and ‘traces of war’.

Part II of the thesis responds to the gaps in knowledge identified in Part I, adding the currently absent experiences and voices of 10, white, male, British, former military personnel (FMP) to the (academic) field through the findings presented. The chapters build cumulatively, to ultimately show through the concept of ‘combat capital’, that serving in and leaving warfare in the 21st century is experienced qualitatively differently to veterans of previous warfare (Leed, 1979, Lifton, 1974).

Chapter 5 details and justifies the methodological rationale and innovative choices made within this research, drawing attention to ethical considerations, sampling, analysis of data, and the completion of ‘pilot’ (‘practice’) interviews conducted before fieldwork took place. The chapter not only provides a rigorous and reflexive insight into the processes and limitations of the research, but also presents a strong case for the use of visual methodology in future research with this participant group (FMP).

Chapter 6 is the first of four empirical (data analysis) chapters, placing a focus on ‘life before’ military service. This chapter explores participants’ narratives around childhood, the reasons for enlistment, and provides an insight into the ‘pre-military’ resources (forms of capital) and early socialisation within military fields and cultures. The significance of this chapter relates to the notable struggle (and violence) present within participants’ lives before they joined the military, where enlistment was

unanimously framed as a resource to 'escape' from a lack of opportunities, disadvantage, and a potential 'life of crime', by facilitating (upward) social movement.

Chapter 7 draws deeply upon Bourdieu's (1977, 1990) framework of 'field theory' to conceptualise and explain 'life becoming' – a distinctly separate period of military life within participants' narratives, concerning the initial entry into the military institution, and the subsequent transformative process of 'becoming' a soldier. This chapter considers the 'practical mastery' achieved when militarised theory, practise, and resources come together within the battlefield, and formally introduces the new concept of combat capital and its embodied and symbolic 'value'.

Chapter 8 focuses on 'life during' military service, providing a rich insight into how the 'war on terror' was experienced qualitatively differently. The blurring of boundaries that Chapter 3 identifies at a macro, socio-political level, can be seen to structure the micro, individual level of participants' service within the battlefield. The chapter also explores participants' experiences of navigating military life, with a focus on 'masculine' coping mechanisms, the building of forms of capital, and participants' experiences of thriving (or not) in military fields. Specific attention is paid to the difficulty of maintaining relationships to those 'outside' of the military, along with the processes and barriers surrounding accessing resettlement support when leaving the military.

Chapter 9 builds cumulatively on the previous three empirical chapters, to present some of the most novel contributions to current knowledge within the thesis. This chapter places a unique focus on 'life after' military service, through the new concept

of 'combat capital'. A 'continuum' of conflict that runs throughout participants' narratives is highlighted, through exploring the 'traces of war' (McGarry and Walklate, 2011) carried within and upon participants' bodies. The chapter firmly grounds these experiences within the socio-political landscapes of 21st century warfare, as well as within the 'civilian' field conditions experienced by participants within 21st century 'civilian' society. Crucially, chapter 9 details what has come to form the title of this thesis – participants' experiences of navigating 'no man's land'.

'No man's land' is used to capture the unanimous period of adapting and adjusting to the new and drastically different field conditions of civilian life, characterised as a time of struggle, varying in length and degrees of severity. Chapter 9 firmly brings the role of the state within analysis and discussion, drawing attention to participants' experiences of returning to and navigating 'civvy street', amid the punitive and violent austerity measures of 21st century Britain (Cooper and Whyte, 2017).

Chapter 10 presents the overarching conclusion to the thesis. This final chapter draws together all previous chapters in a final critical discussion, clearly reconnecting the findings presented in Part II, with the earlier discussions and gaps in knowledge raised in Part I. In addition to providing a summary of the thesis, this chapter offers some recommendations for policy makers, and for those working with FMP (veterans) more generally.

1.4. Final Introductory Points

Before proceeding with the chapters to follow, I have several additional ‘introductory points’ to raise. Firstly, I must make clear that the majority of participants overwhelmingly framed military service and war as positive experiences – narrated as a period in life like no other, and characterised by deep friendships, belonging, excitement, laughter, travel, survival and realising one’s potential. In no way do I intend to diminish or deny the positives of military service in this thesis. However, the narratives of the 10 British former military personnel (FMP) presented within the chapters to follow, reveal a continuum of ‘ordinary suffering’ (Bourdieu et al., 1999) and social harm(s) (Hillyard et al., 2004; Pemberton, 2016), that run throughout the life course, deeply connected to the state and its institutions. The state’s role in the violence and traces of war has long been removed and/or obscured (Jamieson, 1998; McGarry and Walklate, 2011, 2016). Consequently, this thesis maintains space for the state to be clearly held accountable within the scope of analysis and discussions to follow, exposing the various traces of violence, war, and conflict inflicted upon the bodies and lives of the 10 men who took part in this research.

Secondly, although the limitations of the research are raised in Chapter 5, I feel it is important to make clear that this thesis does not claim to be representative of the military institution and its personnel *per se*. The research presented here fails to capture the experiences of female FMP, and those of black and minority ethnic groups (BME). There is also an absence of personnel from the Navy, and from higher ranks within the military, namely officers. Further, with regard to the ‘newness’ of warfare, there remains a gap in knowledge here concerning the experiences of ‘making war from afar’ – such as operating drones and guided missiles.

Thirdly, when discussing the 'battlefield' or 'physical landscapes of war', it must be made clear that I am not claiming war to exist in one physical space, as 21st century conflict transcends space and place (Bauman, 2002: 87; Holmqvist, 2012; Kaldor, 2012; Young, 2007; Lippens, 2004; Ryan, 2013). However, many participants *did* serve in physical battlefields. It is therefore useful to think of the battlefield – the site in which soldiers' bodies are physically placed to engage in war-making 'on the ground' – as being a site of struggle where the battle for power may be at, and about, its borders and the value of its capitals (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 104).

This thesis makes frequent reference to 'masculinity' (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005), and more specifically, to 'military masculinity' or 'military masculinities' (Woodward, 2000) – along with 'gender' and 'gender order' (Butler, 1993, 2004; Henry, 2017). I want to make it clear that these terms refer to socially constructed, fluid, and ever changing (human made) 'categories', that are assigned *to* bodies and behaviours, and/or identified *as*. They are not fixed, 'taken for granted' realities (Millar and Tidy, 2017, Woodward, 2000). Despite 'gender' not been framed at the forefront of this introduction, the notions of masculinities and gender run throughout the thesis, and have been placed *within* the wider 'field theory' adopted.

Furthermore, this thesis has been written from a position of being aware of the multiplicity of masculinities (Higate, 2000, 2003, 2012*a*, 2012*b*, see also; Conway, 2008; Parpart and Partridge, 2014; Titunik, 2008), especially concerning the changing nature of warfare (Bornman, 2009; Duncanson, 2009; Hurley, 2018; Myrntinen et al. 2017; Zalewski, 2017). However, perhaps due to the vast majority of participants

occupying front-line combat roles, participants' narratives do appear to resonate with what is often referred to as, and also heavily critiqued to be, a 'warrior masculinity' (see *ibid.*), aligned to (battle)fields of war (Bornmann, 2009; Hale, 2008).

As an additional point of clarification, within the following chapters, I have chosen to predominantly refer to participants as 'former military personnel' (FMP), rather than 'veterans'. This is for reasons that I hope will become clear in Chapter 9. The Glossary provided in Appendix A contains further abbreviations and explanations of terms highlighted in grey (or in blue if reading electronically).

Finally, this thesis has been deliberately structured to foreground the voices of those who took part at every possible level – where participants can even be heard in the contents page. The richness of narratives gathered in this research far exceeded what was ever imagined, and I have included long extracts from interviews wherever possible. However, there are so many more experiences I wanted to share here, had space allowed. The presentation of this research has been guided by the knowledge that some participants wish to read it, and I have tried to present the thesis with them in mind.

CHAPTER 2

Criminology and War: The Invisible Veteran(s)

...criminological and victimological research needs to look beyond the domain assumptions of crime per se and explore the experiences of those who may be on the fringes of the discipline but are nonetheless very much within its capacity to understand.

McGarry and Walklate, *The Soldier as Victim*,
2011: 913

2.1. Introduction

Although emerging 'against a backcloth of the First and Second World Wars', criminology has only very recently begun to address war in the 'substantive ways demonstrated by other disciplines' (Walklate and McGarry, 2015a: 2). Jamieson (1998) first suggested that there could (or should) be a dedicated field of study called the 'Criminology of War'. However, the value and potential of this suggestion did not appear to take hold within the discipline until the events of September 11th, 2001 (9/11). As Hagan et al. (2012: 482) state, '[c]riminology is only beginning to consider the mass violence associated with war, armed conflict, and political repression'. This chapter is therefore split into two main sections.

Firstly, section 2.2. traces war in criminological literature before the events of 9/11, highlighting how criminology has long placed a focus on war as being inherently criminogenic. Secondly, section 2.3. summarises criminological literature on war post-

9/11, drawing attention to the significance of these events in refocusing the discipline on issues of war, security, and the state. The chapter then explains how the two dominant constructions that have appeared within criminology and wider contexts – of the soldier and veteran as ‘criminal’ and as ‘victim’ – have left large gaps in knowledge, rendering the experiences of ordinary, ‘not obviously’ problematic British veterans all but invisible. Finally, the chapter offers a conclusion, arguing that despite a renewed focus within criminology on war post 9/11, the voices of veterans who have served in and left conflict in the 21st century are still significantly absent from the field.

2.2. Criminological literature and war before the 21st century

The first traces of war within criminological literature can be seen to have emerged during the course of the First and Second World Wars. Bonger (1916) is among the earliest to place war, and more specifically the military institution, under a criminological gaze. Bonger (1916) approached ‘militarism’ and economic conditions from a Marxist perspective, claiming that militarism was driven by aims of controlling populations, protecting borders, and/or to attain and exploit ‘foreign’ territory for capital gain. However, Bonger also discussed how the ‘evil of military life’ was predicted to cause British soldiers to have ‘a higher propensity to commit crime in civilian society’ (McGarry, 2015: 259). The connections between war and crime were developed further in 1936 (Bonger, 2015 [1905]), where the conditions and occupation of war were argued to be ‘completely opposed to the morals of normal life’ (p. 104), giving rise to a ‘spirit of violence’ that is learned in wartime (p. 518) – as crime at war was unbounded and rarely punished and/or recorded (see also Sorokin, 1944; Hobsbawm, 1994).

Hamon (1918: 64) also discussed war and the military institution as 'teaching' deviance, having a lasting effect on violence within society: 'War thus becomes a school of crime, a university of hooliganism and worse, whose bitter fruit may well be tainted in the years after the war'. Jamieson (1998: 484) identifies a number of other early scholars that drew upon the explanatory model of 'war as a "school of crime"' (see Abbott, 1918; von Hentig, 1947: 33; Mannheim, 1941, 1965). Abbott (1918) observed that people may become 'habituated' to violence when studying the problems of readjustment experienced by veterans (see also Lifton, 1974; Pilisuk, 1995; Shay, 1995), claiming that veterans were 'more or less incapacitated and demoralized by an apprenticeship to the trade of war' (Abbott, 1918: 43 in Jamieson, 1998: 485). This habituation to violence during wartime was later termed, 'atrocious habit' by von Hentig (1947: 336), who suggested that people require a period of withdrawal from violence in post-war conditions.

Bryant (1979), inspired by Sutherland (1949), also talks to the explanatory model of the 'military as a school of crime' (in Jamieson, 1998). Yet Bryant's (1979) work takes a unique approach, adopting an institutional view of the military and drawing attention 'to the prevalence of particular types of crime and deviance that exist and persist within the U.S. military' (McGarry and Murray, 2017: 7). Criminal activity is depicted by Bryant (1979), as persisting and emanating directly from *within* the military institution (McGarry, 2015: 255), with additional scope for illegitimate acts of state violence to be committed against civilian and 'enemy' populations (McGarry and Murray, 2017: 8). This unique focus on the military institution appears to show the very structure and culture of the military as being a site for the production and reproduction of behaviours defined as criminal.

Ignatieff (1994: 140-141) can be seen to provide a more contemporary understanding of the 'war as a school of crime' model, arguing that the collapse of the state's monopoly of violent means resulted in 'chaos' and an 'erotic paradise of the all-is-permitted' (in Jamieson, 1998: 485). The criminogenic nature and contexts of war being pervasive in family life, criminal justice, and public morality still permeate contemporary attempts to make sense of offending among the veteran population (see Jamieson, 1998; Jamieson et al., 2008; Treadwell, 2010a; 2010b; MacManus et al., 2012; 2013). However, subsequent criminological literature has included challenges to this assumed 'criminogenic disposition of military veterans' (McGarry, 2015: 259, see also McGarry and Walklate, 2016).

Hakeem's (1946) study can be seen as an early example of such a challenge, claiming that the causal linkage between military service and crime had been made 'on a *priori* basis', with an attempt to render 'any phenomenon of current interest' as 'a factor explaining crime causation' (p.120). As such, he explains that a narrative had emerged whereby the armed forces teach ('non-criminalistic') individuals to 'kill, to be aggressive and to hate', which is then presumed to continue upon return to civilian life (ibid., p. 121). Importantly, Hakeem (1946: 131) and others (see Lunden, 1952; Tompkins, 1972) concluded that it was not possible to support the direct connection between military service and offending, highlighting that a rise in arrests post-war could instead be attributed to the return of over half a million young men to civilian life, who were of prime 'offending age' (Willbach, 1948: 505). In addition, Lunden (1952) identified that experiences gained before military service 'were equally

important factors to determine their offending' (McGarry, 2015: 259), especially where previous involvement with the legal system had been present.

Sampson and Laub (1996, see also Bouffard and Laub, 2004; Bouffard, 2005) also offered a perspective that challenged arguments surrounding the military as 'inherently criminogenic', following the results of their longitudinal study with 1,000 men, raised in areas of poverty in Boston during the Great Depression (1929-39). Through adopting a life-course perspective, it was found that the military was a positive turning point in the transition to young adulthood (ibid.). Results showed enhancements to subsequent occupational status, job stability, and economic wellbeing, with benefits being larger for 'veterans stigmatized with an officially delinquent past' and who joined the military earlier, rather than later, in life (Sampson and Laub, 1996: 347). Resonating with the recent Howard League report (2011), the connections between these bodies of work appear to suggest that offending cannot be directly linked or attributed to military service alone, or that the military produced veterans that were inherently criminogenic.

When summarising the historical focus on war within criminology, McGarry (2015: 258) highlights the influential work of Sutherland (1940) in encouraging scholars to 'consider crimes of the powerful as a prevalent concern within the criminological canon', and for providing 'avenues of inquiry that bring the actions of powerful actors into question'. McGarry (ibid.) continues, explaining that while this approach has now gained momentum in modern criminology, 'few early scholars took this approach and even fewer did so by paying particular attention to war' (see also Walklate and McGarry, 2015a: 7). There are, however, some notable exceptions.

Park (1941) discussed the functionality of war as 'nation building' through 'collective action' (p.561-3), as well as affording the state purpose:

...the state not only had its origin in war but that its chief business is still, as Dealey says, "to be ready for war and to wage it whenever national safety or national interest demand it". ... Nothing is more demoralizing to an army or to a military state than peace, and nations to survive must act. (p.568)

Mannheim (1941) also offered an early critical gaze to the distinctions and overlaps between war and crime, attempting to identify the importance of 'the economic boom conditions of wartime' (ibid. p.47, see also von Hentig, 1947: 339-341) – such as full employment and high wages coupled with rationing – 'as contributing to wartime crime rates and the development of the black market' (Jamieson, 1998: 486). Scholars have since explored the relationship(s) between war, war industries, the arms trade and organized transnational crime, 'suggesting relationships of complex interdependency' (ibid., see Karp, 1994; Naylor, 1995; Ruggiero, 1996). Mannheim (1941) additionally sought to extend understandings of war as purely a matter of humanitarian law, instead considering the 'perpetration of war as a crime when conducted without just cause' (Walklate and McGarry, 2015a: 7). As he states, 'crime is always wrong, war is only wrong according to circumstance' (Mannheim, 1941: 6).

Sutherland (1949) further extended this critical interpretation of 'war crime', framing corporate acts of deviance surrounding war efforts as forms of white collar crime. This included the profiteering from trade in arms; espionage; economic collusion and tax evasion (Walklate and McGarry, 2015a: 7). Sutherland (1949) believed these war

crimes were an extension of his existing understandings of corporate crime (1937; 1940; 1945), and that war simply provided new opportunities for state deviance. Despite Sutherland paving the way for an increased critical criminological engagement with war, the post-war period saw criminology focus primarily on the increase of domestic crime as discussed above (see also Cornil, 1951) and the prosecution of war crimes at an individual level during the Nuremberg and Tokyo Trials (Zolo, 2009). McGarry and Walklate (2015a: 8), drawing on the work of Morrison (2006), highlight how this 'obscured rather than implicated the role of the state in the violence of war'.

As Murray (2016: 41) discussed, 'this tendency to "obscure" state complicity can be found in the framing of the war in Northern Ireland [as] "the Troubles"'. Murray explains that although the conflicts in Ireland have been the subject of criminological analysis for some time, they have rarely been examined through the lens of war. Jamieson (2015: 94) highlights that 'the British government's position throughout "the Troubles" was that they were dealing with a crime problem and *not* a war or insurgency' (emphasis in original). However, Operation BANNER (1969-2007) in Northern Ireland was the British Army's longest continuous deployment, 'and the conflict was the most serious security situation it had faced since the Second World War' (ibid.). Framing 'the Troubles' in terms of crime, can therefore be seen as an attempt to remove and silence the very real political aspects of these conflicts, and subsequently, the state.

In 1998, Jamieson produced a land mark paper within the area of criminology and war, heavily influenced by the conflicts in former Yugoslavia. Here, Jamieson (1998) identified this tendency for criminological literature to avoid broader issues related to

the state, and to instead reduce discussions of war and crime to individual levels. Walklate and McGarry (2015a) produced the first collection of work 'specifically dedicated to the academic study of criminology and war' (p. xv), claiming inspiration from Jamieson's (1998, 2015) critique of criminology, concerning the discipline's failings to adequately address the complexities of war (p. 8).

2.2.1 Jamieson (1998): 'Towards a criminology of war'

Jamieson (1998) was the first to suggest the need for a distinct 'criminology of war', providing the 'main centre point for a criminological analysis of war' (Walklate and McGarry (2015a: 8). In *Towards a Criminology of War in Europe* (1998), Jamieson provides a detailed overview into the various ways in which war and crime had previously been represented in criminological literature, explaining that "'social disorganization" in wartime conditions [are taken] to be axiomatic' (p.482). In addition to the 'war as a "school of crime"' model discussed above, Jamieson (ibid., p.484-7) presents a range of 'explanatory models' underpinning previous commentaries of the war/crime relationships¹.

Most notably, Jamieson (1998: 486) draws attention to war as an 'intensified expression of the gender order' – an important model which demonstrates the widely documented escalation of violence against women and girls in the context of war. Jamieson (ibid.) states that 'for over two decades feminist writers have argued that war crimes such as rape or mass rape are an expression of the gender order or of militarized masculinity'. Further, that increases in violence against women during and after

¹ Including war as 'anomie'; war as a 'temporary reversal of prevailing morality'; and war as a 'continuance of economic relations' (Jamieson, 1998: 484-7)

wartime, contrary to writers such as Bonger (2015: 104) and Mannheim (1941: 118), may be 'domestic' in nature and are thus an extension of the routine 'order of things' (Jamieson, 1998: 486).

Despite demonstrating that war has been present in criminological literature for some time, Jamieson critiques the majority of the literature surrounding war, suggesting that it is heavily focused on crimes that are often seen as a continuation of 'routine' ordinary crimes 'in an altered social (demographic), legal and political context' (1998: 481). In addition, the reluctance of contemporary criminology to foreground war and armed conflict is claimed to be even more 'astonishing' when one considers that war involves: mass violence and victimisation through (among other things) state action (Cohen, 1993, 1995); substantial increases in social regulation, punishment and ideological control (Rusche and Kirchheimer, 1939); and new techniques of surveillance (Giddens, 1985), often resulting in human rights violations (Jamieson, 1998: 480).

Furthermore, Jamieson (1998: 481) highlights that in conventional criminological literature,

"war" is usually taken to mean conventional interstate war – as distinct from the protracted civil or internal armed conflicts waged by either state (regular) armies or paramilitary groups engaged in struggles of state formation or fragmentation. (Cohen (1993, 1995a, 1995b) is a notable exception.)

This is especially significant when considering that 'new wars', as termed by Kaldor (1999), had developed throughout the 1980s and 1990s (discussed further in 3.4.). As such, these conflicts (particularly those within Africa and Eastern Europe) had not

been adequately addressed within criminology, and additionally, neither had soldiers' and veterans' experiences of serving in and leaving such wars. Kaldor (1999: 29) states that the irregular, informal wars of the second half of the twentieth century were discounted because they 'did not fit our conception of war'.

Jamieson's (1998) call for a distinct 'criminology of war' therefore sought to encourage the discipline to move away from the reductionist approaches that had so far masked the complexities that connect war, crime and the state. *Towards a Criminology of War* thus 'conceptualised a space wherein war is tantamount to state crime and squarely within the concern of a critical criminology' (Walklate and McGarry, 2015a: 8). In addition, Jamieson (1999: 25) clearly called for 'more to be understood about the behaviour of men in groups', arguing that the masculine military culture should be central to any analysis of war and violence. Perhaps the most cited and famous words of Jamieson, 'there is more to be said', are taken from her (1999: 26) conclusion, where she states: 'Like most violent crime, war is "bad". It is mainly conducted by men. But there is more to be said'. This was a direct call for the discipline to take seriously the complexities of war and to do so 'with an ambitious level of intellectual curiosity' (ibid.).

However, despite reaching some influential thinkers, such as Young (1999), McGarry and Walklate (2016: 9) claim that Jamieson's (1998, 1999) critique of criminology and ideas on how to move research and discussion forward, did not appear to capture the attention of the discipline until the 21st century, following the events of 9/11. Of course, notable exceptions exist, such as work by Cohen (2001), Hodge (1997), and Lippens (2001) (among others in disciplines such as Social Legal Studies, Law and International

Relations), who were writing about war before 9/11, regarding themes that were critiqued by Jamieson (1998, 1999) to have been previously lacking.

2.3. Criminology and war after the 21st century

As McMillan (2004: 380, in Walklate and McGarry, 2015*a*) states, ‘the impact of the September 11 attacks [2001] was massive’, forming a significant historical marker – particularly in terms of war, security, and crime. Not only was this impact felt in terms of the loss of life, injuries and damage to landmark buildings, but the societal and political reactions to the events of the 9/11 attacks are also still unfolding today. In addition, the subsequent global ‘war on terror’ has raised a number of questions regarding the legality of war (Hayward and Morrison, 2002), particularly surrounding the 2003 invasion of Iraq (Kramer and Michalowski, 2005; Enemark and Michaelson, 2005; Winston, 2005; Hagan, 2015; Berger, 2016; Michalowski and Kramer, 2016). Critical attention has also been paid to the motivations and profiteering of state organised violence (see Whyte, 2003; 2007; 2010), and private companies in war making (see White, 2010; 2012; 2016; Ruggiero, 2015).

As Jamieson (1998) had stressed, there was a clear need for criminology to pay attention to the complexities of the relationship(s) between crime and war. The events of 9/11 and their aftermath, appeared to add additional weight to this call and thus resonated, albeit still small in scale, within the discipline. Walklate and McGarry (2015*a*: 9) subsequently explain:

criminological interest in war clustered most coherently around the “9/11 moment” (McMillan, 2004: 383). These events fractured global ontological

insecurities and became the skewed rationale for over 10 years of war in the Middle East, with the asymmetry of the “War on Terror” facilitating the blurring of boundaries between crimes at war and crimes at “home” (Aas, 2013).

Degenhardt (2013: 31) addresses this blurring of boundaries and the complex relationship between war and crime, identifying violence as the fundamental link between the two:

What precisely links war with crime, apart from violence? In the current war against terrorism, the notion of the enemy and that of the criminal have converged and, with this, the practices of the military apparatus were utilised in conjunction with the techniques of arrest and incarceration that are typical of the criminal justice system.

Further, Degenhardt (2013: 32) argues that the complex distinction between crime and warfare is ‘punctured by reference to law and politics in both directions’.

When this is considered alongside ‘the hegemonic, patriarchal and masculine “metaphor of war” (see Steinert, 2003) [that] became a key part of the criminological lexicon during the 1970s’ (Walklate and McGarry, 2015a: 8), the blurring of war and crime appears ever more complex. ‘Wars’ have been waged on drugs, poverty, crime and terror. Yet, as Jamieson (2003: 260 in *ibid.*) highlights,

In spite of the pervasiveness of war metaphors in crime discourse, criminologists often fail to explore the potentially pertinent literatures that deal directly with the reality of war and its sequellae.

The discipline has therefore been 'compelled to question more thoroughly' the complex connections between crime and war (Murray, 2016: 45, see also McGarry, 2015: 270), and to do so in a distinctly political space (see for example Brown, 2011, 2015; Jamieson, 2015; McEvoy, 2003; Ruggiero, 2006, 2015). This involves taking into account the motivations, justifications, and actions taken by the state, when engaging in and seeking to control violence. As Ruggiero (2015: 29) states, 'In brief, recent international events have transformed war into a series of episodes of crimes of the powerful'. As such, there has been a renewed focus on genocide (Jamieson, 1999; Hagan and Greer, 2002; Morrison, 2006; Hagan and Raymond-Richmond, 2009; Cameron, 2012; Degenhardt, 2015a); sexual violence (Mullins, 2009a, 2009b); human rights (Hamm, 2007; Shiner, 2008); the growing criminalisation of migration (Hudson, 2009); and the military institution (McGarry, 2015).

The blurring of boundaries also extends much further, encapsulating a global shift in the inability to draw clear lines between private and public security (Avant and Haulfer, 2012; White, 2010, 2012, 2016); international and domestic security (Hudson, 2009; Aas, 2012; Murray, 2014; Degenhardt 2015b); war making, peacekeeping and crime control (Degenhardt, 2007; 2010, 2013); legitimate and illegitimate violence (Ruggiero, 2005, 2006, 2015; Young, 2007); and notions of the 'inside/outside' (Loader and Percy, 2012; Holmqvist, 2012; Ryan, 2013; Murray, 2015; McGarry 2015).

Much of this renewed criminological focus on war can be seen to identify something unique in the events of 9/11 and in the subsequent global reactions. Criminology began to rethink war and war conditions, paying attention to the new security terrain that had emerged – often through an interdisciplinary approach (Bouffard, 2005;

Degenhardt, 2010, 2013; Green and Ward, 2004, 2009). What appears to run through much of this work is a shared focus on, and acknowledgment of, 21st century warfare as being fundamentally different. The 'newness' of recent wars, namely 21st century warfare, is an issue of extreme importance within this thesis – forming the sole focus of Chapter 3 and explored there in more detail.

Despite the renewed focus on war and war conditions, and the connections made with 'the historical application of crime and war' by critical criminologists in the decade after 9/11, these issues 'remained on the fringes of the criminological imagination' (Walklate and McGarry, 2015a: 9). Instead, Walklate and McGarry (ibid.) explain that as in the wake of the Second World War,

the "War on Terror" also invoked the interests of mainstream criminology, creating a populist debate about more conventional concepts of offending, and employing routine analysis of domestic criminal justice processes symptomatic of the criminological enterprise.

Although Jamieson (1998) had written about the implications of focusing solely on how war affects 'routine' crimes, namely avoiding broader structural issues relating to the state and systems of power, mainstream criminology appeared to have missed (or ignored) the warning. As such, the focus on soldiers and veterans committing domestic crimes 'at home' quickly led to two dominant constructions within Britain, of the soldier and veteran as 'criminal', and as 'victim'.

2.3.1. The soldier and veteran as 'criminal'

As highlighted in section 2.2., there has long been a historical concern about military personnel committing crime, particularly in domestic settings. However, this concern received renewed attention in 2008, following the National Association of Probation Officers (NAPO) report, which acknowledged for the first time, the problems the criminal justice system (CJS) was facing with regard to veterans. The NAPO (2008) report followed Home Office research in 2001, 2003 and 2004, which suggested 'seemingly quite conservatively' that 'between 4% and 6% of the total UK prison population may have once been in the armed forces' (Treadwell, 2010b: 73). Treadwell (ibid. p.74) details how government were forced to admit that they had no way of knowing how many serving prisoners had military records, and further, how many had seen active service in armed conflict.

The NAPO (2008) report therefore drew attention to the ethical and custodial pressures that the CJS was facing concerning the 'alarming levels' of veterans in custody, leading to a second report the following year that looked at those under the supervision of the Probation service (NAPO, 2009). The 2009 report claimed that veterans are disproportionately represented at every stage of the CJS, and that an estimated 20,000 ex-armed forces personnel were currently serving a prison sentence in England and Wales (ibid.). NAPO was only able to provide an estimate figure of 20,000, as veterans were not, and are not, captured in national statistics (Murray, 2016: 4). Despite this, NAPO (2008) claimed:

Large numbers of ex-service personnel were being convicted for a range of offences, primarily involving violence within a short period following discharge from the forces.

Treadwell (2010*b*: 74) highlights how this finding was not new, demonstrating that the Independent Monitoring Board (2007:14) had recently reported similar problems, also linking them to violence and resettlement:

The Board is concerned about the increasing number of ex-servicemen now present in the prison. The preparation for civilian life both in life-style and finances does not appear to be a major objective of the Armed Forces Ministry. It is very easy to equip a person to kill, however a robust form of rehabilitation into the general community is sadly lacking on his release.

These reports ushered an increased awareness of, and interest in, the resettlement of British military personnel post-war (Murray, 2014: 252). The statistics, along with rising discourse and framing of the soldier as 'criminal' (McGarry and Walklate, 2011), subsequently sparked a criminological interest with academics such as Pritchard (2010) and Treadwell (2010*a*, 2010*b*). Treadwell (2010*a*: 8) claimed that although statistics varied, between 3% and 10% of the British prison population were former military personnel (FMP), placing former soldiers and military personnel as 'by far the largest occupational group in the prison system' (Doward, 2008).

The NAPO (2008, 2009) reports did not only capture the interest of criminologists, but caught the attention of the British media, leading to widespread reporting. The Telegraph (Leach, 2008), for example, ran the headline, 'Thousands of war veterans locked up in British prisons: One in 11 prisoners serving time in UK jails is a former

member of the armed forces, a new report reveals'. The Guardian (Doward, 2008) ran a similar story, highlighting how 'often it is those closest to the soldiers who are victims of their violence' – linking offending to struggles 'adapting' to civilian life, along with substance abuse and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The linking of PTSD to offending (NAPO, 2008; 2009) is an issue that will be considered further in section 2.3.2. below.

In response to the widespread concern surrounding 'veterans in prison', a number of successive reports were produced. Treadwell (2010b) had warned against simply reducing the issue of FMP in custody 'to a statistical counting exercise' (p. 74), arguing that 'the experiences of armed forces personnel as perpetrators of crime has received little attention' (p. 73). As such, he worked with the Howard League (2011) to produce one of the first large scale qualitative research projects looking at veterans in prison. The report examined the transition from the armed forces to civilian life, highlighting several difficulties faced by former personnel. This included employment, housing and finance, and considered the relationship between recruits from disadvantaged backgrounds and crime (Howard League, 2011: 4). These findings were later replicated in The Royal British Legion (2011) report, and *The Veterans' Transition Review* (Ashcroft, 2014).

The Howard League (2011) report also found that former armed forces personnel were overrepresented among those who had committed sexual offences: 24.7% of veterans in prison compared with 10.9% of the (non-veteran) 'general prison population', and violent offences: 32.9% of veterans in prison compared to 28.6% of the non-veteran,

general prison population² (DASA, 2010 in *ibid.*, p.17). However, a further significant conclusion of the report claimed that it was not possible to directly link military service and offending in a causal relationship (Howard League, 2011: 71), much like Hakeem (1946), Willbach (1948) and Lunden (1952) had suggested in the post-World War(s) period.

The Howard League (2011: 71) report explained that a causal link between military service and offending was not possible, as they had found it difficult 'to discern any particular reason for offending which distinguishes this group from other offenders', stating:

What is clear is that the conventional problems associated with criminal behaviour such as drug and alcohol abuse, homelessness, a poor ability to deal with emotions, low educational attainment and financial pressures, appear to be as common among ex-servicemen in custody as it is among the general prison population. (*ibid.*)

As Walklate and McGarry (2015a: 10) ascertain, this had the very timely effect of 'neatly divert[ing] attention away from the role of the state in engendering violence in young males and neglecting to reintegrate them successfully back into society'.

Research by MacManus et al. (2013) largely contributed to the focus on veterans committing domestic crime ('at home'), in their production of a large scale 'data linkage cohort study', examining the links between pre-existing 'risk factors', military service

² Number of veterans in prison reported as 2,207 (100%) and general prison population as 81, 831 (100%). Actual number of veterans in prison for sexual offences: 546 (24.7%) and for violent offences: 725(32.9%) and (respectively) for the general population, 8,900 (10.9%) and 23, 394 (28.6%) (DASA, 2010, in Howard League, 2011: 17)

and violent offending. It was found that violent offending was the most common form of offending among the veteran cohort, and contrary to the findings of the Howard League (2011), that deployment to Iraq and/or Afghanistan 'was associated with an increase in subsequent violent offending' (MacManus et al., 2013:910). Murray (2013; 2014; 2015; 2016) also conducted research with 'violent veterans' in prison in England and Wales, with some interesting and pertinent findings.

In the wake of the NAPO (2008; 2009) reports, the CJS sought to respond rapidly by creating the 'veteran offender' as a distinct category of offender. However, this was not matched with any changes to policy or practice guidelines. Murray (2013; 2014; 2016) therefore focused on experiences of FMP within the criminal justice system, as well as on those that govern them – adding the much needed and still significantly lacking voices of veterans to the field. The term 'veteranality' was coined (inspired by Michel Foucault's concept of 'governmentality'), to help understand how the CJS deals with and governs 'veteran offenders' (Murray, 2013: 20).

It was found that there are huge tensions that exist between the two socially constructed identities of 'veteran' and 'offender'. Where the term 'veteran' usually summons notions of pride, honour, inclusion and often superior (moral) places within society – 'offender' does the opposite: shame, dishonour, exclusion and often inferior positions in society. Therefore, when these two constructions are combined in the (now official) category of a 'veteran offender', experiences of those within this category often include tensions and struggles with identities, feelings of worth, rejection and belonging. In addition, 'veteran offenders' and those that govern them, described how the CJS often dealt with and viewed them differently from other offenders, whether this

be positively or negatively – usually relating to discourses of ‘hero’ vs. ‘risk’. As Murray neatly summarises, ‘veteran offenders’ often experience a shift in their identity from ‘national defender’ to ‘national offender’ (and sometimes back again) in quick succession (2016: 5).

Murray’s (2016) research aims to disrupt the (historically) typical theorising of veteran offenders as ‘inherently criminogenic’, instead seeking to view violence ‘at home’ on a continuum and not as something that can easily be separated from violence ‘at war’ (see also Walklate, 2016) – or more importantly, from the political landscape of war. When introducing the research, she explains:

I investigate whether their violence is better understood as an extension of the war paradigm itself. What is meant by the “war paradigm” speaks directly to the post 9/11 security terrain, especially how the changing nature of warfare has brought together practices of war and criminal justice in a more unified strategic framework. (Murray: 2016: 10)

Here, Murray also clearly identifies that there is something unique and worthy of research regarding the nature of war, security, and criminal justice in the post 9/11 climate. Furthermore, that the experiences of those within the research must be grounded in this context. As mentioned earlier, the changing nature of warfare will form the specific focus of Chapter 3 for this very reason – 21st century war appears to be a ‘new’ form of conflict (Kaldor, 1999), in need of criminological attention.

The shift from 'national defender' to 'national offender' as discussed by Murray (2016: 5-10), appeared to be further enhanced by high profile cases such as Abu Ghraib³ and Marine A⁴, which expanded the 'deviance' of soldiers to also include offending behaviour during times of service, i.e. 'at war'. Thus, the construction of the 'veteran as "criminal"' is extended to include the 'soldier as criminal' (ibid.). Despite the very recent quashing of Marine A's (Alexander Blackman's) murder conviction being replaced with manslaughter, resulting in his immediate release from prison (Morris, 2017a; BBC, 2017a), these cases appeared to disrupt the dominant image of the British soldier and further complicated the relationship of war and crime.

This is captured in what Walklate and McGarry (2015a, 2015b; McGarry and Walklate, 2016) refer to as 'traces' of violence and war that can be seen to extend and operate along a continuum of violence. When 'illegitimate' violence is committed by soldiers 'at war', it demonstrates how issues of transition from the military to civilian life (alone) are inadequate in explaining away 'veteran offending'. Instead, as Jamieson (1998) discussed, the military must be viewed as a site of violence, which exists outside of 'legitimate' boundaries. In other words, just because soldiers' behaviour(s) at war usually fit within the confines of the law, this does not make it any less violent.

Another important and relevant finding of Murray's (2016) research, concerns the emergence of two dominant representations surrounding the construction of the 'veteran offender'. The first, perhaps not surprisingly, is that of the 'violent veteran'

³ Where US soldiers tortured prisoners in Abu Ghraib, made known through the now iconic images of abuse being released into the public domain (see Hamm, 2007)

⁴ Alexander Blackman – a US marine charged with murder, after head-cam footage of him shooting an injured Afghan whilst in battle was leaked (see BBC, 2014). He was later released in 2017 following a high-profile appeal (see BBC, 2017a).

(Howard League, 2011; MacManus et al., 2013; Murray, 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016). The 'violent veteran' has become '*a problem to be solved*' and in need of suggestions on ways to 'rehabilitate him' (Murray, 2016: 7 emphasis in original). The second dominant representation of the 'veteran offender', is as 'mentally impaired' (Dandeker et al., 2003; Iverson et al., 2005) or, as Murray (2016) terms, the 'vulnerable veteran'. She states that both the 'violent veteran' and the 'vulnerable veteran' appear interrelated, 'as veterans violence is understood largely as the product of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)' (ibid., p.7). As such, a 'prevailing discourse' has emerged to provide 'ways of knowing the veteran', stemming from 'various measures of statistical designs and measures of post-conflict reintegration' (Murray, 2016: 7, see Dandeker et al., 2003; Greenberg et al., 2011; Iverson et al., 2005; Lifton, 1974; MacManus et al., 2013; Sherman, 2010).

As has been the case in the civilian population, the linking of 'mental impairment' to offending, especially violent offending (see Duggan, 2008: 507-510; Hodgins et al., 2008; Peay, 2011), the framing of the 'vulnerable veteran' (mainly regarding PTSD) directs attention to the individual and away from the wider context – often involving complex situations involving state power and institutions. Murray (2016: 8) argues that the aim of trying to 'encapsulate the veteran subject and ways to reform him' with regard to 'vulnerability', often results in the focus being reduced to 'individual capacities, and often incapacities, to cope with memories and legacies of combat'. This reduction can operate (whether intended or not) as a method of individualising the problem of 'veteran offenders', divorcing violence from the politics of war and broader, more complex settings. As such, offending is reduced to questions (and/or answers) surrounding individual pathology and coping (in)abilities.

The Howard League (2011), The Royal British Legion (2011) and Lord Ashcroft (2014) reports, also largely spoke to this construction of the 'vulnerable veteran'. When this vulnerability, namely concerning PTSD (see also MacManus et al., 2013), was paired with offending and the new category of the 'veteran offender', it cemented the overarching constructions of the veteran 'as criminal' and of military service as being 'inherently criminogenic'. However, it also paved the way for a second, equally important dominant construction, of the 'soldier and veteran as "victim"".

2.3.2. The soldier and veteran as 'victim'

While British soldiers of the First and Second World Wars were predominantly cast as heroes (Alker and Godfrey, 2016), military victimhood has 'become increasingly common in contemporary mainstream media reporting' on Afghanistan and Iraq (McGarry and Walklate, 2011: 904; Walklate and McGarry, 2015a: 185). This is primarily with reference to British soldiers losing their lives, for example the death of a soldier in 2010 was reported under the headline, '299th Victim' (Hennesy, 2010: 1, in McGarry and Walklate, 2011) – with similar headlines in the Guardian, 'Helmand awaits its 100th victim' (Townsend, 2008) and from the BBC, 'Afghanistan victim from Cornwall' (2010). However, military victimhood has also been captured in television documentaries such as *Wounded* (BBC, 2009) and *Our Soldiers: Return to Civvy Street* (Channel 4, 2013). Both documentaries presented a range of harms experienced by male soldiers, including dealing with the long-term psychological effects of combat, family separation and social difficulties.

Thomson (1999) suggests that the Vietnam War and subsequent anti-war peace movements assisted in increasing the public perception of the 'soldier as victim' (in McGarry and Walklate, 2011), allowing for such representations of soldiers and veterans to be well received by the public. Walklate and McGarry (2015*b*: 187) explain that the most dominant representation of harms suffered by British military personnel are impairments to mental health. Since 2004, there has been a 'groundswell' of research investigating a range of psychological impacts resulting from conflict, including PTSD; alcohol misuse; struggles with anxiety; and incidents of suicide (see *ibid.*). As Walklate and McGarry (2015*b*: 187) continue, the psychological impact of experiencing conflict, most notably 'the "hidden wound" of PTSD (Treadwell, 2010*b*: 76), is seen as the key push factor leading male British veterans into the criminal justice system'.

Despite this, 'framing the soldier as victim, on whom war leaves other kinds of traces, has received much less visibility' (Walklate and McGarry, 2015*b*: 185). As explained by Rock (2007, in *ibid.*), framing military personnel as 'victim' poses a series of challenges, namely that the image of the soldier does not lend itself easily to 'passive', 'vulnerable' and 'weak' connotations of a 'victim'. However, as the media and criminal justice system (CJS) have begun to draw upon notions of the veteran as 'vulnerable', critical criminologists have since (re)framed such discussions to direct attention upwards, in a bid to hold the state accountable for such harms.

Treadwell (2010*a*) touched upon this when he contextualised his piece on soldiers in the CJS as 'casualties of war' – drawing attention to how aside from the direct harms experienced in the profession of soldiering, many veterans also face struggles with

social inequalities such as homelessness and difficulties with employment post-service. Further, Treadwell (2010: 74) briefly considers soldiers being under-equipped on the battle field:

At present Britain's armed forces have plenty to complain about. They are overstretched and poorly housed at home. On the battlefield they have been described as under-equipped, short on manpower and badly paid (given that no other job requires 24/7 hours).

McGarry (2012a) explores this issue further in *The Workplace of War*, questioning whether British troops are adequately equipped in battle and drawing attention to the (at the time) 590 British soldiers that had lost their lives in Afghanistan and Iraq. Building on the work of Jamieson (1999), McGarry (2012a: 6) argues 'there is "even more to be said" about the circumstances under which some of these deaths have occurred'. McGarry (ibid. p.7) uses the criminological lens developed by Tombs and Whyte (2007), examining issues of health and safety with regard to the military as a workplace, claiming:

The British armed forces are not required to notify the UK Health and Safety Executive of any injuries or deaths that occur as a result of work-related practices or negligence... A[t] the crux of this issue the British military are currently not accountable under any health and safety or human rights legislation for the deaths of its service personnel whilst in the UK or on operations in Afghanistan and Iraq[.]

When this is combined with evidence of deaths resulting from heat exhaustion, vehicle 'accidents', and inadequate equipment, McGarry (2012: 7) concludes by asking, 'are such deaths really part of an "unlimited liability" or is there indeed "more to be said"?'

McGarry and Walklate (2011), in *The Soldier as Victim*, were the first to apply a criminological and victimological lens to address the visible and invisible harms that can result from experiences of serving in conflict. This paper was influential in developing the proposal for this research and thesis, as it made a direct call for criminology to consider the more 'common-place experiences' of British soldiers. Based on data gathered in McGarry's doctoral research (2012b), the exploration of the contradictions and tensions between the constructions of 'soldier' and 'victim' took a significant step back from other criminological work that was focused on former military personnel within the CJS, or with PTSD (McGarry and Walklate, 2011: 905) and instead looked more broadly at 'experiencing, perpetrating and witnessing', (*qua* Cohen's (2001) 'atrocities triangle').

Masculine military culture was highlighted as a barrier to help and support among the military population, as well as appearing to obscure (whether intended or not) victimisation and harms. McGarry and Walklate (2011: 912) observe that British soldiers, 'by virtue of their service, may be unaware that they may have suffered victimisation as a consequence of their experiences', continuing:

Such "victim responsiveness" (Geis 1973) adds an extra layer to a soldier's inability to imagine himself as vulnerable. When this is twinned with the normative masculinity associated with soldiering, the harms experienced by British soldiers become liminal. (McGarry and Walklate, 2011: 912)

Using a criminological and victimological lens to consider 'British soldiers who have had such experiences but not "officially" suffered as a result' (ibid. p. 905) also further

uncovered the 'essential paradox of soldiering', whereby the soldier can be both victim and executioner (Lifton, 1974; Holmes, 2007: 345 in *ibid.* p.907).

In addition, McGarry and Walklate's (2011) paper appeared to have significant implications for criminology, in particular for the 'criminology of war' – concluding that 'peering through' the victimological 'looking glass' regarding war and soldiering exposes inherent flaws within the discipline:

Challenging "victimological otherness" implies challenging the deep self-referential grip that crime and positivism have had on that area of study. Once aware of this challenge, there is no room for retreat, making an exception or abdicating responsibility. (McEvoy and Jamieson, 2007, in *ibid.* p.913)

McGarry (2015) continued to challenge 'victimological otherness', using 'military victimhood' and two high profile cases involving violence and British soldiers⁵ to demonstrate, as has long been known, that 'not all victims of crime are equal before the law' (p. 269). Throughout the paper, it becomes clear that there are 'processes of victimisation that persist without our knowledge' (*ibid.* p.270), where 'military victimhood' can operate to obscure, and equally enhance victim status surrounding violence and harms.

⁵ The first case being the murder of Fusilier Lee Rigby in May, 2013 by 'two British born extremists: Michael Adebolawale and Michael Adebolajo' (McGarry, 2015: 256) and the second being the 'Marine A' case, involving Alexander Blackman ('Marine A') who was charged with murder after killing an injured 'unknown member of the Taliban' in Afghanistan (*ibid.*) Blackman has very recently had this conviction quashed and replaced with manslaughter, leading to his immediate release (BBC, 2017a)

With regard to the complex and often problematic concept of resilience, Walklate et al. (2014) draw upon the example of the soldier in relation to the psychological traumas that can result from combat experiences. In doing so, they highlight another facet of the soldier 'as victim':

 somewhat paradoxically, in times of global preoccupations with risk and presumptions around the effectiveness of professional armies, the expectation that soldiers by definition are harmed as a result of warfare has declined. (ibid., p.412)

The emergence of PTSD in the wake of the Vietnam War is claimed to have changed the ways in which resilience to the harms of soldiering are conceived – from an individual trait of weakness or strength, to being connected to the 'hazardous and psychologically taxing environment' of conflict (Walklate et al., 2014*b*: 412). As such, soldiers are rendered responsible for managing their own risks in war, and for seeking help (ibid.). Remembering that McGarry and Walklate (2011) highlighted help seeking in the military as being problematic due to military masculinities and culture, the soldier may therefore be suffering such harms in silence.

On a very similar finding, Taylor et al. (2017) produced a small piece of research on male veteran victims of domestic violence. Taylor (2017) recently discussed the findings, explaining that the highly masculine military culture appeared to have both helped and hindered participants' experiences of victimisation. On the one hand, participants had expressed beliefs that their military training and service had allowed them to better deal with violence and abuse in a domestic setting. On the other, this very same 'coping mechanism' appeared to obscure and delay acknowledgement that

partners were being abusive and violent, and/or that they (participants) were 'victims'. As such, the research also echoed McGarry and Walklate's (2011) findings that military culture can act as a barrier to help seeking and support.

Walklate and McGarry have since continued to provide a critical space for, and engagement with, the Criminology of War – particularly concerning the dubious legal status of the War on Terror and the invasion of Iraq (2003) (see McGarry Walklate and McGarry, 2015a; 2015b; McGarry and Walklate, 2016). The critical victimological lens, although still limited in application by other academics in the field, is still a core focus of their work. They explain, 'framing the soldier as victim is the juncture at which appreciating the political context of this particular conflict becomes salient' (Walklate and McGarry, 2015b: 182). It is also stated that soldiers' bodies are clearly not neglected in relation to treatment and/or support – whether this be psychological, physical, or financial. However,

where they are neglected is within our capacity to understand either their criminality or their victimhood as a product of not just the traces of war's violences on them as individuals [...] but as a product of the traces of the violences of war that may be perpetrated by them but on behalf of the state. (ibid., p. 191)

As mentioned earlier, this can be captured in the 'paradox of soldiering', whereby the soldier can be both victim and executioner (McGarry and Walklate, 2011). Using a victimological lens can then appear to cast light on an increasingly complex, interconnected web of violence, victimisation, and 'perpetrating' (ibid.).

Although Walklate and McGarry have provided ground breaking space(s) for critical discussions surrounding the 'soldier as victim', and have significantly opened up the victiminological lens to explore the experiences of those that deliver violence on the state's behalf, the voices of soldiers and veterans themselves are still severely lacking. In fact, McGarry's doctoral data appears to be one of the only sources of soldiers' voices within this critical literature.

2.4. Conclusion

This chapter has traced war, predominantly within Criminology, from the post-World War period through to the post 9/11 present. It has been shown that although Criminology has long spoken about war in some form (Walklate and McGarry, 2015a), there is indeed a great deal 'more to be said' (Jamieson, 1999) – especially with regard to the individual experiences of those that are employed to 'make war' on the state's behalf. The majority of literature before 9/11 concerned itself with the inherent criminogenic nature and impact of war and military service on crimes 'at home', regularly treating such offending as clearly separable from behaviour 'at war'. As well as early challenges to the 'war as a school of crime' explanatory model (Hakeem, 1946; Willbach, 1948; Lunden, 1952; Tompkins, 1972), this chapter has also shown examples of early critical scholarship surrounding the military institution and military action as state crime (Sutherland, 1940, 1949; Park, 1941; Mannheim, 1941; von Hentig, 1947; Bryant, 1979).

However, this critical approach to war and the military did not appear to gather momentum within the discipline until after the events of 9/11, following calls by Jamieson (1998, 1999) for a distinct 'Criminology of War' to take seriously the role of

the state in the violence of war (and beyond), along with the complex relationship(s) between war and crime. This, Jamieson argued, also requires criminology to acknowledge that war does not always take the form of conventional, interstate war as the majority of literature depicts (1998: 481). In addition, Jamieson (1999) made clear that 'men in groups', masculinity, and military and institutional culture must also form part of any study of war and the military, as 'there is more to be said' (p.26).

The events of 9/11 had a significant impact on the discipline, particularly in relation to the links and relationships between crime and war. Following the NAPO reports (2008, 2009) and subsequent media attention, this chapter has shown how the criminality of soldiers and 'veteran offenders' received renewed attention, leading to two dominant (individualistic) constructions of the soldier and veteran – as 'criminal' and/or as 'victim'. McGarry and Walklate (2011) demonstrated how (re)framing soldiers as victims in relation to the state, rather than the individual, can expose everyday suffering and harms, especially within the 'essential paradox of soldiering' (Lifton, 1974) – whereby the soldier can be both victim and executioner. They also encourage a critical perspective that places harm(s) on a 'continuum' of violence, thus allowing the traces of war and violence to be seen and analysed (Walklate and McGarry, 2015b).

However, with a small number of exceptions (see McGarry and Walklate, 2011; Howard League, 2011; Murray, 2013, 2014, 2015; Taylor et al., 2017), the voices of soldiers and veterans are still significantly absent from criminological literature. Instead, criminology and related disciplines have largely focused on statistically driven research (see for example MacManus et al., 2013), discussions surrounding the legal aspects of war, as well as the blurring of boundaries surrounding public/private

security, war and crime, legitimate and illegitimate violence, and notions of the inside/outside – from a purely (albeit often critical) theoretical level.

Also, by largely focusing on those who appear to be ‘obviously problematic’, whether as ‘criminal’ or ‘victim’, there is thus a huge gap in knowledge concerning the everyday experiences of British veterans, ultimately rendering their voices unheard and their experiences invisible. As McGarry and Walklate (2011: 905) highlighted,

...few of the criminological literatures concerning themselves with war have been interested in the more banal activities of military life or conflict. So it is worth turning our attention to British soldiers who have had such experiences but not “officially” suffered as a result, or perhaps suffered at all- those who do not have criminal records and are without the diagnosis of a psychological impairment. Instead, they are those who have experienced both the traumatic and residual impacts of conflict in a more commonplace way.

The ‘ordinariness’ of war is one of the main areas and gaps in knowledge in which this thesis will contribute, providing a unique insight into the experiences of currently ‘invisible’, not ‘obviously problematic’ British veterans, that have served in 21st century conflict.

Furthermore, there does not appear to be a discussion within criminology about where former military personnel return *to*. Criminological literature often makes reference to the return to civilian life, or ‘civvy street’ (Treadwell, 2010a; McGarry and Walklate, 2011), yet this appears to be treated as a homogenous experience and has not received analytical attention. What ‘civvy street’ looks like, where it is, who it includes and/or excludes, does not appear to be unpacked or explored within the Criminology of War.

As such, criminological literature can be seen (albeit unintentionally) to assume that the term and concept of 'civvy street' means the same to each veteran.

Running through the majority of criminological attention paid to war post-9/11, is also (whether direct or indirect) an acknowledgement of the unique characteristics of twenty-first century conflict. Yet, it does not appear that any criminological literature (perhaps with the exception of Murray (2016) with regard to 'violent veterans') has explored the significance of 21st century war as being inherently 'different', or 'new' (Kaldor, 1999) in relation to the experiential nature of serving in, and leaving, these conflicts. As such, this thesis will now consider the changing nature of conflict and the 'newness' of 21st century warfare in more detail.

CHAPTER 3

21st Century Conflict: The Changing Nature of War

The state on state conflicts of the 20th century are being replaced by Hybrid Wars and asymmetric contests in which there is no clear-cut distinction between soldiers and civilians and between organised violence, terror, crime and war

Dupont, in Hoffman, *Conflict in the 21st Century*,
2007: 11

3.1. Introduction

This chapter explores the changing nature of warfare over time and identifies the unique characteristics of recent conflicts, particularly 21st century warfare. A number of conceptual frameworks are drawn upon throughout, beginning with section 3.2., which presents the ‘four generations of warfare’ proposed by Lind et al. (1989) and Lind (2004). This framework conceptualises the changing nature of war, beginning with the First Generation wars (1GW) of the French Revolution towards the end of the eighteenth century, up to the present era of Fourth Generation Warfare (4GW) in the 21st century.

Section 3.3. then considers the ‘new patterns of war’ (NPW) established by the West from the 1990s onwards, drawing attention to the ‘revolution in military affairs’ (RMA) and ‘asymmetric warfare’. Section 3.4. considers Kaldor’s (1999, 2012) notion of ‘new wars’, characterised by a ‘blurring of boundaries’ between state and non-state actors; combatants and non-combatants; legitimate violence and criminality; and war and peace. Finally, the ‘newness’ of warfare is placed within the wider context of (Western)

21st century life, using Bauman's (2006) theory of 'liquid fear' to demonstrate how changes to the composition of modern societies, have resulted in a perpetuating state of fluidity and uncertainty (Bauman, 2000, 2002, 2007). A conclusion will then be offered, arguing that the 'newness' of war along with the uncertainty of modern 21st century life has not yet been considered within the literature from the experiential level of the soldier – a gap in knowledge which this thesis contributes towards.

3.2. Four Generations of Warfare

Lind et al. (1989) (further expanded in Lind, 2004) proposes that there are four main generations of modern warfare, often heavily influenced by technological developments and weaponry, as well as the social and political conditions of the time. This model has been far reaching, with few critics (Hoffman, 2007). What is often hailed as one of the unique aspects of this framework, is the consideration of context, politics and social aspects that surround warfare and strategy (Benbow, 2006; Rasmussen, 2006). It is generally accepted that although the Fourth Generation of Warfare (4GW) began as a model, aiming to predict the form that future warfare might take, the 21st century continues to see characteristics of 4GW develop in reality.

3.2.1. First generation warfare

The French Revolutionary Wars and the Napoleonic Wars were the major conflicts of First Generation Warfare (1GW) and were wars of 'line-and-column tactics, where battles were formal and the battlefield was orderly' (Lind, 2004: 12). Williams (2011: 66) describes this generation of warfare as being completely removed from the public, where 'Mirror-image forces would meet on a battlefield to wage war and determine a winner'. The 'mirror-image' nature of battle is also referred to as 'symmetrical'

warfare, where forces are relatively evenly matched in terms of military power and strategy. War was conducted via strategy, 'the matching of military means to a specific end goal', essentially to enable a particular political outcome (ibid., see also Rasmussen, 2006). Unlike the population rising spontaneously, the declaration of *Levée en masse* during the French Revolution, was the state organised and enforced mobilisation of all able-bodied French civilian males (of military age) to fight against the enemy (Detter, 2000: 140, see also Andress, 2006; Addington, 1994). This meant that vast numbers of civilians had to be quickly shaped into an effective military force.

Therefore, as well as having a lasting impact on the meaning of 'citizenship' and the rights that this should afford (Giddens, 1985: 229), the French Revolution (and the following Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars) also dramatically changed warfare and the 'face of battle' (Keegan, 2014). The columns of French armies reflected 'both the élan of the revolution and the low training levels of conscripted troops' (Lind et al., 1989: 22). Lind (2004: 12) states:

The relevance of the First Generation springs from the fact that the battlefield of order created a military culture of order. Most of the things that distinguish military from civilian – uniforms, saluting, careful gradations of rank – were products of the First Generation and were intended to reinforce the culture of order.

The mass national army created during the French Revolution, using *levée en masse*, was hugely influential within Europe and forced traditional dynasties, such as Britain, to remodel their royal armies in a more national direction in order to survive (Forrest et al., 2009).

3.2.2. Clausewitz: 'On War'

Military writers began to emerge during the first half of the nineteenth century, reflecting on the battles stemming from France and Napoleon's war tactics and seeking to predict the form future warfare might take. Most influential of these writers, was Carl von Clausewitz (1780-1831). *On War* (1976 [1832]) was first published after Clausewitz's death, and still heavily influences war theorists today (Duyvesteyn and Angstrom, 2005). In *On War*, Clausewitz (1976: 12, 99) famously asserted that war is a political act and can be seen as 'a continuation of politics by other means', believing that war is 'instrumental in nature and should therefore be understood as a rational phenomenon' (Duyvesteyn and Angstrom, 2005: 4). The factor that distinguishes the political act of war from other political acts, is violence: 'War therefore is an act of violence to compel our opponent to fulfil our will' (Clausewitz, 1976: 1). According to Clausewitz, in theory war is violence unrestrained – 'it knows no bounds' (1976: 3). In reality, 'all sorts of conventions and considerations prevent war from being in practice what it is in theory' (Addington, 1994: 46).

However, Clausewitz (1976) believed that the wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon had achieved in practice what war was in theory, and what had caused the great change 'was the eventual involvement of whole peoples, emotionally as well as physically' (ibid, see also Duyvesteyn and Angstrom, 2005; Moran and Waldron, 2003). He also believed that in the wake of the 'people's wars' of the early nineteenth century, 'it would be harder to restrain the degree of violence employed in future', especially when the motivations for war captured the popular imagination (Addington, 1994: 46). Furthermore, Clausewitz believed that 'the culmination point of war was on the battlefield' (Williams 2011: 67), meaning that resources should be allocated and

developed as such. Although Rasmussen (2006: 7) points out, 'The idea of using armed force is believed to have been defined once and for all by Clausewitz', *On War* made clear that 'War is more than a true chameleon that slightly adapts its characteristics to a given case' (Clausewitz, 1976: 101). Clausewitz therefore acknowledges that all wars differ across time and space, and uses the metaphor of water to capture the fluid nature of warfare and conflict.

Clausewitz and other influential writers¹ began to affect the operation of militaries around the world from the 1870s onwards. The tactics of Napoleon and the mass organisation of war were studied, theorised and adopted widely, contributing to the vast development of national armies in the decades before the First World War. Whether Clausewitz (1976) intended to have such an effect, *On War* appeared to promote 'a faith that in war moderation was imbecility and maximum violence was the surest road to victory' (Addington, 1994: 48). As such, the concept and ideas of 'total war' were developed, which saw the complete involvement and support of a nation's people, resources and infrastructure, along with 'maximum violence' (Addington, 1994: 48; Duyvesteyn and Angstrom, 2005; Forrest et al., 2009). Towards the end of World War I (WWI) and throughout World War II (WWII), 'total war' resulted in the deliberate targeting of the enemy's civilian population, who were becoming increasingly instrumental in the nation's war making efforts and success. The separations between soldier and civilian began to merge, as the whole population became legitimate targets. However, soldiers and civilians still (in the most part) remained physically separated in terms of the battlefield and civilian society.

¹ See Addington, 1994: 44-48 for more information on influential military theorists

3.2.3. Second generation warfare

Second Generation Warfare (2GW) (Lind et al., 1989; Lind, 2004) was developed as a result of the Continuous Front in WWI. As troops were unable to proceed forwards in the lines and columns tactics of 1GW, and had spread out sideways as far as possible, the solution to the stalemate was sought in mass firepower – most of which was indirect artillery fire (Addington, 1994; Lind, 2004). This approach was mainly developed by the French and British, and also sought to return a sense of order to the battlefield that had previously been lost during the nineteenth century, due to the Industrial Revolution and the resulting shift to mass warfare (Lind et al., 1989).

The goal of 2GW was attrition – a ‘wearing down’ of the enemy through sustained pressure and attack. The doctrine was summarised by the French as, ‘the artillery conquers, the infantry occupies’ (Lind, 2004: 12). Artillery and infantries were carefully controlled through detailed, specific plans and orders to create a ‘conducted battle’. Lind (2004: 12) explains,

Second Generation war came as a relief to soldiers (or at least their officers) because it preserved the culture of order. The focus was inward, on rules, processes, and procedures. Obedience was more important than initiative. In fact, initiative was not wanted because it endangered synchronisation. Discipline was top-down and imposed.

Many of the characteristics, methods and tactics from 2GW still appear to be strong features of Western military forces, particularly in US and UK forces. Military cultures and tactics remain based on order, obedience and hierarchies (Ben-Ari, 1998; Lind,

2004) – relying on a heavy use of firepower (Duyvesteyn and Angstrom, 2005; Williams, 2011).

3.2.4. Third generation warfare

The First World War also produced Third Generation Warfare (3GW) (Lind et al., 1989; Lind, 2004). As the French and British structured their war efforts with order and specificity, the German Army developed 3GW, commonly known as ‘blitzkrieg’ or ‘maneuver warfare’ (Lind, 2004). This form of war making does not solely depend on firepower and attrition, but also uses ‘speed, surprise, and mental as well as physical dislocation’ (ibid, p.13). German troops were encouraged to use their initiative and be creative in war, which resulted in 3GW becoming nonlinear, uncertain and unpredictable. Leed (1979: 3) therefore explained that ‘the war experience was nothing if not an experience of radical discontinuity on every level of consciousness’.

Influential Italian General Giulio Douhet, writing in 1921, captured the essence of what Kaldor (1999) termed ‘New Wars’ (considered in section 3.4.), predicting that in future warfare, the disintegration of nations will be accomplished through aerial forces:

No longer can areas exist in which life can be lived in safety and tranquillity, nor can the battlefield any longer be limited to actual combatants. On the contrary, the battlefield will be limited only by the boundaries of the nations at war, and all of their citizens will become combatants, since all of them will be exposed to the aerial offensive of the enemy. There will be no distinction any longer between soldiers and civilians. (Douhet, 1942 [1921]: 10)

The inability to distinguish between civilians and combatants has now become a reality (Kaldor, 1999, 2005; Rasmussen, 2006; Hoffman, 2007; Williams, 2011), and is reflected in what Lind (2004) has termed 'fourth generation warfare' (4GW). However, contrary to Douhet's prediction, the battlefield is no longer limited by the boundaries of nations (Kaldor, 2005; Holmqvist, 2012, Loader and Percy, 2012).

3.2.5. Fourth generation warfare

Lind (2004, see also Lind et al., 1989) explains that the 4GW is characterised by non-state actors using methods developed from insurgency and guerrilla style tactics. The 4GW hypothesis emphasises the 'broader political, social and cultural context, and the conflicts and adversaries to which this gives rise' (Benbow, 2006: 25). What separates 4GW from previous 'irregular' warfare, the history of which 'is about as long as military history itself' (Hoffman, 2007: 18), is the state losing its monopoly on war. Lind (2004: 13) states that all over the world, state militaries are finding themselves fighting non-state opponents, such as al-Qaeda, and 'almost everywhere, the state is losing'.

The model of 4GW makes clear that states are not the only actors that wage war, 'which itself becomes a more diffuse and less precisely definable condition' (Benbow, 2006: 26). The model also emphasises that although non-state actors still appear to be unable to militarily defeat the armed forces of a state, 'they have proved increasingly able to use other means to bypass the old-style battlefield' (ibid.). Hoffman (2007) therefore states that Lind's (2004) framework accurately identifies the blurred nature of 4GW, that 21st century warfare is increasingly embodying,

especially the blurring of war and peace, as well as that between combatants and non-combatants. The core of the concept is that the weakening of the state as an organizing and governing mechanism results in the rise of non-state actors willing and able to challenge the legitimacy of the state. (p.18)

The weakening of the state through the rise of non-state actors is an issue that will be explored further in section 3.3.3. in relation to 'asymmetric warfare'. Although the 4GW framework has critics (see Hoffman, 2007: 18-20), namely surrounding the degree to which states are considered to have 'disintegrated' and 'lost legitimacy', it does appear to capture the unique features of 21st century conflict – particularly the 'war on terror'. The chapter will now consider the 'new patterns of war' that emerged in the 1990s (McInnes, 2005), before returning to the 'New Wars' of the 21st century in section 3.4.

3.3. New Patterns of War

The last decade of the 20th century saw a significant shift in the nature of warfare, referred to as the 'transformation of war' by Martin van Creveld (1991). The 'Cold War' that followed in the wake of WWII transcended the boundaries of nations and 'irrevocably' blurred conventional warfare, through the introduction of proxy wars as 'a common mode of armed intervention for political reasons' (Young, 2007: 151).

Young (ibid.) states:

Both the United States and the Soviet Union, rather than face the nuclear dangers of direct confrontation, or the political embarrassment of overt intervention, funded guerrilla groups in every major conflict zone of the globe.

The colossal costs of war that had been experienced during WWII left deep scars among the many nations involved. Addington (1994: 265, see also Kaldor, 2005) claims as many as 55 million people were killed between 1939 and 1945, with the unimaginable loss involving civilian deaths on a scale never seen before.

However, the two emergent super powers of the United States (US) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) had much to gain by continuing conflict:

The “Cold War” suited both sides. World War II had solved the problems of mass unemployment and of destructive economic nationalism of the 1930s in the West and of inefficiency and lack of legitimacy in the East. The “Cold War” reproduced those solutions. In a way, both right and left colluded in this idea. (Kaldor, 2005: 4)

Duyvesteyn and Angstrom (2005:109) explain that a ‘consensus was emerging that major war between Western powers was obsolete and that the era of total war was over’. Although the West still regularly engaged in military operations, ‘their character was fundamentally different’ (ibid.).

As Williams (2011: 28) states, ‘the sudden implosion of the Soviet Union [meant] the rules of the game dissolved’. During the Cold War, there was a general agreement ‘on the source and nature of the external threat to NATO allies’ (Williams, 2011: 51). Although differences between allies on *how* to pursue their liberal values existed, these differences were ‘subsumed against the higher-order concern of the USSR’ (Williams, 2011: 51). Williams (ibid.) explains: ‘In the post-Cold War era, this strong consensus gave way to a weaker shared position that NATO existed to manage “risks”’. Lind

(2004) describes the consequences of proxy wars, such as the US funding of the Taliban 'in order to overthrow the Communist government of Afghanistan' (Young, 2007: 152), and the subsequent new era of warfare that emerged, to be 4GW.

3.3.1. New patterns of war: a four-point framework

McInnes (2005: 109) states that the literature surrounding 'new patterns of war' 'is united in arguing that during the 1990s, a new kind of warfare began to emerge' - appearing to move conflict towards a new type of 'aggressive warfare', founded in notions of 'deterrence' (Mythen, 2016). The 'failure in Vietnam' is described by Kaldor (2005: 6, see also Rasmussen, 2006: 45) to have:

simultaneously strengthened popular feelings that war is unacceptable, that World War II can never be repeated, and, at the same time, fuelled the preoccupation of military planners with "credibility" and "usability".

The disintegration of Yugoslavia and the subsequent series of wars in the Balkans, raised concerns that the region might be destabilised, possibly affecting Western Europe. This meant that 'instability became the primary challenge of the 1990s' (Williams, 2011: 4). As such, the West developed what McInnes (2005) referred to as 'new patterns of war' (NPW), which sought to restore legitimacy in warfare and reduce the 'risks' associated with making war (Rasmussen, 2006). McInnes (2005) proposed a four-point framework to make sense of this shift towards NPW and to identify the key features of these wars.

Firstly, wars were contained and localised, no longer spreading geographically. This applies not only in terms of fighting being contained to battlefields or areas of combat, but also to impact: 'the West intervened in conflicts *without* the risk of war spreading to the West itself' (McInnes, 2005: 110). Although conflicts in the Cold War had been 'geographically contained' in terms of location, they had acquired 'global dimensions due to super power rivalry' (ibid.). The lack of global conflict in the 1990s, however, meant that there was no longer a wider context for escalation.

Secondly, NPW concerned a transformation in the nature and definition of the enemy. The mass destruction of civilian life caused by total war and the various proxy wars of the Cold War had resulted in a shift in the public's tolerance for war making (Alexander, 2006; Young, 2007). Therefore, where total war had identified the whole of the opposing state and its people as the enemy, Western politicians instead sought to 'explicitly distance themselves' from presenting the people, or the entire state, as the enemy (McInnes, 2005: 111). The enemy was thus defined as a problematic, usually 'repressive', regime, individual and/or 'rogue state' (ibid; Williams, 2011).

Thirdly, and intertwined with the second point of McInnes' (2005) framework, concerns an attempt to minimise 'collateral damage' and civilian deaths. In the 1990s, the West used 'high-precision' weapons with technological 'intelligence', claiming to reduce the involvement (death) of those that were not the enemy. Despite these attempts to reduce civilian casualties, mistakes were still made and 'collateral damage' still occurred. Young (2007: 160) summarises this aspect of NPW:

Use of force frequently involves extreme and brutal collateral damage, the smart bombs don't work, the military don't sufficiently care, it is always exceedingly disproportionate to the harm exerted by the enemy[.]

The strong reactions to such mistakes were in part due to the raised expectations of the public, as they had been promised a war of 'precision and accuracy' (Benbow, 2006; Rasmussen, 2006). However, if the enemy was no longer the people, but a regime or leadership, 'then bombs that missed did not hit the "enemy", but innocent civilians' (McInnes, 2005: 111). One of the reasons the West had become so 'concerned' with not causing collateral damage and avoidable civilian deaths, was also in part due to the fear that such actions 'would have invited retaliation in kind' (ibid.).

This leads to the fourth point in McInnes (2005) framework, which concerns a lack of participation from Western society in conflict, to the point where 'society spectated'. McInnes (p.111) states that wars were 'no longer fought by nations in arms, rather they were fought by representatives on the field of battle'. In other words, the military returned to being a profession and war returned to the battlefield, away from (Western) societies. Young (2007) supports this, stating:

The end of mass conscription in most Western countries means that substantial losses cannot be sustained and mass confrontation avoided at all costs. The return of too many body bags is seen as an electoral danger and, most importantly, the public has little stomach either for massive casualties, whether of our own troops, those of the enemy, or of innocent civilians. The moral changes in public tolerance of violence evident domestically within the wider society are extended to warfare.

One of the main ways that NPW claimed to establish this distance and reduction in loss of life, was the use of significantly advanced technology and communication, commonly referred to as the 'revolution in military affairs', or RMA.

3.3.2. Revolution in military affairs (RMA)

A detailed overview of the 'revolution in military affairs' (RMA) is provided in *The Risk Society at War*, where Rasmussen (2006) describes the 'new risk rationality of strategy' that has emerged in the practice of security policy since the end of the Cold War. Against the background of Western public concerns, Rasmussen (2006: 46) explains that 'the sweeping effectiveness and precision of US forces in the battle for Kuwait did indeed seem revolutionary'. RMA is arguably as old as war itself, and is said to capture the fundamental changes and transformation in military strategy, often brought about by developments in information, communication and technology (Rasmussen, 2006: 43)².

The 1990-1 Gulf War³ 'showed the power of the new technology and how it could be used for "battle in depth"' (Rasmussen, 2006: 46). Although a relatively short war, with considerably less casualties than in previous conflicts, the Gulf War had extreme importance in the changing nature of war and conflict. It stemmed from a long history of conflict within the (Persian) Gulf and between the Gulf and Western states – primarily the US during the Cold War – signalling the 'enduring dominance of American

² For the purposes of this chapter, 'RMA' will be used from now on (unless stated otherwise) to refer to the most recent RMA, beginning in the wake of the Cold War and first used in the Gulf War.

³ Also referred to as the Persian Gulf War, First Gulf War, Kuwait War, First Iraq War.

military power' (Shaw, 1991: 207). McGarry and Walklate (2016) discuss the importance of the Gulf War, stating:

For Baudrillard (1991/1995) and Shaw (1991) we learn that the 1991 Gulf War changed the nature and character of war that perhaps set the context for contemporary warfare. This is a form of war being conducted *interstate* between belligerent nations, to *intrastate* between warring factions. (p4, emphasis in original)

McGarry and Walklate (2016: 3) also highlight the Gulf War as a war of deterrence, functioning "as a preventative electroshock against any future conflict and "shepherding" "foreign" nations into US imperialist systems of democracy'. As such, it was an uneven conflict against an unimagined 'enemy', 'who were decimated virtually and en masse by a more aggressive and powerful state' (ibid; see also Baudrillard, 1995).

The vast developments in technology and information communication created the ability for the Western public to watch precision-guided munitions hit their targets from the comfort of their homes, leading to the Gulf War being named 'the video game war' (Duyvesteyn and Angstrom, 2005: 16-17). However, supporting the third point of McInnes (2005) framework of NPW, Rasmussen (2006: 47) highlights how the US military had to fight the perception that strikes, claimed to be far more 'humane', were more precise than they actually were. As a result, 'the advertised precision made people regard collateral damage in general and civilian casualties in particular as something avoidable for which the military should be held responsible' (ibid.).

Hoffman (2007) argues that following the Cold War, 'America was arming itself for the wrong kinds of war' (p.411), when 'placing particular emphasis on missile defense, space assets, precision weaponry, and information technology' (p.395). As Williams (2011: 65) argues,

American military planners invaded Afghanistan in 2001 utilizing what they believed to be revolutionary tactics ... US strategic planners approached Afghanistan and the Taliban as if it were a traditional state with traditional military forces. It appears that they failed to understand the rather evident reality that the Taliban regime was not a classically organized state and that its forces would not respond like a conventional army.

This is where the West's triumphant claims surrounding the RMA and the ability to wage 'swift and clean wars' began to break down (Benbow, 2009). Benbow (ibid.) argues that RMA advocates failed to recognise and plan for the reality that such strategy only appears to work, and has been developed to work, against traditional states and traditionally organised 'enemies'. When used against non-state, or non-traditional adversaries, the RMA can have what Rasmussen (2006) termed, 'boomerang effects'.

Boomerang effects (ibid.) capture the unintended consequences of the RMA, which, like a boomerang, return to, or 'come back on', the West. For example, Rasmussen (2006: 76) states, 'the fact that RMA enables armed forces to avoid civilian casualties to a degree unheard of in historical terms has a "boomerang effect" because it focuses attention on the civilians who are killed nonetheless'. Therefore, it becomes 'harder to justify death and destruction that wars still bring' (ibid., p.9). This echoes McInnes'

(2005: 111) argument, that when the public is promised precision killing against a narrowly defined enemy, missed targets ultimately means innocent lives lost – severely damaging the ability of states to maintain public support for war making (ibid.; Alexander, 2006).

Rasmussen (2006: 83) also highlights how the West's focus on minimizing 'risk' in war, such as civilian and military deaths, can become a risk in itself. As the West, particularly America, has established a monopoly on warfare and military dominance, enhanced by the RMA and extreme levels of investment in weaponry and technology, very few (if any) states exist that could 'win' in traditional, linear or 'symmetrical' style warfare (Benbow, 2006). When adversaries are non-state actors, victory becomes virtually impossible (Rasmussen, 2006). Thus, adversaries must develop new tactics and strategies to play to their strengths and find (and target) weaknesses of the West if they are to engage and stand a chance in war. A further 'boomerang effect' of the RMA can therefore be seen in adversaries deliberately targeting civilians in Western countries, in acts defined as terrorism (ibid., p. 83).

As McInnes' (2005) framework demonstrates, in establishing NPW using the RMA, the West aimed to reduce risk to (particularly Western) civilians – to contain conflict geographically and prevent it reaching the Western population, and issue 'precision strikes' to narrowly defined 'targets'. When adversaries take violence 'beyond the military sphere' as defined by the West (Rasmussen, 2006: 9), and deliberately target civilians in Western countries *at random*, the West's tactics are thus manipulated and often 'reversed'. This is commonly referred to as 'asymmetric warfare', 'asymmetrical strategies', and/or 'irregular warfare'. Rasmussen (ibid.) explains that the result of

RMA 'is not more rational and cleaner warfare, but rather what two perceptive Chinese colonels term "unrestricted warfare"' (see Liang and Xiangsui, 2015). As Benbow (2009) demonstrated, literature surrounding the current RMA, although useful, is inadequate in making sense of 'New Wars' (Kaldor 1999, 2012). Instead, the notion of 'asymmetric warfare' must also be considered.

3.3.3. Asymmetric warfare

'Asymmetric warfare', like RMA, is not a new concept or feature of war. Benvenisti (2010: 339) states, 'From the dawn of history, adversaries developed capabilities to overwhelm their opponents and conquer them into submission'. However, also like RMA, asymmetric warfare has recently received renewed attention, especially following the events of 9/11. Benbow (2006: 24-5) explains that the concept of 'asymmetric warfare' begins with the 'recognition that not all conflict takes the form of two broadly similar actors pursuing similar strategic approaches against each other'. Asymmetry in conflict can refer to a difference in relative military power between actors, and/or between their strategies and tactics. The terms 'asymmetric' or 'asymmetry' are often used interchangeably with, or alongside, 'irregular' in regards to warfare, to capture 'non-conventional' war making.

'Conventional', 'symmetrical' conflicts, usually take place between 'two or more states that are similarly matched, most commonly in terms of high-intensity air, sea and land capabilities' (John-Hopkins, 2010: 469). Examples of conventional, symmetrical, inter-state conflicts include both World Wars, the Iran-Iraq War, the Falklands War and the Persian Gulf War. John-Hopkins (2010: 470) explains:

Parties to these conventional inter-state symmetrical conflicts sought to “weaken the military forces of the enemy” by disabling “the greatest possible number of men” on the battlefield, typically located away from urban centres. In other words, the goal was to create an asymmetric state of affairs through a material trial of strength, in order to force the adversary to capitulate.

Where the goal of conventional warfare was to *create* asymmetry through war efforts, asymmetric warfare *begins* as an ‘uneven’ conflict between parties. As such, strategy is also likely to be asymmetric or ‘irregular’, meaning conflict often becomes unpredictable and difficult for traditional armies to fight.

In irregular warfare, the ‘weaker’ party often deliberately removes fighting or engagement with the enemy from the traditional ‘battlefield’, or defined areas of conflict, to environments in which their local knowledge and skills become advantageous strengths. This may include urban environments, such as towns and cities, as well as remote, ‘harsh’ environments such as mountains and deserts. Meigs (2003: 4), when discussing the tactics of asymmetric warfare used recently in Afghanistan since 2001, states: ‘al Qaeda’s overall strategy is not new’. Drawing on tactics used in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the Taliban and al Qaeda, when defeated, ‘broke apart and exfiltrated into the mountains of Pakistan and into the villages of remote Afghanistan, remov[ing] the U.S. advantage’ (Meigs, 2003: 8). As John-Hopkins (2010: 471) asserts, in asymmetric conflicts, the militarily ‘weaker’ party must be innovative if they are to attempt to gain advantage:

[the weaker party] may therefore employ indirect offensive and defensive strategies such as guerrilla warfare, concealing themselves among supportive civilian populations in cities, towns and villages, which provide both cover for

them to launch attacks and also protection from counter-attack (see also Arreguín-Toft, 2008: 204-5).

Examples of asymmetric conflicts include 'Vietnam, Chechnya, Gaza, The West Bank, Afghanistan and Iraq' (John-Hopkins, 2010: 470). When researching 'how the weak win wars', Arreguín-Toft (2008: 4) found that 'strong actors have been losing asymmetric conflicts *more and more over time*' (emphasis in original). Arreguín-Toft's (2001, 2008) findings also suggest that weaker adversaries generally prevail in asymmetric conflicts because of the adoption of 'unconventional counter-strategies that transform hostilities into protracted wars of attrition, which become politically costly and unsustainable for the stronger side' (John-Hopkins, 2010: 492). Furthermore, asymmetric conflicts have the tendency to escalate into wars not only *among*, but also *against*, entire civilian populations (Walzer, 2015: 187). The Iraq Body Count (2017), a website that 'maintains the world's largest public database of violent civilian deaths since the 2003 invasion', is a powerful reminder of such escalation⁴.

Rasmussen (2006: 143) discusses asymmetric irregular warfare concerning terrorism within 'risk societies', arguing that the terrorist approach is 'a reflection of the West's fears more than a description of actual terrorist networks'. These fears are grounded in late-modernity, where 'our present lives are defined by the future they are to realise' (ibid. p. 159). As such, Al-Qaeda's key method of terrorism - the suicide bomber - strikes at the heart of 'risk societies', with the robbing of other people's futures deemed 'truly appalling' by Western citizens (p. 159-60). Mythen (2016) echoes this argument that the West has waged the U.S. led 'War on Terror' based on a skewed presentation

⁴ At the time of writing, the number of *recorded* civilian deaths stands at 198, 685 (07/07/2017) [now 288, 000 - 20/08/2018] (see also iCasualties, 2017)

of 'risk' posed by terrorism, namely to security. Drawing on the work of Beck (2009), who terms the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq as 'risk wars', Mythen (2016: 48) explains that these conflicts 'are very much contingent on the representation and interpretation of dangers'.

Despite this, the 'new terrorism' thesis, originating from Laqueur (1996, 1999 in Mythen, 2016: 52), suggests a historically unprecedented level of strategy, technology and objectives, leading to 'a transformation in the nature of political and religious violence'. The significant changes to the organisation of terrorist groups from the last decade of the twentieth century, facilitated by globalisation and accessibility to information technology, have contributed to the weight of the 'new terrorism' thesis. Instead of 'small, close-knit individuals, operating under a tight command and control structure', 'new terrorist groups are said to be more loosely organized and ideationally cohered' (Mythen, 2016: 52, see also Hoffman, 2007, 2012). Rasmussen (2006: 163) asserts that 'al Qaeda is widely regarded as the first of a new breed of terrorists who are able to exploit the flows of globalisation to their advantage'.

Kilcullen (2007: 39) therefore asks, 'How do we defeat enemies who exploit the tools of globalization and open societies, without destroying the very things we seek to protect?'. Mythen's (2016) warning, that the weight attributed to the 'new terrorism' thesis should be 'treated with caution', is important and insightful. By employing Beck's (1999, 2002, 2009) work on 'the risk society', Mythen (2016) and Rasmussen (2006) begin to unpack the exaggeration, manipulation, and agendas mobilised by the West – particularly by the US and UK – under the umbrella of the 'war on terror' (see also Whyte, 2003, 2007, 2010). This includes, for example, the desire to protect and spread

Western ideologies of democracy and rationality, through military action couched in notions of 'deterrence' against future 'risk' (McGarry and Walklate, 2016: 3).

Rasmussen (2006: 164) claims that terrorism is considered to pose a direct threat to rationality and democracy underpinning Western ideologies:

Irrationality is scary from a risk-society perspective because an irrational agent does not attempt to manage risks: instead he thinks little about the future and does not care much about boomerang effects.

Debate about the rationality of the 'new enemies', namely those defined as terrorists, 'thus defined Western strategy at the beginning of the twenty-first century' (ibid. p. 160). Rasmussen (2006: 185) also explains that in the terminology of risk society, 'it is wars that are worth the risk, because not fighting them would be seen as a betrayal of certain values'. Wars of the 21st century engaged in by the West have therefore taken on a different character, often focused on 'individuals who must be held responsible for their actions' (ibid.; Thornton, 2007).

In 1991, Martin van Creveld wrote that 'in the future, there will be a tendency to regard such [enemy] leaders as criminals who richly deserve the worst fate that can be inflicted upon them' (p. 200). Rasmussen (2006: 185) states that in the years that followed, 'the conflicts the West has engaged in have been personalised exactly in the way Creveld described'. Naming enemy leaders as 'criminal', and the subsequent wars (Afghanistan and Iraq, for example) that have been waged against them (McInnes, 2005), have contributed to the blurring of war and crime (see also Chapter 2). The

blurring of boundaries, along with the unique opportunities for organized violence that globalisation has provided, characterise what Kaldor (1999, 2012) termed, 'New Wars'.

3.4. 'New Wars': The Blurring of Boundaries

Kaldor (1999: 1) explains her central argument is 'that, during the 1980s and 1990s, a new type of organized violence has developed, especially in Africa and Eastern Europe, which is one aspect of the current globalized era'. This type of violence was termed 'New War', with 'new' being used to distinguish these wars 'from prevailing perceptions of war drawn from an earlier era', and 'war' to 'emphasize the political nature of this new type of violence' (ibid. p. 1-2). Although Kaldor (1999: 3) agrees that there has been a RMA, the revolution is argued to be 'in the social relations of warfare, not in technology'. These social relations concern globalisation and the disintegration of states (Kaldor. 2005). In order to fully appreciate the 'newness' of wars stemming from the 1990s onwards, a brief reminder of the nature of 'Old Wars' is necessary.

'Old War' refers to an idealised form of war 'that characterised Europe between the late 18th and the middle of the 20th century. "Old War" is war between states fought by armed forces in uniform, where the decisive encounter was battle' (Kaldor, 2005: 2). As Tilley (1990 in Kaldor, 2005) argued, Old Wars were linked to the rise of the modern state and were state-building. Further still, Old Wars were fought according to certain rules (at least in theory), codified in the Geneva and Hague Conventions. As Kaldor (2005: 3) states, 'rules were critical to establishing the legitimacy of wars'. Old Wars, as described by Kaldor, also fit with descriptions of First, Second, and Third Generation

Warfare, proposed by Lind et. Al (1989; Lind, 2004). 'New Wars', according to Kaldor (2005: 3) 'are just the opposite':

These are wars fought by networks of state and non-state actors, often without uniforms... They are wars where battles are rare and where most violence is directed against civilians as a consequence of counter-insurgency tactics or ethnic cleansing. They are wars where taxation is falling and war finance consists of loot and pillage, illegal trading and other war-generated revenue. They are wars where the distinctions between combatant and non-combatant, legitimate violence and criminality are all breaking down.

Kaldor (1999, 2005, 2012) stresses that the process of globalisation, the intensification of 'global interconnectedness – political, economic, military and cultural' – is a key component of New Wars. The globalisation of the 1980s and 90s is particularly important, as it is considered to have been 'a qualitatively new phenomenon which can, at least in part, be explained as a consequence of the revolution in information technologies and dramatic improvements in communication and data processing' (Kaldor, 1999: 3).

New Wars, although usually localised, involve 'a myriad of transnational connections' so that the distinctions 'between internal and external, between aggression (attacks from abroad) and repression (attacks from inside the country), or even between local and global are difficult to sustain' (Kaldor, 1999: 2). The impact of globalisation is also claimed to be visible in New Wars through the global presence of international reporters, mercenary troops and a 'veritable "army" of international agencies' – including non-government organisations (NGOs) such as the International Red Cross and Oxfam, as well as international institutions like the European Union (EU) and the

United Nations (UN) (ibid. p.4). Kaldor (1999: 4-5) argues that the monopoly of legitimate organised violence has been eroded, both from above – through the ‘transnationalization of military forces’ beginning during the two world wars, and further cemented during the Cold War, and from below – by privatisation.

This has created a ‘new war economy’, involving violence being ‘increasingly privatized both as a result of growing organized crime and the emergence of paramilitary groups, and political legitimacy disappearing’ (Kaldor, 1999: 5, see also Ruggiero, 1996, 2005, 2006, 2015; Whyte, 2003, 2007, 2010). Kaldor (1999: 9) expands and terms this the ‘new “globalized” war economy’ – which is almost the opposite of the centralised, totalising economies of the World Wars. Kaldor (2012) suggests that this new type of warfare must therefore be understood in terms of ‘global dislocation’, whereby the multiple actors involved in new wars, who operate beyond the confines of the nation state, have resulted in security being reconceptualised. This reconception of security was enshrined in the UN commitments to ‘human security’, as the principle denotation of peace and justice (Evans, 2013).

The shift in war making to include peacekeeping and the promotion of democracy has left a number of scholars notably troubled (Edmunds, 2006). The union of security and development, permitting Western forms of violent intervention in the name of humanitarian aims and principles, is argued by Duffield (2007) to be inherent to understandings of New Wars. When discussing the well known statement made by Clausewitz (1976: 12, 99) that ‘war is a continuation of politics by other means’, John-Hopkins (2010: 471-2) suggests that ‘[t]his still holds true for contemporary armed

conflicts, but with the added proviso that humanitarian law may serve as a continuation of war by other means’.

Significant debates in the post 9/11 setting have appreciated the significance of legal questions surrounding war, particularly questions ‘concerning [the] legality of interventions and the right to wage war to protect the peace’ (Murray, 2016: 50), as well as the legality of the 2003 invasion of Iraq (Kramer and Michalowski, 2005). This has led to a revival in the work of Carl Schmitt (1934), notably inspired by Agamben (2005), regarding the right to suspend rights and as a framework to express concern over exceptional abuses of Sovereign power. However, distinctly lacking from these discussions is an engagement with what the changing nature of war means for the role of the soldier, especially at an experiential level.

One rare exception to this can be found in Murray’s (2012, 2014, 2015, 2016) work with ‘violent veterans’ imprisoned in England and Wales. Murray’s research considers the blurring of boundaries between war and the criminal justice system and seeks to place the narratives of participants within this context. Much has been written about the blurring of language in respect to the inescapable presence of war within criminological discourse (see for example Alexander, 2006; Garland, 1996; Mythen, 2016; Ruggiero, 2005, Steinert, 2003). The use of war metaphors speaks of ‘ways to manage social problems, namely crime, in a way that assumes for “them” an “enemy” status’ (Murray, 2015: 60). Examples include ‘wars’ on drugs, trafficking, poverty and, of course, the ‘war on terror’. Murray (ibid.), however, highlights that not so well documented, is ‘that warfare relies more and more frequently upon metaphors of

criminal justice'. Crucial to this reversed blurring of language, is the perception of insurgents not as actors of war, but rather as 'criminals' deserving of 'punishment'.

Degenhardt (2007, 2010, 2013) demonstrates that the use of criminal justice metaphors in war is not unique to the recent war on terror, as earlier examples can be found in the need to 'punish', or react to the 'illegal', in the first Gulf War, Kosovo and Northern Ireland. Yet, these metaphors now appear to be increasingly obvious, with public and political rhetoric grounded in notions such as: 'bring terrorists to justice' and 'eliminate the threat that they pose' (Blair, 2001). This has meant that counter-strategies have emerged with criminals in mind, 'leading to a war that merges military provision with police provision and practices of war with law enforcement in a bid to protect the domestic through international designs' (Murray, 2015: 60, see also Sparks, 2006; Loader and Percy, 2012). As Murray (2016: 57) states,

This blurring has seen NATO coalition forces train Afghan Police as part of their role in occupying Afghanistan (Loader and Percy, 2012); the military employing policing tasks such as going on 'patrol', and further still, the military having an increasing role in securing the domestic arena.

Examples of the military occupying roles in the domestic sphere, include the British military providing over 30,000 soldiers to cover the firefighters' strike from 2002-3 (Rayment, 2002); providing security in the 2012 Olympics held in London; as well as the very recent deployment of the military to UK streets, to assist police following the Manchester bombing (Booth et al., 2017). Ryan (2013: 457) explains, the implications of this blurring, where 'the links between police and military actions are continually reinforced', means that 'the boundaries of military and police are becoming

undecidable'. Murray (2016: 57-8) argues, 'one must therefore question not only if terrorists are actors of war or criminals, but also if veterans are actors of war or crime fighters'.

As such, Kaldor (1999: 5) explains that the distinctions between 'external barbarity and domestic civility, between the combatant as the legitimate bearer of arms and the non-combatant, between the soldier or policeman and the criminal' are breaking down. Loader and Percy (2012: 214) discussed this blurring and erosion of boundaries in terms of the 'inside' and 'outside', stating: 'security and threats are no longer (if they ever were) ordered along simple lines of "inside" and "outside", "war" and "crime", and "public" and "private"' (see also Beck, 2002: 47). For Ruggiero (2016),

war is no longer a "duel" (qua von Clausewitz 1968), it is instead a manhunt pursued using deadly technologies that limit the human sacrifices of invading military actors whilst meting out extra judicial executions. It is also fought not simply by belligerent armies but by private military contractors (PMSc) who are seldom held accountable for violence' (McGarry and Walklate, 2016: 8-9).

Loader and Percy (2012: 214) explain that the incorporation of 'private actors of many persuasions, from private military and security companies' has meant that the notion of public/private divide in security terms, where the state held the legitimate monopoly on the use of violence, is 'clearly and spectacularly eroded (see also White, 2010, 2012, 2016, 2018).

The blurring of boundaries within new wars thus extends to the actors themselves. Very few accounts exist concerning what this means for the experiences of soldiers

serving in the new wars of the 21st century and equally, as highlighted by Degenhardt (2016), for civilians within these conflict zones.

Furthermore, the new wars of the twenty-first century also see a blurring of boundaries between war and peace (Hoffman, 2007). A striking example of this is the rise in 'home grown terrorism' (Lind, 2004; Alexander, 2006), claimed by Lind (2004: 14) to be 'by far the most dangerous kind' of 4GW. Lind (ibid.) explains that because the core of 4GW is the crisis of legitimacy of the state, 4GW has begun to evolve on 'home soil'. The London bombings on 7th July 2005, often referred to as the '7/7 bombings', are a prime example. The 7/7 bombings involved four suicide bombers, carrying out a co-ordinated attack on central London's public transport at rush hour (BBC, 2005a). The attacks were related to the British involvement in Iraq and were carried out by young males who were British citizens (Alexander, 2006; 17).

This was also the case in the high-profile murder in 2013 of Lee Rigby, a British soldier, on the streets of Woolwich, London. The two men responsible for the murder, Michael Adebolajo and Michael Adebowale, were also both British citizens, and as was the case in the 7/7 bombings, they claimed that the attack was related to British military involvement in the Middle East. Michael Adebowale addressed onlookers filming the incident and delivered the following message:

The only reason we have killed this man today is because Muslims are dying daily by British soldiers and this British soldier is one; he is an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth (2013, in McEnery et al., 2015: 238)

Here the 'inside'/'outside' security divide (Loader and Percy, 2012), where the West has so far attempted to prevent 'outside' threats for the benefit of those on the (Western) 'inside', collapses. Attempts and claims to maintain Western society as a 'safe space', i.e. not affected by conflict and war making in the Middle East (Mangold, 2016) as established in the 'new patterns of war' of the 1990s (McInnes, 2005), become increasingly difficult to sustain. The post-9/11 society, like warfare, has also undergone changes as a response to these new security threats.

3.4.1. 'New Wars' and 21st century society

Bauman's (2006) conceptualisation of 'liquid fear' captures the threats of the twenty-first century, such as those posed by terrorist attacks, especially 'home grown' attacks. Liquid fear is a concept that places language on the 'unknowability' of fear within 'liquid modernity', in which 'disembeddedness' characterises the current situation at both individual and societal levels (Bauman, 2002). If fears are unknowable, and 'risks' no longer have points of origin, 'solving', preventing or attempting to control such fears becomes increasingly difficult, and in some cases, nearly impossible. Bauman, when introducing *Liquid Fear*, states:

Fear is as its most fearsome when it is diffuse, scattered, unclear, unattached, unanchored, free floating, with no clear address or cause; when it haunts us with no visible rhyme or reason, when the menace we should be afraid of can be glimpsed everywhere but is nowhere to be seen. "Fear" is the name we give to our *uncertainty*: to our ignorance of the threat and what is to be done' (2000: 2, emphasis in original).

The ever-increasing number of terrorist attacks in Western countries since 9/11 tap into this notion of Western 'liquid fears'. Namely, Western fears surrounding 'uncontrollable risk', especially with regard to security and democracy (Beck, 1999, 2002). 'Uncontrollable risk', as Beck (2002: 41) states, is 'a contradiction in terms'. Yet, in the current 'risk society', 'it is the only apt description for the second-order, *unnatural*, human-made, manufactured uncertainties and hazards beyond boundaries we are confronted with' (ibid.). As McInnes (2005: 116) contends, this has resulted in tactics of asymmetric warfare designed to strike at the very heart of the West's fears – 'security' and the protection of those defined as 'citizens', through 'indiscriminate targeting' that generates wholly unpredictable, and thus 'uncontrollable', threat and fear.

Beck (2002: 46) also argues that following 9/11, uncontrollable risk is now 'irredeemable and deeply engineered into all the process that sustain life in advanced societies'. All the distinctions that define the nation state – borders that divide domestic from international ('inside' from 'outside'), the police from the military, crime from war and war from peace – have been 'overthrown' (ibid., p. 47). As Bauman (2002: 87) suggested, the lasting significance of the events of 9/11 will prove to be 'that of a *symbolic end to the era of space*' (emphasis in original). This directly challenges the legitimacy of states' claims to provide 'security', through exclusion based on spatiality (Young, 2007; Lippens, 2001, 2004).

As Bauman (2002: 101) explains, one of the purposes and aims of terrorist acts is to target the 'loopholes' and limits of confinement, demonstrating that 'blows can be delivered' to powerful adversaries – undermining their claims to provide security to

citizens. Whatever form future warfare takes, Hoffman (2007) argues that it will be hybrid, custom-designed conflict targeting Western, particularly U.S., vulnerabilities. The strength of weaker adversaries, also argued by Arreguín-Toft (2001, 2008), will lie in their ability to adapt. Meigs (2003: 8) claims, 'by exploiting our weaknesses and blind spots, the terrorist is capable of inflicting harm at will. His operational asymmetry is derived from his ability to continuously evolve new tactics'.

When analysing the events of 9/11, involving the hijacking of commercial aircrafts, Meigs (2003: 8-9) claims:

His ['the terrorist's'] advantage lies in our inability to recognize these new structures of his operation and to predict his new attack vector. ... [This] combination permitted the terrorists to use a mechanism for transportation we all take for granted as part of our system of commerce and common benefit, and turn it into a devastating weapon.

This has also been seen more recently with the use of domestic vehicles in multiple attacks across Europe, including London (see Dodd and Taylor, 2017⁵; BBC, 2017⁶), France (see Samuel, 2017⁷) and Germany (see Worley, 2017⁸). Hoffman (2007: 399) predicts that rather than 'short, decisive conflicts, future wars will involve protracted and extremely lethal conflicts of the most savage violence – in short, complex irregular warfare'. Transnational cooperation is therefore suggested by Beck (2002) to be the

⁵ Van drove into pedestrians outside a Mosque in Finsbury Park, London, 19/06/2017

⁶ Car drove into pedestrians on Westminster Bridge, London, 22/03/2017

⁷ Car drove into pedestrians on Champs-Élysées roundabout, Paris, 19/06/2017

⁸ Truck drove into pedestrians at a Christmas Market in Berlin, Germany, 19/12/2016

only solution to the problem of global terror, echoed by Ryan (2011, 2013), who advocates that 'security' is transnational policing.

Hoffman (2007: 398) claims that 'one of the few areas of consensus among military analysts is that we are sure to see the further blurring of warfare categories.' As Kaldor (1999, 2005, 2012) argues, new wars must be understood in the context of globalisation and the ever-increasing interconnectedness and speed of communication. However, despite the wealth of discussion concerning the changes in warfare, the literature is still lacking an engagement with what all of this means at an *experiential* level – for those employed by the state to deliver violence on their behalf, and further, who return to a 'post-conflict' life amid the 'liquid times' of 21st century society (Bauman, 2007). This thesis contributes towards these gaps in knowledge.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has contextualised the fundamental changes in warfare from the eighteenth century, beginning with the first generation of warfare (Lind 2004), to the fourth generation in the 21st century present. It has presented and drawn upon a number of frameworks that seek to conceptualise these changes, culminating in Kaldor's notion of 'new wars'. It has also shown that scholars from criminology, as well as fellow disciplines including law, international relations and politics, have much to say about the changing nature of war – particularly in the post-9/11 setting. Further, that most scholars agree, despite differing perspectives, that 21st century warfare is in some way 'new'.

Although Gray (2005) argues that 'if war's nature were to alter, it would become something else', this chapter has demonstrated that the nature of war could be seen to have changed at 'a most profound level, that of definition' (Alexander, 2006: 43). The blurring of boundaries, between war and crime; military and police; public and private security; combatant, criminal and civilian; and war and peace, are widely accepted to characterise the 'newness' of recent warfare, particularly 21st century conflict(s). In addition, the 'liquid fears' (Bauman, 2006) and 'uncontrollable risks' (Beck, 2002) of modern life, present new challenges for (particularly Western) states, their security and for war making. The inability and difficulty in identifying and defining 'enemies', their location, their strategy and motives, means that the 'war on terror' can be seen to be everywhere and nowhere (Bauman, 2006). The growing trend of 'home grown' terrorism only enhances these difficulties and, as Lind (2004) described as being the core of fourth generation warfare, can erode the legitimacy of Western states from within, or from the 'inside' (Loader and Percy, 2012).

In addition, the legitimacy of the violence used by states is also in question, most notably in regards to legality (Kramer and Michalowski, 2005; Braithwaite and Wardak, 2012*a*, 2012*b*), and in relation to the ever increasing use of private military contractors (Ruggiero, 2004; 2015; White, 2015; 2018). War making and state violence is especially problematic when mobilised under notions of criminal justice, peacekeeping and humanitarian aims (Duffield, 2007; Kaldor, 2005). As General Krulak predicted, this can result in 'three block war', where state forces find themselves 'simultaneously fighting, peacekeeping, and handling humanitarian tasks in the same battlefield' (in Hoffman, 2007: 398).

Ultimately, this chapter has shown that the 'rules' of warfare (as we have previously known it) 'no longer apply' (Rasmussen, 2006: 163), and that the 'game has changed' (Williams, 2011). Yet, despite the wealth of engagement with the newness of 21st century war at theoretical and legal levels, there is a distinct absence of engagement with what this means at an experiential level for those serving in these conflicts and occupying blurred military roles. Furthermore, when the characteristics of 'New Wars' are combined with the well documented changes in modern societies (see for example Bauman, 2000, 2002, 2006; Beck, 1999, 2002; Young, 1999, 2007), there is also an absence of what all this means to those leaving 21st century conflict and how the transition from military to civilian ('post-conflict') life is experienced. As such, it is essential to question whether new 'logics of practice' (Bourdieu, 1977) have developed in response to the changing 'rules', and 'game', of warfare and modern society. Chapter 4 will now present the theoretical framework of this thesis, which draws upon concepts of social capital and the 'thinking tools' of Bourdieu (1977; 1990).

CHAPTER 4

Social Capital, Transitions, and The ‘Thinking Tools’ of Bourdieu: From One Field to Another

[T]he social agent is before anything else a being of flesh, nerves and sense (in the twofold meaning of sensual and signifying), a “suffering being” who partakes of the universe that makes him, and that he in turn contributes to making, with every fibre of his body and heart.

Wacquant, *Body and Soul*, 2004: vii

One must thus draw up a theory of this non-theoretical, partial, somewhat down-to-earth relationship with the social world that is the relation of ordinary experience.

Bourdieu, *In Other Words*, 1994 [1987]: 21

4.1. Introduction

Since the production of the first NAPO report in 2008, the notion of transition from military to civilian life has received increased political, social and academic interest (Cooper et al., 2016: 2). However, as argued in Chapters 2 and 3, very little exists by way of theorising this transition, and even less with regard to qualitatively capturing the experiences and voices of those that have left the military in the 21st century. When reviewing literature surrounding ‘military to civilian transitions’ (MCT), the lack of theorising within criminology and war led me to look outside the field, finding a body of work within the drug sphere that has long drawn upon the concept of social capital (SC) to make sense of the transitions experienced by recovering drug users.

Early conversations with my supervisor Samantha Weston, whose current research is also drawing upon frameworks of SC (Weston, 2016; Weston et al., 2018), led to a joint paper exploring the under researched ‘dark side’ of SC for marginalised groups (Wilkinson and Weston, 2015). Applying the notion of SC, and in particular considering the negative consequences it can have, proved extremely useful when thinking about transitions and the struggles that may arise as a result. However, placing SC back within the wider sociological approach of ‘field theory’ originally proposed by Bourdieu (1977 [1972]), provided a much deeper theoretical framework in which to make sense of the complex experiences of leaving the military, as expressed through the narratives of veterans within this research.

This chapter will therefore follow this same line of theoretical development, from the notion of SC, to Bourdieu’s (1977, 1990) ‘field theory’ and ‘thinking tools’. In keeping with Bourdieu’s grounded approach to social research, this chapter will frame the core theoretical framework¹ in the context of MCT in which it has arisen. As such, section 4.2. provides a brief overview of SC and transitions, paying specific attention to ‘bonding’ capital and ‘bridging’ capital; the under researched and often overlooked ‘dark side’ of SC; and the concept of ‘recovery capital’. Section 4.3. will then present Bourdieu’s (1977, 1990) ‘field theory’, beginning with contextualising its emergence, before moving onto present the core ‘thinking tools’ of habitus, field, capital, doxa and hysteresis.

¹ Other theories will be also drawn upon throughout the thesis, as and when appropriate.

4.2. Social Capital and Transitions

Social capital (SC) is a notion that has existed for many years and has 'become an influential concept in debating and understanding the modern world' (Baron et al., 2000: 1). Since the 1990s in particular, SC has 'captured the imagination and attention of social science researchers and policy-makers more than many other sociological constructs', leading to a range of policy developments and initiatives across a broad spectrum of issues (Li, 2015: 1). SC also spans disciplinary fields, with Portes (1998) observing that it is perhaps the best example of a sociological concept being 'exported' to other disciplines. However, Portes (1998: 2, see also Fine, 2002: 798) argues that the application of SC 'has evolved into something of a cure-all and, like other sociological concepts... [t]he original meaning of the term and its heuristic values are being put to severe tests' by the increasingly vast range of applications.

Although SC can have many benefits, there is an often neglected, and equally important, 'dark side' – which can lead to negative consequences such as social exclusion and isolation (Li et al., 2003). The positive and negative impacts of SC are both present within the narratives of participants in this research, appearing to be significant within how serving in, and leaving, the military is experienced in the 21st century. This section introduces the SC literature, as well as demonstrating that the concept has proved extremely useful within the drugs sphere, to make sense of the processes of transition experienced by people recovering from addiction.

4.2.1. Social capital (SC)

Broadly defined as 'social networks, the reciprocities that arise from them and the value of these for achieving mutual goals' (Baron *et al*, 2000: 1), SC centres on the idea

that 'social networks have value' (Putnam, 2000: 19), and are a 'valuable asset' (Weston et al., 2018). SC can be thought of as the 'collective value' of all social networks, and captures the specific benefits that flow from the trust, reciprocity, information and cooperation of social networks. This is said to increase social interaction and a sense of belonging and tolerance, claimed to deliver benefits to those involved, as well as helping to build communities and social cohesion (Bartkus and Davis, 2009). Furthermore, Cloud and Granfield (2008: 1973) highlight that:

Social capital is important during life crises because it affects the options, resources, information, and supports available to people as they attempt to resolve their problems. The possession of social capital helps facilitate particular ends, whether it is in acquiring employment or whether it is overcoming a major life obstacle.

The transition from military to civilian life can present a complex variety of problems (Ashcroft, 2014), even for those claimed to have transitioned 'successfully' – as will be shown within this thesis.

The introduction of SC to theoretical debate can be attributed to three main authors: Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman, and Robert Putnam (Baron et al., 2000), who have defined and applied the concept in different ways, however all agreeing that 'relationships matter' (Field, 2003: 1). Bourdieu (1977 [1972], 1984, 1986; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977 [1970]) is often heavily credited with being among the first authors to write in specific terms of SC during the 1960s and 70s (Baron et al., 2000). However, it was not until his later works that the concept was defined and used with clarity, with Bourdieu instead dedicating considerably more attention to other forms

of capital – namely cultural, economic and symbolic (considered in more detail in section 4.3.). Yet, SC has always formed an important concept within his discussions surrounding the accumulation, conservation and transmission of capital for instrumental purposes (Lareau and Weininger, 2003: 568) – defining the concept as:

the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition ... which provides each of its members with the backing of collectively-owned capital. (Bourdieu, 1986: 51)

Bourdieu (1986) therefore refers to SC, as with other forms of capital, to address differential resources of power, seeking to link an analysis of the cultural, to that of the economic.

According to Bourdieu (1986: 51-2), SC depends on the size of social networks, as well as the amount and quality of resources contained within the networks – such as prestige, power and wealth. To secure benefits and/or goals, SC needs to be ‘spendable’ in some way – i.e. it has to be mobilised and transferable, where people need to *invest* in sociability to cultivate and consolidate social relations in order to gain access to it (Bourdieu, 1986: 52). The main contextual basis of Bourdieu’s (1986; 1997) discussions of SC is in relation to education, and the benefits that middle and upper class families (in France) could obtain through their various forms of capital. For example, parents wealthy in economic, cultural, and SC were more likely to facilitate their children achieving high levels of educational and occupational success. SC was important at school level and beyond, due to the social networks that could be mobilised for opportunities at schools, and subsequently for employment (see also Lin,

1982). Echoing his stance on economic and cultural forms of capital, Bourdieu's (1986) conception of SC was therefore grounded in the reinforcement and (re)production of social inequality – serving mainly as an 'exclusionary device' (Li, 2015).

Coleman is the second prominent theorist within SC literature, whose work was notably influenced by Bourdieu's approach – especially regarding its benefits for educational advantage (1990a; Bourdieu and Coleman, 1991). However, unlike Bourdieu, Coleman (1988, 1990b, 1994, 1997) saw the creation of SC 'as a largely unintentional process, which he defined mainly in functional terms' (Baron et al., 2000: 7). For Coleman (1994: 314), SC arises as a 'by-product' of activities intended 'for other purposes', meaning that 'there is often little or no direct investment' in it. This is at odds with Bourdieu (1986, 1990), who discusses SC in relation to 'strategy' and the advancement of one's social position. Although Coleman's work has been responsible for shaping contemporary debate, his work has also been heavily critiqued. Portes (1998: 4-5) draws attention to Coleman's 'rather vague definition', arguing that close or dense ties, also termed 'bonding capital', had been overemphasised to the neglect of weaker ties, or 'bridging capital'.

4.2.2. Bonding capital and bridging capital

One of the main criticisms of social capital (SC) theories relates to the emphasis on close, dense social networks, usually cast in an overwhelmingly positive light (van Deth and Zmerli, 2010). Granovetter (1973; 1983) was one of the first scholars to draw attention to the potential negatives, explaining that there are two forms of social networks that make up SC. The first are 'strong ties' (bonding capital), referring to dense social networks usually made up of close family and friends, and the second are

'weak ties' (bridging capital), consisting of all other acquaintances, which form a 'loose' network (Granovetter, 1983: 201-2). Strong ties are claimed to consist of people that usually have similar views and values, whereas weak ties usually consist of networks of loosely connected people, who are likely to vary in backgrounds and values (Granovetter, 1973: 1370).

Contrary to most discussions of SC that enforce the importance strong ties, Granovetter (1973, 1983) argued that there is actually great 'strength in weak ties'. The strength of 'weak ties' to those outside one's close-knit networks, lies in the 'bridging' capabilities to other social groups. This bridging capability is claimed by Granovetter (1983: 202) to be of extreme importance:

Individuals with few weak ties will be deprived of information from distant parts of the social system and will be confined to the provincial news and views of their close friends. This deprivation will not only insulate them from the latest ideas and fashions but may put them in a disadvantaged position in the labour market, where advancement depends, as I have documented elsewhere (1974), on knowing about appropriate job openings at just the right time. Furthermore, such individuals may be difficult to organize or integrate into political movements of any kind.

Crucial to Granovetter's (1973, 1983) argument, is that weak ties can provide channels of information between social groups, and access to opportunities that would otherwise be inaccessible.

Granovetter (1983: 202) argues that the spread of information and new ideas is essential to the promotion and development of inclusive societies and communities,

particularly regarding connections to those 'separated by race, ethnicity, geography, or other characteristics'. Instead of placing an emphasis on the establishment and creation of SC alone, as much of the recent policy and practice initiatives do (van Deth and Zmerli, 2010), Granovetter (1973: 1360; 1983) argues that the focus should be placed on developing 'weak ties'. This would encourage the (re)connection of individuals from otherwise disconnected and potentially isolated communities, in addition to opening up opportunities to a wider, more diverse network of individuals.

This has more recently been supported by Lin (2001), who proposed a network-based theory, viewing SC as an 'investment in social relations with expected return in the marketplace' (p. 19). More specifically, SC is seen as both a concept *and* a theory:

As a concept, it represents investment in certain types of resources of value in a given society. As a theory, it describes the process by which capital is captured and reproduced for returns (Lin, 2008: 51 in Li, 2015: 5).

Resonating with the approach of Bourdieu and Coleman (1991), Lin's (1982, 2001, 2008) work is mainly concerned with the instrumental effects of SC, although it does also emphasise the 'expressive' aspects, such as solidarity, support and identity construction.

Putnam (1993, 1995, 1996, 2000; Putnam and Feldstein, 2004) is the third author that has been heavily influential within SC literature (Baron et al., 2000: 8), with his work focusing heavily on expressive aspects and their wider impacts. Putnam (1993, 1995, 1996) is also responsible for widely popularising the concept and facilitating its entry into mainstream political discourse – famously linking declining SC in Italy and

America, to declining 'civic engagement'. *Bowling Alone* (Putnam, 2000) became an American bestseller, drawing attention to the decline of SC through the central example of declining participation in social activities such as bowling. Although widely cited, Putnam's (1993; 2000) work makes some extremely bold claims about the power of SC. For example:

Good government is a by-product of singing groups and soccer clubs (1993: 176)

Social capital makes us smarter, healthier, safer, richer, and better able to govern a just and stable democracy. (2000: 290)

As a rough rule of thumb, if you belong to no groups but decide to join one, you cut your risk of dying over the next year *in half*. (2000: 331 original emphasis)

These claims have, perhaps unsurprisingly, attracted the attention of critics within academia, as well as the media (Fine, 2002; Li, 2015). In addition to critique around the lack of evidence to support such claims (Putnam, 2000: 506-8), Putnam's (1995, 1996) early work also focused predominantly on close, dense ties, while neglecting the effects and benefits of weak ties as advocated by scholars such as Granovetter (1983).

However, Putnam (2000: 19-21) later addressed this critique, subsequently terming strong and weak ties as 'bonding' and 'bridging' capital. Following criticism similar to that of Coleman, concerning functionalism and failing to address issues of power and conflict, Putnam shifted his position to acknowledge that SC can have 'dark sides' (Baron et al., 2000: 10). Putnam (2000: 23) states, 'Bonding capital is ... good for "getting by", but bridging capital is crucial for "getting ahead"'. This is where Bourdieu's

work remains consistently held in high regard (Li, 2015; Li et al., 2003), as his approach to SC was always founded in notions of strategy, struggle, and power – paying specific attention to the ways in which capital can (re)produce privilege and inequalities.

4.2.3. The 'dark side' of social capital

Despite the 'ocean of discussions on the presumed positive consequences of social capital', less benign and negative aspects are frequently overlooked (van Deth and Zmerli, 2010: 631). However, a number of recent studies have begun to highlight the 'dark sides', 'unsocial capital', or 'bad social capital' (Callahan, 2005; Dekker, 2004; Fiorina, 1999; Hoerber Rudolph, 2004; Levi, 1996; Portes and Landolt, 1996; Putnam, 2000). The 'dark side' of social capital (SC) discussed by Putnam (2000: 351-363) advocates that it can be used for both positive and negative goals, touching briefly on some of the concerns raised around issues of power and struggle that had been lacking in his previous works. He writes:

Social inequalities may be embedded in social capital. Norms and networks that serve some groups may obstruct others... A recognition of the importance of social capital in sustaining community life does not exempt us from the need to worry about how that "community" is defined – who is inside and thus benefits from social capital and who is outside does not. (Putnam, 2000: 358)

The acknowledgement of the exclusions that can occur from the presence, or not, of SC, leads Putnam (2000: 362) to conclude that 'some kinds of bonding capital may discourage the formation of bridging capital', and further, that 'for our biggest collective problems we need precisely the sort of bridging social capital that is toughest to create' (ibid. p. 363). Bridging capital, or weak ties are therefore identified as being

of significant importance, without which negative consequences can occur – such as intolerance, social isolation, and ‘high walls’ excluding those who do not ‘qualify’ (Portes,1998). Putnam’s (2000: 411) solution to creating bridging capital is through community-based activities such as sports and the arts, where he claims that individuals’ ideologies do not matter to the overall (positive) goals.

Although the theoretical advancement of bridging and bonding capital have brought about significant debate, van Deth and Zmerli (2010: 633) maintain that there are a number of other approaches that are equally useful for capturing and making sense of the less benign negative consequences associated with SC. One approach works on the premise that values and norms are intrinsic (cultural) aspects of SC. If these values and norms have negative effects on the system or regime, then the increase of such SC will also increase the spread of these negative effects (ibid.). Van Deth and Zmeli (2010: 634) explain that commonly cited examples include:

Religious organizations that show clear sectarian tendencies, status groups that aim primarily at social exclusions, the Mafia, skinheads, the Ku Klux Klan, or the Nation of Islam (cf. Levi, 1996), who all achieve their goals more efficiently by relying on networks, trust and shared values, “even though these are of the bonding kind”.

Another approach discussed by van Deth and Zmerli (2010: 634) stresses that ‘the dark sides of social capital are most likely observed in inward-looking and isolated social networks’ (see also Li et al., 2003; Paxton, 2002). Three mechanisms of integration that have specific importance here, are institutional structures or governance mechanisms; bridging ties provided by overlapping memberships; and strong collective identities that can exist independently of social networks (van Deth and

Zmerli, 2010: 634). Furthermore, the creation of 'unciviness' and intolerance is more likely when bridging mechanisms are absent (ibid., see also Granovetter, 1983).

This thesis will demonstrate that although there are many benefits to the SC gained during military service within the lives of participants, the inward-looking and often isolated nature of social networks within the military institution can lead to negative consequences such as distrust of those 'outside' (civilians), intolerance of those with different norms and values, and the continuance and (re)production of social exclusion and isolation (see Chapters 8 and 9).

Authors such as van Deth and Zmerli (2010, see also Callahan, 2005; Dekker, 2004; García-Albacete, 2010; van Deth, 2006; Zmerli, 2010) have also advanced critical debate surrounding SC and its 'dark sides', by stressing the significance of context. This returns SC to its original conception, in line with the work of Bourdieu (1986, 1990). Recent work within the drug sphere adopting this position, which grounds its theoretical developments in empirical research and context, has provided guiding literature for the use of SC within this research (see Best and Laudet, 2010; Best et al., 2015; Cloud and Granfield, 2008, Granfield and Cloud, 2001; Panebianco et al., 2015, Weston, 2016; Weston et al., 2018).

As well as providing a starting point in which SC and its positive and negative consequences are already theoretically developed, especially regarding substance misuse and recovery – which is of direct relevance to several participants within this research, as well as in relation to veterans more generally (see Johnson et al., 2008;

NAPO, 2009; Howard League, 2011; MacManus *et al.*, 2012) – this literature has also helped to shape my thinking about transitions in a much wider sense.

4.2.4. Recovery capital and transitions

Granfield and Cloud (2001) first introduced the notion of social capital (SC) to the drug recovery literature as a response to the lack of theorising about the broader social context in which individuals are embedded, and the impact of this context on natural recovery². Despite the lack of theorising, the importance of social context within recovery is claimed to have been noted by many researchers. Murphy and Rosenbaum (1997, in *ibid.*) explain that while virtually anyone can experience problems with substances, ‘individuals with life options or a stake in conventional life tend to have a greater capacity for controlling their drug use or for getting out of trouble’. Drawing upon theory used within Hagan and McCarthy’s (1997) research with homeless, criminalised young people, Granfield and Cloud (2001: 1547) applied the lens of SC to consider the ‘role that structured social relations play in overcoming drug-use’.

Granfield and Cloud (2001: 1552) argued that the opportunities to develop alcohol- and drug-use associated problems, as well as opportunities to ‘transform oneself’, are ‘unevenly distributed’ and often depended on individuals’ social positions and life options. Those with higher status were ultimately found to have more resources, access to social relations, and thus greater opportunities for self-change (*ibid.*, p.1553). The SC available to participants with ‘relatively stable middle-class lives’, offered access to information, normative expectations, relationships, institutions, and other

² ‘Natural’ recovery is the ‘Termination or “cessation” of substance dependence without the aid of formal treatment or participation in 12-step groups such as Alcoholic Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, or other mutual-help groups’ (Cloud and Granfield, 2008: 1983)

useful resources that 'might otherwise have been unavailable in different social contexts' (Granfield and Cloud, 2001: 1554). Further, Granfield and Cloud (ibid.) state:

people's ability to become immersed in conventional life and develop meaningful social relations is influenced by the pre-existing social capital they bring with them into their addiction as well as the amount of social capital they are able to retain through these dependencies[.]

These findings have significant theoretical value when thinking about the narratives of participants within this research. In addition to being able to directly apply this work to narratives around addiction, the notion of bringing SC *into* an experience also appears to apply to transition more generally. Those who appear to enter the military with substantial SC, seem better equipped to leave the military – with employment and support being key benefits of maintaining (civilian) SC throughout military service (returned to in chapter 9).

Cloud and Granfield (2004, 2008) then developed and expanded the connections between SC and recovery, coining the term 'recovery capital' – defined as 'the sum total of one's resources that can be brought to bear on the initiation and maintenance of substance misuse cessation' (2008: 1972). Recovery capital is made up of four main forms of capital (Cloud and Granfield, 2008: 1973-5), neatly summarised by Weston et al. (2018: 491 emphasis added):

These are: **social capital**, referring to the amount of supportive relationships and individual may have; **physical capital**, referring to tangible items such as property and money; **human capital**, referring to an individual's aspirations,

skills and positive health; and **cultural capital**, which is made up from a person's beliefs, values and attitudes which link to social conformity.

These four types of capital; social, physical, human and cultural, 'represent a comprehensive framework for understanding the wide range of resources that can be drawn upon in an effort to overcome substance misuse' (Cloud and Granfield, 2008: 1975). Cloud and Granfield (2008) also develop the notion of 'negative recovery capital', which, like the 'dark side' of social capital (Putnam, 2000; Zmerli, 2010), seeks to capture the ways in which recovery capital can have negative consequences and goals, such as the maintenance or facilitation of substance (ab)use.

Cloud and Granfield (2008: 1977) explain that their previous writings (see 2004) implied that recovery capital existed on a continuum from 'none' (or zero) to large amounts. However, they claim it is more useful to instead conceptualise recovery capital 'as an interval-level variable, where zero is not the beginning but a point along a positive and negative continuum' (2008:1977). The resources that constitute recovery capital are therefore also the resources that can constitute *negative* recovery capital, and context is often crucial to the positive or negative values it may take on.

The example of negative recovery capital provided by Cloud and Granfield (2008: 1976), is that of a well-educated person, who occupies a professional position, is a member of a 'solid family', has a large income, and who epitomises 'prosocial values', yet has also struggled with substance misuse for years. Such a person has all the resources that would typically make up positive recovery capital, yet those very same resources act to provide ongoing access to substances, while 'maintaining daily

responsibilities and a persona of stability'. Thus, these collective resources in this *context* form negative recovery capital.

New concept: 'combat capital'

The new concept of 'combat capital', developed through this research and presented in Part II of the thesis (see Chapters 7-9), builds on, supports, and advances the well-recognised framework of recovery capital, in relation to military service and transition. Combat capital provides a framework for making sense of the collection of resources that I refer to as 'military capital'³ – social, cultural, human, bodily, and symbolic forms of capital – which when combined with combat experience, forms a 'value'. Combat capital is anchored in the unique conditions of the physical battlefield, and additionally, to the socio-political context of warfare – meaning that it is formed and recognised at embodied and symbolic levels. The 'value' of combat capital therefore operates on a positive to negative continuum, dependent on the context in which combat experience is formed. As the thesis will demonstrate, particularly in Chapter 9, the value of combat capital is recognised in both military and 'civilian' fields.

It is worth noting that 'military capital' is the collection of these resources (forms of capital) listed directly above, but *without* combat experience. Combat

³ Swed and Butler (2015) have also referred to 'military capital' – comprising of human, social, and cultural capital (see p. 126). – within the context of the Israeli military, and subsequent employment in the 'hi-tech' sector. Swed and Butler's (2015) conception of 'military capital' does not appear to include bodily or symbolic capital.

experience is considered to include any presence in the (physical) battlefield, and/or any involvement in 'making war' – for example by operating weaponry such as drones or guided missiles from afar. Military capital also holds a value, again operating on a positive to negative continuum, recognised both 'inside' and 'outside' the military institution. As will be shown in Part II, 'David' was not posted to an area of conflict and was therefore unable to gain combat capital. Yet he still held military capital that (positively) facilitated his access to additional resources and support – including being re-located to a 'veteran wing' in prison (see Murray, 2013), and subsequently securing veteran-specific supported housing, which also assisted in his access to (positive) recovery capital from addiction.

Best et al. (2014, 2015) have recently linked recovery capital to notions of identity transitions, arguing that recovery 'is more usefully framed as a social process, underpinned by transitions in social network composition' (2015: 121). While recovery capital is considered to be of extreme value when thinking about recovery, and more importantly, within the lives of those experiencing recovery, the transition of identities – from a using identity to one in recovery – is considered to be of equal importance. Best et al. (2015: 117) explain that the transition of identity within recovery involves shifting one's most salient identity from being defined by norms and values that revolve around substance abuse, to being defined 'by membership of a group whose norms and values encourage recovery'. As such, recovery is seen as 'a socially embedded process of successful social identity transition' (ibid. p.121).

Conceptualising recovery through recovery capital and notions of transition led Best, along with Albertson and Irving (Albertson et al., 2015), to apply SC to the lives of veterans undergoing recovery and desistance transitions in civilian life. This research built on links established between Addaction, one of the UK's largest specialist drug and alcohol charities, and the Royal British Legion, who piloted a veteran-specific project in Sheffield in 2010 (Albertson et al., 2015: 392-3). Building on the pilot, Addaction then developed the 'Right Turn' programme, which provides 'specialist support for veterans with substance misuse issues and acknowledges the specific experiences of people in the armed forces community' (Addaction, 2017). Peer support and mentoring is built into the programme, where 'recovered veterans' are trained to become 'Veteran Recovery Champions'. In 2014, the Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT) 'announced its support for the expansion of the Right Turn project into a total of 20 sites around the country' (ibid.).

Albertson et al. (2015: 394) evaluated the Right Turn programme, with one of the aims being to test whether identity transitions - from networks supportive of 'criminal activity and substance misuse', to networks supportive of 'desistance and recovery' - supported the assertion that recovery and desistance are 'associated with social factors'. This was to be done through 'transition mapping', drawing on the FiMT's (2013) report. The final report has recently been published (Albertson et al., 2017) and the findings indicate that identity transitions are a vital part of the overall MCT, along with SC and resilience. Although specific to those recovering from addiction, many of Alberston et al.'s (2017) findings, and extracts of veteran's narratives, resonate with those within this research. This is positive and reassuring, and strengthens the

approach of using SC as a theoretical tool to which veterans' (various) transitions are conceptualised.

Another very recent addition to the literature on military transitions, is Cooper et al.'s (2016) proposal of a theoretical framework based on Bourdieu's (1977) conceptual 'tools', not dissimilar to the framework that emerged within the course of this research, for theorising MCT. Cooper et al. (2016) acknowledge that there can be positive and negative transition outcomes for service personnel when moving into civilian life, and suggest Bourdieu's (1990: 58) concept of 'cultural competence' as a means of understanding how 'individuals become proficient within a culture and how they learn to "play the game"' (p.163). Cooper et al. (2016: 170), with the aid of Bourdieu's 'thinking tools', provide a complementary framework to this thesis, to 'articulate the challenges of negotiating different military and civilian fields'. However, Cooper et al. (2016: 172) do not appear to have drawn on any empirical data, seemingly at odds with Bourdieu's approach, which demanded theory emerges from, and be embedded within, 'practice'.

4.3. Field Theory and the Thinking Tools of Bourdieu

Bourdieu (1930-2002) is often hailed as one of 'the foremost social philosophers of the twentieth century' (Grenfell, 2012: 1), and along with Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, is one of the most influential French thinkers 'whose work succeeded structuralism' (Calhoun et al., 1993: 7). The vast, far-reaching, and theoretically dense works of Bourdieu have covered an 'astonishing range of empirical topics and theoretical themes' (Webb et al., 2002: 2). His works were grounded in empirical research, almost all of which can 'be seen as a response to an actual practical context'

(Grenfell, 2012: 15). As Bourdieu himself claimed, he never theorised ‘for the sake of it’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1989: 50). In addition to his work and theory being born out of practice, much of his work is also grounded in struggle and conflict, with notions of power, and the way it operates and is diffused (or not) within society, guiding much of his writing.

Although I am still very much a student of Bourdieu’s many complex works, this thesis utilises Bourdieu’s ‘field theory’ and the ‘thinking tools’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1989: 50) that emerged throughout his writing. When grounded in empirical research, these tools form an insightful and sophisticated theoretical framework for making sense of social problems. As Bourdieu stresses the importance of context within social science, it is therefore in keeping with his approach to briefly provide some context to the emergence of ‘field theory’. This also goes some way to avoiding what Wacquant (1993) has described as a ‘tendency to import discrete aspects of Bourdieu’s works[,] while divorcing them from the larger intellectual and political projects in which Bourdieu was engaged’ (in Goodman and Silvestein, 2009: 4).

4.3.1. Contextualising ‘field theory’ and the ‘Theory of Practice’

‘Field theory’ spanned Bourdieu’s life works, and was initially born out of his own experiences and practice, firstly during his military service in Algeria, amid the Algerian War of Independence, and secondly within his home region of the Béarn⁴ (France) (Bourdieu, 1977; Webb et al., 2002; Grenfell, 2012). Bourdieu’s military service was perhaps the most important experiential and contextual aspect of

⁴ Detailed overviews of Bourdieu’s life and works have been heavily documented elsewhere, and can be found relatively easily (see for example Grenfell, 2006, 2012; Jenkins, 1992, Robbins, 2000; Wacquant, 2005)

Bourdieu's life, as his time in Algeria, and his subsequent return to France, provoked much of his intellectual engagement with the practices of the social world (Goodman and Silvestein, 2009) – prompting his move from philosophy to sociology (Grenfell, 2012: 17). The emergence and development of field theory from war and conflict makes it especially relevant to this research, as Bourdieu witnessed not only the physical struggles for life, but conflict between cultures and different ways of life.

During his military service in Algeria, Bourdieu engaged in 'self-taught' ethnography 'on the fly, at times with machine guns firing around him' (Bourdieu, 2001: 423 in Goodman and Silvestein, 2009: 6). Through his ethnography, he observed and documented traditional society in opposition to the modern world, and 'the consequences it had for the individuals involved' (Grenfell, 2012: 17, see also Bourdieu, 1958, 1961, 1962, 1979). Although a vastly different cultural context, Bourdieu also observed a similar clash between 'old and new' in his home region of the Béarn, where he conducted additional ethnographic research, focused through 'the angle of the rupture and fragmentation brought about by modernity' (Goodman and Silvestein, 2009: 4).

Bourdieu's approach to social research and theory was born out of a frustration with structuralist anthropology and its inability to take into account, and make sense of, the practical and strategic dimensions of everyday life that he had observed in Algeria, and subsequently, in the Béarn (Bourdieu, 1977; Webb at al., 2002; Grenfell, 2012). The famous *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977 [1972]), and later, *The Logic of Practice* (1990), presented both his critique of anthropology, and the methodological solutions on how to counter these shortcomings. Bourdieu (1994 [1987]: 20-21) strongly felt

that knowledge production, and 'objective' knowledge and analysis in particular, *reproduced* the privileged positions and power of those producing it, leading to vast errors in interpreting practice. Bourdieu's 'field theory' and 'thinking tools' were thus essential to this new way of thinking, and continued to be developed throughout his works, underpinning much of his subsequent thinking about the social world.

The publication of *The Weight of the World* (Bourdieu et al., 1999 [1993]), an extensive series of individual accounts of social suffering, from a range of socio-economic demographics in France, sought to directly confront this disconnection between the political context of contemporary society, and the lived experiences of those in conflict with it. By drawing together the voices of those 'who have nothing in common', Bourdieu et al. (1999) revealed the '*tragic consequences* of making incompatible points of view confront each other, where no concession or compromise is possible because each one of them is equally founded in social reason' (1999 [1993]: 3 original emphasis). In the postscript, Bourdieu (*ibid.*, p. 627-629) writes:

The political world has gradually turned inward, absorbed in its internal rivalries, its own problems, its own interests. ... the electoral success of the prophets of doom, eager to exploit and magnify the most primitive expressions of moral suffering that – as much as and more than by the poverty and the "passive violence" of economic and social structures – are produced by all the small privations and muted violence of everyday life.

Upon reading this amid the current (turbulent) political times of 2017/18, I cannot help but be reminded of the value of Bourdieu's work and how it is still increasingly relevant today, especially within this research.

As the previous chapters have demonstrated, the area of criminology and war has long been dominated by 'mainstream', often 'positivist' driven research (McGarry and Walklate, 2016), which rarely comments on, or takes into account, the socio-political context of conflict or its impact within the lives of former military personnel (see also Jamieson, 1998; 1999; 2015; Kaldor, 1999; 2012). Although exceptions do of course exist, very few have applied sociologically driven interrogation to the transition from military to civilian life, often failing to contextualise this transition politically and socio-economically. When this is combined with the 'newness' of war and society in the twenty-first century (somewhat reminiscent of the clash between traditional society and modernity observed in Bourdieu's earlier work), and considering that 'field theory' was born out of his observations of conflict (both physical and symbolic), it is perhaps unsurprising that the works of Bourdieu have proved extremely insightful during the analysis and understanding of participants' narratives within this research.

This section will now present the core 'thinking tools' of Bourdieu (1977; 1990): *habitus*, *field* and *capital*, as well as *doxa* and *hysteresis*. As the works of Bourdieu are so vast, and his concepts many, these are considered the fundamental building blocks of 'field theory' that guided much of his works. Despite being separated here for clarity, from the outset it must be stated that these concepts, especially *habitus*, *field* and *capital*, work together, and must therefore be understood in relation to one another, and as part of the wider 'field theory' in which they emerged. As Bourdieu himself states, 'Such notions as *habitus*, *field* and *capital* can be defined, but only within the theoretical system they constitute, not in isolation' (in Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 96).

4.3.2. *Habitus*

In brief, *habitus* is the internalised and embodied framework for making sense of and responding to the world, where past experiences structure and guide future practice. Bourdieu (1994: 65) explains that *habitus* intends to resolve both an experiential and sociological conundrum: ‘all of my thinking started from this point: how can behaviour be regulated without being the product of obedience to rules?’. Grenfell (2012: 49) places this idea in different terms, stating, ‘Bourdieu asks how social structure and individual agency can be reconciled, and (to use Durkheim’s terms) how the “outer” social and “inner” self help to shape each other’. As such, Bourdieu (1977: 72) defines *habitus* as:

The structures constitutive of a particular type of environment (e.g. the material conditions of existence characteristic of a class condition) produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable *dispositions*, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures ... without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them and, being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor. (original emphasis, see also 1990: 53)

This ‘structuring structure’ comprises of a system of dispositions, which generate perceptions, appreciations and practices (Bourdieu, 1990: 53), with the term ‘disposition’ being crucial for bringing together his ideas of structure and tendency. Bourdieu (1977: 214) thus specifically defines his use of ‘dispositions’:

The word *disposition* seems particularly suited to express what is covered by the concept of habitus (defined as a system of dispositions). It expresses first the *result of an organizing action*, with a meaning close to that of words such as structure: it also designates a *way of being, a habitual state* (especially of the body) and, in particular, a *predisposition, tendency, propensity or inclination*. (emphasis in original)

These dispositions or tendencies are *durable*, as they last over time, and are *transposable*, in that they can become active within a vast variety of ‘theatres of social action’ (Bourdieu, 1993 [1980]: 87).

The significance that Bourdieu places on the body, perhaps originating in his own military experiences as well as his studies of phenomenology, has also emerged as a strong theme within this research – particularly regarding basic training and the deliberate, systematic training of a ‘military habitus’ primarily *through* the body. Furthermore, Bourdieu (1990: 68) refers to the body as a ‘living memory pad’, not dissimilar to the ways in which Gendlin (1962, 1973, 2017) discusses ‘body memory’:

An individual’s sum total of life experiences, including traumatic events, saturates every part of his or her physical body. A person is much more than the thin, shifting attention or consciousness (2017).

The importance of the body is vital when researching experiences of war, which occur in conditions heavily demanding of the physical, as well as mental, body.

The *habitus* is therefore a product of history, and is not only deeply *rooted* in (past) practice, but is also responsible for *producing* (current and future) individual and

collective practices. Bourdieu (1990: 54) refers to this as, 'a present past that tends to perpetuate itself into the future'. Unlike 'scientific estimations' – which are corrected and adjusted after each experiment, *habitus* is a 'practical hypothesis based on past experiences', that gives 'disproportionate weight to early experiences' (ibid.). Stone (2008: 33) explains this in terms of 'routine osmosis', suggesting the gradual absorption of action within social space, leading to regularised patterns of behaviour as a result. People often join the military when they are young, mainly between the ages of 16 and 24⁵. This could suggest that recruits may not have had chance to fully develop an adult *civilian* habitus, and/or that the rapid acquiring of a military habitus at a young age disproportionately affects future action, as proposed by Bourdieu.

Chapter 7 will argue that the basic training all military recruits pass through appears to 'break down' aspects of the (civilian) habitus and, through extensive training of the body, 'rebuilds' it to become a military habitus. This very quickly (within twelve weeks) generates regularised and often predictable patterns of behaviour among recruits, essential within conflict situations. As the habitus is 'a present past' (Bourdieu, 1990: 54), a military habitus – which is not 're-broken down' upon leaving the military – can therefore structure life upon the return to post-conflict life. Bourdieu (1977: 8-12; 1990) makes clear that *habitus* takes into consideration the effects of *strategy*, on which he believes all social action is based to some extent. Individual action thus depends on a whole series of personal and contextual conditions and emerges 'from an unconscious calculation of profit – albeit symbolic (in the first instance at least) – and

⁵ 40.9% of recruits join between the ages of 16 and 19, and 41.7% between 20 and 24 (MoD, 2014: 10)

a strategic positioning within a social space' (Grenfell, 2012: 44). This social space is termed *field*, and is where *habitus* is shaped.

4.3.3. Field

According to Bourdieu (1998: 32), *field* is the arena, which can be physical, social and/or symbolic space(s), in which agents (people) inhabit and are located. *Fields* can exist on multiple levels and can overlap, meaning that agents may occupy more than one field at a time. Essential to Bourdieu's concept of *field*, is that they are sites of struggle. Thomson (in Grenfell, 2012: 66) explains that Bourdieu's use of 'field' refers to *le champ*, 'which is used to describe, *inter alia*, an area of land, a battle field, and a field of knowledge', rather than *le pré*, which is synonymous with the images that the English word 'field' may conjure (for example a meadow). Bourdieu often uses the analogy of a football field to capture *le champ*, which also neatly captures his conception of the social world as 'a game' (see Bourdieu, 1990 for example). However, for the purposes of this thesis, the example of a (traditional) 'battlefield' is perhaps more useful, along with the analogy of war as a 'game' (Williams, 2011).

A battlefield is often a defined space where war is 'made', in which soldiers (*agents*) usually have set positions. The 'game of war' (again traditionally) has specific rules (*doxa*), which players must learn, along with various requirements of skill (*capital*). The position of a soldier determines their action within the (battle)field and may prevent them from entering into certain areas, and/or may limit their action(s). For example, an infantry soldier is likely to occupy a different field position to that of a chef. Their roles within the war are also considerably different, yet both contribute to the overall aims and goals of war making. The physical conditions of the (battle)field, i.e.

whether it is dry, wet, cold, hot, sandy, mountainous or urban, also affect soldiers' actions and thus, how war is 'made' or 'played'. This also further affects future practice, as, for example, the experience of war in Afghanistan – where participants have described the conditions as 'unimaginably dry and hot' – would form part of the infinite nature of *habitus*, which structured their practice in Iraq, where conditions were similar. As such, their war making in Iraq was able to begin from a point of partial familiarity with the harsh field conditions, in a way that their first visit to Afghanistan had not.

As Bourdieu would argue, the same is true within the social world. We are forever internalising experiences, using them to structure our future practice, which then results in slightly different experiences and practice, and so on and so forth. This is where *habitus* and field must be understood in relation to each other, as field conditions shape *habitus*, which then shapes agents' perceptions of the *field(s)*:

On the one side it is a relation of *conditioning*: the field structures the habitus ... on the other side, it is a relation of knowledge or *cognitive construction*. Habitus contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world. (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 127)

Practice is therefore the result of the relations between one's past experiences and dispositions (*habitus*), and current circumstances (*field*). Bourdieu describes this 'obscure double relation' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 126), or 'unconscious relationship' (Bourdieu, 1993: 76) between *habitus* and *field*, as the meeting of 'two evolving logics or histories' (Bourdieu, 1993: 46; 2000: 150-1). Leaving civilian life to

enter the military, and equally, leaving the military to re-enter civilian life, can therefore be broadly conceptualised as moving from one *field* to another, in which *habitus* is constantly changing and adapting, structuring perceptions and practice.

A crucial aspect to *field*, is the presence of forces that can have ‘push and pull’ effects on agents, leading to arenas of struggle where agents compete for power, status, and/or recognition. Bourdieu (1994: 39) states:

A field is a field of forces within which the agents occupy positions that statistically determine the positions they take with respect to the field, these position-takings being aimed either at conserving or transforming the structure of relations of forces that is constitutive of the field.

The ‘field of forces’ that Bourdieu refers to is an abstraction, capturing sites in which power operates within specific boundaries. Bourdieu (1990: 228) argues that ‘Boundaries are where battles take place’, in particular, boundaries between fields, which are said to be ‘the sites or the causes of very real struggles’. The meeting of civilian and military fields are thus potential sites of struggle, as are the meetings of combatants on the battlefield; which will be expanded upon with the support of data in Part II.

Bourdieu (1988: 270) also claimed that economic and cultural capital operated as the two main hierarchised poles in a social field. These forces have ‘magnetic’ like effects on agents within the field, and agents’ positions can also affect the forces within the field. This is summarised by Bourdieu (1998: 40-41) as:

... structured social space, a field of forces, a force field. It contains people who dominate and people who are dominated. Constant, permanent relationships of inequality operate inside this space, which at the same time becomes a space in which various actors struggle for the transformation or preservation of the field. All the individuals in this universe bring to the competition all the (relative) power at their disposal. It is this power that defines their position in the field and, as a result, their strategies.

Agents' field positions, whether individuals or institutions, are thus determined by the power they hold, along with their investment and involvement within the field. Bourdieu (1991: 242) writes that 'Every field is the site of a more or less openly declared struggle for the definition of the legitimate principles of division of the field', and what is divided according to those established principles, is capital, in the form of money, esteem, power or social standing. Capital is therefore the third core 'thinking tool' of Bourdieu, essential to understanding how agents navigate fields and occupy their positions.

4.3.4. Capital

Bourdieu (1986) suggests that capital is a form of *power*, intrinsically linked to one's relative position within a field, and to how the specific 'profits' arising out of participation and competition in that field (or the 'game') are distributed and allocated. This seeks to extend the sense of the term 'capital' by employing it in a wider system of exchanges, 'not solely in the one form recognized by economic theory' (ibid. p. 81). Bourdieu (in Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 98) returns to the analogy of 'the game', to capture how field positions are driven by agents' strategies in regards to the

accumulation of capital, which increases the likelihood of 'competency' within fields, as well as the ability to become dominant in a particular field:

...the value of a species of capital hinges on the existence of a game, of a field in which this competency can be employed: a species of capital is what is efficacious in a given field, both as a weapon and as a stake of struggle, that which allows its possessors to wield a power, and influence, and thus to *exist*, in the field under consideration.

The 'species of capital' referred to by Bourdieu asserts that there are multiple forms of capital drawn upon with each social 'game', and that the value of these forms of capital varies depending on the field in which they are present:

We also have *trump cards*, that is, master cards whose force varies depending on the game: just as the relative value of cards changes with each game, the hierarchy of the different species of capital (economic, social, cultural, symbolic) varies across different fields. In other words, there are cards that are valid, efficacious in all fields – these are the fundamental species of capital – but their relative value as trump cards is determined by each field and even by the successive states of the same field. (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 98)

Economic capital refers to wealth and financial power, as well as physical possessions and assets (for example property) (Bourdieu, 1991: 14). Social capital refers to resources linked to social networks and group memberships (Bourdieu, 1997: 51), as discussed in section 4.2. of this chapter. Cultural capital originated from Bourdieu's desire to explain the unequal achievement of children within education that emerged during his early fieldwork (Bourdieu, 1986: 47), and can exist in various forms.

Cultural capital can be *embodied*, in that it is accumulated over time through dispositions of the mind and body (*habitus*), *objectified*, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, medals, machines), and *institutionalised*, through (often original) properties such as qualifications and rank (ibid.).

In the military, cultural capital may therefore be earned over time (embodied), through military service and experience and accumulated through the (objectified *and* institutionalised) collection of medals, rank badges, or 'stripes' worn on uniforms. Bourdieu (1986: 83) also stresses the connection between cultural capital and the body, writing:

Most of the properties of cultural capital can be deduced from the fact that, in its fundamental state, it is linked to the body and presupposes embodiment. ...This embodied capital, external wealth converted into an integral part of the person, into a habitus, cannot be transmitted instantaneously (unlike money, property right, or even titles of nobility) by gift or bequest, purchase or exchange.

This is also consistent with Wacquant's (2004) work on boxing, where the body is essential to forming not only the *game* of boxing, but a 'practical mastery' of the game, through a habitus attuned to the (boxing) field: 'a body "habituated", that is, temporally structured and kinetically remodeled according to the specific demands of the field' (p. 60). Wacquant refers to *bodily capital* to capture the value of bodily conditioning, in many ways similar to participants' descriptions of the importance placed on the often violent training of the body, ensuring it is 'ready for combat'.

Cultural capital, in line with Bourdieu's (1986) writing on the educational system, can also be inherited and *transmitted* through military families, who immerse their children (in varying degrees) within a military field – thus presenting children of military families with an advantage over recruits with no previous exposure to military culture. It will also be shown that participation in Cadets (youth organisations that can be joined as a hobby and/or as preparation for joining the military) also appears to have similar effects on cultural (military) capital (see Chapter 7). Bourdieu (1986: 51) further explains that cultural and social capital can be 'converted' (as one would with currency) to economic capital in certain fields, for example in gaining employment through military skills (e.g. in the private military sector, see White 2010, 2012, 2016, 2018), or through social connections (e.g. a friend knows of a job opportunity, see Granovetter, 1983). Equally, economic capital can be converted to cultural capital, through the opportunities that holding economic capital presents, such as being able to afford a visit to an art gallery, or to purchase books (Bourdieu, 1986).

Symbolic capital 'is the form that the various species of capital [economic, social and cultural] assume when they are perceived and recognized as legitimate' (Bourdieu, 1989: 17). Bourdieu (2000: 242) states:

Symbolic capital... is not a particular kind of capital but what every kind of capital becomes when it is misrecognized as capital, that is, as a force, a power or capacity for (actual or potential) exploitation, and therefore recognized as legitimate.

Symbolic capital is thus linked to social structures or fields, often within institutions, with its 'worth' depending on recognition – either built into the system or attributed

through agents within the system. Moore (2012, in Grenfell, 2012: 100) explains that symbolic forms of capital are associated with a well-formed habitus, which is also likely to result in higher levels of cultural capital. Symbolic capital can also be thought of in terms of the honour and prestige that a person may accumulate through possession of other forms of capital, with its value dependent on the field in which it is present. This is of particular relevance within a military setting, where symbolic power is officially attributed according to rank. Yet, this symbolic capital and power rarely transfers to civilian settings, as military ranking systems, and the power and status of ranks, are not commonly recognised.

Bourdieu (1990: 120) maintains that there is always a cost to building symbolic capital, whether that is in time, energy, economic capital or through the accumulation of cultural capital. Symbolic capital is therefore always linked to 'profit', which can be symbolic or material, and is likely to 'advance' one's position in the social 'game' being played (ibid.). Symbolic capital is thus intrinsically embedded in *strategy*, whether 'consciously' (deliberately) levied in order to gain advantage or to assume a higher field position, or through the (unintentional) ways in which symbolic capital is valued by others and the field in which it is present – delivering or removing opportunities for social movement.

Underpinning Bourdieu's work and discussions on social struggle, is the notion of *symbolic violence* (Schubert, in Grenfell, 2012: 179) – where symbolic capital exerts harmful effects through reinforcing and (re)producing social inequalities. Symbolic violence is often associated with titles and rank, and the hierarchies of social structures. Bourdieu (1989: 23) argues that symbolic capital 'is a credit; it is the power

granted to those who have obtained sufficient recognition to be in a position to impose recognition'. In other words, symbolic power not only facilitates power, but presents agents with power over others. This can lead to *symbolic domination*, which Bourdieu (in Bourdieu and Eagleton, 1992: 115) argues is 'something you absorb like air, something you don't feel pressured by; it is everywhere and nowhere, and to escape from that is very difficult'. The subtleness of symbolic power, in that it is difficult to see, can thus prevent recognition of its existence, which also prevents acknowledgment that 'it is at the root of much violence and suffering' (Schubert, in Grenfell, 2012: 192).

4.3.5. Doxa and hysteresis: 'a fish out of water'

Doxa and *hysteresis* are also fundamental tools when considering how agents navigate social space, and have emerged within this research, initially with regard to MCT. Bourdieu (1977: 68) states that *doxa* is the relationship 'of immediate adherence that is established in practice between habitus and the field to which it is attuned, the pre-verbal taking-for-granted of the world that flows from practical sense'. *Doxa* is therefore a set of fundamental (enacted) beliefs, often perceived as 'natural' (Bourdieu, 2000: 16), that are rarely 'spoken': 'what is essential goes without saying because it comes without saying' (Bourdieu, 1977: 165). Furthermore, *doxa* is required to instil and maintain agents' '*investment in the game*', through their 'belief' (*doxa*) in the game and its stakes (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 98). *Doxa* is thus essential to Bourdieu's (1990: 75) notion of 'practical mastery', or 'feel for the game', often gained through 'cultural competence' (ibid. p. 58).

Cooper et al. (2016) discuss military transitions in terms of 'cultural competence' (Bourdieu, 1989: 43, 1990: 58), where having a 'feel for the game' comes when one's

habitus is attuned to the demands of a particular field, and the expectations and conditions of the field (*doxa*) are known. They argue that military and civilian cultures require different sets of cultural competencies:

The doxic position is different in each field, and therefore the veteran in transition must acquire a new competence in the rules of civilian life if he or she is to enjoy a “successful” transition (Demers, 2011, in Cooper et al., 2016: 8)

When the habitus ‘encounters a social world of which it is the product’, or is perfectly attuned to the field it is currently in, Bourdieu (in Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1989: 43) explains that it finds itself ‘as a fish in water’, in that ‘[the habitus] does not feel the weight of the water and takes the world about itself for granted’. As such, when military personnel return to civilian life, and their (military) habitus does not ‘fit’ within civilian fields, the corresponding experience could be described as a fish *out* of water – where the veteran is acutely aware of their surroundings and the struggle of not being in the appropriate conditions for which *habitus* is aligned. This disconnection, between habitus and field, is termed *hysteresis*.

Hysteresis is the collision, or rupture, between habitus and field, and is described by Bourdieu (1990: 59) as being ‘one explanation of the structural lag between opportunities and the dispositions to grasp them which is the cause of missed opportunities’. As one’s ‘feel for the game’ is lacking, the habitus of the past is dysfunctional, yet the habitus of the future is not yet established (Cooper et al., 2016: 9). Bourdieu (1977: 78) writes:

As a result of the *hysteresis* effect necessarily implicated in the logic of the constitution of habitus, practices are always liable to incur negative sanctions

when the environment with which they are actually confronted is too distant from that in which they are objectively fitted.

This is present within many of the participants' narratives within this research, and as Hardy (in Grenfell, 2012: 127) states, 'at times of crisis in particular, *habitus* must respond to abrupt, sometimes catastrophic, field changes, but that response always takes time'. Joining *and* leaving the military can be thought of as drastic changes in *field(s)*. Upon joining the military, as it will be argued, the *habitus* is very quickly, and with force, *trained* to adapt to a military field. However, when recruits leave the military, they do so with their military *habitus* intact, which even for recruits who are wealthy in various forms of transferable capital, will take time to adjust to civilian fields.

The Weight of the World (Bourdieu et al., 1999) presents a series of individual struggles with the *hysteresis* effect, at times very similar to some of the narratives that will be presented in this thesis. These struggles often stem from individuals' *habitus* not being aligned with what is needed for success in another field, an inability to obtain the *capital* needed to improve one's field position, and the time dimension associated with being 'out of synch'. This can result in people being unable to grasp opportunities when they are present, leaving them in positions of disadvantage. Bourdieu et al. (1999) highlight through personal narratives, that there are wide sections of the (French) population in dominated social positions, often through the wielding of symbolic power by politicians and powerful elites. Despite the range of *strategies* employed by those dominated, in attempts to escape these struggles, changes in the field only appear to worsen their position, as their *habitus* has still not aligned itself with the previous field change, and it thus falls further 'behind'.

4.4. Conclusion

This chapter has presented the main theoretical framework that has come to underpin this research. Adopting a social capital (SC) approach to transition that has been dominant within the drugs sphere for many years, along with Cloud and Granfield's (2008) notion of 'recovery capital', have proved extremely insightful and valuable tools within the analysis of veterans' narratives in this research. The development of recovery capital to include the importance of identity transitions (Best et al., 2014, 2015) has further influenced analysis, and strengthened the need to replace SC back within Bourdieu's wider approach of 'field theory'. As this chapter has briefly introduced – and as Part II will demonstrate further – the new concept of 'combat capital' developed through this research builds upon 'recovery capital', leading to a fuller theoretical framework in which military to 'civilian' transitions (MCT), and veterans' experiences more generally, can be conceptualised within the 21st century.

What has emerged from the data, as will be shown in more detail in Part II, is that MCT can be thought of as moving from one *field* to another. As a *military habitus* appears to be so deeply embedded within the veteran, particularly within the physical body – which Bourdieu has always stressed is key to understanding 'practice' – it may not, especially at first, 'fit' within a civilian *field*. If veterans are unable to mobilise or acquire various forms of *capital*; if their capital cannot be recognised and legitimised as *symbolic capital*, due to them not having 'practical mastery' of the game (*habitus and doxa*); and/or if their capital operates with *negative* outcomes – this could help explain how and why some veterans experience difficulties with transition, and are left feeling as though they do not 'fit' within society.

This disruption and misalignment between *habitus* and *field*, termed *hysteresis* by Bourdieu (1977), may contribute significantly to our conceptions of the 'problematic veteran', whether due to an involvement in the criminal justice system, difficulties with substance abuse and mental health, homelessness, and/or relationship breakdowns. The notion of struggle that underpins much of Bourdieu's work has also advanced observations within the data of everyday conflicts, not officially recognised as 'problematic'. These veterans, as was shown in Chapter 2, are almost 'invisible' within the area of criminology of war, despite the 'newness' of war potentially presenting a wealth of qualitatively different experiences, such as the continuum of conflict in 21st century life (see Chapter 3).

The emergence of Bourdieu's (1977) field theory from war and conflict, both from his own experiences and through witnessing the experiences and struggles of others, adds another dimension to the applicability of his 'thinking tools' to this research, strengthening the need to make sense of veterans' experiences throughout the course of their lives. As *habitus* is continually evolving, with early experiences holding disproportionate weight over future practice, it is essential that research into the lives of veterans attempts to capture experiences before the military, as well as during and after. Part II of this thesis will therefore begin with Chapter 5, which presents and justifies the methodology of the research.

Part II

CHAPTER 5

Methodology

Without allowing people to speak freely we will never know what their real intentions are, and what the true meaning of their words might be.

Cottle 1977, cited in Burgess, *Field Research*, 1982

5.1. Introduction

The research presented within this thesis is based on in-depth narrative interviews lasting between two to four-and-a-half hours, incorporating photo and object elicitation, with 10 British veterans – nine from a range of locations in England, and one who lives in Brussels, Belgium. This chapter outlines and justifies the methodological choices made, as well as reflecting on fieldwork within four main sections. Section 5.2. presents the research question and aims, which were developed in relation to the discussions raised in Part I of the thesis. Section 5.3. details preparations for entering the field, drawing attention to the research approach and design, ethical considerations, and pilot interviews conducted to test the method. Section 5.4. then discusses navigating the research field, focusing specifically on sampling and recruitment, as well as adapting the method within interviews. Finally, section 5.5 offers an explanation of the analysis and interpretation of data, as well as considering reflexivity in relation to the methodology and fieldwork.

5.2. Research Question and Aims

Part I of this thesis argued that there is a need to explore the individual experiences of former British military personnel (FMP) who have served in 21st century conflicts, and to understand in more depth their return to the complexities of modern 'civilian' life.

In Chapter 2 it was shown that although there is a promising sub-field emerging within criminology, often referred to as the 'criminology of war', there are still significant gaps in knowledge surrounding the experiential level of serving in and leaving recent conflicts (McGarry and Walklate, 2016). In particular, there is a lack of research concerning 'unproblematic' FMP, who do not obviously appear to fit the constructions of 'offender' and/or 'victim'. In addition, there is a significant absence of engagement with what 'civilian life', or 'civvy street' looks and feels like to FMP, and thus how it may be experienced differently – individually and/or by certain groups. Further, it has been demonstrated in Chapter 3 that the nature of 21st century conflict, especially within the 'war on terror', is now characterised by a 'blurring of boundaries' (Degenhardt, 2013; Kaldor, 2012), potentially presenting a qualitative difference in experiencing warfare and military service that is currently lacking in criminological attention. This thesis attempts to address these deficits in knowledge.

Chapter 4 presented the theoretical framework of this thesis, drawing upon Bourdieu's (1977, 1990) 'field theory' and 'thinking tools'. This chapter argued that when the blurred nature of recent warfare is considered alongside FMP's return to 21st century 'civilian' fields, which are equally fluid and uncertain (Bauman, 2000, 2002, 2006, 2007), it is essential that veterans' experiences are considered qualitatively. Not only does Part II of the thesis theorise the transition from military to 'civilian' fields, primarily using the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 4, but by anchoring participants' experiences within the socio-political context of 21st century life, it also identifies and explains potential avenues for struggle and difficulty, along with barriers to help-seeking and support.

Although the transition from military to civilian life has recently received renewed attention (Albertson et al., 2015; Ashcroft, 2014; Brown, 2011, 2015; Channel 4, 2013; Cooper et al., 2016; Demers, 2011; Doyle and Peterson, 2005; Mogapi, 2004; Sayer et al., 2011), very little exists by way of *theorising* this transition. Therefore, one of the principal aims of this research is to provide a greater understanding of how British veterans have experienced moving between military and civilian life in the 21st century, drawing attention to the importance of forms of capital, whether positive or negative, when navigating these fields.

As such, the research question is:

- How do experiences of serving in 21st century theatres of war impact on the return to civilian life?

In order to answer this question, and after describing and reflecting upon the methodological approach adopted, Part II of this thesis will therefore address and achieve the following aims, to:

- a) provide a theoretical framework, including the new conceptual tool of 'combat capital', to better understand military to civilian transitions.
- b) explore what 'civvy street' means and looks like for British veterans, and whether a 'post-conflict' life exists in the 21st century.
- c) understand and explain how British veterans make sense of their identities post-service.

5.3. Preparing to Enter the Field

5.3.1. Research approach and design

As the research question was deliberately designed to be open and exploratory in scope, narratives seemed the most desired outcome of data collection, due to their potential to elicit data on lived experience, values, occupational ideology, cultural knowledge, and forms of capital (Johnson, 2001: 104). Further, the research question and aims are driven by a desire to uncover the voices and experiences of currently 'invisible' veterans within criminology, meaning the methods used strived to retain considerable flexibility, so as not to restrict the data and findings with a rigid research design (Miller et al., 2012: 30). When considering which methods to use for data collection, specific consideration was therefore given to flexibility, richness of data, breadth of coverage, and researching veterans – who as a group, have a unique set of experiences that can be difficult to capture (Ward, 2017).

'Relatively unstructured' in-depth interviews (Beardsworth and Keil, 1992: 261), drawing on the free association narrative interview (FANI) technique (Holloway and Jefferson, 2000), were thus the most appropriate methodological tools – aiming to capture life events before, during, and after military service, as well as experiences of transitioning between military and 'civilian' fields. The decision to use narrative-style interviewing was firstly informed through reflecting upon my previous undergraduate research with veterans (Wilkinson, 2012), which used semi-structured interviews. Although this small piece of research generated rich data, it did seem to be constrained even by a semi-structured interview schedule. The second reason for choosing this method was the knowledge that colleagues in the field of criminology and war have also used in-depth interviews to research veterans' experiences (for example McGarry,

2015), and specifically the FANI technique (Murray, 2015, 2016) – demonstrating that this method of data collection was already known to be successful with this participant group.

As a variant to narrative interviewing, photo (and object) elicitation was also incorporated into the method, following its use within Jenkins et al.'s (2008) exploratory research on veteran identities. The method therefore sought to disrupt the ordinary ways in which narratives are often recounted, for example using time-linear frameworks, instead of seeking to anchor experiences in time, place and space through the items participants brought with them. As military personnel regularly move between physical fields during their service, photos and objects could capture and place some of these experiences, as well as connecting to bodily experience and 'being there'. Photographs also allowed for an insight into social networks and capital, through the bodies captured within them and the meaning and narratives attached to them.

The flexibility of the research design aimed to allow participants to have the freedom to guide interviews, and subsequently, for the data and analysis to be able to guide future interviews. It was decided that the visual element of the research should be optional to participants, rather than compulsory, which meant that two styles of in-depth interviewing were developed:

1. In-depth interviews using an interview topic guide inspired by the FANI technique (see Appendix C8), to generate a relaxed conversation style interview.

2. In-depth interviews using photo and item elicitation, to create an interview completely guided by what the participant brings to the interview, with a topic guide to facilitate the interviews if necessary (see Appendix C9).

This section will now discuss each interview style in more detail, providing further explanation and justification for the methods chosen, in line with the research question and aims.

5.3.1.1. In-depth interviews and narratives

The first aim of this research was to develop a theoretical framework in which military to civilian transitions could be understood. It was therefore important that both methods of data collection generated in-depth interviews to stimulate rich narratives, allowing for insights into experience¹ throughout the life course. Burgess (1982) claims the best way to access such rich data is through ‘conversations with purpose’, allowing participants the freedom to guide narratives to areas of meaning. Barthes (in Polkingthorne, 1998) supports this, claiming that narrative ‘is the primary form by which human experience is made meaningful... it organises human experiences into temporally meaningful episodes’. Within the narratives elicited in this research, these ‘temporally meaningful episodes’ seemed overwhelmingly to hinge around military service, regardless of service length, falling into the categories of life before, life becoming (referring to initial military training), life during, and life after², which have provided the overarching structure of this thesis.

¹ With ‘experience’ being defined as any form of practical contact with and observation of events or occurrences before, during and after military service, including knowledge and skills gained, feelings, emotions and sensations (Adapted from Oxford Dictionaries, 2015a and McGarry and Walklate, 2011)

² Despite the topic guides having also separated questions into life before, during and after, questions were rarely, if ever, asked in this order – with these temporal categories emerging naturally through participants’ narratives.

The second and third aims of this research concern perceptions of the social world in regard to a 'post-conflict' life, as well as perceptions of self and making sense of identities post-service. Grounds and Jamieson (2003: 353) state that 'narratives serve to bind us to our culture', with Riessman (2008: 3) further explaining that narratives 'draw on taken-for-granted discourses and values circulating in a particular culture'. The connection to culture through storytelling is essential to understanding what 'post-conflict' life means to participants, as well as how civilian life is experienced in contrast to military service. Further, Williams (1984, in Reissman, 2008: 55) argues that narratives 'attempt to reconstitute and repair ruptures between body, self, and world'. This method of data collection thus fits with the research question and aims of exploring and theorising experiences of return, particularly regarding how the habitus and capital developed within a military culture adapt to civilian fields.

Viewing ordinary events and stories as 'ways in' to uncovering and understanding how sociological concepts work in everyday life, allows seemingly mundane data to take on many levels of meaning, facilitating the production of metaphors within narratives (Riessman, 2008: 59). Gendlin (1962, 2017) frequently discusses the importance of metaphors in reaching a 'felt sense', explaining that metaphors speak directly to our implicit knowing, based on our past experiences – similar to Bourdieu's (1977) notion of *habitus* and the 'present past'. As war is a unique experience, not easily captured with language, narratives and metaphors in particular, can help to get close to that experience. When designing the method and interview guide used within this research, inspiration was drawn from the FANI technique (Holloway and Jefferson, 2000; 2008), also used recently by Murray (2016) in research with veterans serving a prison sentence in England.

What was particularly appealing about this approach is that FANI questions do not ask specifically about singular events, but rather create starting points from which participants have flexibility in how they answer, and thus which narratives they choose to share. Holloway and Jefferson (2000: 37) explain that this has the effect of 'eliciting the kind of narrative that is not structured according to conscious logic, but according to unconscious logic: that is, the associations follow pathways defined by emotional motivations, rather than rational intentions'. FANI aims to get closer to experience than traditional question-and-answer interviews, which often encourage 'report' style responses, devoid of context and meaning. Although this could be seen as a methodological limitation, in that participants were not asked the same questions consistently, it is considered that it actually strengthened the findings, as strong themes emerged naturally within interviews and the data, without my guidance. An example of this has been provided in Appendix D.

As Holloway and Jefferson (2008: 303) observe, FANI therefore emphasises the meaning and context within which the account makes sense, whilst also recognising that the story told is constructed within the research and interview context. Notions of 'field' play an important role in making sense of movements within the lives of military personnel, and capturing the context of accounts was essential to allow for wider insights into how habitus and capital operate. Participants usually opened narratives with some context, placing the stories they wished to share in place and space, as well as in relation to with whom they shared these experiences. The freedom of FANI then permitted participants to continue their 'unconscious logic' of story-telling into related but not necessarily connected accounts – for example involving the same people,

another incident within the same place and/or time frame, or even a recent event that somehow linked to what was being discussed initially. This permitted the research question – which is interested in the *impact* of experiences – to be explored through the connections that participants themselves made. The incorporation of photos and objects within the method also greatly facilitated this.

5.3.1.2. Photo & object elicitation

The second method employed to access experience and thus explore the research question and aims, was the incorporation of photos and objects into the interview. Following a similar method used by Woodward and Jenkins (2011), who conducted photo elicitation with veterans to explore military identities, participants were invited to bring around 10 ‘meaningful’ photos and/or objects with them to the interview. This was stated on the Information Sheet (Appendix C1), and was a voluntary aspect to participation. Half of the participants (five) brought items with them, and a sixth had wanted to show me photos on a device, but was unable to due to a lack of internet. Where items were brought, these were used to structure the interview, with initial conversation stemming from the statement, ‘talk to me about what you have brought with you today’.

The potential limitation with this method, is that participants who brought items could be seen to have directed the data by pre-selecting what they wished to discuss, and therefore presenting a particular ‘presentation of self’ – constructed by the information they were willing to offer up to their ‘front stage’ (Goffman, 1959). This seemed initially to be the case with Liam, who had clearly thought a lot about what he wanted to bring, and what he wanted to say:

so I've brought- there's a *theme* to things that I've brought (HW: oh ok) the theme being, just about *everything* that you do when you're in the army, you have to earn (HW: yeah) one of the first things that you get, when you join the army, is a beret [gets beret out and holds it on his lap]...

(Liam)

Liam was very deliberate and particular about when he gave me certain things to hold or look at, which tied with what he was saying, or with what he was about to say. Further, his narratives during this first section of the interview contained few false starts and corrections, seeming almost to have been rehearsed. The directing of data in this way was considered interesting 'data' in itself, revealing issues about military service that had obviously been considered important to present. However, through my questions, these initial framings were deconstructed during interviews, probing further into the narratives originally presented. In the case of Liam, his narratives then showed that he was thinking and re-framing his discussions, uncovering additional and occasionally contradictory information.

Military service and the transition from military to civilian life include frequent movements between fields. A tool was therefore required to somehow anchor these experiences in place and space, helping to bring the past into the present in ways that disrupt ordinary ways of forming and presenting narratives. West (2013: 177) states that memory is 'entwined with place (it is localised, framed and made sense of through place) and the spaces (both physical and imagined) and times in which it occurs'. Photographs can thus be thought of as capturing a snapshot of experience, as they can act as a visual reminder of place, space and time. Barthes (1993: 15) describes this beautifully by describing cameras as 'clocks for seeing'.

Photo elicitation, also referred to as 'photo interviewing' (Hurworth et al., 2005), was first developed within anthropology as a technique to facilitate communication and understanding between researchers and participants (Collier, 1957; Collier and Collier, 1986). Harper (2002: 13) states that 'photo elicitation is based on the simple idea of inserting a photograph into a research interview', to generate much deeper insights into respondents' lives that connect 'core definitions of the self' to society, culture and history. West (2013) further contends that the most fundamental aspect of photo interviewing is that the practice of remembering is enacted and embodied. Narratives form an essential part of this, providing a vehicle upon which experiences can be (re)performed, added to, moulded, and as Thrift and Dewsbury (2000) suggest, rehearsed and constantly practised.

When initially researching photo elicitation and visual methods, my supervisor Evi drew my attention to the work of Lydia Martens (Keele University), who frequently uses physical objects within her research into the effects of consumerism on family life. In Halkier et al., (2011: 4-5), Martens and colleagues discuss 'practice theory' in relation to objects, drawing upon the work of Reckwitz (2002: 249):

A "practice"... is a routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, "things" and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge.

Although this definition of practice mirrors much of what was discussed in Chapter 4, surrounding Bourdieu's approach to practice, Reckwitz's emphasis on and importance

of 'things' caught my methodological attention. Reckwitz (2002) makes clear that objects and their use are central to performance, and thus the reproduction of practices in everyday life. As a method of data collection, this spoke directly to the research question and aims, providing insight into the more routine aspects of military life that reveal a great deal about culture, practice, and identities, and thus how habitus and capital develop within particular fields.

Jenkings et al. (2008) highlight how photo elicitation produced discussions that moved 'beyond the contents of photographic representation to the "life worlds" of the interviewee and those represented, i.e. the larger phenomena, which the photographs are being used to explore or access'. This was also the case in this research, where initial discussions of the photos and items moved naturally, with little or no prompt from me, to consider much bigger issues – such as discussing medals and where they were received (Iraq), to wider discussions of the justifications and motivations behind the invasion of Iraq, and their perceptions of war and politics post-service. In addition, the objects brought generated insights into the daily practices of military life, and certain moments of pride and success. One example of this was Tom bringing in two military magazines in which his regiment had been featured as a result of their 'successes' in Afghanistan.

Another way in which photo elicitation facilitated the aims of this research, was the ability to explore and capture participants' social networks, which have always been of theoretical interest. Participants usually explained who was present in each photograph and the role these people have or had within their lives. It is worth noting that few pictures of (civilian) family were brought to interviews, with the majority of

images relating to military service. It is likely that this is because the research is focused on military service, and thus people felt the items they brought should reflect this. However, following analysis of the data, it was also felt that the absence of civilian social networks within the photos replicated something deeper about social capital, in that the social networks formed with civilians, even family members, rarely seemed to hold the same 'bonding' value as those described within the military. This very dense capital experienced within the military was thus described as being 'lost' upon leaving, and was rarely replaced.

Barthes' (1993) *Camera Lucida* suggests that photographs can be representations of something 'lost', be it a person, an object, a landscape or an event that can never be regained. Sontag (2005 [1977]: 8), however, views photographs not as a form of death, but instead as 'conferring on the event a kind of immortality'. Whether death or immortality, the image or photograph therefore holds within it the potential for what Barthes (1993 see p. 26-7) terms 'punctum', which is the element of a photo that 'rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces'. This emotive quality of photographs can directly touch the viewer, whether involved in some way with the image or not. Punctum was most certainly experienced by both participants and myself on several occasions.

One particular image, repeated in almost all of the collections brought by participants, was a photo of a collection of (mostly white) men in a theatre of war, usually in desert style camouflage kit, standing near to or in front of various types of weaponry, arms wrapped around each other, tanned, much thinner faces than they had in the interviews, and usually smiling collectively. Very few of these photos were discussed

in terms of all the people in the photo still being alive or escaping injury. The deaths of friends and colleagues, whether at war or at home, was often discussed by participants as a direct result of looking at the photographs, and these discussions were sometimes difficult. Further, insights into the networks and people with whom participants are still in touch were facilitated in this way, leading to wider discussions around the ways in which military connections have, or have not, been maintained.

In-depth interviews, incorporating photo and object elicitation therefore seemed the most appropriate and innovative methodological choices for this research – which has been confirmed through data collection, analysis and subsequent reflections. The limitations of methodological choices seem to have been far outweighed by the depth and quality of data collected. As well as research design and methods, ethical considerations also formed an important part of preparations to enter the field.

5.3.2. Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for this study was gained from Keele University's Research Ethics Committee, through submission of the relevant documents (provided in Appendices C-C10) to Keele University's Ethical Review Panel. Following the approach laid out by Miller et al., (2012), ethical considerations remained an ongoing reflexive aspect of the research, rather than viewing ethical clearance as the 'end' of the ethics process. Conducting in-depth interviews with former military personnel raised a number of ethical issues that needed to be addressed. This included informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, and 'risk' – mainly stemming from the treatment of this participant group as being potentially 'vulnerable'.

Firstly, it is known that former military personnel are overrepresented in the criminal justice system (NAPO, 2009; Howard League, 2011, Murray, 2013), the homeless population (Johnson et al., 2008; Treadwell, 2010a), and are more likely than the general population to suffer with mental health problems, as well as substance misuse (Johnson et al., 2008; NAPO, 2009; Howard League, 2011; MacManus et al., 2013). Further, there was a possibility of the research causing (secondary) harm to participants, through distressing or traumatic experiences being discussed, and thus potentially relived. In line with guidance provided by the British Society of Criminology (BSC) (2015: 6), which states, 'Researchers should consider carefully the possibility that the research experience may be a disturbing one, particularly for those who are vulnerable by virtue of factors such as age, social status, or powerlessness', this research has therefore treated the participant group as 'vulnerable' in terms of the ethical conduct of data collection and processing.

Secondly, within the politics of criminological research, my approach seeks to clearly distance itself from what is often termed 'administrative criminology'³ – referring to research aligned with the state and its institutions, which often fails to 'contemplate violence and victimisation perpetrated by the state and corporate actors' (Tombs and Whyte, 2002, in Walklate and McGarry, 2015a: 6). Instead, I adopt a 'critical' stance, actively creating space for the state to fall within the scope of analysis and critique. This approach acknowledges and builds upon the calls from Jamieson (1998) and Walklate and McGarry (2015) to transgress the borders of mainstream criminological

³ Also known as 'mainstream criminology' (qua Cohen, 1981) –described as being predominantly positivist in orientation and therefore concerned with the causes of crime, without considering the social construction of crime as an ideologically driven notion; generated, (re)enforced and (re)produced through politics, law, and thus the criminal justice system.

positivism, towards an empirical 'critical criminology' of war, which allows for state authority to be challenged. As Part I of this thesis has shown, there is a strong case for the need to consider soldiers and veterans through a 'victimological lens' (McGarry and Walklate, 2011), both in terms of being subject to violence per se, and through being employed to deliver state sponsored violence within a war that is questionable in terms of its legality (Kramer and Michalowski, 2005), and ideological justification (Mythen, 2016). As such, the participant group was also considered 'vulnerable' in terms of the political critical stance taken within this research.

5.3.2.1. Informed written consent

Due to treating the participant group as being potentially 'vulnerable', the collection and processing of data was considered carefully to make sure that consent to participate was well informed. Participants were made fully aware of what participation would entail, the implications of taking part, as well the ability to opt out at any stage without giving reason, before being asked to participate in the research. Appendix E details the process for achieving informed consent, which involved providing all relevant documentation in advance, including the consent forms; encouraging potential participants to ask questions about any aspect of the research; and asking that participants 'opt in' to the research in writing – either by email or by post.

5.3.2.2. Confidentiality and anonymity

Although confidentiality and anonymity are usually of prime importance within any criminological research, the subject matter of this project – concerning war, violence, behaviour(s) defined as criminal, and the potential critique of the state – meant that

protecting participants' identities was paramount in terms of ethical considerations. Appendix F details the process for achieving confidentiality and anonymity for participants within this research, both during the interview and with regard to the storage and processing of data. All names - participants' and anyone else mentioned in the interviews - have been replaced with pseudonyms. Further, any information that could possibly lead to the identification of participants, such as places, dates, names of specific military operations, have either been withdrawn from the data completely, or replaced with anonymised information. Keele University's (2018a, 2018b) policies and procedures of research conduct and management of data⁴ were (and are) followed at all times.

5.3.2.3. 'Risk'

As with most university ethics processes, Keele places particular emphasis on 'potential risks to individuals, participants and members of the research team; the measures that will be taken to minimise risk; and the procedures that will be adopted in the event of an adverse event' (Appendix C1). During the planning of the research, 'risk'⁵ and 'harm' were considered in detail, which greatly facilitated the ethical approval process, and the success of data collection – as procedures to minimise both had been built into the research design from the very start. In addition to the potential risks posed to the anonymity and confidentiality of participants' identities as considered above, there were two other main ethical considerations in regards to 'risk':

⁴ This has recently been updated in line with the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, see GOV.UK 2018b) – with which my practices and storage of data still comply.

⁵ For the purposes of this discussion, 'risk' and 'harm' have not been unpacked and problematised as terms – however I am more than aware that particularly within criminology, they are fraught with complexities. When designing the research and ethics application, they were both considered in depth.

1. Recalling potentially traumatic events may have negative consequences for participants

Ethical boards are often wary of 'trauma' and the risk of participants becoming distressed during interviews and/or suffering future harm (DePrince and Freyd, 2004), and can be reluctant to permit researchers to engage in such interactions as a result. However, a common theme within trauma research is that the ethical focus should not be placed on 'whether participants will become distressed by the research, but rather on whether the study is designed in such a way that the final outcome will be a positive one for participants' (Brabin and Berah, 1995: 165, see also Becker-Blease and Freyd, 2006; Cook and Bosley, 1995; DePrince and Freyd, 2004).

As this research is focused on veterans' experiences, there was perhaps a higher risk of traumatic events – such as war experiences – or issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) being present within the life course, and thus potentially being discussed in interviews. Despite this, and as it was pointed out to the ethical board, what veterans consider to be traumatic can be very different to what people with no military experience may consider to be traumatic. McGarry and Walklate (2011), for example, write about the 'ordinariness' of war for FMP, and that to these individuals, traumatic experiences were a feature of everyday life. Thus, talking about them is an essential part of discussing their stories, and ultimately of this research. Becker-Blease and Freyd (2006) support this, arguing that there can actually be a great deal of harm in '*not asking*', as this can have the effect of denying or silencing significant experiences in the life course.

During one interview, staff from the accommodation where a participant was staying entered the room, and I left to go to the toilet. Upon listening to and transcribing the audio-recording, the conversation between the participant and staff while I was absent had been captured on the recorder, and revealed an interesting interaction about the difficulties of participation. Staff firstly asked if I was alright, which I assume was linked to the dynamic of him having recently left prison – to which the participant expressed he ‘hoped so’. The staff then asked how he was, and he said that he was finding it ‘hard work’, due to it bringing up memories that ‘you don’t really want surfaced’. Most interesting, was the participant then explaining that he had known this would be the case before participating, but felt the research was important and ‘worth it’ – i.e. worthy of recalling difficult stories and memories as he saw value in the project and its potential implications for veterans more widely.

This unexpected private interaction in my absence confirmed my earlier (pre-fieldwork) desires to create a space in which difficult discussions could take place. The BSC (2015) ethical guidelines discuss the protection of those potentially deemed ‘vulnerable’ due to a range of factors, such as being ‘victims’ of violence, and building protections into the method to limit secondary harm as a result of participating in research. The methods used in this research were therefore designed specifically to allow participants to guide interviews, giving them freedom to self-select the experiences they wished to share. This can also go some way to addressing the power imbalances that can occur between researcher and participant (Miller et al., 2012: 40), and means that any discussions of trauma, or

experiences that are difficult to discuss, have been selected by the interviewee and are thus considered important to them within the context of the research.

The Further Support Sheet (Appendix C10), in line with BSC (2015: 6) guidance, contains a wealth of signposting to various support services; including mental health and wellbeing, employment, housing, and a range of veteran specific services. This was given to every participant, with two main aims:

- a) to go some way to reducing any harm that may have been caused by participation in the research, through providing appropriate contacts and signposting to support.
- b) it is known that former military personnel as a group have significantly low levels of 'help-seeking' (Sharp et al., 2015), and can take on average 10 years to present to services with a problem, particularly mental health issues and drug abuse (Albertson et al., 2017). The Further Support Sheet was therefore seen as an opportunity to provide participants with a wealth of access points to forms of support, that may (or may not) be useful, independent of the research.

No interviewees became distressed during interviews, despite some very difficult discussions, and I am not aware of any harm that arose out of participation in this research.

2. Negative consequences for me, the researcher

As well as considering the impact of the research on participants, I was also very aware of the impact that the research could have on me as a researcher. The first consideration related to my safety during fieldwork, as I knew that I would likely be travelling to and attending interviews alone. To combat this, Keele University's

'Lone Working Policy' (2010) was followed at all times, and interview locations were managed on a case-by-case basis. It was arranged that I would contact my supervisor Sam Weston via mobile phone before and after the interviews, and to keep her informed of interview locations and times. Although it was preferred that interviews would take place in public places such as community centres, or where other people were present in the same building, this was not always the case in practice.

Another consideration of negative consequences concerned the impact of the research on me personally, for example discussing potentially traumatic experiences, and carrying the weight of participants' stories with me throughout this process – some of which felt incredibly heavy. My wellbeing throughout this research has been a priority, and during fieldwork, I made sure to only schedule one interview per week and kept a research diary – which also proved useful for reflexive interviewing (Lumsden and Winter, 2014). It was also arranged that I could call Sam after the interviews, which I did on several occasions.

5.3.3. Pilot interviews

Before fieldwork began, I carried out three pilot interviews, one using photo elicitation, and two using the interview guide inspired by FANI. These were carried out with two of my supervisors (Evi Girling and Sam Weston), and one British veteran. As suggested by Bryman (2012: 263), it is desirable to ensure that research instruments function well, *before* going into the field. I interviewed Evi using photo elicitation, and asked her to bring some 'meaningful' photos, which provided the structure for the interview. I interviewed Sam using the interview guide, tailoring introductory questions to

academia rather than the military. The third and final pilot interview was carried out with a British veteran that I know well, who agreed to take part in a short interview to test the method with someone from the desired participant group.

All three pilot interviews produced very rich data, about the whole life course, and provided an opportunity for me (and my supervisors) to see how the methods could work in practice. Although Sam and Evi are not former military personnel, and there are of course limitations surrounding them as pilot participants, these interviews filled me with confidence that I could use these methods effectively in practice. Further, although the third pilot interview was also carried out with someone I know, I had never talked to them about their military experiences before, and all of the questions worked well, along with the prompts.

After this interview, I was also lucky to have a discussion with the veteran about the method, which provided some useful insights. This included feedback surrounding how he had unexpectedly discussed more and with richer detail than anticipated, due to the open FANI style questions, and that he perceived photo elicitation to be very much worthy of use among this participant group⁶. These pilot interviews confirmed that using photos and objects, as well as the interview guide, could work well with veterans, and were therefore appropriate and innovative methods for this research.

⁶ Although the veteran participant did not bring photos to the pilot interview, he explained that he had intended to, but had unfortunately forgotten his phone - which he planned to use to access the photos.

5.4. Navigating the Field

Once ethical approval had been granted and the three pilot interviews had been conducted and reviewed, fieldwork began. A total of 12 interviews were conducted with 10 male British veterans – nine who served in the Army and one in the RAF - in a range of locations across England and one in Belgium, lasting between two to four-and-a-half hours each.

5.4.1. Sampling

The veteran population can be a very hard to access group, even when approached through official channels such as veteran organisations and the criminal justice system (CJS) (Murray, 2016). As this research is primarily concerned with exploring the experiences of currently ‘invisible’ veterans within criminology and war literature, sampling was mainly conducted using convenience and purposive snowballing techniques (Bryman, 2012; Coyne, 1997; Jupp, 2002). All participants were white males, although as an additional discussion of recruitment provided in Appendix G explains, this was not for a lack of trying. This means there is an absence of female experiences, in addition to experiences of people from black and minority ethnic groups. Although this clearly raises limitations in the data, the intention of this research was never to produce a sample that would be generalisable, namely due to the size of the sample, but also because this is an initial exploratory insight into what is still largely an under-researched area (McGarry and Walklate, 2016).

The aim of this project was to capture exit points from the military and subsequently to explore transitions to civilian life, considering the impact of serving in 21st century theatres of war. Career veterans, where retirement has been taken, were not a focus

within this research. This could be seen as a limitation in sampling, as these experiences of transition are absent. However, it is considered that career veterans are an important group that I hope additional research will consider, as despite leaving the military with some level of financial stability gained through their military pension, Williams et al.'s (2018) findings raise issues around cultural reintegration, echoing those presented in this thesis (see Chapter 9).

It is also important to raise another limitation in sampling, which concerns a lack of representation of higher ranks, particularly where entry to the military starts within roles such as 'Officer', as opposed to 'working up the ranks'. This was not a deliberate exclusion, but instead seemed to reflect the networks used to generate the sample. Again, this is a group that future research would actively seek to consider, as it is likely that they hold very different levels of capital upon entering and leaving the military – which according to the results of this research, could present a very different picture of transition. As such, the theoretical insights provided here are also not claimed to be generalisable to the wider military institution. There are a wealth of roles, ranks, and experiences within the military, and this is a small insight into the experiences of 10 white males who served predominantly in combat roles (see Table 1, p 153).

I raise these limitations in the data and research in a bid to avoid what Taylor et al. (2013: xxi) describe as analysis 'woefully focused on the micro-level. The system of power and legitimation ... almost entirely missing.' This research has unfortunately not had the capacity to fully explore and present critical insights into '[t]he notion of a total system, of a grossly unequal class-structure and a culture, which legitimises and

mystifies inequality' (ibid.), which was present in the data regarding the military institution. However, in future work and publication, this will be considered⁷.

5.4.1.1. Recruitment

Sampling took place in two waves. The first formed a 'core' group of 8 'invisible' veteran participants – not known to criminal justice agencies or charities working with veterans – using existing networks established in previous research (Wilkinson, 2012) as a starting point (see Appendix H). The second wave generated a much smaller subsample of 2 'visible' veteran participants from a housing charity, once saturation was being achieved in the core sample (see ibid.). As this research is concerned with the experiences of currently 'invisible' veterans within Criminology and War, it was important to also gain an insight (albeit limited) into the lives of 'visible' veterans, in order to allow for some form of comparison. The two participants in the subsample are therefore classed as 'visible' for the purposes of this research, in that they are considered to represent the veterans that have already entered knowledge production, due to being contacted through a charity working with veterans leaving prison – and are thus 'known' to various services and bodies, including the CJS. I am well aware that this comparison is limited, however I do not consider the small number to render the experiences gathered as part of this research invalid. In fact, they are extremely insightful.

⁷ It is worth noting that McGarry and Murray are currently working on a book (forthcoming - see also McGarry and Murray 2017, 2018) that explores the concept of 'khaki collar crime', whereby the call for ethnographic research into the military institution is raised, along with the need to study the composition of the military system(s) of power.

The core group of participants were made up of seven veterans from a range of locations across England, primarily from the North and Midlands areas, and one who now lives in Brussels, Belgium. All eight of the 'core' participant group had served in the Army. The small subsample of two veterans was drawn from a voluntary sector housing organisation in Birmingham, which runs a scheme providing accommodation and support for veterans leaving prison. Within the subsample, one participant had served in the Army, and the other in the RAF. Appendix H details the processes of sampling, firstly for the core group of 'invisible' veteran participants, and secondly for 'visible' participants.

Excluding the participant who now lives in Belgium, participants are currently living in and/or grew up in areas that feature in the 20 most deprived areas in the UK, including Birmingham, Blackpool, Burnley, Liverpool, Pendle, and Stoke-on-Trent (see DCLG, 2015: 10). All 10 participants were white males who had served in the British Armed Forces: 9 in the Army, and 1 in the RAF. A brief snapshot of demographics has been provided in **Table 1** (see next page), and more information about participants is provided in the Participant Biographies (Appendix B).

Although further interviews were considered, at 8 participants plus the additional 2 in the subsample (10 in total), the data had become saturated (Bryman, 2012: 426), was already incredibly rich, and the constraints of time and resources became limiting. In addition, as the interviews lasted much longer than I had predicted, ranging from between two and four-and-a-half hours, transcription took significantly more time than I had originally planned. As the key focus of this research was the life stories of participants, I wanted to maintain the ability to conduct in-depth analysis on

interviews, and thus capture these stories in detail, letting the voices of those that took part be prominent within the thesis. I am not sure I would have been able to do this had more interviews been conducted. As such, the sample was made up as follows:

Table 1 - Demographics of the 10 participants

Participant demographics		No. of participants	
		Army	RAF
Age when first joined the military	16	4	
	17	2	1
	18	2	
	21	1	
Total number of years service	4-7	4	
	8-11	2	1
	12-15	3	
Age at time of interview	30-39	6	
	40-49	2	
	50+	1	1
Main role in military (Several participants moved between roles)	Infantry	6	
	Artillery	1	
	Signals	2	
	Chef		1
Employment status at time of interview	Employed	5	
	Student	2	
	Other	2	1
Posted to one or more areas of conflict	Yes	8	1
	No	1	
Brought photos and/or items to the interview	Yes	4	1
	No	5	

5.4.2. Adapting to the field: becoming a chameleon

Due to the flexibility designed into the interview methods, no one interview looked or felt the same. Purely by chance, 5 participants brought photos and/or items, and 5 did not – although one participant had wanted to show me photos on Facebook using his mobile phone, but was unable to due to a lack of internet. This meant that whilst in the field, I was constantly having to adapt the method, tailoring it to each participant and what was (or was not) presented to me on the day. In practice, this worked far better than I had originally anticipated, and it also allowed freedom to build on elicitation and FANI techniques following transcription of earlier interviews, changing and adding questions as saturation was occurring (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, Glaser, 1992).

In addition to the method, I also adapted to fit the research field, sensing a ‘shift’ in my own habitus throughout the process. Although I do not think I ever showed it in the interviews, early discussions of violence and war experiences were initially hard to hear. However, by the third and fourth interviews, nothing heard affected me in the interview setting. Similar to participants, who often described getting into ‘soldier mode’, I got into ‘researcher mode’. Whilst in the interviews, everything said was purely considered ‘interesting information’. It was only when transcription and detailed analysis began, that the weight of some of the words and stories became real, and at times, very heavy. Learning to deal with the responsibility of holding these stories, making sense of them, and ultimately doing them justice – whilst also holding teaching roles in the university and maintaining some form of ‘home life’ – has at times been incredibly difficult to navigate, and the ‘fields’ were regularly blurred.

5.5. Analysis and Reflection

Data analysis began from the teachings of grounded theory (Corbin and Strauss, 1990; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1992), which seeks to let data guide the themes and thus theories which emerge, rather than testing pre-formulated hypotheses. 'Emerging explanations' are developed and tested, based on data as the research progresses, feeding back into the data collection process. The final shape of the theory has thus been driven by constant reflection and re-working to ensure the best 'fit' with the data. However, I did of course enter this research with pre-existing theoretical interests and ideas, initially stemming from a small piece of undergraduate research with former Army personnel (Wilkinson, 2012), and subsequent engagement with literature and criminological study.

For example, the importance of social capital (SC) in transitions was an existing area of interest, guided by my own experience and interactions with this group, as well as discussions with Sam Weston (supervisor) about her research into the recovery and transition from drug abuse (Weston et al., 2018). This has inevitably led me to consider the role that SC, and subsequently other forms of capital, play in processes of military to civilian transitions. As Pink (2004: 370) states,

..it is difficult to separate research and analysis. Analysis is often on-going as research proceeds and researchers develop understandings of informants and their social and cultural worlds, even if this involves no formal or overt analytical methods.

Analysis was developed through the identification of emerging themes and key topics during fieldwork, initially made in note form and audio-recordings. In line with a

grounded theory approach, these fed back into data collection, and continued to be re-worked, alongside reading various theories, guiding and focusing the research. This meant that before full transcription of all interviews had been completed, analysis had been ongoing 'informally' for approximately a year. During this process, Bourdieu's (1977) 'field theory' became ever more relevant and present within the data, along with helping to conceptualise my movements between research, academic, and 'home' fields.

Once all interviews were transcribed (see Appendix I), 'formal' analysis of the data took place. This process was greatly informed by Attride-Stirling's (2001) framework for 'thematic network' analysis, completed within the data organising software NVivo and subsequently summarised into an Excel Spreadsheet. A brief overview of this process has been provided in Appendix J. Although 'formal' analysis was guided by the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 4 of this thesis, a number of theoretical perspectives have been considered throughout, and will be woven into the data chapters to follow. Theory has very much been used within this research as 'tools' to which the data can be understood and easily communicated, rather than simply fitting data to theory.

Although the data and words of participants have been arranged somewhat 'neatly' into common themes within the four data chapters to follow, I am not suggesting a universal 'uniform' experience. Despite many similarities, participants all experienced these events in qualitatively different ways, with this thesis seeking to draw out the overarching themes, placing them in a framework to which the transition from military life to a 'civilian' 'post-conflict' life can be understood. There are of course exceptions

in the data and experiences, and these will be highlighted where relevant. However, for the most part, these exceptions appear to strengthen the main theoretical framework of field theory that has been adopted, by capturing the differences in forms and values of capital in relation to habitus and field.

5.5.1. Interpretation

Throughout analysis, I consistently returned to original transcripts to ensure that I was listening carefully to the stories unfolding in the context they were told. Within qualitative interviews, particularly where rich narratives are elicited, subjective meanings, identities and sense of self are often negotiated and heard as these stories are presented (Maruna, 2001; Goffman, 1959). These seek to capture and reconstruct personal experiences, recounted at a particular point in time, to a particular audience, and for a particular purpose. This context will have an effect on which stories participants chose to share, along with how they are framed and subsequently interpreted.

Further, my reactions to the data are central to how it will be interpreted and thus presented – see Appendix K for two examples. As with participants' selection of narratives, interpretation will therefore reflect my experiences of hearing, reading, analysing and selecting data, at a particular point in my life, for a particular audience and purpose. It is hoped that the use of lengthy quotes from participants will allow readers to arrive at their own conclusions about my analysis, as well as supporting points of discussion. Although I have not conducted discourse analysis, I have included the data within the thesis as it was transcribed in full verbatim (see Appendix I), including false starts and pauses, to allow the reader to gain a better sense of

interactions. Despite strongly believing that my methods do justice to the research and have integrity, it is important to consider the impact that I may have had on the data.

5.5.2. Reflexivity

In line with the critical stance I take within the politics of criminology, mentioned briefly in section 5.3.2, this research rejects the notion of an 'objective' criminology, that offers a "view from nowhere" with all of its rights and privileges' (McCarthy, 1994: 15). Instead, I align my approach with scholars such as Wacquant (2011: 441-2), who critically reflects upon what is referred to as the 'science-politics nexus in criminology', forged through the 'hierarchical articulation of the academic field'. Within this context, reflexivity can be thought of as a 'continuing mode of self-analysis and political awareness' (Callaway, 1992: 33 in Pillow, 2003: 178). As Higate and Cameron (2006: 2019 -20) discuss, reflexivity remains 'largely peripheral to the field' of military studies, and in particular within military sociology, which is curious, considering 'the values of researchers can never be eradicated from their work'.

I therefore wish to firmly place myself as a human being, not as an 'objective scientist', who has approached this research within the confines of my own experiences – and thus habitus – and as a result, have likely guided this research in relation to these subjectivities (Higate and Cameron, 2006). Although very wary of avoiding falling into what Pillow (2003: 182) refers to as a 'confessional tale', where 'the use of self-reflexivity is often used to situate oneself as closer to the subject', it is important to offer an insight into my connection to this research topic. Not only does this context potentially aid the reader in understanding my motivations for originally embarking

upon this project, which Higate and Cameron (2006) argue is hugely lacking in research into the military, but it also has a direct connection to the data gathered⁸.

I am a white female, currently 27 years of age at the time of writing (I was 24 when fieldwork began), originally from a small village on the Yorkshire/Lancashire border near Burnley – an area heavily targeted by military recruitment (Morris, 2017b) – with no military experience. My ex-husband was ex-military – he left the Army approximately three years before we met. At the start of most interviews, participants asked me how I had come to be interested in this subject and conduct research into the experiences of former military personnel within the discipline of criminology. I was always honest and usually answered along the lines of:

Well my ex-husband was ex-military, and when I was doing my undergraduate degree I kept seeing connections between what he and his friends, both serving and ex-military, used to discuss, and the things I was studying. I did a small piece of research for my dissertation, and have been interested in researching this ever since.

(Hannah, taken from the interview with ‘Gavin’)

The knowledge that I was once married to an ex-soldier seemed to form an instant connection with participants, building rapport and what appeared to be a level of trust. I already had an insight into military culture, and knew many military terms, although most participants did still explain them.

⁸ See also Appendix H – detailing the use of existing contacts to former military personnel, used as an initial starting point for snowball sampling

Simon asked me how this came to be my PhD topic towards the end of the interview, directly relating my previous relationship to a level of understanding into the difficulties faced by this group:

Simon: I didn't realise your, your ex-husband was, ah, ex-Military. Um, so I could see that you've got a good understanding what it's like to be in the Military.

HW: Yeah, well, not that I can claim to, but I, I've seen it-

Simon: (overlap) No, no, no. But you, you

HW from somebody that I cared about. (end overlap.)

Simon: I think having to live with someone who's ex-Military, you're going to understand that these guys are very nice people to be with (pause) but could flip and, and. As I say, once you're a soldier you're always a soldier...

He then continued to talk in more detail about his personal struggles in the two years after leaving the military, with renewed focus on his need to channel aggression through sport, and negotiate his identity. Prior to this, Simon had mostly spoken about his wealth of success post-military. I am not sure that participants would have spoken to me in such depth, or with the range of topics discussed, had I not shared this part of myself with them.

As Higate and Cameron (2006: 224) discuss, 'Military culture is characterized by the creation of insider and outsider categories between military personnel and civilians', with the 'us' and 'them' dichotomy potentially creating barriers between (civilian) researcher(s) and (military) participants. Despite being an outsider in many ways, it seemed that the disclosure of my former marriage to an ex-soldier may have placed me as somewhat 'inside', eliciting rich data that I had not expected. Further, upon reflection and analysis of transcripts, the 'ex' part of my marriage status seemed to

create a space for participants to talk about and reflect upon their own relationship troubles, with one participant remarking, 'I'm sure this is all probably familiar to you'.

Some of these reflections seemed to have already been thought through, with narratives about failed marriages and relationships flowing easily, whereas others appeared to be actively reflecting within the interview, with my presence seeming to provoke a consideration of how it may have been experienced from the partner's side:

Oliver: [shows photo of a woman sat in a living room with two dogs] And that's the wife, that was the wife

HW: Oh, is this 'the wife'? Ok (very long pause)

Oliver: erm (long pause) well, I er, I suppose I didn't treat her very well. Well, erm, not with the respect that she needed treating with (long pause) I didn't treat her badly. Erm (pause) I was never abusive, never physically or mentally abusive. I just didn't care (long pause) That's the honest answer. I didn't care.

My re-using of 'the wife' may also have contributed to this reflection, as I did change my tone of voice when saying it, perhaps drawing attention to the detached language used to describe her. I have thought about this exchange a lot and wondered whether I picked up on this 'as a woman', and whether a male researcher would have done the same.

There was also a very notable absence of women in the data, with few participants referring to their partners (or ex-partners) by name, in contrast to the many men discussed - all of whom were named, or efforts were made to remember their names. In addition, where male friends and/or colleagues were discussed, this was often

accompanied by a brief overview of their character, or how they knew each other. Instead, women were often constructed in terms of their female 'role' - mainly as mothers, girlfriends and wives, with little revealed about their personalities or the things they enjoyed.

Being a female researcher may also have impacted the data in other ways. As documented by Murray (2016), being female and researching experiences of male veteran participants seemed to elicit more discussions around emotions, and less about the specifics of violence and weaponry, compared with male researchers such as McGarry (2012*b*). However, McGarry was formerly in the military, which may have facilitated such discussions beyond him simply being 'male' - with participants perhaps being aware of a shared knowledge in respect to weapons and military life. Discussions of violence, weapons and activities at war made up a relatively small portion of the overall data, and were often softened or filtered, apparently for my benefit. Yet, these discussions are still present, and more so than I had expected - with some interviews containing graphic discussions of time spent at war. It seemed that these detailed accounts of war mostly stemmed from the photos brought to interviews, as weapons, death and destruction were frequently present in the images, prompting conversation around them. This may perhaps have facilitated data collection on these topics that might otherwise have been absent.

The final reflection stems from a number of participants expressing their desire to read the thesis once finished, asking that I send it to them - which of course I will. In addition, some participants have got back in touch post-interview to ask how the project is going, and to update me on certain changes in their lives. One participant

even sent me a powerful poem that he wrote about war (see Appendix L), explaining he had been thinking a lot about my earlier question, regarding whether he could think of a metaphor to capture the experience of war. Knowing that participants are connected to this project beyond their time given in interviews was never something I had expected, and has been both a positive driving force within this project and at times, a source of anxiety. It has deeply affected the way in which this thesis has been produced and finally presented, as I wanted to make it as accessible as possible, whilst still maintaining the academic standard required of a PhD thesis. The focus throughout has been to let the voices of participants guide the thesis – even down to the structure of the data chapters to follow, where participants’ words have been used to construct chapter titles and headings, and these are thus present within the contents page.

5.6. Conclusion

This chapter has presented the methodological rationale that has guided the research, drawing attention to the limitations of these choices, and thus to the processes employed. The fieldwork within this research produced a wealth of high quality data, the main strength of which lies in its rich detail. By incorporating photos and items into the interviews, along with the use of FANI techniques (Holloway and Jefferson, 2000, 2008), in-depth narratives have generated rich data which spans the life course of 10 British veterans. This allows for a new understanding of the currently ‘invisible’ veteran within Criminology and War, who has experienced conflict in more ‘commonplace’ ways (McGarry and Walklate, 2011: 905). The data therefore poses a challenge to the dominant constructions of the soldier and veteran as ‘criminal’ and/or ‘victim’ (McGarry and Walklate, 2016). Most importantly, this research provides a

unique insight into how the experiences of serving in 21st century theatres of war – most notably within the ‘war on terror’ – impact on the return to ‘civilian’ life.

Further, this thesis provides a rare consideration of what ‘civvy street’ means and looks like for British veterans returning from conflict in the 21st century, and how they make sense of their identities within this often complex transition. Through this in-depth narrative method, the following empirical chapters are thus able to fulfil the aims of this project; producing a data-driven theoretical framework that is currently lacking in the literature, along with the creation of a new thinking tool – ‘combat capital’ – to conceptualise movements from military to ‘civilian’ fields. Taken as a whole, this methodology allows for a detailed and considered analysis of both the research question and aims, generating a unique understanding of how the experiences of serving in 21st century theatres of war impact on the return to ‘post-conflict’ life, amid the ‘fluid’ and uncertain conditions of 21st century society (Bauman, 2007).

CHAPTER 6

Life Before:

'I saw the army as my route out'

So let's talk about before,
about why I chose the rank and file.

...

I wanted something else – him.

The man looking back at me,
the one with the uniform, the gun.

The one going somewhere, getting something done.

'Arthur', in Sheers, *Pink Mist*, 2013: 5-7

6.1. Introduction

This chapter is the first of four empirical chapters, which have been structured to reflect how interviews revealed a clear distinction between life before and life after military service, regardless of service length. This first chapter, 'Life Before', emerged from both the data and theory (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990), suggesting that early life experiences would be of significant importance. In addition, this chapter also holds a purpose in making sense of the elicited narratives within the flow of participants' lives, allowing the four data chapters to build upon one another, producing rich insights into the experiences of serving in and leaving the British military in the 21st century.

Prior to interviews taking place, participants were 'invited to bring a small number of photos and/or objects/items that are meaningful ... (approximately 10) to the interview' (Appendix C1). This was an optional part of participation, which resulted in half of the participants (five) bringing items. Participants who brought photos and

items to interviews often began by showing an image of themselves as children or young adults, wishing to discuss 'who they were' before they enlisted. Although participants who did not bring items were sometimes asked to 'talk to me about life before you joined the military', they also all chose to return to childhood throughout the interview, using a very similar framing to the interviews with item elicitation.

Before outlining the structure of the chapter to follow, it is considered necessary to briefly highlight that within the theoretical framework adopted in this thesis (see Chapter 4), Bourdieu (1977, 1979, 1984, 1990, 1997) consistently argues that early life experiences hold the greatest weight within the habitus. In order to attempt to grasp the development of habitus and capital in relation to the various social fields occupied, childhood must therefore be considered. Bourdieu (1990: 66) explains that habitus is acquired through the subconscious absorption and internalisation of the specific 'rules of the game' of a particular field, usually through the repetition of experience within that field. Habitus then provides a 'practical knowledge', or 'feel for the game', which forms an embodied framework of (past) experience, used to negotiate (future) unfamiliar experiences, social contexts or fields (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). In line with Bourdieu's (1977) metaphor of social life as a 'game', the habitus, along with the various forms of capital held, then guides and structures human action and strategy, mediating how positions are occupied, or not, within new social fields.

In other words, experiences can be seen to be converted into a subconscious framework to which all future experiences are processed and responded. Whoever we are at this precise moment, Bourdieu (1977; 1990) argues, is the product of everything that has gone before. These experiences are held in the body and mind, with decisions

made ultimately stemming from the options we *perceive* to be available to us, drawn from past experiences, with our habitus shifting and adapting to fit the field(s) in which we operate. A limitation in the methodology must thus be reiterated, in that reflexive interviews generate and construct information about the past from the current habitus in which participants operate.

As will be discussed further in Chapter 7, the military is very good at overriding, at a relatively early age (usually 16-22, Gee, 2017), the pre-military habitus, in order to generate a shared and systematically constructed *military habitus*. Within this research, regardless of service length, all participants had been strongly conditioned by the military habitus, 'drilled' into the body and mind during basic training and maintained throughout military service, as will be discussed in Chapters 7 and 8. Due to training and service causing such a significant shift in the way participants see the world and their bodies within social spaces, it is difficult to ever truly capture a sense of their habitus before their military service. However, clear insights and themes did emerge within discussions of childhood, that are still considered valid and worthy of discussion here, especially in relation to participants' pre-military capital.

The experiences of childhood presented here are not unique to people joining the military (Gee, 2017; Howard League, 2011), but reflect the stories participants chose to share. Within this chapter and the three to follow, the words of participants have been organised through the common themes that emerged within narratives, highlighting exceptions and contradictions within the data throughout. As a reminder, the sample included nine participants who served in the British army and one who

served in the RAF – within the ranks of private, lance corporal, and corporal – no sergeants or officers were interviewed.

This chapter falls into three main sections. Section 6.2. draws attention to a shared narrative of a ‘normal childhood’, where several participants initially framed their life before military service as being without struggle. Section 6.3. will then build on the previous section, exploring the most dominant theme with the data, of a universal narrative of the military as an escape from socioeconomic conditions of disadvantage, as well as from a perceived ‘life of crime’. Section 6.4. considers participants’ pre-military habitus and capital, before offering a conclusion, drawing together the three sections of the chapter in a final discussion.

6.2. A ‘Normal’ Childhood

When speaking about life before military service, several participants used the phrases ‘normal childhood’ and ‘normal upbringing’ in an attempt to frame childhood as something not worthy of discussion. Even within a small number of interviews, ‘normal’ did not reflect the same type of upbringing to each participant. However, across interviews, ‘normal’ was used to refer generally to a lack of difficulties in childhood, encapsulated with references to having lots of friends, enjoying school (or at least enjoying the social aspect of school), and playing sports, along with the presence of basic physiological needs being met – such as food, water, shelter and being clothed (Maslow, 1943; 1954; 1970). Within this construction of an ‘unproblematic “normal”’, the notion of being a ‘lad’ was also frequently present, usually used in relation to sports and behaviours such as fighting. What became increasingly interesting within this theme, is that in every interview where childhood had initially

been framed as 'normal' – i.e. without struggle, this had been disrupted by the end of the interview, in varying degrees. This section will explore this disruption firstly in relation to family life, and secondly in relation to education.

6.2.1. Family life: 'I had to grow up very quickly'

Within most, if not all interviews, participants made reference to what could be seen as difficult experiences within their childhood family life. These included the death of a parent; sexual, physical and/or emotional abuse and/or neglect; parental separation or divorce; and household substance abuse and addiction - all of which have been defined in the literature as 'adverse childhood experiences' (ACE) (Felitti et al., 1998; Bellis et al., 2014; Real Life Research, 2015; Corcoran and McNulty, 2018). Based on their research, Bellis et al. (2014) estimate that around 50% of the population in the UK have experienced at least one ACE. I include this only to make the point that the following section is not seeking to place these experiences in contrast to participants' descriptions of a 'normal childhood', as it is well known, even with conservative estimates, that ACE are widespread. What this section seeks to do, is to highlight how participants first constructed 'normal childhood' as meaning an *absence* of difficulty, whilst then proceeding to reveal significant experiences that contradicted this, with an overarching narrative of having to 'grow up' quickly. When thinking about habitus, this may perhaps reflect what will be shown in Chapter 7 – that the military 'drills' into recruits how one should not revisit the past, and how there should be 'no excuses for weakness' (Gavin).

Gavin's story most strongly captures this recurrent disconnect between an original bid to frame childhood as 'normal', and thus not worthy of further exploration, and subsequent discussion of a range of difficulties experienced within family life.

er I had a normal upbringing I suppose, [clears throat] enjoyed school (pause) well mostly enjoyed it. Had loads of friends. Er:: I loved sports like most lads. That's about it really, pretty normal. Not a lot to say.

(Gavin)

Gavin then went on to revisit the topic of childhood several times, without prompting, disclosing that he was sexually abused as a young child by someone close to the family. He also talked at length about his parents going through a 'messy divorce' when he was 8 years old, which had severely affected him and his brother.

Yeah it was pretty shit when I think about it really [sighs] I mean looking at it now ... They put me and my brother in the middle. Like that stupid game piggy in the middle where the pigs never fucking win (pause) we had to sometimes take letters or "tell your fucking Dad this", you know what I mean? I didn't understand. I remember like, er once I started to have a cry on the stairs and my Mum lost it with me. She was like, "Gavin you and your brother need to be grown up about this", er "I can't be worrying about you too" type thing (long pause) I was 8.

(Gavin)

Liam also discussed how he had to 'grow up' and deal with challenging circumstances at a young age, expressing a similar resentment and disbelief about not receiving the support he needed from his family:

I left home at 14 (HW: ok) I had a *massive* fight with my stepdad. Really violent attack actually ... My family abandoned me (pause) and didn't want anything to do with me ... he was arrested for it and all this kind of stuff and:: erm (long pause) the way they saw it was, that I'd reported him to the police. I mean, *stupid* really you know, I was a 14 year old kid. And I mean, I look back on it, it's a long time ago, but I look back on it and think, *why* (pause) but that shaped me *a lot*. I went into care, and there was a period there where I was between 14 and 16 and I was effectively, I had to grow up very quickly and look after myself.

(Liam)

Liam spoke of this incident as a 'turning point' in his life course (Sampson and Laub, 1993), generating significant change, in both life situation and identity, inherently connected to his decision to join the military. This could also be seen as a defining experience in relation to Liam's habitus, in that this incident of violence quickly led to Liam being thrust into a new, previously unknown field – that of the care system – causing a fundamental 'shift' in being in order to adapt. This involved developing his own use of violence, referred to in the extract above as 'looking after himself'.

Throughout his works, Bourdieu (1977, 1984, 1990, 1998, 2006) stresses the heavy weighting that early experiences have on the (adult) habitus, ultimately giving most shape to the 'structuring structure' that guides human action and strategy. Even when discussing the promotions received in the army, Liam related these back to this incident:

He was in the army. My stepdad, er and he only got to lance corporal. So, and my brother got to corporal (pause) so (laughs) so, I beat them, I beat *him* most importantly. And that was definitely a psychological aspect to it (HW: yeah) and,

and the other thing was that (pause) I like an underdog, I always have done (pause) and I was the underdog

(Liam)

While Liam clearly connected these difficult childhood experiences to his military service, this was not always the case. What was most striking in the narratives surrounding a disruption to the original construction of a childhood without struggle, is that several participants (Gavin, Harry, Josh, Kelli, Tom, Simon) appeared to actively resist connecting difficult experiences in childhood to their decision to join the military.

I had a very, very simple upbringing, always had everything I needed, had a room ... clothing, food, the fridge was always full of food ... but there wasn't enough attention on us. The parents were not there for us (pause) because they were too busy. ... We had everything we needed. You know, my father didn't, didn't play with me or (pause) He took me on the cemeteries when I was a very young child ... but never went, um, never went cycling or running or, you know ... I've got no memories of playing with dad. (HW: No?) You know, it's um... it's not the reason why I joined the Military. The Military was really because I wanted. I was surrounded by Military personnel and, you know, the activity, the adventure, the sports, um, but my upbringing is a completely normal upbringing with no difficulty whatsoever.

(Simon)

Again, perhaps reflecting the current (still military aligned) habitus, Simon tried to frame physiological needs (food, water, shelter) as being 'enough', yet consistently returned to how notions of safety and security, along with belongingness and love (Maslow, 1943, 1954, 1970) were also clearly needed, yet were absent. Although Simon said he had 'a completely normal upbringing with no difficulty whatsoever', the second

extract of interview shows him return to discuss his childhood in more detail, seeming again to contradict this statement:

I was about 16, my parents just couldn't handle me anymore. So I had to move back, ah, I moved back to Scotland [from Belgium] in fact, I was like, 16, I moved out of my parents' house. The, the relationship with my parents didn't work out, ah. As I say, I felt that they didn't understand my, you know.. where I want to go, what I want to do. And:: as I say, I didn't feel that I was getting the support (HW: yeah). I think they were too busy, um. They, they also had problems, personal problems too between them. ... I always remember my mother one night, you know, all this shouting in the house ... she walked into my room and says, "right. Pack a suitcase, we're leaving your Dad" (HW: yeah) I said "NO. Do what you want. You could go. Dad could go. But I'm staying here". And they're still together now, so, I'm quite pleased I did that.

(Simon)

Simon continued to express how his parents had recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary, of which he felt largely responsible due to his act of resistance. However, this incident had clearly affected him, representing what seemed to be a defining moment in his childhood and habitus. Simon talked about this story multiple times, claiming this, along with his father never playing with him as a child, had been driving forces in his parenting style with his daughter. He did not want her to feel that 'adult problems were hers to deal with', and ensured, despite his demanding job, he always made space for quality time together. Like Liam, this one experience was discussed as having been carried through life, actively and consciously – at least in his reflections - influencing his decisions as an adult.

When talking about his inability to settle in 'civilian' life, Josh moved between the army and his instability in upbringing as the source:

I've never settled to anything. Or become attached, to anything. Because. You just don't (pause) but that might have been put in well before the army, that might just have been from when I was a kid, looking for the next thing. Like I was always looking for an exit plan, I don't know. But yeah, may well have been from being a kid that.

(Josh)

Josh moved out of the family home at 15 to live at a friend's house from school but did not expand about why this was. Although potentially unconnected, he did later explain that he had always had a very turbulent relationship with his mother and siblings and mentioned that there had been an incident that removed his father from his life at a young age. Josh spoke about his Dad (stepdad) fondly, with reference to his character, physical appearance, job, and the role he continues to play in his life:

My Dad's a huge man, gentle giant I call him. Bald like [laughs]. Looks like a biker! Well he was back in'day. Er, yeah he loves the outdoors like me, walking and stuff with his dog ... he plays the guitar ... he's always been there for me and I enjoy having a beer with him when I can.

(Josh)

I asked Josh to talk to me about his Mum, to which he simply replied: 'she is a dick'.

Within the data, women mentioned in interviews, regardless of their relationship to participants, often remained 'faceless', in that little information was provided about

their physical appearance, character, and/or details of their lives¹. This was in direct contrast to the males that appeared within narratives, who had faces (either appearing within the photographs or described), and were ascribed personalities and purpose, with context offered about their connection to the participant. Despite fathers being absent or unknown to several participants during childhood, no resentment towards them was ever expressed. Instead, echoing Murray's (2016: 146) findings regarding 'faceless mothers', women were constructed mainly in relation to their (gendered) roles as mothers, wives, and girlfriends, and narrated according to their 'failures' within these roles.

At the time of interview, David had recently left prison and was clean from drugs for the first time in years. Unlike other participants, he spoke directly about his difficult upbringing and talked a lot about his mother in various capacities. In the extract below, David narrates his mother and her addiction as the key problem in his childhood, linking her to his own drug abuse and offending:

once the drugs got hold of me that was it. I was a completely different person, like, just selfish [sucks in air] and stopped seeing my daughter ... my mum was an alcoholic, um, so she's been clean for nine years now. Um, I don't it think it helped when she was drinking around me, um, and round violent boyfriends because there's six siblings ... me and Lily was the only ones that didn't get adopted out to other families [sniffs]. So, there's four that's been adopted out to everyone at young ages [sniffs], um, and they're really well to do people now. I mean one's, um, one's a musician, one's um, a psychiatrist and they got adopted into really nice families with lots of money. And, you know, they were well looked after whereas me and Lily just got the bare minimum. And because my

¹ See also discussion in section 5.2.2.

mum was an alcoholic [sniffs] she treated us like shit. Now, I don't hold that her against her now, I don't... because it is an addiction and I've been there. So, me and Mum reconciled ... cos we didn't have a lot when we grew up, we didn't have nothing I spent a lot of years in care [sucks in air]. And I hated her, you know, didn't like her at all then.

(David)

This account also captures the final theme in relation to family life, also heavily present within other interviews (Gavin, Harry, Mike, Oliver, Simon, Tom), of a restriction to human flourishing and life chances – termed ‘autonomy harm’ by Pemberton (2016). David had seen the impact that growing up in a different parental environment, or *field* had for his four adopted siblings – namely a family wealthy in various forms of capital, including financial stability, cultural capital, social networks and support, and symbolic capital (such as adopted parents being doctors or teachers). Although they had the same start in life, moving into ‘nice families with lots of money’ allowed David’s siblings to achieve upward social mobility, whereas he and his sister Lily have spiralled downwards, into extreme addiction, multiple encounters with the criminal justice system, and long periods of homelessness.

What David and others (Gavin, Josh, Mike, Simon, Tom) recognised, was the wealth of opportunities unavailable to them, because of socio-economic circumstances surrounding their upbringing. This was not only expressed in terms of money, but also in a lack of time and attention parents had to offer, as well the inability to engage in developmental activities such as sports, music and reading. The next section will build on family life by exploring participants’ narratives around education, which also seemed to be bound to their often limited space to flourish as children.

6.2.2. Education: 'I wasn't interested'

Education was the second key feature of the initial framing of a 'normal childhood', seeming to mean the absence of struggle, manifested in collective claims to have 'enjoyed school'. More specifically, it emerged that what participants actually meant is that they had enjoyed the feeling of bonding social capital and belonging (Granovetter, 1973, 1983; Putnam, 1995, 2000), experienced through the social aspect of school, as well as self-actualisation achieved through playing sports. Again, what was interesting was that participants firstly framed school as unproblematic, yet during the course of the interviews, this was disrupted when learning was discussed.

Josh: Well not a lot really to say (pause) fairly normal childhood, at school. Then I decided I was going to join the army.

[later in the interview]

HW: So:: you mentioned that leading up to the decision to join the army that there wasn't much to say. But talk to me about school

Josh: I enjoyed it. Well, I didn't not enjoy it, er when I was there. Erm I enjoyed sports and. I was good at sports, so I enjoyed sports you know (pause) other than that, actual- er well I enjoyed it again just being round' lads and erm, being round me mates and stuff, but (long pause) I weren't good at school ... I only went really to see me mates really. And play sport (pause) got in a bit of trouble and stuff at school really

Oliver was an exception to this, in that even the social aspect of school was difficult to him. However, he explained in detail that this had not always been the case, and that moving to a secondary school in an area much further away had been responsible.

Oliver effectively lost his social capital – his network of school friends – which he claims sparked a downward spiral in his life course from then on:

First photo in a frame, as it is. (HW: Okay) That's me at about eight-years-old. ... that was (pause) probably the best time of my life. By far. Not a care in the world. Simple as that. Everything was done for me. I didn't have any responsibilities. I had good friends. Good family. The school that I was going to at the time, spot on. Couldn't knock that at all. Best time of my life. Things started going downhill then. I moved schools. To a senior school. The school itself was miles away. ... Didn't really socialise with people because they weren't in my social circle. The average journey was an hour to school, and an hour back. So, it really threw my world back then. I hadn't really thought about it until, you know, that brief conversation before. And I've thought about it since. My life changed around that time.

(Oliver)

What seemed to characterise the lack of enjoyment and lack of success within the academic aspects of school, was that the *field* of education was not well matched to participants' habitus and capital. This was manifested in participants 'not being interested' in school, yet related directly to the learning environment in which they never seemed to 'fit'.

Tom: I mean I wasn't really interested you know (pause) I did GCSEs. Did *average* (HW: yep) but I wasn't an academic sort of person, I probably, thinking back I had the ability, I just couldn't be fucked

Kelli: I studied public services at college, left school with no GCSEs and I know I wasn't stupid, but I wasn't academically that way. I wasn't interested at school. (HW: mm) I think it's probably more the environment I was in. I didn't like it at all.

Bourdieu (1984: 328, 1988, 1991, 1997, 2006, see also Lucas, 2001; Edgerton and Robert, 2014) wrote extensively on the field of education, arguing that institutions of learning are sites in which power and socioeconomic inequalities are (re)produced, legitimising the existing social hierarchy by transforming it into an apparent hierarchy of 'gifts' or 'merit'. It is claimed that educational institutions demand, without communicating these demands, a certain habitus and high levels of capital – mostly cultural – as a starting point (Bourdieu, 1997; 2006). Cultural capital refers to the embodied forms of cultural knowledge, such as social expectations, particular tastes (art, for example), and generally knowing what is expected in a range of social settings (Bourdieu, 1997). Schools, colleges, and universities, Bourdieu (2006; see also Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977) argues, operate on the basis that students have an existing level of understanding and application of language, social codes, and an interest in, or at least an inclination towards, the achievement of academic goals – which are then inherently linked to measures of 'success'.

When these presumed qualities are not held, to use Bourdieu's (1977) metaphor, the mismatch of students' habitus and capital with the educational field can leave them feeling like a fish *out* of water – in that the environment around them is noticeably 'wrong', causing discomfort up to extreme struggle. Students then have to work additionally hard to grasp the educational 'tools' needed, before being able to 'succeed' – i.e. get high grades. Within the narratives of participants, this site of struggle was often avoided through truancy, not paying attention, and/or rejecting the value of education completely, with participants instead focusing their energy on their friendships and sport – where they were often still able to succeed.

So it was established that I was, you know, moderately intelligent. But that I (imitates posh female voice) 'failed to apply it' (HW: ok) So I had a lot of friends, uh which I hung around with. And I was incredibly immature at that time. Um, it's the old saying isn't it? 'I wish I could go back to school' [laughing] But it's, it's absolutely played out with me, definitely. I mean when I was in school, I was a dickhead. I couldn't communicate. I was one of the crowd. I was, you know, I fucked around. And I ended up leaving with five GCSEs, of grades, two Cs, Ds, an E and an F (HW: yeah) you know, I was not going anywhere academically.

(Mike)

As Bourdieu (1997; 2006) highlights, when students do not conform to the required standards of learning, they are often subject to forms of punishment. A strong theme within these academic struggles was forms of punishment such as detention and exclusion from class or school, as well as the labelling of participants as 'not clever' or even 'bad'.

I was quite clever ... but I was *bored*. I was really bored with school ... I just didn't get on with school at all, and I still got decent grades, well actually *no*, I didn't. I got Cs for everything and the reason I got Cs for everything, I found out later, is because. They thought, because I didn't pay much attention and I got kicked out of class every now and then, that I wasn't clever, and they put me in for exams where the most I could get was Cs! (long pause) school let me down really

(Liam)

Simon now knows that he has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), which his daughter has also been diagnosed with. However, when he was at school, this was not something that was known about or diagnosed. Simon discussed how he had found the learning environment of being seated in a classroom to be like torture, as he

struggled to sit still and concentrate, even when he tried his best. Although Simon mainly framed the lack of support in relation to his parents having to work multiple jobs, and so not having time to develop him academically, the extract below highlights how his ‘turbulent’ behaviour was dealt with at school:

Um, I’d always remember you’d get these cards at the end of the week. At primary school you’d get cards. Gold silver and bronze, and the black one, ‘*you’re a bad boy*’. I’d be too extreme, I’d be black or it’d be gold [laughs]

(Simon)

I found Simon’s phrasing of ‘I’d be black or it’d be gold’ to be poignant, reflecting the school’s assignment, and/or Simon’s internalisation of a gold card representing good *behaviour*, and black card a bad *person*. This is not uncommon within education and parenting, but can have lasting effects on self-esteem and development (McMahon, 2009), potentially leading to labels acting as a ‘self-fulfilling prophesy’ (Becker, 1963).

The final theme to emerge in relation to education was that participants linked ‘not being clever’ directly to a career in the army:

Josh: I wasn’t really clever enough to do owt else. So that’s where I was going (pause) I joined with my best mate and we both kinda joined up together. But he was a bit cleverer than me, er could have done whatever he wanted [laughs] so yeah as I said I wasn’t very clever at school so I was always going to go into the infantry

Oliver: So, secondary school wasn’t particularly good. It was shit. So, I didn’t really study. Played truant quite a lot. (HW: Yes) Yes. I wasn’t really

interested. So. Hence, the career path that I was led on, really. So, I think I could have done a lot better and a lot more for myself.

Joining the military was thus narrated as being deeply connected to low educational attainment and feeling and/or being labelled 'not clever'. In a society where most employment sectors demand a certain level of educational grades (usually five GCSEs or O Levels at C or above) as a basic point of entry, those that fall short can feel, and actively *are* excluded from the field. What will be discussed in the following section, is how participants saw and used the military as solution and resource to escape a lack of opportunities, real or perceived, in 'civilian' life.

6.3. The Military as an Escape

Perhaps the most dominant theme to emerge within the data was a universal narrative around the military acting as an 'escape', or 'route out' of socioeconomic deprivation, as well as from anticipated involvement in the criminal justice system. This built on participants' descriptions of childhood that often encompassed financial difficulty and a general lack of resources, which was then connected to poor educational attainment. The theme of escape has also very recently been discussed by Gee (2017: 5, see also QA Research, 2009), echoing findings in this research, that the two motives driving army recruitment are:

first, the need to escape disadvantage; and second, the allure of the soldier's life, which is particularly characteristic of the youngest recruits. In most cases, both motivations – the push and the pull – influence the decision to enlist.

'The soldier's life', relating to the imagining of an 'adventure in waiting' (Gee, 2017: 7), is also present within participants' narratives, alongside the desire to gain purpose and 'make something of life'. This section will explore this theme in more detail, firstly in relation to the military as an escape from disadvantage, and secondly from a 'life of crime'.

6.3.1. Escaping disadvantage

Morris (2017b), with the aid of the charity Child Soldiers International (in Morris, 2017c), recently confirmed what has long been known - that the military, particularly the army, specifically target recruitment in areas of socioeconomic disadvantage and low employment. An army briefing document for the most recent campaign, run under the strap line, 'This Is Belonging', made clear that there should be deliberate and strategic 'up-weights to specific areas', mainly in northern England, including Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool and Leeds (Morris, 2017c). Participants within this research, with the exception of Simon, had all previously lived in areas listed within the 20 'most deprived' areas in England before joining the military (DCLG, 2015: 10). Rachel Taylor (in Morris, 2017b), director of programmes for Child Soldiers International, states:

It's not about presenting the military as one of many options. It's about exploiting people who don't have a lot else going for them and taking advantage of that lack of opportunity to fill the ranks usually for the most dangerous and badly paid jobs.

This campaign is of course much more recent than when any participants from this research joined. However, the marketing image of a life in the army – of adventure,

travel, excitement, belonging, camaraderie and purpose – was the very same image communicated in respect of the reasons for joining, recounted in almost all interviews.

I wanted that life. I wanted adventure and I wanted money. I wanted adventure I wanted to go places, I wanted to see the world. Er (pause) make me dad proud of me ... I weren't interested in like building or owt like that and erm. I didn't see anywhere else for me to go, or what to do.

(Josh)

Simon, who grew up close to a military base in Belgium, was the only participant to extend this image to directly link the appeal of joining the army to involvement in war:

I wanted to travel. Oh absolutely yes. Yeah, sports, adventure, travel. It was the only way I could have done it really. I never finished anything that I was passionate about. And, and this again, is where the Military was leading, um, and the big trigger, for me, was the Falkland War. (HW: mmhmm) I'd always remember seeing the news, like, the Falklands and that. They, you know Margaret Thatcher was, ah, deploying her troops to the Falklands, and that was me. Military base, you know, all this activity, these uniforms (HW: yeah) combat troops, action, you know, and, and I was always being a person of action. So I thought, yeah, yeah, definitely that [thumps on desk] "that's what I do", and that was confirmation.

(Simon)

Narratives overwhelmingly reflect that the military was perceived as a resource, often the *only* available resource, by which participants could enhance their life chances. Joining the military was seen to be a quick route into new, otherwise inaccessible fields, the aim being to achieve eventual upward social mobility and security – financial,

emotional, and physical – as well as to access a range of opportunities for development that would not be possible in ‘civilian’ life.

Mike: [for] 18 months, I was, sort of, bouncing from job to job. They were dead ends. Towards the end of '98, I thought, 'I've had enough of this now' (HW: yeah) And I, uh, went past the Army Careers Information Office in Blackpool. And I thought, "fuck it". (HW: yeah) I went in, and I said, "I'd like to join the military".

Liam: at that age, when you go into care (p) er they er, they give you er a sort of a flat (HW: right) semi-independent living ... the idea is, by the time you're sixteen, you're out of the door ... so:: I also saw the army as a kind of, you know if I can get that, it's my route out, you know. It's income, it's a job, it's security it's, a new life really.

Harry: most people get in and they leave. They'll do four or five years, and then they'll be gone. ... It's all about pushing the boundaries. And that people need to understand that there is more to life than the shitty little council estate they live on.

Tom was also drawn to the discipline offered by the military, in addition to it acting as resource facilitating a route out of disadvantage. What was particularly striking within the extracts below, the first referring to the first time Tom joined the military, and the second referring to when he re-joined, was that the military was seen as a temporary escape from 'life' – meaning the various pressures and decision making in the modern 'civilian' world. Further, that the army provided opportunities to harbour a sense of self-sufficiency, control, and purpose. Tom very much narrated the army as a safety net, in that it was a known site in which he could achieve stability and security:

In the back of my mind, it was just this concept that, I don't want to work in McDonald's or Tesco's. I need to sort my life out, and *do something* with my life. And if I can't sort myself out, then the fucking army will... I just thought, well it will either make me or break me (pause) so:: I clearly had enough about me to know what I needed. So yeah, that's how I ended up in the army the first time...

I just upped and went and moved to Canada (pause) thought I'd leave the rat race behind and disappear one day. And it was quite liberating actually. Just leaving the rat race behind. Obviously when I got back I had to think about getting a job and getting back into life. And this was the height of the fucking recession, "fucking hell, jobs are going to be difficult, what skills have I got?", you know what I mean. So:: I re-joined the army (HW: mm) which I guess in a way is *not* dealing with life really [laughs] but erm yeah so it's just, that was a part of my life where I went, "oh, didn't work out, so back in the army".

(Tom)

While some degree of agency remains within military life, the big overarching questions of what to do with one's life (and how to do it), are mostly removed, while the illusion of 'individual resilience' and purpose is provided (Gee, 2017). This seemed reminiscent of the theory posed by Fromm (1941), in which during times of uncertainty, particularly societal instability, humans can often seek 'escape' in submission to authority – even to the point of committing acts of violence if required. Tom was not the only participant who seemed to hand over his agency when enlisting, allowing the military to ultimately take charge over life decisions.

6.3.2. Escaping a 'life of crime'

Like Tom, several participants linked the discipline and structure provided by the military as an attractive feature of joining up, narrating these as qualities they lacked

in both personality and life circumstance, but recognised they needed - even at the age of 16 in Josh's and Gavin's cases. The lack of opportunities within 'civilian' life, as well as (for some), an existing involvement in petty crime and illegal drug use, were seen to be the conditions that would ultimately act as a direct pathway to imprisonment. Participants overwhelmingly saw the military as a positive and life affirming opportunity, very much in line with the post-World War II view that the military offered 'divergence and desistance from crime' (Alker and Godfrey, 2015: 77). The physical removal of the body from home environments to a military space, appeared to be seen as the key deviant from behaviour defined as criminal, along with the accumulation of various forms of capital, anticipated to generate a post-military life where deprivation and a 'life of crime' would be escaped indefinitely.

The accumulation of capital through military service, that had been perceived to generate upward movement out of the socioeconomic factors 'escaped', included economic capital, in that participants knew they would have a stable income; human capital in relation to the development of skills, experiences, and in some cases a transferrable trade (for example Mike trained to be a chef); symbolic capital as they were 'doing something' with their lives, embodying a sense of purpose that they and others would recognise as holding positive value; and social capital through the friendships and bonds that were advertised as lasting a lifetime. As it will be discussed later in Chapter 9, military service did successfully deliver some of these expectations, yet participants often returned to the same (deprived) 'civilian' fields originally escaped.

Harry joined the army at 21 years of age, making him the eldest at the point of enlistment within this sample. He described his life after leaving school as a sequence of short term employment and 'signing on' (claiming jobseeker's allowance), alongside the heavy use of cannabis. For Harry, the draw of joining the army was that it provided an immediate way out of a lack of opportunities, in which he saw an inevitable life path of involvement in the criminal justice system, already witnessed within the life course of his older brother:

I just used to bum around really with my brothers. My cousin. Um, used to get stoned quite a lot. (HW: Yeah) And then, the choice was to, uh, join the army or just be a petty criminal, like my brother. So, decided to join the army, and my brother went back to prison. ... So, I thought I'd stop smoking weed and I'll join the army, because I wasn't going anywhere and, basically, if I stayed where I was, I'd just end up either in prison, or (pause) well, or in prison. There wasn't, there weren't really any other options. I joined the army because it was either join the army, or go to jail. There wasn't, there weren't any other opportunities.

(Harry)

At the very end of the interview, Harry returned to reiterate this point, unprompted, seeming to stress the positive impact that military discipline had on his life, which could otherwise have followed in the same path as his brother:

HW: I could go on for hours, but I'm aware that it's tea time, and I don't want to take too much of your time

Harry: All right, okay. There is something I should say, really. Um, so, I said it was a question of me joining the army or going to prison. But, my older brother who used to live with me, he is a recidivist, so, he's in prison now, he's been in, he's got out, he's gone back in. So, I think that was the real option. So, that's just the way it is (pause) and in all fairness, if he joined

the army, well, which he couldn't have, because, if he hadn't a rap sheet that long by the time he was my age, maybe things would have been different for him, because there's a certain amount of discipline.

In addition to the military providing a route out of the socioeconomic conditions associated with offending, Josh and Gavin also saw the army as a field in which their childhood and teenage enjoyment of fighting and use of violence could be channelled in accepted 'legitimate' forms, rather than criminal.

Josh: When I was a bit younger and dumber, I loved fighting and stuff like that. So:: you know. But yeah it was kind of where it was always really, way I was heading I think. I didn't want to get a dead-end job (pause) so other than a life of crime or a life in the army that, that was it. And I didn't want to go to jail, so:: army it was

Gavin: I was always in trouble really, er fighting a lot of the time (pause) always seemed to have that aggression you know what I mean. Er I mean as I said I play a lot of rugby now, but yeah when I was young I don't know, I mean I did enjoy a good fight. ... I mean [sighs] fighting has always been in my life really. Didn't have a clue what to do like I said and well, the army doesn't give a shit about that stuff (laughs) better than me being fucking sent down

As will be discussed further in Chapter 7, pre-military violence was seen to have been a positive resource within the military, often allowing participants to excel during basic training in the army.

Aside from escaping a lack of opportunities, Mike claimed that he had always wanted to be a soldier from a very young age. Within this desire was the knowledge of what

being in the army would entail, in which the prospect of enlistment acted as a diversion from a potential 'life of crime'. From the age of 13, Mike was very active within the Army Cadets, which he explained 'was a passion I kept to myself, kind of like my own little thing'. He was part of a very large group of friends, which in the extract below he discussed to be engaging in escalating criminalised behaviours, initially beginning with the use of cannabis. What was striking is that although violence was seen as less problematic, the military seemed to operate as a protective factor, mainly from drug use, even before Mike had joined.

they were smoking pot. Then they started taking more, uh, different drugs. ... it turned to, uh, ecstasy and, things like that... I refused to take it, part in any of that because (HW: yeah) I knew about drug testing. And I knew that, you know, I'd get anything like that on my record and my, plans for the Army are, uh, gone. Um, it was only further down the line when they started, um, smashing car windows. And then, a couple of months later, it would be, uh, smashing car windows to get car stereos... But we weren't violent. Well we weren't sort of (pause) obviously there was instances with violence, but um, we weren't overtly violent and we didn't go out *looking* for fights... So essentially I did see this progression. ... I went off then, sort of done my own thing. At that point, funnily enough, I went and joined the TA

(Mike)

Mike was not the only participant to have spent time in the Army Cadets and was also among other participants who were acutely aware, before joining, that their bodies would soon become their most important tool, both to them and to the military. The final section in this chapter will expand on this in relation to bodily capital (Wacquant, 2004), along with a more general overview of participants' pre-military habitus and capital.

6.4. Pre-military Habitus and Capital

Although it is difficult to grasp habitus through reflective interviews, especially as narratives surrounding 'life before' are constructed within and by the current habitus, three themes emerged within the data in relation to participants' pre-military habitus and capital.

6.4.1. Born a soldier: Military families and playing war

The first theme to emerge in relation to participants' pre-military habitus was that the majority of participants (Gavin, Josh, Kelli, Liam, Mike, Oliver, and Simon) expressed how they had always been well aligned to a career in the military from a young age, often narrated with reference to soldiering being within their 'genetic makeup'. This seemed to stem from a natural physical ability and enjoyment of using the body for sports and outdoor activities, as well as the young habitus being immersed within military culture and fields, through the presence of celebrated masculine role models with a military history - such as brothers, fathers, and grandfathers. Further, there was a strong presence of what Gee (2017: 7) refers to as a childhood 'pull' towards the military, generated by the 'official military branding of toys and play areas' and the ceremonial demonstrations by soldiers during parades and sporting events.

For Simon and others, military uniforms were also recognised for their symbolic capital, signifying male role models to be aspired to, as well as embodying 'the allure of the soldier's life' - representing adventure, action (involving weapons), and positive purpose (Gee, 2017: 5-8):

Simon: as a young child my ambition was always to join the military. I think I was born as a soldier [laughs] ... I was born in Mons which is near SHAPE, so, the Supreme Allies Headquarter Power of Europe (HW: okay) so:: it's a *big* military base ... I was raised there. My father worked as a War Grave Commission gardener. Ah, also my grandfather. There's, there's a tradition of war grave commission. So um, my father, before I was born, was in the Guards. He did three years in the 50s. So, again the relationship with the military from being young ... My father had to get a second job, to make ends meet... so in the evening he'd work for Ford Motors and sell, bloody, ah, cars to military personnel in SHAPE. So we always had military personnel round our house. Um, and I always see people in uniform and all this, thought it was great [laughs] but for some reason my father too, my grandfather, my uncles, were all in the military

Liam: I always wanted to be in the army because my brother joined, when I was seven, and I saw, his, passing out parade, and they do like a display and stuff like that. And you know you stand there and, your parents are in the audience and everything. And they're marching round. You know all in their uniforms and that, you know, *big guns* [laughs] and, I always thought, that was brilliant. ... So I was mainly inspired by my brother, he was in the, the REME, erm, the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

Mike also considered his childhood desire to join the military in relation to the knowledge that his Grandad was in the Navy, although he moved on to capture what others referred to as 'playing war' – involving military toys and guns, as well as childhood games, imaginary play and fighting. In the extract below, he connects the Action Force figures he played with as a child, which came with backstories relating to ranks, weapons, uniforms and job roles, to a 'pull' towards the military:

it's just something that I've always wanted to do. I mean, you know when, uh. (pause) I still remember in [unclear] farm in the precinct, the shopping precinct (HW: Mmm) And, um, I was crying. And, and I vividly remember this. I was crying and wouldn't stop. And my mother stopped a passing policeman ... I must have been probably about four, I don't know. Turned round to me and he went, "whoa, why you crying? You've got to be grown up. When you grow up, you want to be strong like me, don't you?" And I went, "no", like that. And he went, "what do you mean no?". "Well, when I grow up, I'm going to be a soldier, not a, not a copper". ... so I don't know where it comes from. I honestly couldn't say. But it's always been (pause) sort of, I don't know, genetically within me. ... when I was a young kid, I played with Action Force. You better believe every one of them had a rank. [Laughing]. And it was. And it was a rank of the British Army. (HW: yeah) None of the US Army shite...They were all Action Force figures ... I even toyed around with, my mother was having the back yard landscaped...

(Mike)

Mike then proceeded to explain in animated detail how his mother had left him alone to play and he had brought in a whole pallet of sand from the garden, transforming his living room into a 'beach landing' that his army 'had been lacking'. It was noticeable that even at the age of 10, he was aware of military strategy, tactics and language, as well as the need for his Action Force figures to engage in training exercises and prepare for war:

When my mother got back, she walked in and there was rocks, there was trees, there was. And there was about 150 Action Force figures over the sink. And she was like. She didn't know what to say. She literally kicked the ever loving shit out of me. She just. What would you do with that? (HW: I don't know [Laughs]) she come in and I was actually in the middle of beach invasion. I was fuming. And she said, "what are you doing?" I said, "the storm of the beach head". And she was... "you don't even know what that means!" I went, "but I do look"

[Laughs] So, I think. I've always wanted to do that. Nothing, nothing else clearer. And it was all down to toys. You know what, the sneaky bastards, no wonder they've got all the birds with, you know, with, you know, kitchen sets and all that. Highly sexist, disgraceful.

(Mike)

It was also interesting that Mike showed an appreciation of how gendered constructions of masculinity and femininity are socially embedded within the habitus and thus performed from a very early age, here through common symbols within popular culture – boys as ‘warriors’ and girls as ‘domestic’ (Butler, 1990, 1993, 2004; Francis, 2010; Jordan and Cowan, 1995; Messner, 2000).

Like other participants (Josh and Gavin), Mike went on to join the local Army Cadets as a teenager, knowing this would be a field in which he could find enjoyment and self-actualisation, whilst developing the skills (human capital) needed to be successful in the army. When conceptualised in terms of *strategy* (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990), it appeared that for many participants, their pre-military habitus was attuned to the demands required of a military field of employment. As such, the following section will consider how efforts were made to increase pre-military (mainly bodily) capital, in a bid to enhance the chances of passing basic training and ultimately grasping military positions.

6.4.2. Preparing the body and mind: Developing pre-military capital

The second theme in relation to pre-military habitus and capital was that in addition to the habitus being aligned with military culture and fields, many participants had also in some way started to develop forms of capital that would assist them in basic training

and beyond. Kelli had completed a Public Services course at college, which involved a key focus on sport, physical training and team building skills. Mike replicated what was discussed by Josh and Gavin in relation to the benefit of joining cadets as a teenager, emphasising that most of the skills and knowledge demanded in basic training had already been learned:

cadets was ongoing, and I was, uh, going to different places. Um, very much into the spirit of, you know, the military mind kind of thing. And, it is very similar. You know, I mean there is absolutely. The thing that shocked me was there was absolutely no distinction to what I was teaching cadets, as a young cadets sergeant (HW: right) when I was teaching them section battle drills and you know, harbour drills and all these different military things, to when I later went over to the infantry. They were *exactly* the same.

(Mike)

In addition, Mike had also volunteered in the Territorial Army (TA), and as it will be shown further in Chapter 7, this wealth of military experience gained before joining led to his rapid progression and promotion within the army from the start of basic training.

When discussing the decision to join the military, all except David and Oliver claimed that they immediately began preparing their bodies for basic training, sometimes before enlistment had occurred. As many had family members with military history, and several had joined their local Army Cadets and/or completed a Public Services course at college, a basic appreciation of the types of physical demands that would be expected of the body was also held – beyond the knowledge that they would have to pass an initial fitness test.

I had asthma and I couldn't run a quarter of a mile without wheezing and coughing and what have you (pause) from sixteen to eighteen I, I was *so* determined to do it, and be a strong soldier, that I went out every day running and, I just *thrashed* the [laughs] asthma out of me, and you know to go from, if anybody knows how to get fit from scratch it's me

(Liam)

Participants talked of this process in overwhelmingly positive terms, often with a clear sense of pride in what they were able to achieve, discussing how they had enjoyed seeing the visible results of pushing their bodies to previously unimaginable extremes. What emerged in these narratives, was that further to the desire to build bodily capital (Wacquant, 2004), including strength, endurance, and physical size, part of the process of 'getting fit' seemed to involve a pre-military distancing from the lives they wished to escape:

Harry: I was just getting stoned all the time... I was 21 when I decided to join, so I stopped smoking weed, started to get fit, and then just joined the army. I was doing my own fitness then.

Gavin: I'd obviously known for a while that's what I wanted to do like I said. But I dunno something just clicked and I was like, right, I need to get fucking fit (laughs) not that I was unfit you know. I was always running around and playing sport, did stuff with cadets and that. But I smoked and drank a lot. Cut that straight out ... Started beasting myself every bloody day ... didn't have any money back then, so me and [friend he joined with] made all sorts to carry. Used to fill a rucksack up with rocks, sometimes er, run until we threw up (laughs) when I think back now, I mean god I can't imagine what training would have been like if I hadn't have done all that.

There was a collective sense that the building of bodily capital was needed to facilitate success, or perhaps more importantly, the lack of failure, in basic training, with a wider awareness that bodies also had to be 'fit' as part of an effective 'military machine' (Josh).

Through this pre-military bodily training and thus the building of bodily capital, participants made reference to how this had also, usually unintentionally, prepared their minds. Hockey (in McGarry et al., 2015: 360), in line with Bourdieu's (1977, 1990) notion of how bodily experience translates into the habitus, explains:

The mind is inseparable from the body; they remain reversible aspects of the same fabric. So exposure to physical hardship and hazards brings about a bodily toughening, whilst simultaneously the mind comes to cope with those factors.

The experience of mentally dealing with extreme fatigue, discomfort, and pain during pre-military fitness was expressed to have enhanced the ability to 'make it through training' (Gavin, Josh, Liam), with participants seeming to have already begun to develop the type of 'individual resilience', or 'psychological capital' needed to 'bounce back' and cope with military training and service (McGarry et al., 2015). In Chapter 7 it will be shown that David and Oliver struggled immensely during basic training, due in part to their lack of skills to develop social capital – as the following section will consider in more depth.

6.4.3. Belonging and social capital: 'I joined for the military family'

The third and final theme to emerge in relation to pre-military habitus and capital, concerns the presence or absence of a sense of belonging, seemingly generated through

dense bonding forms of social capital (SC) (Granovetter, 1973, 1983; Putnam, 1995, 2000). Although strong bonds within family life seemed to be frequently lacking (Gavin, Harry, Josh, Liam, Simon, Tom), the vast majority of participants expressed how forming close friendships in childhood and adolescence had always been easy, seeming to gain a clear sense of belonging within these often dense networks. The skills of forming interpersonal relationships are essential within military life to quickly build teams and trust, whilst developing ‘resilience at group level’ against potentially traumatic events, such as the loss of friends and colleagues during combat (McGarry et al., 2015; Tsai et al., 2012). As will be discussed in Chapter 9, the existence of SC in pre-military life also greatly facilitated the return to ‘civilian’ life post-military, in that most participants had family, albeit still with troubled relationships, and friends that eased their transition to ‘civilian’ culture. The two exceptions to this were David and Oliver.

Like Oliver, David had friends when he was very young, but explained that he ‘moved around a lot’, originally from Ireland to England, then several times within England – each time, leaving childhood friends behind. When he entered the care system at the age of ten, he stressed that he lacked confidence, which he believed was due to the violence he had experienced from his mother’s boyfriends. David related his lack of confidence to an inability to make friends, and subsequently to the severe bullying he experienced in care, which also shaped his experience of basic training. Further, David entered the army as a heavy abuser of legal and illegal substances, referred to below as ‘baggage’:

I was getting bullied an awful lot in care and that didn’t help from the older lads bullying me, um, yeah, so. Got me to steal cars and stuff like that. ... I thought

they was my friends [sighs then laughs] if you had anything nice they'd take it off me, like, my trainers and stuff like that. So, I never had nothing in there... And then when you come out of that and you go into the army and you get the same sort of thing it was the same feeling all over again. ... it was fucking awful really. But I had a support worker in care, I think he was from Barnardo's, a Barnardo's support worker he said, "why don't you join the army" and I was like, "yeah, all right then". Um, so, I was 17 then but I went into the army with a lot of baggage. And I think I should've sorted my baggage out first

(David)

What characterised the SC held within participants' lives before military service, with the exceptions of Kelli, Mike and Oliver, was a lack of bonding capital and attachment at the point of enlistment in relation to parental figures. Gavin, Harry, Josh and Simon had all moved out of the family home by the age of 17, and David and Liam had entered the care system at the ages of 10 and 14 respectively. Seemingly, still as teenagers or young men (16-21), participants appeared to be more ready and keen to 'accept' the military family as their own, and the sense of belonging and paternal role sold within military recruitment (Gee, 2017).

After discussing moving from Belgium to Scotland due to the broken relationship with his parents at 16 (see section 6.2.1.), Simon also seemed to connect his upbringing on the military base as a driver of *re*-belonging to a military family:

yeah so I've got no memories of playing with Dad (pause) I signed up for the uniform because I want to be part of, you know, the Military family, um, because I was raised by, I'd gone around looking at the war graves you know

(Simon)

On other hand, Oliver had such a strong bond to his family that leaving them to join the RAF at 17 was an incredibly difficult experience:

I left home, moved away. I hated it. (HW: did you?) Yes. I never told anybody at the time, but I was so homesick. It was ridiculous. I mean, my family was everything to me. But that was my world. Everything focused around that. Even though all my brothers and all the rest of it were moved away, that hub of my family unit was with my mother.

(Oliver)

Noticeable throughout all interviews, was that participants did not construct or refer to themselves as adults until *after* military service, appearing to see the military institution as delaying 'growing up'. There appeared to be a connection between a childhood in which many participants had to 'grow up quickly', and the desire to submit to the highly disciplined authority of the military, which effectively removed agency in relation to big life decisions. The military family was known, through advertising and through participants' families with a military history, to generate security and safety, as well as a paternal sense of belonging that had been lacking at the point of enlistment.

6.5. Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that certain key experiences in childhood, notably centring on various forms and sites of struggle, influenced participants' drive towards joining the military, and the desire to escape what was perceived to be a lack of opportunities and limited life chances in 'civilian' life. All participants had joined the military in low ranks, and many associated a lack of educational attainment with a career in the military. Pre-military violence was present in several narratives, used by

and against participants in a number of forms, with the discipline and structure of military life seen as an attractive draw, and for some an instant removal from a potential 'life of crime' (see also Gee, 2017; The Howard League, 2011; Murray, 2016; Treadwell, 2010a, 2010b).

Importantly, it has been shown that for many participants, their habitus had also been aligned to the military through an immersion in military culture and fields from early childhood. As such, and in line with what Bourdieu (1977; 1990) often refers to as 'strategy', participants were able to get a 'feel for the game' before joining, facilitating an awareness of the demands of a military field, notably bodily capital, required to succeed and ultimately grasp 'field positions' – i.e. employment. As will be argued in Chapters 7 and 8, for the vast majority of participants this pre-military preparation of the body and mind, along with a habitus already primed to 'fit' within a military field, allowed them to thrive in basic training and beyond, embodying the desired military habitus with ease and enjoyment.

However, the difficulties discussed in this chapter in relation to David and Oliver, who were at two extremes in relation to their social capital – David entered with no social capital along with severe issues of substance abuse and addiction, whereas Oliver had very strong bonding capital that made leaving his family painful, whilst also being unable to form new social capital – extended into basic training and in what came to characterise their military service. As such, and as considered in more detail in the chapter to follow, they both experienced military service as a site of struggle and exclusion, which continued upon the return to 'civilian' life.

It is also worth noting here, although it will become more relevant within Chapter 9, that few participants seemed to have been well socialised within adult 'civilian' fields before entering the military – partly due to joining at such a young age, but also seeming to reflect the lack of opportunities for cultural embeddedness within childhood and adolescence. Apart from Harry, Kelli and Mike, who had been employed as teenagers, no other participants had gained (or discussed) experience within 'civilian' fields of employment, other than observing their parents. As such, their habitus had not gained the experience and insight into the knowledge and skills that would be required upon the return to 'civilian' life.

Finally, what was striking, is that all participants appeared to narrate their reasons for joining as an escape – seeing and using the military as a resource to facilitate (upward) social movement. Forms of conflict were present before participants enlisted, with a continuum of conflict fluctuating throughout the life course. Participants' narratives around 'life becoming', in which the military habitus was formed, along with the adoption and development of military culture and forms of capital, will now be considered.

CHAPTER 7

Life Becoming: 'you've got to be well-oiled machines'

Soldiers are not born but made. They are fashioned through their training in specific ways, for specific ends.

Rachel Woodward, *War Heroes and Little Green Men*, 2000: 640

7.1. Introduction

This chapter is the second of four empirical data chapters, focusing on 'life becoming' a soldier, where participants unanimously framed the process of initial basic training (phase 1) and trade training (phase 2) as distinctly separate periods of their military service. It is important to briefly highlight that one participant joined the RAF as a chef (Oliver), and the other nine participants joined the British Army as: **infantry** – 'front line' soldiers (David, Gavin, Harry, Josh, Kelli); **'signallers'** – providing communication systems (Liam, Mike); **artillery** – 'firepower' (Tom); and as an infantry (and ceremonial) **guardsman** (Simon). As such, the range of military experiences in this research are mostly confined to active combat roles in lower ranks – meaning these discussions of 'military habitus' to follow are in no way claiming to be representative of the whole British military institution, or of a singular 'social order'. Further, every habitus will of course be different at the individual micro level, due to previous life experience. Yet, within the data and literature, there are common features of a 'military habitus' – designed to produce 'well-oiled' bodies and practices within the 'military machine' (Gavin and Josh, see also MacLeish, 2015).

All participants spoke about basic training at length, and frequently returned to discuss the experiences and friendships gained during these first 12-14 weeks throughout the interviews. Basic training was unanimously expressed as being the most significant and memorable period of military service, often alongside a clear sense of pride and achievement. It was clear that participants recognised the transformative qualities of this process, narrating basic training as a 'point of no return' in terms of their previous civilian identities (Gavin, Harry, Josh, Kelli, Simon, Tom). Participants spoke to themes consistently reproduced in the literature surrounding the 'manufacturing' of soldiers and personnel by the military (Arkin and Dobrofsky, 1978; Gee, 2017; MacLeish, 2015; Thornborrow and Brown, 2009). These themes included being 'cut off' from the 'civilian world' and thrown into a 'new self-contained world' (Brotz and Wilson, 1946); the often extreme discipline that became internalised (Hale, 2008; Maringira et al., 2015); and the intense conditioning of the body and mind to produce the practices and 'spirit' required of *being* a soldier (Ben-Ari, 1998; Gee, 2017; Hale, 2008; Jenkins et al., 2008; Maringira et al., 2015; Woodward, 2000).

This chapter builds on the previous chapters, continuing to place participants' experiences within the main theoretical framework of 'field theory' (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990). Importantly, the components (forms of 'military capital') that make up the new concept of 'combat capital', created through this research, will be presented throughout the three main sections. Firstly, section 7.2. draws attention to the field conditions of the military institution as narrated by participants, arguing that cultural capital and deep bonding forms of social capital (SC) had to be developed, generated in part through the shared experience of struggle – constructed and sustained in opposition to 'weakness' and to those defined as 'outsiders'. Secondly, section 7.3. then

argues that these field conditions resulted in participants' habitus shifting and adapting to a 'military habitus', along with the development and embodiment of the additional forms of military capital – human, bodily, and symbolic – needed to navigate and survive military fields. Through a focus on Mike's unique experiences, it will be shown that the 'military habitus' is formed within a culture grounded in strictly enforced hierarchies of authority, operating on and through a gender order that prioritises highly 'masculinised' military practices (Higate, 2003, 2012a), where gay sexualities are furiously excluded (Bulmer, 2011, Heggie, 2003).

Finally, section 7.4. draws attention to practical mastery – where theory, practice and direct experience in the battlefield form an embodied 'feel for the game' – deepening the military habitus and forms of military capital. This section will introduce the new concept of 'combat capital' that has emerged within this research (Wilkinson, 2017), demonstrating how the forms of military capital developed in 'life becoming' – military training – combines with the unique field conditions and experiences of war, to form an embodied and symbolic 'value'. The chapter will then offer a conclusion, connecting these three sections in relation to the key findings.

7.2. Institutional Life: Building walls to the 'outside'

During basic training, recruits undergo a 'forced separation' from 'civilian life' (Godfrey 2008; Cooper et al., 2016), leading to a 'rupture or break in their ordinary experience' (Hale, 2008: 307). This 'rupture' is essential to the process of becoming a soldier, and begins with the physical removal of the body from civilian fields, as well as the strictly enforced removal – and often replacement – of all 'symbolic resources' related to

civilian life and identity (ibid.). ‘Symbolic resources’ are described by Hale (2008, qua Zittoun, 2006; Zittoun et al., 2003) as relating to cultural reference points within situations, that indicate how we are to act, react, or *be* in this particular setting.

Much like Bourdieu’s (1990: 66) notion of ‘doxa’, symbolic resources generate ‘taken for granted assumptions’, and communicate the ‘rules of the game’ within a particular field. When these ‘rules’ are absorbed by the habitus, a ‘feel for the game’ or ‘practical knowledge’ is acquired (Bourdieu, 1990: 66; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Hockey, 2009). As will be shown further in section 7.3., gaining a feel for the ‘military game’ demands that recruits quickly adapt to the military doxa and field conditions, through developing a ‘military habitus’, along with capital aligned and attuned to the demands of military field(s). Bourdieu (1977, 1990) maintained that *habitus* must be understood in relation to *field*, as well as *capital*. This section therefore provides the context to which the ‘military habitus’ and forms of capital – including social, cultural, human, bodily, and symbolic – are developed and embodied, through an insight into the military field conditions of basic training, provided within participants’ narratives.

In line with Goffman’s (1961) conception of the ‘total institution’, the military field¹ is a place of residence and work in which large numbers of individuals are cut off from wider ‘civilian’ society. Such entities always exist in relation to their boundaries and their ‘others’, ‘and they may not need to be quite as “total” as they seem’ (MacLeish, 2015: 16). Rather,

¹ Although discussed as a singular ‘field’ here, the military institution is made up of a wealth of fields and sub-fields, many of which overlap – including physical, social, and symbolic ‘fields’ (see Cooper et al., 2016)

The full meaning of being “in” or “on the inside” does not exist apart from the special meaning to him of “getting out” or “getting on the outside”. In this sense, total institutions do not really look for cultural victory. They create and sustain a particular kind of tension between the home world and the institutional world and use this persistent tension as strategic leverage on the management of men” (Goffman 1961, 13).

David recounted his entry into the military institution from the care system, echoing the notion that the ‘outside’ was no longer accessible:

As soon as the families went and the parents gone and everyone was gone then Jesus, that was just like a nightmare, like, do you know what I mean it was like [sucks in air] it was like seven months of crap. They keep you there, and the amount of times I wanted to go and it was just like [sniffs] you know?

(David)

Simon discussed how this forced separation from the wider world ‘lasts around the clock’, where leaving ‘is completely withheld at first, ensuring a deep initial break with past roles’ (Goffman, 1961: 14). He narrated his experience of entering the ‘inside’ through the trauma it brought for some recruits:

You can’t leave the first four weeks. Or, the camp is closed the first four weeks, so basically regardless if you want to leave or not you do the training for four weeks. But, I mean, people left after the third day already because they were slashing their wrists and all sorts. I mean, it was terrible. I mean, I, I just. Yeah, I got this vision of this guy at lunchtime running out. He’d just cut his two wrists, basically (HW: Right) They took him away. You never saw him again, um, and (pause) it was a bit of a shock to the system.

(Simon)

Upon entry, participants recounted how their identities were stripped, paving the way for their old 'civilian' self to be broken down and replaced with becoming a soldier:

Josh: when you're in that uniform you're not *personally* (pause) you're a number and you're there as part of a (pause) you know a well-oiled machine

Simon: I turned up with long hair. I was, I had your hair! (HW laughs) So I was, ah, very young and long hair and I'll always remember marching in. We all stood there. They said, "right, haircut". And the Sergeant was there with the Corporal and they clipped my hair, but they left this big line in the middle, so, a Mohican (HW: Oh) And they would take you and say, "right, march out like that". I said, "no, I'm not going to walk out like that". Everybody was laughing at me, so. Anyway then they clipped it off and, ah, they thought it was quite funny, and then we got issued out uniforms and all this.

The experience of being thrown into a separated and contained military world, which is comprised of unknown, unpredictable and hostile fields, requires survival on many layers of being. The military doxa prioritises survival through conformity to hierarchical authority, and being individually representative of 'the team' (MacLeish, 2015). Crucially, to survive and succeed in training and beyond, recruits must bond as a team and form intense levels of trust and loyalty (Ben-Ari, 1998; Gee, 2017; Ward, 2017). This is achieved through the development of bonding social capital, through the shared experience of struggle and surviving basic training, as well as the creation of 'walls to the outside' – as this section will now demonstrate.

7.2.1. Welcome to the family: Trust and loyalty

The findings presented in Chapter 6 of this thesis showed that there was a notable absence of bonds to parental figures – including ‘faceless mothers’ (Murray, 2016) – at the point of enlistment (see 6.2.1.). As such, the data reflects what is known more widely about enlistment within the lower ranks of the military, particularly the army (Ashcroft, 2014; Morris, 2017b, 2017c; Howard League, 2011): ‘their joining the army is not simply in order to get a job, but in order to find a family which will nurture and respect them. Some of these young men find exactly that’ (in Higate, 2001: 452). The military sells a sense of belonging among recruits that is directly linked to strength and survival:

A sense of belonging may sound like a small thing. Yet it fuels you as much as food and water, because it doesn’t just feed your body, it feeds your mind and soul. The stronger the sense of belonging – the stronger you become.

(Army, 2017²)

In the military fields in which participants were plunged, survival not only required individual resilience (McGarry et al., 2015), but resilience and the performance of military practices at group level:

You look after number one and number two is your friends. Or the guys you’re working with. It’s weird to explain because you might hate the guy you’re working with. You might think he’s a prick. You know, but you’d gladly fight him but you still look after him. You know, no matter what happens, you’d do

² Full text provided in Appendix M

whatever you possibly could to do that. And it's probably part of the training that they make you have that. Sort of ethos and mentality.

(Kelli)

Participants narrated how initial training bonds recruits together, generating rich social capital (SC) at a level rarely experienced elsewhere in life (Ward, 2017), with the exception of war itself (see Chapter 8). As will be shown, SC forms a key component of what will be defined in section 7.4. as 'combat capital'.

Throughout participants' narratives, the theme of belonging (or not) to the 'military family' was key to military experiences – especially during phase 1 training and times of war. Further, once participants arrived at their regiments, following the successful completion and 'passing out' of basic training, they were placed in a section within a platoon, which became their 'military family'. The notion that you 'all fail, or all succeed together' (Gavin) was drilled into recruits from day one, through the regular and often unpredictable use of group punishments – often for seemingly minor individual 'failings' such as being one minute late. Participants maintained that this was justified, as 'if you're a minute late in theatre, people fucking die' (Gavin).

The boundaries between work and social life were often blurred and inseparable, with a collapsing of the categories of 'colleagues', 'friends', and 'family' into one, albeit very strong, social network:

Josh: You did *everything* together. You went to *breakfast* together, *dinner* together, *tea* together, if we was in operations you'd go out on *operations* together. You know if you was going out ont' beer, you'd go out ont' *beer*

together ... that goes from showering to having your tea you know. You're, you're closer than brothers.

Tom: you've got a load of squaddies that are trapped in a place, and they can't go home, they socialise more. And they become like a *family* themselves ... we became *so* close, you know?

Here, Josh and Tom describe the process of forming dense, 'bonding' forms of capital (Coleman, 1994; Putnam, 2000), or 'strong ties' (Granovetter, 1973, 1983), that consist of very close, usually homogenous networks with high levels of shared values and trust. The daily practices of working, eating, exercising, cleaning, being punished, and succeeding together meant that recruits had a wealth of shared experience, and quickly got to know each other, forming friendships on a deep level rarely found in 'civilian' life.

Throughout the narratives, it appeared that shared values and loyalty were created in part through the development of cultural and human capital, gained through embodied learning of regiment specific military history. Embodied is used here in the sense that this history was often learned through intense repetition, alongside bodily practices and movements – such as repeating mottos whilst marching, saluting, and using equipment and weaponry. Knowledge of military history was transformed into symbolic capital, with recruits having to 'prove themselves worthy' of owning and/or wearing certain widely recognised pieces of uniform and kit - directly connected to or representing this history. Several participants brought some of these 'symbolic resources' (Hale, 2008) to interviews:

Liam: One of the first things that you get, when you join the army, is a beret [gets beret out and holds it on his lap] but you don't get to wear it straight away (laughs) erm, and there's a cap badge on the beret and you have to earn them both. So, the cap badge six weeks in you have to pass a *test*. So the motto is, "certa cito" [shows HW the badge] *swift and sure*, you have to know that. It wasn't easy. Even to get that... everything in the army stands for something. The jimmy on the cap badge is because it's *messenger of the gods*, roman mythology and what have you [hands HW a belt] this is obviously, [points to green section] *land* [dark blue] *sea* [light blue] and *air* for the ways in which we communicate. And there's an argument whether there should be a black line at the top, for *space*³

Mike: there's a lot of knowledge and classroom work. A lot of things have meaning... like the King's Regiment, for example, theirs [belt] is green, red, green. The green is for the grass and the red is for the blood, um, and their motto is *Nec Aspera Terrent*, which is "Difficulties be Damned". I was in the Kings before the Signals... Signals is called Scaly Backs. That's their nickname, because in World War II, when they had the old radios on their backs, the battery acid used to leak, and you'd end up with, like, scaled backs and stuff, so they were called Scaly Backs.

Simon: Um, my battalion fought in the Waterloo, 1815, so. It's the longest serving Infantry Regiment in the British Army, Coldstream Guards, formed, ah, from Cromwell's New Modern Army. So it goes back a long, long time. It's a family regiment. So people tend to join by generations.

The regiment's history could be seen to further cement dense, bonding SC and thus the notion of a 'family', whose history must be learned and fought for with pride. This delivered to participants the awareness that they were part of and belonged to

³ Mike also served in the Royal Signals, and repeated almost word for word Liam's descriptions of the pin badge and belt

something bigger, and that they themselves would become part of that history through their service. Further, it helps to create a clear, collective narrative that justifies the embodied military practices and use of violence (see Butler, 2009).

Participants' narratives surrounding the 'breaking down' process of basic training involved what Gee (2017: 10) termed 'stripping the civilian' – which allows for the absorption and embodiment of 'militarised' cultural capital, in replacement of 'civilian' forms of cultural capital (Cooper et al., 2016). One of the aims of initial military training is therefore to 'overpower recruits' civilian identities' (ibid.), allowing them to depart from previously held 'civilian' norms – especially regarding the use of violence. Huntington (1957: 11) is clear that the mandate for fighting and legitimate forms of violence are what separates the military from the civilian sphere (in Millar and Tidy, 2017: 145).

Within the data, it emerged that very early on in training, the military began the process of constructing for participants what Butler (2009) terms 'frames of war' – collective narratives used to legitimise violence and killing, anchored in the threat posed by defined 'others'. The drawing of lines to the 'outside' (non-military) in basic training, and between regiments, job roles, and ranks in trade training, laid the foundations for what will be discussed further in section 7.3. – that violent practices were developed, normalised, deemed 'necessary', and thus embodied in relation to the 'narrative of war'. The field conditions in basic training and within the military therefore encouraged rivalry and fighting, serving to strengthen and 'close in' bonding capital and build 'walls to the outside' (Portes, 1998):

40 regiment was known as “naughty 40”, 'cos they were awesome in the field, fighting, but they also, they would fight back in barracks (HW: mmm) so they were always in trouble and stuff, so:: but it was brilliant! It was like one big dysfunctional family... It's whoever you can find to have a rivalry with and fights and stuff. Unless, it was *us*. The battery against another battery, in which case we'd all come together to have a go at them.

(Tom)

Participants expressed that this informal, sometimes organised, violence was tolerated and in part encouraged by the military as a resource for problem solving (see Gee, 2017) – such as settling disputes within military field conditions which deliberately foster heightened levels of aggression: ‘You upset someone, you'd have a little fisty cuffs round the back and it's, you know, it's, it's solved. Happens all the time’ (Mike).

Perhaps more importantly for the purposes of discussion here, participants’ narratives (David, Gavin, Josh, Liam, Mike, Simon and Tom) captured how fighting was used to perform and thus ‘prove’ loyalty and worth, strengthening and defending the forever moving and shifting boundaries constructed against ‘outsiders’ or ‘others’:

David: we was always fighting with the paras, the Parachute Regiment because their own structure is, they'd say “the Army is shit and we're the best”. And army structures would say, “the Paras are shit, we're the best” So:: when we met in a pub, pffft, oh the riots do you know what I mean, fighting.

Josh: It's part of being loyal to each other and, as a regiment you know, being close as a regiment and, you're taught, everyone's taught. You're as close as brothers you're closer than bothers when you're in them, those places

so um, hit one you hit us all and erm it's, that's the type of mentality that we had as a close family regiment.

However, when fighting involved 'civilians', i.e. the 'real' outside, this informal violence - previously tolerated and encouraged - quickly became defined as problematic and unacceptable, resulting in a range of formal and informal punishments:

Josh: If it's squaddie on squaddie that's it, go on, whatever, it's dealt with ... You go out on civvy street and break somebody's jaw you're looking at doing, you know a few weeks porridge you know.

David: Yeah, there was the military police and the police involved when we was fighting with civilians, and they come down hard on us then ... they would. Grippped us, like, do you know what I mean, threw us around. Didn't help being us being in the Army when we was young ... 'cos you think you're better than everyone else, do you know what I mean? (HW: yeah) and you probably snub the, you know civvies and that and they ended up fighting with us.

Here David draws attention to what will be discussed in the next subsection – that the building of dense, bonding forms of SC can produce situations of exclusion, social isolation, intolerance and potential victimisation of 'outsiders', through building higher walls to those who do not 'qualify' (Portes, 1998: 17). Putnam (2000), building on the work of Granovetter (1983) termed this the 'dark side' of SC (see Chapter 4).

7.2.2. Welcome to the dark side: bullying and exclusion

Whilst the 'strong ties' (Granovetter, 1973, 1983), or dense, 'bonding' forms of social capital (SC) developed through basic training can be hugely beneficial in building homogenous group cohesion to perform military practices (Goldstein, 2001), and was

experienced overwhelmingly positively by those participants who were *within* it (Coleman, 1990a; Putnam, 2000), this was not the case for all participants. Oliver's and David's experiences of training were exceptions in the data, in that they were not able to develop sustainable friendships - bonding SC - within basic training and beyond:

Started the course, come down with German measles. So, that was me quarantined for a fortnight. So, all the friends that I made throughout my course, they carried on ... then I moved from there to Hereford to do my trade training. Brilliant. Get in there, make some friends and who knows? Did all that, and you come to the end of it, you think, "right, I'm going to stay friends with these". But you don't. One goes to Bristol, one goes to Glasgow, one goes to London. You just split up. It's not like the army where (HW: You're in a platoon, or you're) Correct.
(Oliver)

Despite Oliver making clear that 'accomplishing trade training was brilliant', his removal from the military field during the crucial stages of 'becoming' meant that he lost the SC acquired. He then re-joined a group that had already established friendships and field positions – with Oliver being seen and treated as an 'outsider'.

Due to Oliver's job role, he again lost the SC briefly acquired when moving on from trade training to his postings, as chefs in the RAF mostly navigate military fields alone. Considering that Oliver joined the RAF to find a life of friendship and camaraderie he had been missing in childhood (see 6.2.2.), this was an extremely difficult aspect of his military career. Oliver pinpoints this break in training, and the subsequent lack of SC throughout service, as contributing to his alcohol addiction, which as will be explored further in Chapter 8 (8.2.2.), was enhanced by military and chef cultures that use alcohol as the foundation for social activity and as a coping mechanism (Belhassen and

Shani, 2012; Duke et al., 2013; Fear et al., 2007; Iverson et al., 2005; Pidd et al., 2014; Pizam, 2012).

David entered the military with very low levels of SC in general, along with low levels of human capital (aspirations, health, skills) and bodily capital (fitness). Unlike Oliver, who was still successful in his job role despite the lack of SC, David's habitus and capital were poorly aligned to military fields. As a result, he was subject to intense bullying and violence. David experienced 'hysteresis' – the feeling of being a fish *out* of water (Bourdieu 1977, 1990) – in that the field conditions in which the habitus operates are noticeably, and in this case, painfully 'wrong':

I was always insubordinate to my superior officers, went AWOL a few times. ... ended up getting in trouble, with civvies and started taking drugs again. Started drinking ... we got bullied quite hard ... and because it's blanket treatment one messes up we all mess up. Our corporal was a battalion boxer [sniffs]. And, he just used to just come in and just lay the shit out of us, pissed up with his mates, like. And I get flashbacks from that. Because it was just none stop. We were only young. [sighs] you know, we were literally crying. A couple of lads went really, like, weird and not crazy but they were getting picked on day in, day out. They just went weird in the end. I think a couple of them just snapped

(David)

Here David and his platoon suffered the dark side of the homogenous cohesion demanded by the military (Goldstein, 2001), in that there was one level of desired performance, and if even one recruit did not meet that standard, all recruits were (violently) punished collectively.

At the time of fieldwork, there had been a number of high profile news reports about the treatment and systematic bullying of recruits during basic training. This included heavy reporting on the death of a recruit (Willgress, 2016), and a BBC documentary which led to heavy critique of the use of language during training (Hill, 2016; Millward, 2016; Ross, 2016). Several participants referred to these stories (Harry, Josh, Kelli, Liam, Mike, Tom), connecting them to 'lefty bollocks' (Gavin) and human rights – which interfere with the military's work and the use (and abuse) of violence:

Too much human rights has come into the training so they can't actually, *break* people in training now 'cos there's too many, without sounding horrible *do-gooders* saying "oh you can't do this, you can't do that" ... if we're not allowed to (pause) *swear* at them anymore. Which you know, again that's one of your⁴, that was in the paper the other week ... if we can't turn these young men and women into machines, you know, *well drilled* soldiers because we're too nicey nice, then *how* are them people gonna serve in the front line? In operations around the world? Well they're not. And I know it sounds really horrible but war's not fun and, you have to be a certain type of person to be able, I think, to be able to go and deal with that and then go and deal with it after.

(Josh)

Recruits usually enlist before they have entered adulthood, and thus experience 'military indoctrination as a powerful adult socialization process' (Arkin, 1978: 151, Gill, 1997). Like other participants (Gavin, Harry, Josh), Josh (above) captures what Gee (2017: 20) describes as training delivering (and enforcing) a group level politics, where 'military culture proudly distinguish[es] itself as conservative and authoritarian'. The

⁴ In the interview and during transcription it was felt that Josh was about to say 'that's one of your *lot*', directed towards me, as a researcher/academic – i.e. perceived as one of the 'do-gooders' concerned with human rights.

division between the 'inside' (military) and 'outside' ('civilian') is thus further structured through constructing the 'creeping liberalism of society' – liberal politics and ideologies – as a threat to the army's 'traditional values' and thus its effectiveness (British Army, 1993, in Gee 2017:20-21, see also Levy and Sasson-Levy, 2008: 368).

The culture of 'conservative authoritarianism' also appeared to extend to new forms of cultural capital entering the military institution, where a lack of 'weak ties' (Granovetter, 1983) or 'bridging capital' (Putnam, 2000), prevents new information and intersectional/heterogeneous cultural norms, values, and practices from entering social networks (Wilkinson and Weston, 2015; Weston et al., 2018). Networks can then draw inwards, developing 'downward levelling norms' (Portes, 1998), which build high walls excluding those deemed 'outside' – fostering fields in which intolerance and hate towards 'others' can become normalised:

I was treated a little bit as a foreigner because I had a French accent because I was raised here [Belgium] I was the French boy. They called me Belgique, um. So the Sergeant. I'll always remember he'd always, ah, take the micky out of me and at the beginning were quite (pause) I wouldn't say they were racialisists, but didn't like foreigners. In the Guards it's only recently that you've got a black Guardsman. (HW: yeah) We didn't, we were a white regiment and some of the guys were National Front and all this, very, "this is a white regiment", and all this. So it's very racist. Ah, I didn't say but the instructor picked on a little bit at me. But very quickly I realised how fit I was. I was a quiet one, but I was a natural, excelled at sports.

(Simon)

This quote from Simon gives an insight into the field conditions and ‘forces’ within the Guards Regiment, and perhaps also the doxa – in which the ‘rules of the game’ culturally exclude BME⁵ and ‘non-British’ personnel. The presence of known National Front supporters – a far-right fascist political party that later merged to become the British National Party (BNP⁶) (Goodwin, 2010) – is an example of the ‘dark side’ of closed, dense social networks and capital, which can foster extreme intolerance and exclusion. To begin with, Simon was marked out and treated as a potential ‘outsider’ because of his Belgian accent. Yet due to his bodily and human capital, which were in high demand, Simon was able to quickly move out of this ‘outsider’ category, and instead be firmly celebrated as a high quality recruit – as it will be shown in section 7.3.2..

Mike witnessed victimisation of non-British personnel, which resulted in him filing a formal complaint against his first driving instructor:

He was being an arsehole to the two Gurkha lads. Uh, they spoke English, not exceptionally well. But, you know, he was really aggressive towards them. Treating them like absolute turd, dog turd. It was unbelievable. So, um, I, I kicked up a big stink about that on their behalf. Because they couldn't complain. If they complained, they were sent back you know. And so, um, that caused a bit of a ruckus.

(Mike)

⁵ Black and minority ethnic groups (BME)

⁶ The connection with the BNP is also raised in Chapter 8, in relation to Mike experiencing victimisation due to his sexuality.

As will be discussed further in the next section (see Case Study 7.1.), Mike had experienced being an 'other', excluded by all levels within the military hierarchy due to his sexuality. It seemed that because Mike recognised and had felt the harms that were taking place, he was better placed to challenge and resist exclusion and victimisation – as he had done it before. Further, he was known to be a good soldier, stemming from what seemed to be a well-adapted military habitus, along with forms of capital and military practices that had been developed throughout his years of previous service and time in the Cadets. In Bourdieu's terms, Mike used his relatively secure field position to challenge the dominant hierarchies of power, which were exerting symbolic, if not physical, violence against his colleagues (Bourdieu, 1984; 1989; 1991) – on account of their being 'different'.

Wadham (2016: 277) claims that exclusion must be understood within the 'intensely masculinised fraternal culture of military life', continuing:

the elevation of the functional imperative of military masculinities and their intensely fraternal character of these bonds, expressed as the rule of brothers through highly sexualised, racialized, homophobic, homocentric practices and at keeping the unit right and the difference out.

What was striking within the data, is that military culture, from the narratives of those in this research, appears to be relatively consistent with accounts and literature from over a hundred years ago (Clausewitz, 1976 [1832]; Leed, 1979). It seems as though the 'high walls to those who do not qualify' (Portes, 1998), built through the maintenance of a 'closed institution' (Goffman, 1961) – physically, culturally and legally (in terms of violence) separated from the wider world – has prevented

significant inputs from 'new' backgrounds, cultures, and ideologies. As recruits are often drawn from the same socio-economic geographical locations, especially in terms of those at the lowest and highest levels of entry points to the military (Ashcroft, 2014; Howard League, 2011; Levy and Sasson-Levy, 2008; Morris, 2017b, 2017c), the military field conditions also appear to have remained constant. This chapter will now discuss how participants' habitus adapts and shifts to fit these field conditions – to form a 'military habitus' – along with the development and embodiment of (militarised) forms of capital.

7.3. Basic Training: Drilling the ('masculine') military habitus

Although emerging naturally within data analysis, when turning to the literature it was encouraging to find that other scholars have also referred to what is termed a 'military habitus' (Maringira et al., 2015), or 'army habitus' (Higate, 2000). As a reminder, the experiences within this research are mostly confined to active combat roles, meaning the following discussions are not claimed to be representative of the military institution as a whole. Yet, it seems from the data and literature, that the military instils in recruits a widely shared framework for understanding and responding to military fields - the 'military habitus' – which it will be argued in Chapter 9, continues to operate in non-military fields.

These commonalities appear in the data, and are also persuasively argued within the literature (Higate, 2003; Woodward, 2000), to be heavily connected to gendered constructions and performances of 'military masculinities' (Atherton, 2009; Bulmer, 2011; Cohn, 1988; Herbert 1988; Heggie, 2003; Wadham, 2016; Woodward, 2000, see also discussion in Chapter 1). Participants' narratives capture how military training

'identified a cultural ideal which associates masculinity and combat through the valorisation of strength, athleticism, aggression, (hetero)sexual conquest, and brotherhood' (Bulmer and Eichler, 2017: 163). Within the data, basic training led to an embodiment of what has also been termed the 'warrior ethos' or 'warrior model' (Allsep, 2013: 386; Millar and Tidy, 2017: 15), which defined for participants what it meant to be a 'man'.

Oliver, the only participant who trained and served within the RAF, captured the key building blocks of the 'masculine' military habitus:

They wanted *strong, stability, reliable* people who wouldn't ask questions, would do as they're told, and that's that. I.e. so anything other than that, you were below standard. So, even if you had mental illnesses going on, you couldn't come out with it because you'd have been a laughing stock. You'd have been treated like shit.

(Oliver)

Within the data, it was striking how practices embedded within a 'masculine' military habitus often centred on 'testing', where 'manliness' must be 'proved' to be recognised (see Gilmore, 1990; Bulmer and Eicher, 2017). Being a 'man' is therefore inherently connected to successfully 'passing tests' – overcoming and withstanding struggle – both physically and mentally.

Achieving desired military masculinities can therefore be thought of as 'mastering stressful situations', with battle being the 'epitome of such tests' (see Ben-Ari, 1998: 113). This is shown by Simon, who compared his initial completion of basic training in

the navy to his subsequent army training. Simon appeared to claim that the harshness of the army's training equated to 'manliness':

in the army, you're treated from day one, they just give you a hard life ... they'll kill you physically, basically. Ah, they test you to the limit, but you're treated as a man. And, and I wanted to be treated, ah, as a man, basically. ... I felt that in the navy, I was treated more as a kid. In the army you trained as a man. Maybe a macho environment, I mean quite a hard environment (HW: mmhmm) I mean, you got people, all walks of life in the infantry. Ah, some pretty rough guys joining up. But they all trained to do one job (HW: yeah) and it's amazing what the army brings to these young men, you know, discipline.

(Simon)

Here, Simon replicates what most participants discussed – that basic training acts as a 'rite of passage' to symbolically embody 'the soldier' (Ben-Ari, 1998). As discussed by MacLeish (2015) and Gee (2017), 'discipline' and the overcoming of the physical and mental 'beasting' delivered during training are necessary processes for the 'good military machine' to function and deliver violence. Part of this process includes successfully developing and embodying the human capital to conquer and control one's emotions (Gee, 2017; Maringira et al., 2015; Woodward, 2000).

Although he trained with the RAF as a chef, Oliver still trained for battle. In the following quote, he discusses the 'blocking off' of emotions, in very similar terms used by other participants (David, Gavin, Harry, Josh, Kelli, Liam, Simon and Tom). Below, Oliver clearly connects the conquering of emotions to the ability to kill:

Training shows you how to put up barriers. Without a doubt. You can't survive without putting them barriers in. I think that's another thing the forces do. They help you to block off your emotions. Because you can't afford to have them at the forefront. Because you couldn't go out and kill somebody if you've got your emotions there at the front. You block them off. Which, in everyday life, you can't survive like that. (HW: no) Yes, you've got to have your emotions under control. But you can't just block everything off.

(Oliver)

For Mike, 'putting things in compartments' also extended to his sexuality. In recent history, the military have furiously excluded, criminalised, and punished potential LGBT⁷ recruits and serving personnel (Sinclair, 2009; Heggie, 2003). Despite intense debate in the 1990s surrounding the ban of LGBT personnel, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) maintained the position that 'homosexuality was "incompatible" with military service', due to the narrative that gay personnel would damage morale, discipline, and thus 'unit effectiveness' (MoD, 1996 in Bulmer, 2011:24). However, the UK Government lost the legal battle in 1999, led by the charity Stonewall, and the ban was officially lifted on 12th January, 2000 (Hoon, 2000, in Bulmer, 2011).

In the data, 'gayness' was most commonly associated with 'weakness', with weakness being connected to 'risk' in combat situations. This resonates with the literature, which argues that exclusionary policies banning gay personnel were central to the construction and (re)production of military masculinities, and thus the 'gender order' within military institutions (Bulmer, 2011: 344) – where 'all things "feminine" are disparaged, and "manhood" is equated with toughness under fire' (Duncanson, 2009:

⁷ lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender – acronym now often includes queer and intersex, i.e. LGBTQI

65 in Millar and Tidy, 2017: 15, see also Bornman, 2009; Heggie, 2003; Myrntinen et al., 2017; Gee, 2017; Parpart and Partridge, 2014; Titunik, 2008). Gay sexualities are particularly demonised within this construction, with derogatory terms such as ‘faggot’ used routinely by participants and their superiors to criticise behaviours and people who did not conform to the (‘masculine’) military doxa. The following case study highlights Mike’s unique experiences captured within the data – drawing attention to how being gay in the army, both when it was illegal and subsequently legal (post-2000), structured and framed his army service, and thus his (military) habitus.

Case Study 7.1. – Mike

Mike was in the Army Cadets as a teenager and joined the Territorial Army (TA, now referred to as the ‘Army Reserve’) as a volunteer at the age of 16. As was shown in Chapter 6, Mike completed a wealth of training during this time and seemed to already have a habitus well aligned to military fields (see 6.4.2.). During his first period of military service as a TA soldier, it was illegal for LGBT people to enlist in the military. Mike was therefore well practised in getting into ‘soldier mode’, which for him meant drawing upon a framework for navigating military life - his ‘military habitus’ - that did not (initially) include any performative aspects of his sexuality:

It was December time 1995. Um, now unbeknown to everyone at this point I was struggling quite significantly with my sexuality [*Mike explains how he attempted suicide following a difficult break up with his first boyfriend, which had been a secret relationship*] Now, under normal circumstances, I was due to deploy to Bosnia in the February ... to be honest, that was a really good opportunity for me because, I completely

went into soldier mode. And when I do. Whenever I go into soldier mode, everything else gets relegated to not an issue. Not a problem. And that was, kind of, like the, the affectation I had with being military. With being a soldier. I prioritised that over everything else. But when I went away, that was it. My only focus was on, you know, being the best that I can for, within the job. So. Um, and I did very well.

Following his successful performance in Bosnia as a reserve, Mike was asked to stay and sign-on full time with the infantry. Although Mike had welcomed the temporary absence of the ability to (legally) explore and embrace his sexuality before the deployment, the prospect of signing away his sexuality permanently resulted in him turning the offer down:

It actually did play on my mind a little bit. You swore the oath⁸. And you also signed a slip of paper stating, "I declare that I'm not a homosexual", blah, blah, blah. Um, it was very much on my mind. Not, about this piece of paper but the, kind of, life that I would have, if I agreed. And this was an area of my life that I'd never explored either.

When Mike re-joined the military, after spending several years living in Blackpool and working in a number of gay bars, the laws around LGBT personnel in the military had changed. However, even with the knowledge the ban had been lifted, Mike still viewed 'being a soldier' as being without his sexuality:

I just naturally assumed that it was illegal. And I just so happened to be watching the news, telling me that the law had been, that the military and the government, had been overruled about gays in the military. And it was now legal. Um, at that

⁸ 'The Oath Of Allegiance' – See Appendix N

time, it didn't make a big impact. It didn't have a big impact on, with me. Um, my concern was being a soldier.

Approximately four months after Phase 1 and 2 training had been completed (which takes a year as a signaller), and when it was officially 'legal' to be gay in the military, 'Debbie', Mike's friend and colleague, asked him if he was gay:

I thought, okay. But don't tell anyone, cause I don't want that to be my life. That, you know, that's not me. Um, so that was that. Come back and within two weeks, the entire squadron knew. The only way to describe the next three to four weeks was that I was completely and utterly ignored by everyone. (HW: right) I was ignored by everyone in the troop. I was ignored by everyone in the squadron. I was ignored by my troop commander. My troop sergeant, the squadron sergeant major. Everyone ignored me.

From this moment on, Mike's military service was narrated as being framed and structured through his embodiment of 'problematic' sexuality, which posed a direct threat to the gender order within the army (Bulmer, 2011; Cohn, 1988; Heggie, 2003). Because of his sexuality, Mike faced a wealth of hostile reactions, exclusion and victimisation – often violent – during his service, which will be explored further in Chapter 8. Mike's experiences as an 'unwanted other', therefore resonate with research focussed specifically on LGBT experiences of exclusion and harassment (Myrntinen et al., 2017: 112; Bulmer, 2011; Heggie, 2003).

What was most striking in Mike's interviews, is that from the moment he was 'outed' as being gay, he actively resisted the military's attempts to define and manage him through his sexuality. Mike explained, 'the problem was, I refused to answer the

question “are you gay?”, which resulted in him being summoned to the sergeant major’s office:

He was a fucking animal, and I've never seen him look as uncomfortable as he looked. But that made me more angry. That made me absolutely furious This, this, this *gay thing*, at the time, had never been part of my military life. I'd, I had completely separated them out. It had never ever crossed over. So the next thing, he went, “you know, um, you've got to understand. You'll have to. You have to realise that, uh, this is all very new and, um, um, uh. And well we don't really know how to, sort of, how, you know, to take it”. Like that. And I'm thinking, “what do you mean, *it*? By *it*, you mean *me*.”

The quote above captures the lived experience of this legal and cultural cross over – from gay personnel being formally “outside” and excluded from the military, to being legally but not yet culturally allowed “inside”. Mike explained, ‘I was the first [“gay soldier”] apparently in that, sort of, first year that any of them knew about’. For Mike, he was still the same soldier. However, to the military and to his fellow colleagues, Mike was now seen and constructed as a ‘gay soldier’, and as a result, had instantly become a ‘threat’ to cohesion, an ‘outsider’, and a ‘risk to be managed’ (see Bulmer, 2011).

Mike not only refused to be defined by his sexuality, but also drew upon the ‘ideal’ forms of masculinity, including the use of violence, to navigate what were now very different field conditions:

I got everyone there. And I turned round and said, “right, you all want an answer apparently. Well, you ain't getting one. I am me. If you've got a problem with me. In fact, if any one of you have a problem with me, step forward right now, cause I'll, I tell you what, I'll fucking drop you. We'll soon see what's going on”.

Like that. And effectively offered the whole troop out... So things over the following, months, what have you, um, sort of, got better. Took a long time. Took a long time. Uh, I did make it clear that, you know, I use words like “queer”, “faggot”, “poof”. You know, in, in all, in positive and derogatory ways

For Mike, the removal of the ban on gay personnel did not seem to disrupt the gender order in terms of changing the ‘heteronormative and patriarchal norms that continue to structure engagements with issues of inclusion’ (Bulmer, 2011: 352). Instead, he had to continually ‘prove’ himself throughout his service, negotiating military life by still conforming to the majority of dominant performances of military masculinities – constructed (in part) in direct opposition to gay sexualities (Bulmer, 2011; Heggie, 2003; Higate, 2012; Hinojosa, 2010; Woodward, 2000). Mike indicates this above through explaining to his peers that he would still use derogatory terms, appearing to still see this as an important cultural aspect of being a soldier and thus being accepted.

However, throughout his service, Mike began to co-opt performative aspects of his sexuality, introducing new practices to the field:

Six months down the line, I had them all coming into my room asking me to take them to gay bars! One night, we all got absolutely hammered. I took 17 members of the squadron (laughing) to this club that only happens once a month. And they had a competition who could snog as many guys as they could in one night. And it just got messy ... So things developed from that. I built relationships. And they, they started to actually see my own, sort of, work ethic. My own, way. So I, I gained a lot of respect from a lot of people because of the way, of the, my, my mind-set. I wasn't considered feminist. I wasn't considered camp. Um, and they knew that I had more gay jokes than they could ever come out with you know, and funnier ones.

(Mike)

Mike began to shift the field conditions and micro level structure(s) during his service, resonating with Bourdieu's (1977) argument that structure affects action, and action affects structure. It is interesting to note that the squadron turned their visit to the gay bar into a competition – still performing military masculinities within a framework, or habitus, of 'proving' oneself. Further, that Mike's 'mind-set' was respected, as he did not disrupt or pose a threat to the gender order within military culture. Mike did not challenge the use of derogatory language and discourse (potentially what was meant by 'feminist'), and actively contributed towards it, meaning peers did not have to change any of their behaviours or practices to include and accommodate him and/or his sexuality. As such, it appeared that Mike was seen as an 'exception to the ('gay') rule', so to speak - accepted because he was culturally still 'one of the lads'.

Mike's narratives also highlighted contradictions within these performances of military masculinities:

[Mike hands HW a photo] Extremely gay picture there, but this is the weird thing because squaddies are, you know, they'll be there, hugging and walking with their arms round each other and stuff and it's not, it doesn't have a sexual content to it. Um, but sometimes it does, weirdly enough, but it's not like intentional, and, it's very strange because if you did it on the streets outside of that environment, it would be deemed really gay.

Here the boundaries between what is considered 'gay' and thus 'problematic', and 'camaraderie' and thus 'acceptable' are somewhat blurred. The bonds that are formed between personnel are incredibly deep, and frequently do include aspects of love (Ward, 2017). However, as MacLeish (2015) argues, there are still slippery and ever-changing distinctions between behaviours that fall within or outside acceptable practices of 'squaddie life'.

Echoing Bourdieu's (1977, 1990) stance that practice is the key to understanding habitus, Woodward and Jenkins (2011; Jenkins et al. 2008) concluded that military identities must be understood in relation to 'doing', rather than 'being'. Similarly, Maringira et al. (p. 29) argue that soldiers' identity 'is not only constructed, it has become their "being": deeply rooted in their personal history in the army, former experiences of combat and military training'. This section will now consider the deep rooting of a habitus attuned to military fields, along with the embodiment of militarised forms of capital – initially drilled through bodily practices during basic training. As will be shown, social, cultural, bodily, and human forms of capital are key components of what I will explain and define in section 7.4. as 'combat capital'.

7.3.1. Breaking the mind through the body: Embodying violence

The majority of participants' narratives discussing the gruelling process of basic training were deeply rooted in bodily experience. Familiar stories of basic training, as consistently reproduced in the literature (Ben-Ari, 1998; Woodward, 2000; Murray, 2016; MacLeish, 2015; Gee, 2017; Thornborrow and Brown, 2009), were excitedly recounted, at times with a clear sense of pride in having passed through these 'tests'. Discipline and compliance are key aims of the drills and punishments used within basic training (Dandeker & Mason, 2003; 14 in Woodward and Winter, 2006: 58); for the learning and embodiment of required human capital – military skills, practices, and knowledge – as well as serving to 'break the civilian' through 'domination' and 'depleting' recruits (Gee, 2017: 10), so that they accept without question the new cultural capital and doxa delivered to them.

Bodily practices deepen the absorption of expectations and norms of the given field(s) (Bourdieu, 1977; 1990), as the 'rules of the game' – doxa and cultural capital – are embodied, inscribed, and thus carried within and upon muscles and flesh. This deep connection of the body to the practices required of military life, gained through intense repetition, appears to drill the military habitus through the body, into the mind – causing it to be a seemingly permanent (albeit still adaptable) framework for understanding and responding to the world within the lives of participants from then on:

Josh: I was trained to fight every day at work you know. Trained to fight. Whether that's training with a bayonet training or on a range or whatever. But you know, it's still there. The aggression's still put into you that you fight. As an infantry soldier, I think that part of your life will always, it's drilled into you at such a young age and I think, that will always be part of you.

Simon: As I say, the, the knowledge I've got, the military has helped me, but, the 20 odd years I've been out and what I've learnt here is all learnt here [current job]. I've done way more time here than I have in the military, but the military had more influence at the beginning of my life. It's like going to Uni. It will set the tone for your, for the rest of your life basically. And it has done.

Josh and Simon's quotes capture a key aspect of habitus as argued and theorised by Bourdieu (1977, 1990, see Chapter 4) - that early experiences hold the greatest weight in the structuring of the 'structuring structure' that is the habitus. As Chapter 9 will demonstrate further, the 'military habitus' is not 're-broken' upon leaving, and very little military attention is directed towards cultural reintegration (Cooper et al., 2016;

Higate, 2000, 2001; The Howard League, 2011). Although the habitus is never fixed, and is always expanding and adapting, it appears that the intense drilling of military culture, norms, values and practices into and onto the body at a young age (16-21 for participants), makes this framework of navigating fields very hard to 'shift' (Bourdieu, 1990).

It has been shown in the previous section, that the military institution creates the field conditions in which violence becomes normalised, paving the way for violent practices to be deemed 'necessary'. The normalisation and embodiment of violence as a resource was narrated by several participants (Gavin, Harry, Mike, Tom) as being a source of enjoyment, with physical punishment and seemingly random acts of violence being welcomed:

Mike: I think I was late or something. Uh and the next thing, I ended up with boxing gloves on and I got my absolute fucking arse handed to me on a plate ... but I mean it was just a brilliant time you know. And I loved every minute of it. If that was punishment, I wanted more. You know, it was that kind of attitude.

Harry: I remember in training, one of the corporals came off, and he punched me. And he went, "you alright?". And I just laughed and said, "yeah." And he loved it! That's the kind of stuff it is. Because you've got to remember, that that's what it is.

The above quotes illustrate how an important aspect of military life is that the habitus becomes used to the body being subject to, and thus responding to, random and unplanned violence. The act of killing as a resource (human capital) is normalised

through the intense repetition of the practices required to kill, so that the mind is not required to think – the body just ‘does’ (see Grossman, 1995):

You’re conditioned. You get these things *hammered* into you, that’s why they call them drills (HW: yeah) everything in the Army is a drill. Because you do it and you do it and you do it and you *do it*, to the point where it becomes muscle memory. You know, even your reaction to a tactical situation, such as being shot at or something like that, becomes an autonomic function. Everything, from using your rifle, down to polishing your boots, to putting your underpants on, it all just becomes a process, a drill, and that never really leaves you.

(Tom)

The embodiment of violent practices therefore appeared to create the conditions in which the habitus also accepts and embodies the ‘narrative of war’ – the widely held framing of violence and killing as ‘justified’ and therefore ‘legitimate’ (Butler, 2009). The process of absorbing the ‘narrative of war’ was revealed by participants narrating killing through discourses of professionalism – dehumanised by the use of language such as ‘targets’ (people to be killed) and ‘contact’ (being shot at) – where participants were required to be ‘highly skilled, efficient, and accurate’ in their use of violence and aggression (Gee, 2017: 13):

You do your six weeks’ training. So you, you go through these simulations where you go through the villages and you get contact and you get shot at and you fire back, hit targets, and they film you and then you report back and they debrief you.

(Simon)

A prominent theme within the data was that the resources of aggression and violence were trained to become a method of overcoming adversity, which needed to be performed on command and with control – again connecting with the metaphor of a ‘machine’, in which violence can be ‘turned on and off’ like a switch (Gavin, Kelli) (see Hockey, 2009, 2017). The quote below shows Mike narrate this aspect of self:

I've always had a pragmatic approach to violence. I can be angry. I can be aggressive. And I can display that. But I've always, it's always been extremely controlled. Even in the most heightened of situations... [Mike explains that a former partner once hit him for no apparent reason] I said ... “you ever do that again, I will bury you” ... it happened again. And I just hammered him. And he spent about three days in the hospital ... And it was literally as calculated to just be able to turn round and say, um, “like I said to you last time, that's unacceptable behaviour to me. You've had your hiding. You're in the hospital. I'll be leaving now”.

Part of the embodiment of violence also included participants becoming used to transporting, handling and using a variety of weapons. Weapons are a key vehicle to which military practices are performed (see Maringira et al., 2015, Shalit, 1988), taught through intense drills and repetition, along with group punishments. Participants had to develop high levels of human capital, again drilled into the mind through muscle memory (Grossman, 1995; Gee, 2017):

[discussing re-joining the army] I expected to have to re-do some training, but in actual fact I was just dumped back into the system. A day later [deep voice] “Here’s a rifle” [imitates holding it] and you’re like “urgh:: pfftt”, whereas your brain kicks in and it’s like [starts pretending to go over a weapon – talking

quickly] “oh, safety catch changed, either sites, bore, hook, and parts of th-” and, it all comes back to you. You don’t even have to think really.

(Tom)

Several participants discussed how weapons were used so frequently, especially when carried at all times within combat, that they became ‘part of’ their bodies (Gavin, Oliver, Tom). This resonates with Ben-Ari’s (1998: 59) claims, that ‘in a curious way, weapons become mediators between the soldier and his environment’, acting as a ‘continuation’ of the soldier, yet also an ‘extension’ of the dangerous environment due to their lethality. Training therefore includes what has been interpreted as instilling in participants’ habitus an immense ‘respect’ for weaponry, to the point where the health of weapons must be prioritised above their own:

Always made sure whatever state you were in, your weapon came first (laughs) no honestly, we cleaned them and cleaned them and fucking *cleaned* them. I could take mine apart and put it together blind folded. Had to. And even when I was in Afghan and that, Iraq, when I finally got in, no matter how fucked I was, that weapon got cleaned and was ready to go before I was.

(Gavin)

Noticeably absent within the data was the connection to what these drills and weapons would do to other (‘enemy’) human bodies. Perhaps the most striking example of this was in Harry’s interview – in which violence and weaponry were solely communicated in terms of (highly gendered) ‘fun’:

The fact they give you a rifle and let you fire it is still one of the most amazing things. It’s exciting! The first time you’re actually laying there with one and they say “and in your own time, go on”. And it’s just great! And when you throw

grenades and stuff like that, it's just brilliant! It's excellent. It's just like a boys' club. That's what the infantry is. It's just a big boys' club.

(Harry)

Drills, according to Holmes (1986: 42) hold a further purpose of helping 'to minimise the randomness of battle, and give the soldier familiar points of contact in an uncertain environment, like lighthouses in a stormy sea'. This was extended by Hamner (2011, in Allsep, 2013: 384, see also Keegan, 2014 [1976]: 70), who stressed that 'to convince recruits that combat was survivable meant teaching them that the battlefield was in some ways controllable'.

Liam discussed how he went on to become a physical trainer (PT) in the Army and was placed in charge of delivering basic training to new recruits amid the height of the war and conflict in Afghanistan. The extract below captures a moment when Liam reflects on his role, with the hesitations perhaps indicating unease as he appears to wrestle with what he was doing – preparing 'children', as he referred to them, for war:

So you're taking people that are just, raw, from civvy street, and turning them into, and it's mainly a physical thing as well (laughs) And turning them into fit recruits at the other end after only twelve weeks it is, you know that is something special ... But erm, it was for the 16 to 18 year olds (HW: yeah) erm (pause) so:: they were *children*, really. But erm (long pause) erm you know, they can't, they'd never go to war until they're, at least 18 and in a working unit (pause) but er, it was a really good thing. You weren't just shaping a soldier, but a young person as well. And seeing them develop and see them becoming leaders.

(Liam)

Here, Liam also captures what will now be discussed – that basic training provides avenues for recruits to realise their potential and gain a sense of purpose that has often been lacking before enlistment (Gee, 2017; Morris, 2017b, 2017c).

7.3.2. Realising potential and gaining purpose

Participants claimed that during phase 1 training they gained an embodied sense of their potential, which far exceeded anything they had achieved or imagined being able to achieve before joining the military. Seeing and feeling the body's and mind's immense capability to overcome intense struggle, unpredictable circumstances, and hostile environments, were mobilised under discourses of 'warrior masculinities' (see section 7.3.), and enforced rigorously by the military constructing soldiers in direct opposition to 'civvies' (civilians):

I remember once, er I'll never forget it, I was 16, 17 maybe? I don't know, but I was fucking dying. I'd already been sick ... I just didn't have anything left (laughs). The instructor got right in my face, the big bastard, and he shouted as loud as he could, "LOOK LADS. WE'VE GOT OURSELVES A FUCKING PUSSY HERE.", you know, "LOOK AT THIS FAGGOT. MIGHT AS WELL GET US SOME CIVVIES IN HERE IF WE WANTED WEAKNESS. [shouts even louder] GET. UP. THAT. NETTING. OR I WILL FUCKING KILL YOU MYSELF". And I did (laughs) I fucking did it! All in the mind. You, you've got to be well-oiled machines.

(Gavin)

Here we see that the 'walls to the outside', as discussed in 7.2., are continually enforced through practice, where 'weakness' is directly connected to being 'civilian', and further, to being 'gay' and/or in some way 'female' – echoing what was discussed in Case Study 7.1.

Within all interviews, participants narrated how the practices within basic training created an 'us/them' divide between soldiers and 'civilians', who by contrast are 'inferior', 'weak', 'lazy', 'selfish' and at times, 'effeminate' (Gee, 2017; Higate, 2003; MacLeish, 2015; Maringira et al., 2015; Woodward, 2000). Overcoming weakness then represents a cultural movement away from being civilian, where the habitus and forms of capital have shifted towards becoming a soldier. This shift is positively (re)enforced through ascribed and embodied symbolic capital, whereby militarised practices and cultural capital are recognised as holding (positive) value – often rewarded through the earning of items of kit.⁹

The above quote from Gavin also encapsulates 'the complex interplay that connects the soldier's mental faculty for endurance, with a physical performativity that evidence an ability to thrive in extreme conditions' (Murray, 2016: 156). Several participants captured this ability when recounting core training mantras:

Adapt and overcome
Pain is weakness leaving the body
Pain is temporary, pride is forever

Although the physical condition of the body is important, the mind must be equally as 'tough' (Ward, 2017: 13). Gavin and others referred to this mental toughness in terms of being a 'machine' and/or individual 'cogs' (Josh, Kelli, Liam, Mike, Tom), aware that

⁹ As discussed by Liam in section 7.3.1.

their bodies and minds were part of something much bigger – the military machine (MacLeish, 2015).

Most participants also expressed how even though their bodies and minds suffered immensely, basic training was positive, and more importantly, it was *needed* – connecting the drills, embodied violence, and trained ‘resilience’ (McGarry et al., 2015) to war:

Josh: You just get on with it. You know, “I’m not dead, I’ve still got my legs” and just crack on. You have to.

Tom: I mean I thought they could have been a lot harsher at times, and at the end of the day, if you don’t want to be treated harshly, don’t join the fucking army you know. They ask you to do not nice things in the world and you can’t do those things if you’ve been treated with kid gloves. It doesn’t work. Unfortunately the way things work, the way humans work, is. Unless you’re in a harsh environment where you’re putting up with harsh things, you’ll not be a harsh enough person to do the things you’ve got to do.

Here, Tom draws attention to the need for recruits to be in harsh environments, to become ‘harsh’ themselves. What Tom and others (Mike, Oliver, Simon) meant by ‘being harsh’, was ‘being capable of killing’. This can be connected to what Maringira et al. (2015: 28, see also Woodward, 2000) argue in terms of the importance of spatiality and context in relation to the development of the ‘military habitus’ and forms of capital. In order for the habitus to adapt to and thus successfully navigate military fields – particularly *battlefields*, recruits must be fully immersed within violent fields

and hostile terrain, to acquire practical knowledge and a 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 1990: 67; Woodward, 2000).

Successfully being able to complete soldiering practices thus deepens the military habitus, along with the development and embodiment of cultural and human forms of capital, alongside bodily capital (Wacquant, 2004). Together with participants realising their potential, the new framework for navigating military life – the 'military habitus' – allows for survival in training and beyond, reinforced through one of the core Army values – 'pride':

Liam: One thing the army teaches you is not discipline in you know someone shouting at you, but it's actually self-discipline. And you need discipline to survive. By the end of basic training, no one's really coming out and inspecting your locker and stuff, you just do it. You've got pride in yourself. And it sticks with you forever.

Simon: I was quite fit, but I never realised *how* fit I was. We'd go out for long runs and I'd sit in the pack and they realised. Suddenly he says, "well move to the front", you know. And after that I was always at the front (laughs) They put me as a marker and all sorts of things. Anyway, um, but I got very, *very* fit, and within six months when I left, I, I was a different person. I was very confident. Um, I was very proud.

As Gee (2017: 11) supports, giving recruits a clear sense of pride and achievement provides opportunities for instructors to reinforce the 'soldier identity':

Their ability to withstand training thus far is offered as a mark of their character *as soldiers*, and their new skills as a sign of their professionalism *as soldiers*.

After various privations, recruits are eager to hear these affirmations of their worth. (emphasis in original)

Harry described a moment during training in which he realised just how far he had departed from his previous 'civvy' self:

One of the strangest things is that we were on the back area at the ITC. And, um, when I was just a stoner bum, me and my brother went out looking for magic mushrooms, never found any. And I was on the training area, holding my rifle, and I was literally, just surrounded by them. It was really. It was one of those strange experiences, where you just think, "this is weird"

(Harry)

Here, the embodied collision of past and present epitomised the stark contrast between who he had been just a few short weeks ago, and the soldier he had become. Using Bourdieu's (1977, 1990) field theory, this moment captures just how much Harry's habitus had 'shifted'. What would previously have been experienced as a huge victory – finding the mushrooms – was now merely a reference point to a previous 'unworthy' life.

Phase 2, or 'trade' training, follows initial basic training, which is where recruits learn the specific practices and knowledge (human capital) required to complete their chosen or allocated job role. Although phase 2 still includes significant aspects of fitness and 'beastings', it is more focused on technical skills, allowing several participants to realise their potential and gain a sense of enjoyment in learning – often for the first time:

Harry: what I enjoyed most about training, it's physical activity and you're always learning stuff. You get outdoors and it's character building

Tom: I was quite proud of myself as I'd managed to get through basic training, phase two training, and you know I'd survived it all. Turns out I was reasonably clever as well and I was alright at a few things.

Oliver: Trade training in the RAF is intense. On the outside, catering is a four year course. Every other trade we saw had maybe one, or even half a folder. That was their trade training. At the end of it, I had four folders. Eight months worth of written work, without any of the practical side of it. God it was hard graft. Which, for somebody who hated school, don't forget (laughs) That was a massive, massive thing for me.

It was shown in Chapter 6 that traditional sites of classroom-style learning were not fields in which many participants' pre-military habitus and capital 'fit'. However, in trade training, recruits gained a renewed purpose in learning. Military information, skills and knowledge (human capital) were seen to have direct uses and application within participants' lives, in ways that the school curriculum had not. Learning was also strictly enforced through discipline, testing, and punishment – adding a further drive for building human capital.

Further, learning is regularly completed *in the field* - often referred to in the literature as 'practical learning', or 'learning by doing' (Gibbs, 1988; Schank et al., 1999). Simon had previously struggled in classrooms, due to what he now knows is ADHD¹⁰. In military training and military life, he found a field where this previously 'negative'

¹⁰ Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

aspect of his being – which not only prevented learning but led directly to punishment (see Chapter 6) – was now a resource which allowed him to thrive:

If someone has got ADHD, if you hyper focus on something, you can't beat them because they're so into it that nothing around it will stop it, and then they take the information in. So the thing is, is that, um, I excel when I'm under pressure. And this is why I was good in the Military. You get put, you get given a task, you focus on it, you do it, and that's it. ... I was in a small team and I focused on things and then I'd just, you know, I'd just shine.

(Simon)

When individuals operate within the field in which their habitus was formed, and/or in which it is well matched, they are like 'fish in water' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 127, Wacquant, 2004: 255) – not conscious of the water (field conditions) around them because they are perfectly at home, and able to 'swim freely' (perform well), in that they are well suited to the environment (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). This was also the case for Liam, who trained with the Royal Signals.

When living in a care home as a teenager, Liam had spent several years teaching himself to build and maintain his own radios and various communication technologies. As such, Liam had already developed high levels of human capital needed for his role as a signaller, allowing him to excel in military fields:

In phase two, I was a complete super geek (HW laughs) you know I was, hand up, "yeah but, why does that work? Or, how does that work?". And I was relating it all back to me:: using my own kit, as a civilian and trying to work, you know,

“but I did this once and”, I mean I came up with some new things that they’d never seen before!

(Liam)

Potential and purpose were also enhanced by the large amounts of responsibility given to recruits at a young age, which for many participants was the first time they had been trusted to this extent:

Fresh faced out of training. I mean, we’d had a year’s worth of training, but you still, there’s a lot of responsibility ... we had to get the pilots out, brief them on where it all is, we had to get the comms up and running, run the whole show really. It was a *huge* amount of responsibility

(Liam)

The responsibilities given to recruits are bounded in being part of ‘the team’, generating a clear sense of purpose that every action and every individual are part of something bigger – as Ward (2017: 28) states, ‘[t]here is strength in the ability to see beyond oneself’.

Part of seeing oneself as part of something much bigger, also appeared to relate to politics not forming part of participants’ *individual* practices, and was thus excluded from their (military) habitus. As discussed in section 7.2.2., the military instils in young recruits a group-level politics (Levy and Sasson-Levy, 2008: 368; Gee, 2017), operating on conservative authoritarianism – directly opposed to forms of liberalism which posed a ‘threat’ to the military institution. Within the data, individual politics appear to be absent during service, with participants claiming that as soldiers, this ‘wasn’t their place’ as they were there ‘to serve’ and take orders (David, Gavin, Josh, Mike,

Tom)¹¹. Josh expressed this when discussing the context surrounding the questionable legality of the 2003 invasion of Iraq (see Hagan, 2015; Kramer and Michalowski, 2005; Whyte, 2007):

It's politics and it's, it's not. You know like I said I was paid to do a job and, I'd go do that job to the best of my ability (pause) and, don't get involved in the politics side of things and whether I agree with what I'm (pause) where I'm going and what I'm doing or, whether I don't.

(Josh)

Mike also discussed the build up to the invasion of Iraq, explaining how the military directly and forcefully ordered recruits to prevent 'outside' information regarding the politics and context of the war from permeating their lives and practice:

The very beginning of the media was going, it was in a frenzy ... I didn't get involved ... about a week before we were due to deploy, maybe two. We were all sent down to the gym in York. We were told that the brigadier was going to come and speak to us. That is a very unusual thing. I never ever, ever forget it because it really shocked me. He must have been talking constantly for at least 30 to 40 minutes. Ranting about this situation with the media. Ranting about [shouting] "YOU MUST ALL REMEMBER ONE THING, YOU ARE BOUND BY YOUR OATH. YOU ARE BOUND BY THE OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT. YOU ARE SOLDIERS. YOU ARE THIS. YOU CAN CONSIDER THESE DIRECT ORDERS. YOU WILL NOT LISTEN TO YOUR FAMILY. YOU WILL NOT LISTEN TO YOUR FRIENDS. YOU WILL NOT LISTEN TO THE MEDIA OR TO ANYONE ELSE, OTHER THAN THE CHAIN OF COMMAND. THAT IS ALL YOU NEED TO BE AWARE OF. FAILURE TO DO IT", and I thought to myself, "what the fucking hell?" ... I took from that, "wow. The Head Shed is fucking worried".

¹¹ Politics will be returned to in Chapter 9, in regards to participants still viewing politics as 'not their place' within post-military life.

Several participants (Harry, Gavin, Josh, Kelli, Tom) joined the military or were in training amid the '9/11 moment' (McMillan, 2004 in Walklate et al., 2014: 267-8). In Harry's case, this was the first day of basic training:

Um, the day we started at the Infantry Training Centre, Catterick, that was September 11, 2001. (HW: right) So, I walked in and one of the lads from a Yorkshire regiment came over and he went, "someone declared on America". And I went, "shut up, you dick". I said, "who's going to do that?" I said, "nobody's even close enough to them to do that". And then we walked into the NAAFI, and you could see the aeroplanes. But, we didn't see any of the media, or anything that was going on. (HW: right) Because we didn't have any TVs in our rooms, and we were busy training. So, uh, in real terms, all they did was put more people on guard. So, we'd no idea what was going on in the outside world.

(Harry)

For Harry and others, the '9/11 moment' framed and (re)structured their military service from then on, often in relation to the unique context of 21st century warfare (see Chapter 3). Several participants were deployed immediately or shortly following completion of their training, allowing them to achieve a level of practical mastery and purpose in soldiering they had been longing for. This final section of the chapter will now demonstrate that when the military habitus and forms of (militarised) capital come together within the battlefield, they form what I have termed 'combat capital' – which, as participants' narratives reveal, holds 'value' at both embodied and symbolic levels, anchored in (and thus dependent on) the physical and socio-political field conditions of war.

7.4. Practical Mastery: 'We're going to war boys'

So far, this chapter has shown that military training transformed participants from 'boys to soldiers' (Josh), through the habitus having to quickly shift and adapt to align with hostile ('masculine') military fields in order to survive. The embodiment of drilled military practices, alongside the forms of (militarised) capital needed to navigate military fields – including bodily, cultural, human, social and symbolic capital – deepened and strengthened this framework, the 'military habitus', for understanding and responding to military fields as a soldier. However, participants described knowing as young recruits, that training and exercises were not the same as 'doing'. As Kelli stated, 'don't confuse experience with years of service'.

A strong theme within the data concerned the inability to ever fully prepare for the realities of war. Training for war cannot be provided at an experiential level, as 'making war' does not appear to be comparable to any other lived experience (Higate, 2001). To *experience* war, one would have to *be* at war. One can experience and train for hunger, thirst, physical exhaustion, hostile terrain, and even grief and loss. However, it does not appear that one can train for experiencing all of these together, within the unique field conditions that constitute a 'battlefield':

Obviously you're trained to fight and to be fit, and to shoot and they'll make sure you're a well-oiled machine and you're in routines and, you know you've got good discipline, integrity, confidence and one thing and another (pause) but I don't think mentally, I don't think (pause) otherwise no one would suffer with PTSD would they? ... or flashbacks ... you can watch as many videos and you can watch it on the news as much as you want. But the smells and the noises and the heat (pause) no one can, nobody ever (pause) prepares you for anything like

that (pause) it's just summet that you have to learn, from first-hand experience and er (long pause) just deal with.

(Josh)

The battlefield is a unique space in which field conditions are unlike any other. This is where 'combat capital' is formed.

Combat capital is a collection of resources, which when combined with the unique experiences gained in the physical battlefield, take on embodied and symbolic 'value' – operating on a continuum of positive to negative value – recognised both 'inside' and 'outside' of military fields. These resources include the social, cultural, bodily, human, and symbolic forms of capital aligned to military fields and the battlefield – discussed within the previous sections of this chapter as being initially developed and embodied within military training. As Josh conveys, experiencing the battlefield is deeply connected to the body – the smells, sounds, and temperatures being consistently recounted in participants' narratives (see Chapter 8). The value of embodied and symbolic combat capital is therefore anchored in and thus dependent on the field conditions of war in which it is acquired – physical and, as will be demonstrated further in the chapters to follow, the socio-political landscape(s) of warfare.

Bourdieu's original conception of 'field' was born from his own experiences in war (Grenfell, 2008), and thus seeks to capture struggle and conflict between agents entering into competition with one another, each from a more or less advantageous position (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 16-18). Bourdieu (1990) also argues that 'forces' operate within and across fields, creating 'push and pull' type effects on agents within this ultimate struggle for power – which in the case of war, is survival on a micro

level and 'victory' on a macro level. However, as discussed further in the following chapters, 21st century conflict is waged against ideologies, in which 'victory' or 'winning' are rarely, if ever, possible (Kilcullen, 2007; Metz, 2000; Williams, 2011, see also Chapter 3).

Walklate et al. (2014*b*: 267-8) discuss the September 11th (2001) terror attacks as a '9/11 moment' (McMillan, 2004: 383), arguing that although some things 'changed irrevocably', such as domestic and international security, this was a 'moment in time'. What is meant here, is that there have been no further terrorist attacks on this scale since 2001 (ibid. p. 268), yet from this moment on, the US and UK have continued to engage in 'punitive and global counter terrorism responses ... and violent war-making in large parts of the Arab world' (Walklate et al., 2014*b*: 268). The 9/11 moment came to structure participants' military experience, providing a wealth of opportunities to practice 'real soldiering' – and thus develop and embody combat capital. Tom and others (Gavin, Harry, Kelli) were posted to Afghanistan or Iraq shortly after they had completed phase 2 training (aged 18-21) – which was described as being a welcome relief from mundane, 'boring' life in the barracks:

Before there was Afghanistan and Iraq the army was a different place. I spent a lot of my time sweeping garages. A lot of the guys had already decided they'd had enough and were going to sign off! (HW: right) But I was like, "nah it will be alright things will get better". Then some idiot flew a couple planes into a couple of towers in New York and all of a sudden it was like [puts on American accent] "we're going to war boys". I remember watching that on the news, I was in er a café eating a burger. And it was like "oh shit. This could be interesting" ... We deployed to Iraq and that was a *busy*, that was a *good* time, it was like, "fuck me boys, we're going to go and *do* what we're supposed to be doing". (Tom)

As this chapter has demonstrated, military masculinities are performed, 'proved' and recognised through the passing of 'tests'. The ultimate 'test' of becoming a true soldier is proving oneself in, or at a more basic level – *surviving* – war (Enloe, 1998). Several participants expressed how they had felt incredibly lucky to be posted to areas of active conflict immediately, or very shortly after leaving their phase 2 training, as this offered opportunities to embody and perform military practices within the field in which they had been intended for – the battlefield:

This was a medal for going to Kosovo (HW: ok) so, I'd been out of training less than a day. "Get your stuff ready, because you're coming with us" (laughs) I was like "er, ok". You know I hadn't even had chance to ring my Mum or anything and I'm off to go to war. I was out for fifteen months on tour. I just didn't want to come back, it was great! It was what I was trained to do.

(Liam)

Liam's reference to making a phone call to his Mum was a strong reminder that he was posted to Kosovo at the age of 19. As Jones (2017) raises, conflict has historically made use of young bodies – especially those from areas of socio-economic disadvantage (Morris, 2017b, 2017c). Josh flew to Iraq on the day he turned 18:

I'd only been in the regiment probably seven or eight months, before I went to Iraq so. Er went on me 18th birthday so (pause) you know, [sarcastic voice] *cracking* (long pause) first ever time I'd been on an aeroplane.

For Josh, being posted to Iraq meant that he was able to legitimately use the human capital of aggression and violence that he had been encouraged to develop:

There was obviously a massive buzz that you was finally gonna do what you'd been trained to do. It's like being a brick layer and not being able to build a house and not getting to be a part of that. And you know you're trained to lay bricks, you wanna lay bricks (long pause) you're trained to fight you wanna fight. A big part of it is fighting. And, if you're not fighting war zones, well you'll fight in the pub. You train someone to fight eighteen hours a day, they wanna fight

(Josh)

What Josh captures here, through the simile of brick laying, is what Bourdieu (1977, 1990) terms 'symbolic mastery' and 'practical mastery'. Symbolic mastery refers to the 'knowing' of practice – i.e. theories and knowledge of what *should* be done – but 'is not mastery of the real thing' (Roth, 2012: 22). Whereas practical mastery refers to 'doing' – i.e. experiencing, where the habitus and capital combine to allow for practice which responds to and is perfectly suited to the field. Within combat roles, military training demands that recruits have symbolic mastery, but only war itself allows for practical mastery to be achieved. Hence, combat capital can only be formed by 'doing' – playing an active role in war¹² – in which the forms of (militarised) capital and experience come together to form an embodied and symbolic (widely recognised) 'value'.

Harry supports this, explaining that the reason British soldiers are the 'best', is that they consistently *practise* (experience) war:

If you look through the decades, the only reason the British have the best soldiers, is because they always send them to war zones because it's the best

¹² Although the sample does not include any former military personnel who served in combat roles from 'afar' – such as those controlling and operating drones and guided missiles – 'combat capital' is believed to still be formed in these roles, yet may not be recognised as holding the same 'value' as those engaging in combat 'on the ground'. This also applies to non-violent roles such as medics, and in the case of Oliver – chefs, where they have been physically within the battlefield and thus acquire combat capital.

kind of training. It's the best kind of experience. It goes through every generation. So, every decade they go somewhere. There was obviously, getting the training, getting out their street smarts, building through situations. Then you send people over to the Balkans, through the 90s. Um, what else, let's see. Early 90s, Gulf War 1, was '91. (HW: yeah) So, the thing about the British Army is, they always keep busy. So, whether it be Afghanistan or Iraq in the 90s, it's always got to be the same. Give it another 10 years and we'll be somewhere else. Yemen, I'd put my money on.

(Harry)

During his service in the Signals, Mike regularly drew upon the practical mastery achieved, and thus combat capital developed, through his previous posting to Bosnia with the Infantry. In the extract to follow, Mike describes being a 'fish in water' (Bourdieu 1977, 1990), in that his habitus and capital were perfectly aligned to the military field – in this case a 'regimental-wide Commanding Officer's Cup':

I spent a lot of years in the infantry and a lot of these really didn't. For me, infantry tactics are second nature. So this was really putting me into my element, and these are all tradespeople. They had little touch with the infantry tactics side... I literally, sort of, gave them an infantry style briefing. They knew I'd been to Bosnia so took it all seriously ... We won by a considerably large margin.

(Mike)

This extract captures how Mike's experiences and capital gained in Bosnia had formed combat capital – operating on both symbolic and embodied levels. Symbolically, as it was known that Mike had served in Bosnia, he achieved a high level of trust among the group he was in charge of, as they respected his (practical) knowledge and thus his orders. In terms of embodied combat capital, Mike was able to *practise* these skills to a

high level and lead by example, resulting in the team thriving in the field and gaining further symbolic capital in the form of public recognition – receiving trophies, having their names inscribed on the cup, and being mentioned in army magazines.

The final point to be raised here concerns how the shared experience of practical mastery – embodied practices of survival – and thus combat capital gained within the unique conditions of the battlefield, further deepens the strong ties and dense homogenous social capital discussed in 7.2.1:

It's that shared experience of being at the same level, training together, and all going over there and *doing it*. And all being in the shit together. Being shot at. You know. Losing people. It binds you all together, it's something that no one else can understand, unless they've *been there*, you know? It makes us all so much closer.

(Tom)

Not only does the building of intense bonding forms of social capital further form 'walls' to those 'outside' the military - 'civvies' – but it seems from the data that the shared experience of being in battle, also excludes at an experiential level those within the military who have not 'been there'. This is demonstrated by David, who was the only participant not posted to an area of conflict:

I was disappointed when we didn't go to Afghan to be honest. And I have a few friends who were quite gutted when I talked to them. I have a friend in the Paras who's been there twice and he joined at the same time as me. He talks about it and I'm like, "oh yeah", but really, I'm really jealous. I wish I could, because then I could be on that level to talk to him, and say well, "yeah we done this and that". I just want to go for the experience and just be on that level.

(David)

David knew he had missed out on achieving the practical mastery spoken of by other participants, but perhaps deeper than this, he felt that his military service operated on a lower level to those who had experienced conflict as a result – being in some way less ‘valuable’. As will be shown further in the following chapters, combat capital contributes to the hierarchies of symbolic capital and (exclusionary) power(s) at force within the military, as well as upon the return to non-military life.

7.5. Conclusion

This chapter has shown how participants ‘became’ soldiers, beginning with the field conditions of the military institution creating a forced ‘rupture’ in experience upon entry, where basic training (phase 1) quickly established ‘walls to the outside’ (Portes, 1998) – stripping and replacing all ‘symbolic resources’ connected to ‘civilian’ life (Hale, 2008). To survive and overcome the hostile and unpredictable field conditions of basic training, participants had to rapidly build dense **social capital** and trust among fellow recruits, formed in part through the collective and shared experience of struggle. Further, it has been demonstrated that the military doxa, the ‘rules of the game’, hinge on a culture that (re)produces strictly enforced hierarchies of authority, grounded in highly ‘masculinised’ performances and practices of passing ‘tests’ – constructed and sustained in opposition to perceived ‘weakness’ and ‘inferior outsiders’.

As such, participants had to absorb the military doxa through building **cultural capital**, as well as honing and embodying militarised practices – causing their habitus to quickly ‘shift’ and adapt to align with military fields to become a deeply drilled ‘military

habitus'. Part of this process includes the development and embodiment of further forms of 'military capital': **human capital** – military skills, practices, and knowledge; **bodily capital** – the extreme building of strength and endurance, as well as the drilled and thus embodied military practices; and **symbolic capital** – through the (successful) building of military capital being widely recognised and rewarded (or punished if unsuccessful), often connected to the earning of military kit and symbols. This building of military capital continues into trade training (phase 2), where participants learned the human capital specific to their job role, whilst further strengthening their social capital within their allocated 'military family'.

Through a focus on Mike's unique experiences captured in the data, it was further shown that the military field conditions include a culture actively opposed to gay sexualities, constructed as a 'threat' to be excluded. Although Mike's 'military habitus' had been structured to not include performative aspects of his sexuality, due to his previous service at a time when LGBT recruits were banned from the military (REF), he temporarily became an 'outsider' when his sexuality was disclosed. This led to Mike's military service being framed and structured through his sexuality, where he had to continually prove himself 'worthy' of being on the 'inside' – even within the battlefield, as the following chapter will consider.

It has also been highlighted that basic training instilled in participants the foundations for the 'frames of war' to be accepted – where violence is normalised, deemed 'necessary', and thus becomes 'justified' and narrated as 'legitimate' alongside the dehumanisation of killing (Butler, 2009). This 'narrative of war' is initially framed in relation to protecting the team, and subsequently to 'eliminate targets' and 'remove

enemies'. It was found that participants' military habitus had been formed with an absence of individual politics, where the motives for war were not considered 'their place' to engage in. Instead, 'their place' was to do what they had been trained for – delivering violence when asked, narrated through discourses of professionalism.

Importantly, this chapter has introduced the components of the new concept 'combat capital' (Wilkinson, 2017), which captures how the forms of military capital (resources) developed during initial training – social, cultural, human, bodily, and symbolic capital – come together with the unique experiences and practical mastery gained in the battlefield, to form a 'value'. It has so far been shown that this 'value' is recognised (positively) 'inside' the military – with Mike's combat capital gained with the Infantry in Bosnia allowing him to thrive in the Royal Signals. Not only did combat capital facilitate his success at an embodied level – through military practices and practical mastery gained in the (battle)field allowing him to navigate military fields with ease – but at a symbolic level, he was also recognised as holding combat capital, generating widely held trust and respect for his advice and orders. Further, David also recognised combat capital as holding positive value, framing his own service as being somewhat 'less valuable' due to his lack of combat experience. It will be shown in the following chapters that combat capital is also recognised at embodied and symbolic levels 'outside' of military fields – operating on a continuum of positive to negative value.

Finally, this chapter has introduced combat capital as being bound to the (battle)field conditions where it is formed. As Chapter 8 will now argue further, this involves both the physical field conditions of war, in which combat capital is embodied, as well as

symbolic combat capital being anchored in the wider socio-political landscapes of war – which appears to be deeply connected to the ‘value’ it holds in non-military fields. As such, the next chapter will place a focus on participants’ narratives of ‘life during’ military service, drawing attention to the experiences and combat capital gained within 21st century conflict, as well as providing an insight into navigating military fields more generally.

CHAPTER 8

Life During: 'we're not playing soldiers anymore'

'The soldier's body is the equipment and raw material for war, the most necessary and most carefully managed component of the good machine, or even the good machine itself in its most indivisible, cellular form. The soldier is at once the agent, instrument, and object of state violence.'

MacLeish, *The Ethnography of Good Machines*,
2015: 16

8.1. Introduction

This chapter is the third empirical chapter, focusing on 'life during' military service. Participants narrated this as a distinctly separate period of military life to that of basic and phase two training, characterised by 'proper soldiering' within fields of conflict. The previous chapter has shown that training drills a 'military habitus' (Maringira et al., 2015), through recruits' bodies, into the mind, along with the embodiment of military capital – social, cultural, human, bodily, and symbolic forms of capital, which form the components of 'combat capital' – constructed in direct opposition to 'outsiders' (Wilkinson, 2017). The 'outside' mainly being the non-military world, but also includes 'outsiders within'. Within training, participants also learned and embodied a 'narrative of war' (See 7.2.2., Butler, 2009) – whereby violence was encouraged, framed, and justified to protect the survival of the team, as well as to 'eliminate targets' and 'remove enemies'. This chapter will continue to place participants' experiences of military life, especially those gained within fields of war, within a theoretical framework of 'field theory' (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990).

The chapter is structured within four main sections. Section 8.2. explores narratives around experiencing conflict, demonstrating how the unique and fundamentally blurred nature of 21st century conflict at the macro, political level of war making, translated into a qualitatively difference experience of war at an individual level for those who served in the 'war on terror'. Section 8.3. will then move to consider participants' experiences of navigating military life to acquire forms of capital and field positions, drawing attention to how the early socialisation with military culture before joining (discussed in Chapter 6), generated a strategic advantage for several participants, allowing them to thrive in military fields. Section 8.4. provides an insight into the inherent difficulties in maintaining social capital and bonds to the 'outside', especially concerning romantic relationships and parenthood. Finally, section 8.5. will briefly discuss experiences of preparing to leave the military and navigating access to resettlement support. The chapter will then offer a conclusion, connecting these sections within a framework of field theory amid the context of 21st century warfare, arguing that the combat capital gained in the 'war on terror' holds unique embodied and symbolic properties, and thus 'value'.

8.2. Experiencing Conflict

This section and its subsections provide an insight into the themes that emerged from participants discussing theatres of war. Despite 21st century warfare having changed at a fundamental macro level (see Chapter 4), at the micro level of individual experience, war appears to have remained relatively constant. For example, stories recounted surrounding daily life and camaraderie in Afghanistan could be mapped

onto accounts of life in the trenches during the first World War (Leed, 1979), and narratives of advancing within Iraq, parallel with accounts of playing 'hide and seek' amid guerrilla style warfare in Vietnam and Northern Ireland (Duyvesteyn and Angstrom, 2005). However, the narratives in this research also reveal an additional layer to battlefield conditions, rarely presented within the literature at an experiential level (Walklate and McGarry, 2015a; McGarry and Walklate, 2016).

Experiences of serving in theatres of conflict were primarily narrated through the body, resonating with what Gendlin (1962, 1973) terms 'body memory' (see Chapter 5) – where intense bodily experiences, especially in potentially traumatic situations such as war, are retained and carried within the body. Bourdieu's (1977, 1990) notion of habitus centres on embodied memory, an 'ever-present past', which guides and structures future action. Field theory therefore maintains that habitus and capital must be understood in relation to the fields in which they are developed. The following subsections draw attention to the field conditions and military doxa (culture) where the military habitus was further deepened, along with the acquisition and embodiment of combat capital – placing the micro level experiences of participants within the macro level landscape of 21st century warfare.

It is important to highlight that participants' narratives of serving in war and conflict were initially framed in overwhelmingly positive terms. Active combat was consistently expressed to be an exciting and adrenalin fuelled period in life, unmatched by any other. The capability of the body and mind to survive the field conditions of war, along with the unique shared experience and deepening of dense bonding social capital generated an intense sense of purpose (Ward, 2017), as discussed in Chapter 6.

Further, the enjoyment of practical mastery and feeling like a 'fish in water' (Bourdieu, in Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1989: 43), often led to participants wanting to remain in the field where they had been designed to 'fit':

I've never been as good at anything as I was being a soldier. Not sure I ever could be really. Er, it's who I was like, felt easy- I mean, don't get me wrong like it was fucking hard graft (laughs) but I was good at it. Couldn't get enough, er like I said I always volunteered to stop on at the beginning.

(Gavin)

After expressing how war was an intense source of enjoyment, participants often contrasted this with reflections on the preparations and practices that had to be completed before entering theatres of war:

It was like, "right, well I might not come back from this. Fuck. Have I done everything? Have I put everything in place?" It wasn't a case of "shit I don't want to go", that wasn't a question. I'm going (laughs) It was, "have I done everything I can possibly do before I do go?". Like wills and things like that. And I hadn't. And I was panicking.

(Oliver)

As Josh turned 18 years old on the day he flew to Iraq, he was 17 when writing a will and preparing for his potential death. When describing the plane journey, his narrative captured a common theme within the data. The body appeared to be the main tool of preparation for war, with the bodily practices and specific embodied drills of checking (and re-checking) kit also acting as preparation for the mind:

You've already done everything you need to do ... all *horrible* bits of admin ... made sure you've got your will and, you've got life insurance ... and you know you've got your kit and you're squared away and you're ready to rock 'n' roll it's (pause) *again* you leave all your personal, you put that uniform on and "I'm invincible, I'm superman. That's it, I've got me uniform on (pause) *I'm a solider, I'm indestructible*".

(Josh)

Here, the uniform and kit not only act as physical barriers and protection from the dangers of war (to some degree), but seem to generate a rehearsed process that shields the mind and body from being human, and thus the prospect of being killed. Gavin further described using the barrier of uniform to compartmentalise aspects of self:

As soon as I'm in that uniform, I'm superman. I'm untouchable. And (pause) you know, then I go and I do a job and then when I'm out of that uniform I'm not at work anymore.

(Gavin)

The physical removal of the uniform and kit (also described by others – Josh, Tom, Simon), seemed to assist in the mental distancing from 'experiencing, perpetrating, and witnessing' in war (McGarry and Walklate, 2011) - almost like a shedding of the external 'machine' adopted within 'soldier mode', to once again reveal the mortal human within.

Below, Mike talks through a photograph taken in Bosnia, which captured the daily practices of war – providing an insight into experience:

So here you've got, obligatory, the ashtray. The SA80, all the ammunition magazines, notepad and pen, dog tags, MoD90 and NATO ID card. MoD90 is your military ID. And then um. My morphine injector. So if I get shot, so (pause) but I didn't take that [photo] because everyone else was doing it, I just thought it would be fun to document, because bear in mind, everything that you see in this photograph was with me or on me *at all times*

(Mike)

This image demonstrated how the daily realities of being in fields of conflict centre on the 'essential paradox of soldiering', whereby the soldier can be both executioner and victim (Holmes, 2007: 345, in McGarry and Walklate, 2011: 907). Only when arriving in theatres of war did this 'paradox of soldiering' appear to become real:

You go in there [Northern Ireland] and you think at every moment something could happen. At any time you could die. You don't show that you're scared. You just do your job because you're trained. But at the back of your mind you know a bomb can go off... a bomb went off and the bonnet of the car went flying over my head... So you're very alert and you think, "I could be shot at now", you know, "I need to engage, this is serious, we're not playing soldiers anymore".

(Simon)

The embodied experience of conflict led to what will now be shown as a further deepening of the military habitus, through the development of human capital needed to navigate and thus survive fields of war.

8.2.1. Realities of war

Participants' narratives highlighted a further paradox, concerning 'risk' within the 'war on terror'. At a macro political/state level, America and the United Kingdom have been

critiqued in relation to the ‘manufacture of the terrorist threat’ (Mythen and Walklate, 2006a, 2006b) – in terms of their skewed presentations of risk posed by acts defined as terrorism, predominantly to security in the West (Mythen, 2016¹; Beck, 2009), and thus the ‘justifications’ provided for war. Yet at a micro level, these low-level risks faced by the West translated into very real and frequent threats to life for participants employed by the state to perform combat roles in theatres of war, as well as for civilians in Afghanistan and Iraq (Iraq Body Count, 2018; McGarry, 2012a). When discussing the realities of serving in the ‘war on terror’, participants overwhelmingly narrated their arrival and departure from theatre in terms of near misses, stressing the risks and threats to life faced daily:

Kelli: The first day we flew in is when the six royal military police got killed in a village just down the road from us. The village turned on them. That was the day we flew in.

Harry: The Royal regiment of Wales came in to replace us. And they were famously on fire on top of a warrior ... we were looking at it going “whoa oh. That could have been us”.

Mike: Incidentally this camp we were at, uh was the camp that received a nice handful of scud missiles the day after we left. Which a couple of our friends were killed in that.

¹ Mythen (2016: 54) cites David Anderson (2012) – UK Independence Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, claiming **an average of 5 people in Britain die per year** from terrorist related incidents. This is contrasted with the numbers of accidental deaths in Britain, where statistically, death is more likely to occur from riding a bicycle, taking a bath, and/or being stung by a hornet, wasp or bee.

Striking in these discussions of 'real soldiering', was how quickly the military habitus adjusted to become attuned to the dangers of the (battle)field, through a practical knowledge of 'the game' generated through lived experience:

Josh: In the middle of what we've classed as a barracks we're playing volleyball and there's mortar fire coming in and landing hundred metres away and you just crack on. It just becomes part of your everyday life that you hear gun shots. And you know, gun shots are flying past you and (pause) after a couple of weeks, it just becomes *normal* you know?

Kelli: After about a month you were fine. You sort of relaxed once you got your first shot, someone shot at you first you think, "oh oh what's going on?". Then you realise. And so I hear the, you know, cracking thump. You don't flinch, you're like "pfff. Unless I hear it land side I'm not bothered".

Repeated frequently within the data, was the development of embodied human capital, such as the ability of participants to know from how far away shots were coming, purely by the sounds they generated. As Kelli describes, this active learning enabled soldiers to gain a sense of practical mastery within the field, generating strategy to navigate and ultimately survive the battlefield. The constant risks of war were thus managed by only using resources - bodily capital and weaponry - when responding or reacting to 'direct contact' (Gavin, Josh, Kelli, Tom), such as rounds landing within a close distance of the body. Simon discussed having to manage bodily capital as a team leader when in Northern Ireland, making further reference to the normalisation of field conditions where the habitus adjusts to a constant state of adrenalin and risk:

The most difficult thing, I would say, is to keep everybody switched on until the end of the tour. Because people tend to switch off ... you have to kind of say, "look, at any time" - you know you've gone in real conflict and you're being shot at every day.

(Simon)

As with being shot at for the first time, witnessing and dealing with death was also narrated as being a somewhat necessary experience, and thus a form of human capital needed for the habitus to be able to 'settle' in the field of war (Gavin). Below, Kelli and Gavin describe how despite the wealth of training, they were unprepared for the realities of the violence of war:

Kelli: They were driving in an unmarked vehicle, civilian. Er, four of them. And a pick-up truck pulled up alongside them, two guys in the back were under blankets. Um, blankets off, machine guns. Just peppered. Peppered it completely and killed two or three of them. And that was, was surreal seeing that. Cos you got there going, "what's that red stuff on the screen?". And then the penny dropped. "Ahh, it's blood".

Gavin: First one I saw was my fucking mate. Fucking rough ... there was four of 'em I think, driven over a roadside bomb. I watched it, I was fucking there [sighs] worst bit? I had to fucking clean my mate off a car seat.

Although Oliver was a chef, he described several incidents when he mobilised the human capital to kill, coming very close to using his weapon on a number of occasions. Below, he recounts the first moment he realised that he was capable of taking life:

It was actually a dirty great big hare jumped out and I just cocked and loaded. I had a bullet in the chamber. And if that had been a person, would I have said, "stop RAF, I'm loaded, hands up"? The proper procedure? I doubt it, I'd have

just shot. I could have quite easily killed someone... it could have been a little kid messing about, and I think I'd have shot them. Your nerves are right on edge. Would I have shot anything that moves? Yes. And that's a scary thought.

(Oliver)

In line with McGarry and Walklate's (2011: 909) discussion on 'perpetrating in Iraq', the decision to kill 'is a far-from-simple process, especially given a soldier's reliance on the rules of engagement', designed to ensure actions and killing are 'legitimate' and not 'murder'. Participants did not fight for political ends or, with the exception of Simon (Royal Guardsman), for 'Queen and Country' (see Rasmussen, 2006: 161) – instead narrating their actions solely through frameworks of survival:

Soldiers will still fight for the same reasons they've probably fought for in World War I. Which ultimately comes down to fighting for the guy next to you. Because if you don't you're going to fucking die. And you just want to get home alive. All the fucking fancy ideas that come on top of that, that's a nicety that you can't afford when you're in the trenches. Or in the shit wherever you are. And that will never change. Soldiers will always just fight for each other to try and survive.

(Tom)

Aside from the dense bonding social capital and camaraderie, deepened through the shared experiences of war, the body was narrated as the ultimate tool of survival.

Participants' narratives captured how their bodily capital had to be carefully 'managed' - making '*use of one's body without using it up*' (Wacquant, 2004: 130, original emphasis). One of the first battles of survival within Afghanistan and Iraq stemmed from the immense physical tolls of war on the body:

Gavin: [shows picture taken in Afghanistan] Look at me there! Skin and bone I was. We all were like. Took about 6 months being home to get back to normal

Mike: [shows picture from Iraq] I'd probably just come off stag ... I do know and remember exactly how I felt at the time that was taken. And I know I was absolutely on my arse. I was completely strapped.

Josh: I remember being exhausted. Like nothing else I've ever experienced ... I mean for the first few weeks things were totally different. We were clearing villages, clearing houses, clearing resistance, no down time at all.

Although not unique to 21st century warfare, Josh's quote shows how bodily capital had to survive extreme exhaustion, whilst also being lobbied as an efficient and effective tool of violence. Aside from the demands of soldiering on the body – little sleep, limited food and water, and the physical toll of sustained periods of adrenalin, participants overwhelmingly framed their narratives of war in relation to the physical landscapes of war.

8.2.1.1. Landscapes of war

All participants discussing theatres of war, spent considerable time talking about and/or showing photographs of the physical environment where they had been based, locating combat experiences in time, place, and space. After conducting a review of the literature surrounding landscapes of war, Pearson (2011: 125) concludes that 'it is no longer possible to treat war and environment as separate realms'. As such, researchers should 'treat militarized landscapes of all shapes and sizes as "contact zones" between

various actors' (ibid. p. 126). This is synonymous with Bourdieu's (1958, 1962, 1977, 1979) discussions around the notion of 'field', developed during his military experience and ethnographic research in Algeria. For Bourdieu, field is therefore inherently bound to conflict, with the (physical) battlefield being a site of physical contest and struggle between agents, amid a collision of cultures and the environment, in the ultimate fight for power and domination.

All participants who had been posted to Afghanistan and Iraq (Gavin, Harry, Josh, Kelli, Liam, Mike, Tom) framed their narratives in relation to the physical landscape and field conditions, stressing how the first challenge was overcoming and surviving the environment:

Harry: I just remember it being stiflingly hot. And just getting used to it. People were having nose bleeds because it was so hot.

Kelli: Fuck it's hot. But everything just took you by your throat. Literally, the moisture in your body just went completely ... we went straight from off the plane to unloading everybody's kit and equipment ... a couple of lads went down with heat exhaustion ... two days later I shaved my hair off... Everything in the desert is nails. It's there for a reason. Cos it survived in the horrible environment. Harsh environment. So your camel spiders, your snakes

Tom: First words that pop into my head are *hot, dusty, shit hole*. Hot and dusty. Like, horrendously hot. We were out in the desert, there was just fucking sand everywhere. Sandstorms would come in, you couldn't see your hand in front of your face

In the extract below, Mike talks about the initial invasion of Iraq, explaining how a key aspect of his role as a signaller involved working directly with the landscape to find physical 'field positions' to occupy (Bourdieu, 1990), in order to allow others to navigate the (battle)field and survive:

Iraq was a different animal. We crossed the border and it was like entering a different world. Literally. ... So we're crossing the border with the Americans, providing forward comms back to advancing British troops. So we, kind of, picked areas of land where we sort of, fitted into. I distinctly remember getting shot at as we were crossing the border.

(Mike)

Tom was also part of the initial invasion of Iraq, explaining in immense detail his experience of delivering 'front line artillery support' – firepower – and the process of navigating the field. In the extract below², Tom's individual, micro level experience collides and maps onto the macro political landscape of war – narrated through the physical landscape of the Kuwait/Iraq border:

HW: and when you said "cluster fuck" in terms of Iraq?

Tom: well (pause) I mean on different levels. I imagine there's cluster fucks at a higher level, which I wasn't aware of at the time. But for me *personally*, it was a cluster fuck. Obviously once the order had come through. We'd been waiting for about three weeks, in Kuwait. In the fucking dusty shit hole of a desert. For you know, the politicians to make up their minds. And they said, "right we're going in". And we breached the berm. 'Cos there was like this massive sand berm that goes all the way around Iraq

² The extended, complete version of Tom's narrative surrounding the invasion of Iraq has been provided in Appendix O, as it provides a detailed, vivid insight into the realities of his war experience. Unfortunately, it is too long to include in its entirety here.

... all the, front line fighting soldiers pushed through (pause) erm you know that, that night it was just like. Fucking fireworks you know what I mean. You could hear everything in the background going off, it was brilliant.

Tom then talked at length about how his sergeant, despite advising everyone to check their convoy lights, had not checked his own – and it was not working. Again, this vivid insight into the realities of warfare was framed through the physical landscape:

... the infantry have swept through. And killed everything that fucking moves. Blown everything up. And there's just c- fucking shit and carnage everywhere. ... creeping forward and that. And of course, people are getting bogged in cos its sand and all sorts. And *finally* we get onto the roads. And we sort of speed up a bit [*taps on desk to indicate positions*] the guy in front, No convoy light. I've *half* the regiment behind me. Following *me*. ... And this is in the middle of a sand storm at the same time. So:: there's a *war* going on. Right. There's a *sand storm* going on. I'm moving through somebody's else's fucking country that we've just invaded. And I don't know where the front of my convoy is. Right! And I'm only like, what was I at the time? 22? (long pause) 21. Yeah 21 ... so much for my. For the glorious invasion of another man's country. I didn't even know if I was *in* his country...

(Tom)

The 'unknown' aspect of war discussed by Tom was also prominent within participants' experiences of Afghanistan and Iraq at a much wider level. The macro level differences in the nature of 21st century warfare – where the 'war on terror' was founded in unclear aims, unclear enemies, and unclear visions of victory – resulted in a qualitative difference at the individual, micro level of participants' experiences of conflict:

Kelli: They [the military] didn't know what we were training for. No one knew what we were doing. We didn't know what environments... they still thought they had weapons of mass destruction. So we were still doing, you know, nuclear chemical warfare training ... You had to forget everything you'd done in Northern Ireland and Bosnia ... In the end they were coming out half way through our tour to see what we did and how, so they could relay back and train the next battle group who was deploying to relieve us.

Gavin: [laughing] we got told that Taliban tied their turbans on the left, and civvies on the right, or:: erm, might have been the other way round? Oh, I can't remember now, but yeah. That's how we identified them.

In addition to the 'unknown' nature of warfare and the 'enemy', Simon captures a further fundamental difference in 21st century landscapes of war - stemming from 'enemies of the West' actively using 'fear of the unknown' as a weapon (Lind, 2004), especially through the deliberate and unpredictable destruction of their own bodies against undefined and seemingly randomly chosen targets³:

Northern Ireland was, quite special because it's not conventional warfare. You're fighting terrorists who, they don't want to die. They don't want to get caught. So you're playing games with them. The difference is now with modern warfare, is that people blow themselves up. They're prepared to die. And what can you do? Not much. I've seen the psychology is very, very different. At any time you could die.

(Simon)

³ It must be highlighted that the use of 'terror' as a weapon, delivered through the destruction of the body is not new (Bernard, 1976). However, as Bernard (1976) writes in the 2003 preface to his work on medieval assassins in Islam, 'Unlike their modern equivalents, they attacked only the great and powerful, and never harmed ordinary people going about their avocations'.

Fighting enemies who are 'prepared to die' and who use 'indiscriminate targeting' as part of combat strategy and tactics (McInnes, 2005: 116), combined with the West's lack of clarity around aims and 'enemies' within the 'war on terror' (see Chapter 3), has led to a fundamental shift in the nature of warfare (Lind, 2004). The 'game of war', and thus the field conditions of combat, are now unpredictable and unknown at every conceivable level.

Although war has always been chaotic and unpredictable (Clausewitz, 1976 [1832]), this added layer of uncertainty within 21st century conflict – specifically within the 'war on terror' – of being grounded in an absence of clarity at the most fundamental level of definition (Holmqvist, 2012), appears to have generated further complexities to combat experience. The liquid weapon of terror, 'fear', is a forever moving and shifting 'target' (Bauman, 2006), that constantly adapts to the physical (and political) landscape. Non-conventional asymmetric tactics are used, which disregard and thus seek to undermine the official rules of engagement that state-sponsored violence must abide by to be classified as 'legitimate' (Butler, 2009: 160). Warfare is thus also 'fluid, borderless, and networked', newly 'chaotic' at the 'macro' level of understanding (Holmqvist, 2012), as well as at the micro level.

Oliver and Simon, who had left the military before the campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq, both acknowledged this difference in war, ascribing an additional value to experiences gained in the 'war on terror':

Oliver: I admire, especially the lads. What they're having to go through now with dirty warfare. I mean, back in my day, it was all about dirty bombs. Now it's just dirty tactics.

Simon: It's difficult with who's a real veteran, but I would say anyone who's fought in a recent war... Iraq. Afghanistan, you know, these sort of wars. ... These people are lawless. They, they're not regular soldiers. We're not fighting an army, we're fighting terrorists now. Um, and I think it's very, very different.

Although participants' conceptions of what constitutes a 'veteran' will be explored in more depth in Chapter 9, it is worth noting here that Simon's discussion of what makes a 'real veteran' appears to be directly connected to the specific challenges of 21st century conflict. Both Simon and Oliver can be seen here to recognise the *embodied* difference in the combat capital gained during the 'war on terror', thus assigning a unique form of *symbolic* combat capital, that is notably different from their own and seemingly 'more valuable'.

A further aspect to the difference in embodied combat capital gained within the landscapes of Afghanistan and Iraq, is the lived experience of the inherent contradictions within the 'war on terror'. Below, Tom draws attention to how the body was quickly moved between two very different and contrasting physical fields in Afghanistan, stemming from the scale of 'infrastructure that gets built up around a permanent standing army' in contemporary conflict:

One minute you're literally, in the middle of nowhere, fighting. And then the operation's over, you get extracted by a helicopter. You come back in, do what they call rehab, where you replenish all ammunition, your water. Your rations. Your erm, you put a new crypto in your radios. You get all your kit sorted, so that if you had to then grab it and go back out, you could in a second. You get all that sorted, get your head down. And then the next morning, you're down the

boardwalk. Having a fucking chai latte, eating a doughnut... it's very surreal. To go. Those extremes, you know? Sat there with a doughnut and a coffee. Sunning yourself (pause) and blowing people up and shooting people you know?

(Tom)

What Tom describes here can be conceptualised through Bourdieu's (1977, 1990) notion of 'hysteresis' – a mismatch between habitus, capital and field. The habitus and embodied capital aligned to fields of war, faced an extreme and rapid clash between field conditions – the realities of war colliding with Western capitalist cultures of consumption and materialism⁴. Not only did the physical field of shops and cafes appear 'out of place' in the deserts of Afghanistan, but Tom (and others) struggled to 'fit' in a cultural field that seemed noticeably 'wrong' amid the conditions of war.

Josh also described experiencing contradictory field conditions within the landscape of the battlefield in Iraq:

The conditions [in Iraq], you wouldn't wish them on your worst enemies, the conditions that people live in and stuff it's horrible. ... I mean one minute you could be in a palace, you know we stopped in, our company headquarters was in one of Saddam's old palaces which was, *wow*, I mean you've never seen architecture like it. Some of the most beautiful buildings I've ever seen, and then you can drive a mile down' road and then (pause) they're like I said there's human waste in the street and children running round with no shoes on and no, no mums and dads and stuff and running round the streets and you know. It's a totally different world (pause) and that's all they know isn't it, war and violence and suffering unfortunately.

⁴ Tom, and Gavin explained that the boardwalk had a number of shops and cafes. Liam also discussed the 'obscenity' of a mobile McDonalds in Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo

As Schofield (2005: 44) argues, the landscape is ‘the scale at which the impact of conflict can be best appreciated, whether upon the form of physical landscape, or on the psychology of its inhabitants’. A strong theme within the data concerned children puncturing the landscape of war, disrupting the narrative learned and embodied during training and within military cultural capital (see Chapter 7) – leading to an apparent wrestling of morals within the habitus. Josh was unable to construct the parentless children with no shoes as being ‘deserving’ of the conditions of war, in the same way that he (and others) did in relation to adults in Iraq and Afghanistan – whether civilian or military.

8.2.1.2. Faces of war

Although few descriptions of people in war were presented within narratives of combat experience, with a complete absence of women (combatant or civilian), children and the friends and colleagues lost in war were consistently mentioned. This section will firstly consider how the presence of children in battlefields appeared to disrupt the narrative of war constructed by the military – used by the habitus to generate ‘strategy’ to navigate military life. Secondly, it will explore how the loss of friends in war, and the witnessing of death via tactics that disregard the ‘professional’ methods of delivering ‘legitimate’ lethal violence (as defined by Western states, see Butler, 2009; Malešević, 2010), further strengthened the intolerance of those ‘outside’, along with the ‘narrative of war’ – in which taking the lives of ‘enemies’ in the ‘war on terror’ is framed as ‘justified’ and ‘necessary’.

Jones' (2016, 2018) work on the experiences of British soldiers in the 'war on terror' argues that the Western construction of childhood – of innocence and as beings to be protected – can lead to 'moral injury' when faced with children in combat situations. This is especially prevalent concerning 'child soldiers' and children possessing weapons, who may have to be killed. Although no participants claimed to have personally encountered armed children, Gavin discussed his friend's experience:

I had a mate where er, a fucking kid came out, said he looked no older than 10 or 11. Came running out of a house in Afghan, with an AK47 like. Just on patrol you know what I mean? And, and had to make that call. And this is it, you have to, you just never know what's gonna happen out there. No idea what I'd have done to be honest, luckily I didn't have to. Plenty of kids out there mind, but yeah fucking hell nothing like that thank fuck.

(Gavin)

Mike also discussed how children and adult civilians had shaped his experiences of conflict, explaining that for the civilians within the urban landscape of Iraq, war is a daily part of their life:

Out of nowhere, all of a sudden, you'd be surrounded by kids all wanting the sweets out of your ration packs ... I also remember whole families coming running at me with, uh waving anything white. That was a bit upsetting to be fair.

(Mike)

Mirroring the quote from Josh above, Mike provides an insight here into the experiences of those on the opposite side of conflict, where Afghan and Iraqi children are so familiar with the field conditions of war, that they know the contents of British

soldiers' ration packs. What was striking in the data, is that the puncturing of war by children, generated situations that the habitus – the embodied framework structuring action within military fields - had not been trained for, especially where participants were as young as 18 when first posted to theatres of war (Gavin, Josh, Liam).

As shown in Chapter 7, the cultural capital developed and embodied during military training is formed in direct opposition to the non-military 'outside' – mobilised through discourses of 'threat' (Gee, 2017). Within the military doxa, recruits' habitus becomes aligned with what Butler (2009) terms 'frames of war', in which the lives of those defined, or with the potential to be defined, as 'enemies' and/or 'targets' are devalued and dehumanised. As Butler (2009: 1) explains,

...specific lives cannot be apprehended as injured or lost if they are not first apprehended as living. If certain lives do not qualify as lives or are, from the start, not conceivable as lives within certain epistemological frames, then these lives are never lived nor lost in the full sense.

Several participants explained that 'Iraqis love shooting in the air for no reason, and the rounds come down on a lot of innocents' (Kelli). When explaining the reality of this field condition in terms of practice, Kelli's narrative captured the essence of Butler's (2009) argument, in which the construction of certain life to be less valuable produces lives that are less worthy, if not *unworthy*, of being 'grievable' (p. 163):

Wasn't nice seeing civilians at all but you, like I say, you're detached. Because it's not your environment. You shouldn't be that way cos they're human beings, but you still. Fuck them, not interested, you know. Sounds really harsh but you're like, don't care. ... I mean, it affects you when it's one of your own.

Whereas we'd shot a few Iraqis here and there, and we didn't give two shits basically. Give a bit of first aid but nothing major. Not like a lot. Crap happens. It was wrong place wrong time. And that's the attitude you had to have.

(Kelli)

Josh also spoke to the notion that the lives taken in Afghanistan were not 'grievable':

That's what makes places like that very hard to go to cos (pause) they've nothing to lose. Whereas nine out of ten times our soldiers will have families and a lot to lose and (pause) they may not feel it themselves (long pause) but the families would feel it, whereas the people you're firing at don't.

(Josh)

However, in direct contradiction to this narrative (above), Josh had explained earlier on in the interview how the reason he had been able to live the life of a soldier, was precisely because he had nothing to lose:

Before I had [his son] (pause) I didn't really care about anything so it didn't really matter about whether I went out and got shot, or summet happened to me.

(Josh)

This somewhat painful irony exposes the reality of warfare, whereby those fighting on either side of the 'war on terror' (and within war historically), may not actually be that different from one another – aside from their justifications of violence. For example, Chapter 6 demonstrated that a key driver for participants joining the military was the lack of employment opportunities in 'civvy street'. Barnett (2007: 67), writing about the young males fighting on the 'opposite' side of the 'war on terror', similarly claims:

'High unemployment is fuelling conflict. As a fruit trader in Kandahar put it to me, "Those Afghans who are fighting, it is all because of unemployment"'. As Bourke (2000: 236-7) concludes:

Dehumanisation worked quite well in basic training: not so well in battle. ... It was impossible to maintain the fiction that the enemy was any different from oneself for very long. (in Malešević, 2010: 225)

Despite this, Tom's narrative below demonstrates how lived experiences that support the 'frames of war' (Butler, 2009), can translate into, and thus make possible, the construction of 'deserving' death – present within the majority of participants' narratives (Gavin, Harry, Josh, Kelli, Mike, Oliver, Simon):

I never for a second thought we were- they were doing the right thing. I mean, yeah. To an extent. When you're protecting a shitty little Afghan village. Because you don't want the Taliban to come down, and basically rape them and murder them. That's a good thing. And the less of these Taliban, or IS, or:: whoever it is. You know, these beardy weirdies. That want to do bad shit. Well the less of them in the world, the better we all are.

(Tom)

This quote from Tom highlights what Butler (2009: 160) raises as a fundamental aspect of contemporary warfare in 'the West':

Paradoxically, what holds the subject together for Asad [1992] is the capacity to shift suddenly from one principle (reverence for life) to another (legitimate destruction of life) without ever taking stock of the reasons for such a shift.

Within the data, it appeared that participants were conscious of the dichotomies within their own narratives and experience, yet were also acutely aware that unpacking them could potentially lead to harm:

You kind of go. You do your job. And you come away and you don't think about it, I think if you do think about it (pause) I think that's where, you know. *Some* people, erm, end up with like PTSD and stuff like that, I think, you know as far as I'm concerned, I was at work ... you're kind of two different people... it's not really something you think about, but (pause) it's summet that's really hard to talk about (pause) unless you're talking to another squaddie about it.

(Josh)

The second theme present within narratives that captured the 'faces of war' emerged in relation to the intense trust and shared experience of 'witnessing' (McGarry and Walklate, 2011: 909) – leading to unique embodied forms of combat capital. Within the field of battle, it appeared that the realities of losing friends and colleagues in landscapes of war generated deeper levels of dense, 'bonding' forms of social capital (Ward, 2017):

Here's a photo of the three guys, from that tour that didn't come back, all stood together. They call it the "death photo". All three got killed... the death of Hodge, who er, got blown up you know, and that's like a weird thing as well, 'cos he was. He was a bit of a twat you know. If he'd have lived (pause) maybe none of us would have liked him. Or, we'd have fallen out or whatever. But, he didn't live. He was there doing the job, that we were doing. And he got blown up doing it. And, that kind of bound us all together.

(Tom)

In the process of tightening the trust and bonds to those within the ‘inside’, the loss of friends and team members, often through ‘unconventional’ tactics, led to a further strengthening of the ‘walls to the outside’ (see 7.2.) – increasing cultural capital surrounding intolerance and (already trained) aggression towards ‘the enemy’:

When Jimmy got blown up, he er, stepped on an IED. Pink mist we call it. He just, er he wasn’t there anymore. I wish I could forget it. I’ve tried and tried. But, it’s like it happened yesterday. So fucking clear. One minute he was there (pause) and then nothing. Er, messed me up for a long while that. Er. So yeah I mean [sighs] we were all so fucking angry after that, like you wouldn’t believe. Still feel it I think, er but probably did stuff we shouldn’t have like but that’s the way it is out there.

(Gavin)

‘Pink mist’ became the title of Owen Sheers’ (2013)⁵ critically acclaimed verse-drama, based on over 300 interviews conducted with veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq. As Jones (2017: 1) explains, ‘pink mist’ is the ‘military term used to describe the spray of blood after a body has been hit by an improvised explosive device (IED) or sniper fire, conjuring an evocative image of a body shattering upon impact’. Capturing very neatly what were mostly long and detailed narratives offered by participants, all arriving at a similar claim that loss strengthens the resolve for war, Sheers (2013: 44) writes:

It’s more about keeping your mates alive.
Or avenging the ones who’ve already died.
Cos that’s what fuels war, though no one will say it.

⁵ *Pink Mist* first staged at Bristol Old Vic in 2015 (Sheers, 2016) and toured the UK in 2017. I was lucky enough to see *Pink Mist* in at the Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds (April, 2017). The stories presented on stage could easily have been several of the participants in this research talking. For a review of the play, see Jones (2017) –full script published as a book, see Sheers (2013)

Love, and grief, its rougher underside.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter (8.2.1.), although the threat posed by terrorism for those in Western countries is arguably 'manufactured' at a macro level (Mythen, 2016), for participants on the ground, it was very real. For those who discussed losing friends and team members in the 'war on terror', the narrative surrounding the 'frames of war' (Butler, 2009) became somewhat legitimised through lived experience. As Taylor et al. (2013: xx) explain, when discussing the construction of 'deviant others':

Crime was that which was labelled: killing, to murder someone, could be seen as an act of heroism or deed of wanton violence; terrorism could be freedom fighting ... Such interventions, applied with authority and backfired by force, could, however stereotypical in their nature, be real and self-fulfilling in their effect.

However, within the narratives of participants - collected in 'post-conflict' life - new information from the 'outside' *had* been able to permeate the habitus amid 'civilian' fields, causing an apparent disruption in the ability to still apply these 'frames of war' when reflecting on combat. The following section will consider this disruption in relation to the 'blurring' that has come to characterise 21st century conflict (Kaldor, 2005, Degenhardt, 2010, 2013; see also section 3.4. of thesis), through a rare insight into the individual level of lived experience.

8.2.2. Feeling the blur: fighting vs 'peacekeeping' in the war on terror

Although the majority of narratives elicited in interviews were notably separated into the periods of life used to structure the data chapters within this thesis⁶, in narratives surrounding the fundamental lack of clarity in the 'war on terror' (Kaldor, 2005), participants' worlds 'during' and 'after' service collided, through the lens of the political context at the time of interview. The following extracts highlight this collision most strikingly, whereby references are made to the Iraq Historical Allegations Team (IHAT) investigations (see Duffy, 2016; Gov.uk 2018a; Shackle, 2018), which were a prominent feature in the media, particularly in the politically right-leaning press⁷, during fieldwork.

Kelli made the connection to the IHAT investigations, when explaining how a team member had 'gone crackers' towards the end of the tour in Iraq, and had been sent home following a camel spider bite which had left a 'massive big hole in his face':

I was like, "what's he told about people?". I was more concerned about us, I expect one day a knock at the door saying, "right"- I mean, I've had the historical IHATs knock on, sent me in for questionnaires, "did you see things? Have you done things? Has, this?". And the answer is, yeah, we did see and do things, but we didn't know. We did break the Geneva Convention, we did things which weren't right. But they weren't necessarily evil. We didn't do things maliciously, we did things because the jails were full ... we put people in stress positions and it's things like that that we didn't know hadn't been allowed since the Second World War or Korea, but we did them because we didn't know any better. So you got a superior, so the accountability goes with them. Doesn't make it right

⁶ Life before, life becoming (initial training), life during, and life after

⁷ For example, The Daily Telegraph (Mendrick and Sawyer, 2016; Mendick, 2017), The Sun, (Willets, 2016, 2017)

but at the same time if you break them down they'll tell you what you want to hear. I mean, it is kind of borderline torture but not, in a vindictive, long term health wise way. ... you had no choice other than do certain things at certain stages. And after, looking back now, going "why did we do that? Why didn't we question the orders? Why didn't we question this?" We should have questioned certain things, but:: I don't question things now you know ... in our IHAT they were looking for things that did happen, and everyone knew they happened, but why are you chasing something that's been happening since the dawn of time?

(Kelli)

Simon, who was living in Brussels at the time of interview, also expressed a similar position in regard to the IHAT investigations, connecting the British 'Brexit' referendum vote to leave the European Union (June, 2016), to a potential benefit for serving and ex-military personnel⁸:

We get deployed, we defend ... The problem is now, people have returned and I don't know how, um, I think the Brexit, I was very disappointed at the Brexit. But at the same time Theresa May, a couple of days ago, announced that she would change, that she'd pull out of the ah, European Law to protect troops who fought. [sighs] Well, I'm pleased about that. I think it's a great thing. Of course you can't go around killing and torturing people when you go to war. There are rules of engagement. But at the same time, the soldiers going to fight need to feel protected when they come back.

(Simon)

Both Kelli and Josh went on to explain that doing 'things which weren't right' in war (Kelli) – referring to the breaching of the Geneva Convention and rules of engagement – aside from taking direct orders to do so, were bound to the unknown roles and aims

⁸ See for example, Dominiczak and Mendick, 2016; Gearty, 2016

amid the blurred nature of the 'war on terror'. Below, Josh discusses the lived experience of the shift from war to peacekeeping in Afghanistan:

Josh: You have an idea you're going to go again, but when you went again it's totally changed. I mean the first time you've gone you're at war. And the second time, you're kind of peacekeeping

HW: And what was that like, going from the first time to second?

Josh: First time was better (pause) because you knew what you was doing (long pause) you knew you were fighting. You knew. Second time was very very edgy. You'd think before you used your weapon. Not that you didn't think before but you had to think of *all* the potential consequences ... "Is it my life or his?", and in fairness on hesitations like that we lost men, because of it.

Here, Josh appears to provide an insight into how the changing role of the campaign in Afghanistan directly impacted on the performance of soldiering practices demanded in war, with an inability to apply the same narrative of war – 'removing the enemy swiftly' (Gavin), despite being in the same physical landscape of war, amid the same threats. This change in the narrative of war thus disrupted the habitus' framework for navigating the field of battle (or 'peacekeeping'), and subsequently the field conditions which became even more uncertain and unclear.

The blurring of war and peacekeeping was also discussed at length by Tom, whereby the changing aims of the campaign in Afghanistan, in his experience, appeared to exist only at the level of state and media definition:

HW: when you went to Afghan, was it already in peacekeeping then?

Tom: oh no, it wasn't peacekeeping! They might, I don't know what they said about it on the news. How they portrayed it. It wasn't supposed to be war fighting, you know it was supposed to be [makes air quotes] "stabilisation force" or something. I certainly wasn't peacekeeping. It was fucking war fighting. It was a 360 degree fight ... we were embedded within the infantry as their artillery support. We'd get in a bunch of helicopters in Kandahar. Fly however far. Get dropped off in the middle of nowhere, there was no extra support coming, we were *it*. On foot. On the ground. In the middle of enemy held territory. And we would take the fight to them, and smash them all to pieces. You know, in 2009 that was still going on. It was still an out and out fight. And you know, we killed them with artillery fire. And the snipers took a lot of them as well. So:: it was a good old fight. Don't know how they portrayed it on TV but it certainly wasn't fucking peacekeeping. It was us out there, trying to kill as many of them as possible.

In contrast to Josh – whose habitus seemed to have somewhat absorbed the shift in aims, thereby attempting to adjust his practice – Tom did not appear to decrease the readiness for delivering violence during 'peacekeeping'. Instead, as the field conditions still resembled those of war, he actively drew upon other forms of human capital to generate strategy within the field of battle – such as infantry techniques:

2012 was different. We'd still have a good fight 'cos you know, when it comes down to it, they're shooting at you, you shoot back at them. But the second tour wasn't as good. Because our job is artillery, and we weren't allowed to do that. So I actually just found myself, just, *engaging* with my rifle and fighting as if I was an infantry soldier a lot of the time.

(Tom)

For Kelli, doing 'things that weren't right' were heavily connected to the shift from war to peacekeeping in Iraq, which resulted in a blurring of roles between fighting – as he had been trained to do, and 'policing' – which he had not:

The war had just happened. We just come in at tail end of the war. It was just finishing. So everything was up in the air. The lads who'd been in the war just basically upped sticks, back home. Left us with a city to police. And it was just random crap happening. So you were policing a city and you know, a bunch of- I was 18, 19 years old at the time. Yeah 18, 19 it was a bit crazy really ... It was unlike any war we'd ever fought before. It was unlike any peacekeeping mission we'd ever fought before, because it was transnational. ... We basically did what we wanted. We were accountable to nobody for what we did. ... Like police the city, break up domestics, dealing with giving the engineers protection and patrolling the oil lines ... but there was no training whatsoever.

(Kelli)

This micro level experience illuminates what Loader and Percy (2012: 217) discuss as the erosion of 'outside/inside' distinctions between war and crime – terrorism being their main example – along with a collapsing of boundaries between military and policing roles (see Chapter 3).

Mike captured a further layer to the blurred boundaries of 21st century conflict and the collapsing of the 'inside/outside' paradigm (Loader and Percy, 2012). In the quote below, the political landscape of the 'home world' – referring to the military occupying roles in the domestic sphere amid the firefighter strikes in Britain, 2002-2003 (see Rayment, 2002) – further collides with Mike's individual experience in the physical landscape, amid a sandstorm in Iraq:

...finally got them back onto the network, ran outside, sandstorm is still in full swing, and my mast is still up. 12 metres with what we call a pineapple on top of it... So in a sandstorm, that thing was going to snap and it was going to fly round probably killing people. It had to come down. Unfortunately for me, the firemen strike back in the UK (HW: right) sounds a bit random, but because of the firemen strike, we had to leave the 26,000 troops from 19 Brigade in Catterick behind to cover the fireman strike. So we were massively on demand. I was a one-man radio detachment. A PU12 mast, look it up in the manual, it's a two man job in normal weather to put up or bring down ... I got the mast halfway down, at which point one of the guide ropes snapped. And the whole thing just, sort of, pin wheeled onto me. So I saw it coming. And it was quite weird, it was like slow motion. I saw it coming and I thought, "shit". So I jumped on the floor and crawled into a ball. And because of the way it happened, because these two ropes were holding it in and because of the wind and everything else, it was literally hammering me into the ground. It was horrendous.

(Mike)

Due to the mast repeatedly hitting Mike on the back of his head, shoulders and neck, he spent over a week on his back unable to move. However, as he explained 'we'd just invaded the country, so I couldn't really go sick', Mike still operated his radios amid active combat. These injuries were later connected to Mike's medical discharge from the army, as will be discussed in section 8.5.. Although space within this thesis does not unfortunately allow for consideration here, in future work and publications I aim to revisit the data in line with McGarry and Walklate's (2011) approach of applying a victimological lens to the soldier – considering the experiences of participants in terms of state harm through the state's (MoD) failures as an employer (see McGarry, 2012a).

This section on 'feeling the blur' has provided an insight into how the macro level blurring of the boundaries, aims, and practices of 21st century war, directly shaped the lived experience and thus embodied combat capital, gained at a micro, individual level. The following section will consider the practices employed for dealing with war and conflict, encouraged through military cultural capital and doxa.

8.2.3. 'Squaddie banter': Humour and alcohol as cultural coping mechanisms

In line with literature surrounding military masculinities (Duncanson, 2013; Higate, 2003), participants described an overarching military culture in which help-seeking behaviour was strongly discouraged and constructed as 'negative', through notions of 'weakness' which posed a 'threat' to military practices, especially in theatres of war. However, echoing the findings of Green et al. (2010) and Caddick et al. (2015), participants' narratives do contain examples of some contexts, and some people, in which mental-wellbeing was able to be discussed, whilst maintaining the presentation of a militarised gendered identity within a 'masculine habitus' (Brown, 2006). Participants' narratives highlighted the role of camaraderie and closeness played in dealing with 'mental distress' within military life, with many parallels to Green et al.'s (2010) work regarding 'post-military' life.

All participants discussed and made reference to 'squaddie banter' – which I have come to define as, *a learned and embodied resource of cultural capital, hinging on the use of humour as a coping mechanism via distraction and/or story-telling* (see also Caddick et al., 2015: 103). During military life, especially within theatres of war, participants' narratives demonstrate how squaddie banter deepened the dense 'bonding' social capital, through a form of communication apparently unique to, yet widely shared by,

serving and ex-military personnel – allowing for the ‘working through’ of difficulty (Gavin). When talking about how he ‘dealt with’ and ‘deals with’ war experiences, Josh explains:

It’s summet that’s really hard to talk about, unless you’re talking to another squaddie about it. You have what’s known as ‘squaddie banter’ and other people wouldn’t understand it. They might think it’s rude or horrible, you know? But it’s just the way it is. I think some things you either laugh or cry about ‘em. Squaddie banter is a good way of dealing with things. But like I say it’s something I don’t like to think about or revisit.

(Josh)

Harry, Oliver, Simon and Kelli similarly expressed how squaddie banter founded on a ‘dark’ sense of humour was a coping mechanism, operating as a catalyst to the process of moving between ‘squaddie mode’ – aligned to fields of war (see 7.3.) – and ‘squaddie’, by causing a temporary ‘break’ in field conditions causing mental difficulty and/or the potential for distress:

Harry: That is the attitude you’ve got to have. So you’ve got to switch on, but then you can switch off, just mess about. And that’s what people do.

Oliver: You brush things aside. Make a joke of things. Because that’s what the forces do. They make jokes of [sighs] traumatic situations. It’s all a laugh. And I still do it now.

Simon: In the army there’s always someone to cheer you up and the fantastic sense of humour. Often a sick sense of humour, especially when the hard moments are there ... When I’ve got a hard moment, I still just flick to that sense of humour. People think you’re completely mad, but it’s the

way I am you know. And it's important that you do that because it's the only way your brain is going to disconnect.

Kelli: It's the black sense of humour. It's what every military man who's done, you know, combat experience, you get it. Because that's just the way you are. Um, that way inclined. Because you have to have it, a laugh and a joke, to get into that coping mechanism, to get you through it.

Here, Kelli draws attention to how squaddie banter is primarily something attached to the unique conditions of the battlefield, as an embodied and shared tool within the military habitus, designed to navigate fields of war – so deeply embedded that it still structured practice for participants at the time of interview.

Although there were many examples provided of squaddie banter in action, an extract has been chosen from Mike's interview. It was chosen as it contains a direct connection to the performance of military masculinities (Green et al., 2010; Caddick et al., 2015), drawn upon to distract from and disrupt the realities of the situation. Mike described in detail a 'job' in Bosnia that involved 'fishing' dead bodies out of dam, from a considerable height⁹. This discussion was prompted by the photos Mike had brought to the interview, in which he had captured the events on his camera:

We found a total of four dead bodies... The first one, we called Bob because he was bobbing up and down in the water. The second one we called Duncan, as in dunking a donut ... This was the fourth one ... we called Rocky, because he was cut on the rocks so that's the photo there ... we had to get the bodies from the water level up about 50 foot to the footpath ... We had this humongous rope

⁹ Extended narrative has been provided in Appendix P, as it gives a vivid and detailed insight into the daily practices, 'masculinities', and experiences of Mike's service in Bosnia

with a big, massive, dirty, great big hook on it and the only thing we could do was to throw it down, try and, sort of, hook it on somewhere ... The first one must have hooked him on the wrong side. The other side of his face and he literally tore his face off. Half off, anyway, and everyone just looked at each other and laughed. Burst out laughing. ... If I look back now, I just think that was a coping mechanism ... it was, kind of like, a sick attitude was the in thing, the manly thing, not the not showing weakness kind of way.

Squaddie banter was also discussed by David, who was the only participant not to have been posted to an active field of combat. David explained that within prison, squaddie banter was a valuable coping resource, which 'helped keep me alive'. However, David was aware that his 'banter' was not able to operate on the same level as those who had been at war, although basic training did provide a platform of shared experience of 'all being in the shit':

When you're ex-army or ex-forces ... there's always that, when you all get together you start having that banter and it's just, like, some people don't get it, it's, like, an army thing ... But you can all share the, err, the seven months intense basic training ... you can always have that banter cos you know what you've been through. But er, yeah I mean kind of wished I could have it about war like, you know what I mean? They all used to get on one having a laugh about the crap and I didn't have that. Er:: still enjoyed it like. There's that respect that comes with it that I like.

(David)

Squaddie banter appears to be an aspect of (military) cultural capital, which David held. However, squaddie banter surrounding the battlefield, embodied through experience and also holding symbolic value – in that it is a recognised marker of war experience, and therefore of combat capital – served to exclude David, leaving him (and

his service) feeling 'less worthy'. In this way, combat capital holds the capacity to (re)produce exclusionary practices, exerting symbolic power (and symbolic violence) over certain groups (Bourdieu, 1989).

Squaddie banter was also narrated as being deeply connected to a culture of alcohol use (see Fear et al., 2007; Iverson et al., 2005), and arguably *abuse* – again appearing to be another tool used as a cultural coping mechanism via distraction, and/or the removal of the ability to think:

Mike: Ah, squaddies' playtime [shows photo] You only have to look at the eyes ... I mean, how inappropriate it that? A can of beer, a very geeky looking individual, and then an assault rifle in the other hand. That's not good, but this is essentially how it is ... That six-month tour was so messy, it ended three marriages, created two new ones, four children have been born, and this is only 13 people that went ... a messy messy tour

Oliver: Everything happened in the NAFFI ... Cheap, promotional beer... and then you have the typical forces interaction, "Right! Challenge! You've got to drink that. Challenge, you've got to do this, otherwise the forfeit is a pint of this". And was it encouraged by the military? Yes. It was. ... As a chef, you worked anywhere between 12 and 18 hours. Real hard graft. So when you did get chance to let your hair down, you did. And for some of us that liked to drink, you did it to excess. ... Every NAFFI has a slot machine. I've wasted thousands on slot machines. But again, it's a distraction. Once you're putting that in [money] and watching lights go round, you're not thinking about anything else. Once you're completely pissed, you can't think of anything else. Because nothing else exists.

Oliver spoke in detail about his alcohol and gambling addictions, claiming that he pinpoints his inability to form bonding social capital – friendships – during training (see Chapters 6 and 7), as a key reason for his addictions. He also explained that his role as a chef – an occupational culture which has known connections to alcohol abuse (Belhassen and Shani, 2012; Duke et al., 2013; Pidd et al., 2014; Pizam, 2012) – along with frequently moving around during service, often alone and not in a team, caused him to be deeply unhappy and further use alcohol to cope.

Several participants discussed alcohol consumption as the main process of decompression from theatres of war, often via a posting to Cyprus for a ‘drinking retreat’ (Gavin):

HW: Talk to me about when you came home [from Afghanistan]

Josh: Well, I’d been there six months (pause) beer o’clock! But we had to go to camp first for five days before we were allowed to go home. As they didn’t want you going straight from streets of Iraq or Afghan, straight home (pause) because you might not be *whistles* [twirls finger at side of his head] ready to do that so. Yeah just time to get ont’ beer.

Kelli: So we got back from Iraq in November 2003, just after the World Cup, and that February we moved to Cyprus for a two year deployment. And Cyprus was a shithole. I hated it. Hated the place. First two weeks was like any holiday, it was fantastic. But after two weeks you see the seedy underbelly of it all there. The Russian prostitutes, the bars. The basically, just one little world of “go to the beaches in the afternoon, get pissed”.

Josh enjoyed his time in Cyprus, explaining that alcohol was also heavily connected to a continuation of conflict and readiness for war, through informal fighting amongst each other:

In Cyprus, you're quick reaction force for anywhere in the Middle East. So, Iraq, Afghan, places like that. So you're training and stuff, obviously there's downtime as well to be had, you know and obviously it's a nice place to go drinking! ... Even though we weren't fighting a war out there, you were fighting each other. But always on the other side of drink.

(Josh)

As shown in Chapter 7, informal fighting was a resource utilised not only to rehearse the channelling of violence, but to also further strengthen the trust and social bonds within the team, constructed in opposition to the 'outside'. The final section within 'experiencing conflict' will consider the continuation of conflict within the 'inside', leading to a specific focus on how Mike had to continuously navigate the attempts to cast him as an 'outsider', due to his sexuality.

8.2.4. Fighting military culture: 'They send secure emails... "this guy's a poof"

Several themes emerged in relation to struggles within military fields, stemming from field positions and conditions managed through hierarchical power structures within and between armed forces (MacLeisch, 2015; McGarry and Murray, 2018, Woodward and Winter, 2007). Although there is not space to fully explore them all here, themes included the tensions between military roles and ranks – such as Mike's experiences of being less valued as he was a reserve (TA) soldier (see Edmunds et al., 2016), despite performing the exact same role, often to a higher standard than regular full-time

colleagues. Participants (Gavin, Josh, Kelli, Tom) who discussed working alongside TA soldiers mirrored this, with the notion of 'practical mastery' being visible in narratives surrounding the infrequency of (TA's) 'real' experience in the field – meaning that part time and volunteer soldiers 'don't light a candle to someone who does it full time and trains 24 hours a day' (Josh).

Further, participants who had worked alongside American military personnel in the 'war on terror' described a clash of cultures, and at times, aggressive rivalry. American soldiers were seen as 'gung-ho', and unaware of the realities of war compared with British soldiers, who were cast predominantly through discourses of professionalism and being 'the best' due to their realistic (violent) training (Gavin, Josh, Liam, Mike, Tom). Higate (2012*b*) provides a discussion of identity work with British private military contractors, who frame American counterparts as 'less-competent others', using a framework of symbolic interactionism. The themes and narratives raised by Higate map almost identically onto those within the data in this research.

As MacLeisch (2015: 19) demonstrates, the military institution 'draws selective boundaries', which are forever moving and shifting, enforced formally and informally through military culture and the ascribing, or disregarding, of symbolic forms of capital – often connected to the 'proving' of military masculinities through practice (Atherton, 2009). It was shown in Chapter 7 that within the data, Mike's unique experiences stemmed from his sexuality, which had been disclosed without his consent. From this moment on in Mike's narratives, his military service was overwhelmingly structured through the lens of sexuality, detailing how whenever he moved within the military – which as a signaller was frequently – there was often an initial period of exclusion

and/or 'othering', whereby he had to 'prove' himself worthy in some way, often through violence, in order to be fully welcomed 'inside'.

When Mike went to work at SAS headquarters, it appeared that this was one of the only times when he was accepted immediately:

Got there, they all knew I was gay. I'd not told them you know. I think they send like telegrams, in advance you know. They send secure emails, like "this guy's a poof" type thing. So everyone knew already. So, but it was just never an issue. And this was, this was with the 22 guys as well as the 264 guys.¹⁰

(Mike)

Mike discussed a number of incidents throughout his service involving violence as a form of resolution, where he was temporarily subject to exclusion; identification and stigmatisation; direct violence and/or threats of violence; and various attempts at bullying.

I feel it is important to stress that Mike actively resisted any form of 'victim' label within his interviews, and maintained throughout that he 'loved military service', despite the difficulties he faced. Mike's narratives appeared rich in a wide range of positive social capital, as he worked hard to overcome the initial barriers faced when moving to new roles and locations, making a wealth of lasting connections and networks during service. Due to the apparent capital (perceived to be symbolic and cultural) that was held as a result of his sexuality, it also appeared that Mike gained rare access to the

¹⁰ '22 guys' referred to the immediate personnel Mike worked with, with '264 guys' meaning all other personnel based there.

social capital held by military wives and girlfriends, forming additional sources of friendship and enjoyment within military life.

However, I consider that the data demands, albeit briefly here, the application of a 'victimological lens' to explore Mike's experiences (McGarry and Walklate, 2011), along with a return to consider the 'warrior' masculinities within the military gender order (Woodward, 2000). As Woodward and Winter (2007: 5) state,

Gender shapes how military personnel relate to each other, the development of workplace practices and what is deemed acceptable and unacceptable ... The logics and practices of initiation rituals, for example, are saturated within gender politics.

This section on 'fighting military culture' focuses solely on an incident in Iraq, involving a 'liney' – 'the people that manage the "fuel"' (Mike), with 'fuel' meaning the cabling for the radios and communication equipment. Before detailing the event, Mike made sure to give some context to 'lineys' as a group, providing an insight into their 'military masculinity':

They're an animal bunch, you know. Their idea of a good initiation is to all sit round a table and every one of them vomit into a pint glass. And the newcomer has to drink it ...You know, they're like cavemen. Like the cavemen of the Royal Signals.

(Mike)

Within the 'essential paradox of soldiering mentioned previously, the soldier can be 'both victim and executioner' (Holmes, 2007: 345, in McGarry and Walklate, 2011: 908). What was striking about Mike's experiences, is that due to his sexuality, he was also subject to a further level of victimisation from his own comrades. Below, Mike

narrates a reaction to his sexuality in which his life was placed directly at risk, along with the lives of others – compromising high risk missions in the middle of a war zone¹¹:

Must have mentioned that I was gay. And the next thing I know, he goes all funny ... on his helmet, he'd written in big, big black letters, BNP ... and he's a Yorkshire man. So I'm thinking, mmm, that's interesting. Bit controversial ... next thing, on the other side of his helmet, swastika. And it just. And then I started getting the verbal ... And I thought to me self, oh for fuck's sake. Realisation hits ... he refused to give me fuel for a generator that provides power to my radios. At one point, I was actually providing communications, the *only* source of comms, for the whole medical group. Lives are in the balance ... Things got shitty with [him] *[Mike explains he had to collect a new 'crypto'¹² from Headquarters in Al Amarah, which 'wasn't secure. Not by a long shot' (Mike). This 'colleague' – who had been ordered to be the escort – deliberately left Mike and his co-driver whilst they were surrounded]*

...my vehicle was completely surrounded by upward of 40 people, civilians. Now, at that moment in time, I was alone, non-armoured Land Rover. In Al Amarah. Unsecure, with crypto ... So next thing, I put my hand on my rifle. Told my co-driver to do the same. And to make sure that he was ready ... my other hand was on the erase button on the crypto-filled device. So that was my priority, the crypto. Uh, I know that sounds horrible, but what I had in my pocket, risked 60,000 lives. You know, there was only one life and my life in that, in that vehicle. So that would have been pressed first. Then I would have moved onto, you know. Trying to get out of there alive kind of thing...

¹¹ Extended quote has been provided in Appendix Q, rich insight into experience, and the detail of memory surrounding this event

¹² Cryptographic technology which generates secure communication codes and has to be collected from HQ in an escorted convoy – described to be 'highly sought after by enemy troops' as it could give access to all communication systems. Mike and Tom both said word for word, 'There's no friends in crypto', appearing to have been strictly trained to put crypto before their own and colleagues' lives if the situation arose.

[RMP] escorted me back ... I went nose to nose with this guy. And I went, “why the fuck did you just do that? You have just nearly got us killed. Do you understand the ramifications of what you have just done?” And he went, “yeah. That was the fucking idea, you queer cunt”. ... that was unforgiveable ... that is something that. You don't do to your worst enemy. Never mind, never mind, you know, a colleague in a war... that was a hard time for me.... I ended up going a little bit paranoid. I wasn't trusting people around me. ... And that's not healthy in that environment.

As Mike describes, this incident caused a shift in his habitus, shattering his trust and thus the ability to maintain forms of dense, bonding social capital – both essential for navigating fields of war. Although Mike rejected a ‘victim’ status, there appears no doubt that he was deliberately placed in the path of harm, and further, that the military culture of ‘warrior masculinities’, founded in ‘heterosexual masculinities’, contributed to his victimisation (Woodward, 2000; Higate, 2003). Mike also explained he had to fight against his superior for disciplinary action to be taken, once again battling against a military culture and hierarchies of power, constructed against apparent ‘outsiders’ (See Appendix Q). After this event, Mike was recognised for his professionalism in the battlefield and was quickly promoted. This led to an increase in his symbolic capital through rank, as well as cementing the embodied combat capital acquired in the field in symbolic form – allowing him to rebuild trust in the military and thus continue to thrive.

8.3. Thriving in the field: ‘I took advantage of everything’

Nine of the ten participants had been promoted at least once during their service, with the majority (Harry, Josh, Kelli, Liam, Mike, Simon) explaining how they had actively taken full advantage of the vast range of opportunities offered by the military. As such,

practical mastery had not only been reached in fields of war, but also in the navigating of military fields to secure advantageous field positions, and build various forms of capital. Several participants appeared to already be aware of the military doxa, in terms of knowledge surrounding military culture, which requires soldiers to actively ask about and volunteer for opportunities. This awareness of military field conditions seemed to be strongly connected to the military histories within participants' families. As discussed in Chapter 6, the early socialisation within military culture meant several participants' habitus had already been somewhat attuned to the demands of the field before enlistment – allowing them to thrive as they were 'ahead of the game' (Bourdieu, 1990).

Simon had grown up on a military base, surrounded by military personnel as a child, meaning his habitus and capital were well aligned to life in the military (see Chapters 6 and 7). Through realising his physical potential, he developed high levels of bodily capital and found a field in which his ADHD¹³ 'fit', thriving as a soldier:

When you get promoted, you have to move ... I was in Northern Ireland, about to finish my tour, and I volunteered to go to the paras, to do P company, which I did. So I came back from seven months in Northern Ireland. I then had three days off, rested for three days, packed my kit and went and did P company. I always look for new things to do. I got attached and was sent to Belize, um so I got the privilege to do trips that people normally don't ... And that's something the Army is amazing for, travel and seeing places.

(Simon)

¹³ 'Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder'

Although he was right – the military did allow for travel and gaining a wealth of different experiences – Simon (and others) had known to actively ask for and seek opportunities (cultural capital), whilst also holding the confidence and skills to do so (human capital).

Liam discussed how he had always wanted to be in the Army, and had a stepdad and brother who had both served. From his narratives, it seemed that Liam had been well socialised to understand the forms of capital needed to thrive in military fields – namely bodily capital, military cultural capital, and the skills to develop and retain social capital. From his brother’s experience, he also knew that the military institution holds a vast range of career possibilities, but that to access these opportunities requires individual action:

I took advantage of everything. While I was in *and* while I was out. Not everybody does. Believe me, I am the exception rather than the rule. Most people plod through it. Doing what they have to do, doing the minimum (pause) I was the type that stuck my hand up to volunteer for everything, every opportunity going.

(Liam)

Significantly, the immense building of capital led to the Army ascribing positive value to Liam’s life, preserving it above others:

Once you *get* a qualification, and I had *a lot*, and once you start training other people you see, of course you’re more valuable with training. Especially later on when more and more people are required to be on tours in Afghan and Iraq. And:: actually I was missing out, because I was more valuable back at, if you can

train a thousand people in twelve weeks and get them out the door to Afghanistan and Iraq then you're obviously more valuable aren't you?

(Liam)

For Liam, being 'more valuable' was narrated negatively, as holding a wealth of qualifications prevented him from occupying a desired (battle)field position and achieving practical mastery – i.e. 'doing what he trained to do'. It will also be shown further in Chapter 9, that being 'valuable' to the military, and thus excluded from war, prevented Liam from being able to gain combat capital in its symbolic form.

David was also unable to gain combat capital, as his 'battalion never got called up' to Afghanistan and Iraq – meaning the opportunities to achieve practical mastery of soldiering, only available within the battlefield, were also absent. However within the data, David was an exception, in that he also struggled immensely within all aspects of military service, due to entering with a habitus formed within fields and social networks supporting (and encouraging) drug (ab)use and addiction (see Cloud and Granfield, 2004, 2008):

I should've sorted my baggage out first ... [after phase 2 training] I started taking drugs again ... started drinking. I ended up going to Colchester, err, the Glasshouse ... I done three stints there in the end, so, um, I've done about 12 months altogether and that's just with going AWOL and just from getting high and stuff like that but I ended up getting kicked out in the end.

(David)

Although David's narratives present exceptions within the data, his experiences can still be explained through field theory (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990) and (a lack of) combat

capital. From the point of entry into the Army, David's habitus and capital were poorly aligned to military fields, preventing him from thriving in any aspect of military life. As a result, his military experience is characterised by 'hysteresis' (ibid.) – a mismatch of habitus and capital with field conditions and doxa, leading to immense struggle and an inability to grasp field positions.

In contrast, Liam did hold the human, cultural, and social capital required to navigate the processes of accessing opportunities in the military, including completing the relevant paperwork himself – a skill some participants struggled with (David, Gavin, Josh, Oliver). As with joining the army, Liam strategically used the military as a resource (see 6.3.), generating a pathway to achieving his ultimate goals:

I planned for my resettlement from the day that I joined. This is another thing the army did for me. They allow you to do courses, every year, and they pay for it. To get your education. And I went back and got better grades, and then my ultimate aim was to get a degree whilst I was in there ... I jumped through all the hoops and started the Open University and I erm, got a certificate of Higher Education, which then allowed me to get onto a degree course when I left. Which I would never have been able to do otherwise. And as part of my resettlement package, the army actually *paid for my degree* you know!

(Liam)

Mike had already served in active combat before being severely injured – accumulating a wealth of embodied and symbolic combat capital that propelled his career. In contrast to Liam, being taken away from the battlefield was therefore welcomed, as it allowed him to develop additional forms of human capital and experience that he had never imagined possible:

I went to York after this leave had expired with stiches still in my stomach ... I went to the ops room to see if there was any jobs going that would, you know, a desk job somewhere. And they said, "well there's one here, which is in SAS Signals Squadron in Hereford". ... Someone says do you want to work in SAS Headquarters, don't say no you know what I mean? ... Went through all the security vetting and started working on the equipment side ... I was able to take part in things and have opportunities at Hereford that I'd never had before... I mean, I went and saw the Kill House¹⁴ made up! ... It was absolutely brilliant. Loved every second of it.

(Mike)

Mike had also entered the military with a habitus well aligned to the field, through his many years spent with the Army Cadets, and as a TA soldier. He had maintained a strong connection with 'civvy street' until his mid-twenties, and had spent several years living alone in Blackpool before he re-joined as a full time soldier. As such, Mike was very aware of planning for his resettlement, knowing that he would need to build economic capital for his return¹⁵:

I saved up, I even bought a convenience store while back in Liverpool, as a sort of, investment. And a way to, sort of, provide income. I'm also from a single parent family so, I did that [supported his Mum].

(Mike)

¹⁴ The 'Kill House' or 'Killing House' is a two-storey building, made up of specially designed 'kill rooms' used to train SAS personnel in 'close quarter battle' (CQB) skills for Afghanistan and Iraq – including methods of hostage rescue as well as 'clearing' areas of 'targets'.

¹⁵ Economic capital – referring mostly to money and assets – has not formed a prominent focus of this thesis, as it was rarely considered within participants' narratives. Where money was discussed, it was overwhelmingly resisted as being something of 'importance' (discussed further in Chapter 9).

Harry was also aware of securing a level of economic capital for his return to 'civvy street', explaining that he used the money accumulated during a (non-conflict) tour of the Falklands to buy a house. In the extract below, he narrates this process through the lens of meeting his wife, and deciding to leave the military as a result:

My wife's actually the estate agent that sold me my house. So, I came back from the Falkland Islands and I had loads of money in the bank. And I went to buy a house, you know, invest that money somewhere, that's how I met my wife ... I got into a relationship with my wife and then I left the Army two days later ... I always tell the story that I met her and had to leave the Army because she didn't want anyone else giving me orders but her! But the reality is, she wouldn't have been a good army wife ... she wasn't army wife material.

(Harry)

When I asked what he meant by his wife not being 'army wife material', Harry referenced his brother's marriage as an example, explaining that he has three children and had just been to Iraq for the third time:

she couldn't stand that. She's not high maintenance, but she wouldn't put up with that. So I left the army because I was going to start a family with my wife, so it wouldn't have worked with her. But my brother's wife, she used to be in the army herself. So she can take it. It's him that can't because he's got a new baby, and he's not seen his kids for six months.

(Harry)

The following section will now consider the difficulties of maintaining relationships within the military, expressed by all participants.

8.4. Maintaining Relationships: 'It was a single man's army'

A prevalent theme within the data concerned how social capital to those 'inside' the military was often built and strengthened, while ties to those 'outside' were hard to maintain and/or create, especially when participants were posted abroad and to areas of conflict. Although a fleeting comment, Mike provides an insight into how participants' habitus shifted so much through military training and service, that they no longer felt they 'fit' within ('civilian') fields they had previously felt at home in and enjoyed occupying:

[Referring to a photo] This is when I was home on leave. I thought it was quite bizarre, my front living room. It's just a really strange capture.

(Mike)

Although his Mother's living room was exactly the same as when he left, Mike had changed, and his former 'home' therefore felt different. When talking about maintaining relationships to 'civilian' friends, Liam also captured how military life generated experiential and cultural differences so large, they were difficult to bridge:

You go back to reality, when you've been doing all these exciting things, with loads of responsibility, and you know. Just trying to, talk to people, and explain what you've done and you know. It's difficult because. It's just on another planet, compared to what they've been doing.

(Liam)

In addition to friendships, romantic relationships were consistently narrated as being the form of social capital most difficult, if not impossible, to maintain during service. Many participants claimed that the daily practices and lifestyle of a soldier were not

compatible with the expectations of partners, nor did they wish to subject partners to the long, often unknown periods of absence, both physically and in the ability to communicate:

Kelli: In the army I never had a girlfriend. I went four years without a girlfriend because it just wasn't. It was a single man's army. You couldn't basically have a girlfriend. I knew that first year I joined, when I was going out with [ex-girlfriend]. I can't do it. You know, it's not fair on her.

Liam: Sometimes they would just last minute say, "you're working the weekend" (laughs) try explain that to a civilian girlfriend ... they think you're off with someone else you know?

Josh: I was with [his son's] Mum and that but it wasn't easy 'cos you're hardly ever there! One week every three months or so. So it wasn't really like a relationship. It was a big, big test when you come out of the army to try and *be* in a relationship with somebody you think you're in a relationship with, and realistically you're not. It just didn't work. You're used to doing your own thing, having such a strict routine and you're stuck in your ways.

The patriarchal, authoritarian culture, policies, and practices of the military institution (Gee, 2017), were further communicated as disregarding the worth of any romantic relationship, bar marriage:

Having a relationship in the military is impossible you know. I had disaster after disaster really. I er, I've been married *four* times! But, I wouldn't, if I hadn't have been in the military I wouldn't have had those. They were basically just long term relationships. I wouldn't have been married if it wasn't for the fact that you were in the army, and they don't *recognise any* other relationship other than

marriage. It just doesn't count. You can't get a quarter and live together, you just basically wouldn't see each other.

(Liam)

Liam's experiences of being married and divorced (several times) at a young age connects with literature focused on the impact of military service on relationships – where active combat is raised as a key issue in relationship difficulties (see Hogan and Furst Seifert, 2010; Adler-Baeder et al., 2006; Thomas de Burgh et al., 2011).

Mike and Gavin talked about the effects and traces of war on their relationships:

Mike: Ended up ending my relationship at the time. And I think most of it was my fault. Because when I came back from Iraq, I was incredibly angry. And while we were there we weren't allowed contact. We weren't allowed mobile phones ... So things just went from bad to worse ... ended that relationship rather badly.

Gavin: I remember my wife, well she was my girlfriend then ... while I was away in Afghan she managed to get us a house on camp ... I got off the bus to her waiting there. I'd specifically told her before I went I didn't want her to be there. ... honest to god I wanted to punch her. I didn't want to see her never mind live with her at that time. Sounds awful but I couldn't think of owt worse. I'd just been in fucking Afghan shooting people and I just didn't need it. I needed space.

Gavin talked at length about his relationship struggles, detailing how this particular deployment, where he had lost a friend in an IED explosion (discussed in 8.2.1.2.), had almost ended his relationship with his wife. Despite this, like Harry and Josh, Gavin

claimed that wanting to start a family with his wife became the main reason for leaving the military.

In addition to the perceived incompatibility of military life with parenting, primarily due to long periods of absences, the knowledge of becoming a father seemed to create a shift in Gavin's ability to participate in the violences of war:

Handed my notice in the day after I found out Kat was pregnant. ... I don't think she ever thought I'd leave really. But I, er when she told me. It was really weird, like a kind of switch. I just knew I couldn't do it any more if I had a kid. Leaving Kat was always crap you know what I mean, but it was suddenly, it just felt different. I didn't want to be that person [sighs] I wanted my kid to look up to me and, thought of going out there again and doing it just didn't sit right you know?

(Gavin)

Gavin's relationship will be considered further in Chapter 9 (9.3.3.), where the violence he sought to escape re-entered his 'post-conflict' life, following the death of another close friend with whom he had initially joined the military.

8.5. Preparing to Leave: Navigating the 'military bullshit'

The final section of this chapter places a focus on participants' experiences of accessing resettlement resources when leaving the military, drawing attention to what many participants termed 'military bullshit'. Before discussing the preparations for returning to 'civvy street', the reasons for leaving will be considered briefly. Starting a family, as discussed above, was the first of three themes that emerged in relation to leaving the military. Gavin, Harry and Josh all felt that military life was not conducive

to having a family. Participants wanted to play an active and present role in parenting, and seemed unable to see how this could work alongside the known difficulties posed by maintaining long distance relationships as a soldier. In addition, becoming fathers seemed to act as a key driver in desisting from a life of violence (see Maruna, 2001).

The second theme and reason for leaving the military concerned a 'lack of war'. Simon and Tom explained in detail how the inability to be posted to fields of conflict and do 'proper soldiering' led directly to them handing in their notice. Several participants referred to 'military bullshit', appearing to mean military culture and doxa founded on hierarchical systems of forever moving and shifting boundaries and rules, with regularly conflicting and contradicting 'categories [that] didn't line up or nest neatly' (MacLeisch, 2015: 18). As MacLeisch (ibid.) states, 'There is a rule for everything, but not always a reason'. For Tom, it appeared that serving in Iraq and Afghanistan had caused his habitus to shift significantly, having lived for long periods of time in field conditions where survival was the main priority – and orders issued were literally a matter of life or death. As such, a lack of war also meant that 'military bullshit' that characterised life on camp was no longer tolerable, as it seemed even more 'ridiculous and unreasonable' in contrast to the lived experience and realities of war (Tom).

In the extract below, Tom explains how a number of factors including 'military bullshit' combined within a context of military downsizing (Gardner, 2012), culminating in his resignation¹⁶:

¹⁶ Full narrative has been provided in Appendix R, as it gives a deep insight into the 'military bullshit' discussed by Tom, as well a detailed account of his returns from war and the (unwelcoming) reception on camp - especially for 'single soldiers'.

When I came back from Iraq ...I was wearing smelly old green kit. That I'd been wearing probably for about a week. And a pair of deessy boots. Well that's a big no no, cos that's "mixed dress" ... Only:: out in Iraq, there was there *was* no spare kit ... I stepped out of the Land Rover for a second. ... the provo sergeant. He's in charge of like, erm sec- security ... Sees my boots. Starts screaming and shouting at me, [deep voice, shouting] "WHAT YOU FUCKING WEARING THEM BOOTS FOR, WHY'VE YOU GOT MIXED DRESS ON" all this kind of stuff. And I'm like [rolls his eyes and sounds exhausted] "brilliant. Welcome Home Tom" ...

Come back from Afghan ... I spent my first three nights back in England, sleeping on the floor ... Whatever job I got asked to do, and us lot over there fighting, we *did* to the best of our abilities. Some of it got some of us killed. ... *All* they had to do, was make sure there was a bed in that fucking room. And they couldn't even do that. ... you know the military bullshit's going to start again. Being on parade. Polished boots (HW: yeah) fucking, arseholes that just love being arseholes, because they're in charge of people ...

[After] the second tour of Afghanistan, that's when it all really started to fall apart. (HW: right) People started to think about leaving, and signing off ... once someone starts it, once you cut the vein, you just bleed out sort of thing ... Especially if a couple of, guys that are seen to be the old boys, like the core, the guys that have binded together. Which I guess that at that point me and a couple of my mates were (pause) once we decided to go, it was ju- the flood gates opened and everyone was just like, "fuck this, I don't want to do it anymore".

The amalgamation of Tom's regiment with another, led to him and his colleagues becoming 'outsiders' on the 'inside' – as their regiment joined with previous 'rivals', leading to a loss of value in the cultural and social capital formed on shared history and experience. The often violent tension between personnel of previously different regiments, led to what Tom described above as military life 'falling apart'.

Josh also cited the disbanding of his regiment amid the 'Strategic defence and Security Review' (Gardner, 2012) as an additional reason for leaving:

The amalgamation didn't help. It was a nice close small regiment that I loved. I'd done really well in the army, I'd moved really fast. And that was basically being put on hold because we was amalgamating from a regiment of four, five hundred lads, to a regiment of two battalions with the best part of twelve hundred lads you know. So promotions slowing down was another factor.

(Josh)

The change in field conditions due to the Defence Review, meant that competition for higher field positions became fiercer, and thus promotion demanded an increased level of struggle between agents (Bourdieu, 1990).

The third reason for leaving resulted from injury, whereby Liam and Mike no longer held the levels of bodily capital to be able to maintain their desired field positions in the army. Amid the military downsizing discussed above, Liam was offered and accepted early retirement, on a scheme designed for injured personnel. Mike was also medically discharged on a full pension, following over a year of being unable to work due to his spine collapsing, leading to Chronic Pain Syndrome that he still suffers with to this day. He explained at length how the military failed multiple times in relation to his medical needs, initially in identifying the cause of his back pain, refusing to give him the scans he requested, and subsequently in the delivery of his treatment:

I wasn't getting promoted to full corporal ... and the reason for that was, I was constantly on fucking sick ... I had 19 episodes ... Getting ignored all the time. So comes back from paragliding. Next thing [claps] flat on me back. And they finally

gave me a scan. Came back to me later and said “oops, sorry about this. But you’ve got two prolapsed discs and your neck system has collapsed” ... due to, shall we say, army admin fuck ups, I had major spinal surgery [on 1st June] ... it was the end of August before I received my first physiotherapy. By which point I was a block of concrete. And the physio wasn’t effective.

(Mike)

Although Mike consistently made clear: ‘I wouldn’t want you to think that in any way I perceived the military in a negative fashion’, he explained:

I didn’t get a single welfare visit in all that time ... I think in total [I served] about 13 years ... so I do have one criticism. If we went from the accident in 2003¹⁷ to this interview here and now. I have still yet to have any official representative of the military come to me face to face and say, “are you alright? How are you coping? How do you feel? Is there anything we can do to help you?”

(Mike)

Mike’s narratives around being injured were thus strikingly reminiscent of MacLeisch’s (2015: 18-19) words:

Even as bodies, lives and relationships “fell through the cracks”, they somehow fell further *in* to new categories that they had to navigate, disavow, or work themselves out of. ... The military institution draws selective boundaries around its care for and ability to dispose of soldierly life in much the same way that liberal politics draws selective boundaries around its deployment of and responsibility for lethal violence.

¹⁷ The accident referred to here is the incident that resulted from a lack of staffing in Iraq (due to the military occupying domestic roles ‘at home’ to cover the fire brigade strikes), leading to Mike being caught in a sandstorm and being battered repeatedly on the back of his head and neck by communication equipment – discussed in section 8.2.2. In addition, he was also in a bad car accident in Germany, which again severely damaged his spine.

It is important to briefly highlight that in contrast to the other eight participants, Oliver and David did not have a choice in leaving the military. Oliver discussed how being sent to military prison (the 'Glasshouse') for an alcohol related incident, led to the RAF refusing to renew his contract of employment¹⁸, whilst still recruiting chefs at the time. David was discharged straight from the Glasshouse to 'civvy street', after being tested positive for cocaine. Despite leaving not being Oliver's and David's choice, they both still faced similar experiences of navigating the process of exiting the military institution, which will now be considered in relation to the accessing of resettlement resources.

Below, Liam captures the most significant theme and shared experience within the data surrounding resettlement:

there's a lot on offer, but you also, you need to know how to take advantage of it ... There was a pot of money of about £3,000 or something for resettlement. You have to organise the course, you know have already got all the expenses together, plan it basically like a mini expedition. Then submit all the fees and get it all approved. It was a right round the houses thing. So much so, that I'm not surprised hardly anyone takes advantage of it. Anyway, I jumped through all the hoops.

(Liam)

¹⁸ Although space within this thesis does not unfortunately allow for a discussion here, within the data, Oliver's claim that being sent to military prison operated as positive capital for army personnel was replicated in other participants' narratives. Gavin and Josh had spent time in Colchester for violent offences, and due to the increased bodily capital resulting from the intense physical regimes of punishment, both were promoted within six months of release.

Although resettlement procedures and funding appeared to change in relation to the year, context, and length of service (Ashcroft, 2014), a consistent aspect of all participants' narratives was that the resources offered by the military operated on an 'opt in' basis. As Josh explained:

They offered resettlement, but I didn't take advantage of it. If I'm honest, I think they half-heartedly offer you this and that, knowing most won't do it. Nobody really pushes you and says, "right you're doing this, and you need to be doing that". As a soldier, you *need* that. You need a kick up the backside sometimes. So I think I was very *unprepared* for civvy street. But like I said as a good soldier you'll land on your feet, crack on, and make the best of a bad situation. "Improvise, adapt and overcome" and crack on (laughs)

(Josh)

What Josh (also Gavin, Harry, Kelli, Oliver, and Tom) describes here, is how the demands and conditions within military fields of resettlement, were at direct odds with the military habitus – which had been formed in field conditions opposed to 'weakness', and had thus been trained to operate within a framework of not seeking or accepting 'help' (see Chapter 7). At the time of leaving, courses and re-training seemed to have been perceived by several participants as forms of 'help', and thus directly connected to notions of 'weakness' to be avoided (see 9.3.3.).

Further, the process of resettlement demanded a level of human capital – namely 'academic' based skills needed to complete often complex paperwork – which several participants had joined the military precisely to avoid (see Chapter 6):

I remember it was such a ball ache. All these forms and fucking systems and jumping through this hoop to get to more hoops ... I was still pretty young and I remember just thinking I'd be fine, "I'm a soldier" type thing ... I mean, I'd joined because I was shit at reading and writing (laughs) and it was just like, for fuck sake you know? I really struggled.

(Gavin)

Striking within the data, was that the participants who did maximise the resources offered by the military, did so because they also held, or had access to, cultural capital – in terms of knowing how to navigate military policies and processes, and/or social capital. They therefore held the ability (human capital) to draw upon the appropriate people to help complete applications and direct them to sources of support:

I had a mortgage and obligations. You know, that was my mother and little sister's home. So I had to make sure that I had in place everything that I needed. There were some elements of the military who were keen to make sure I had everything in place as well ... I've never had a problem with payments ... it was seamless ... the resettlement officer at Preston Barracks basically showed me how to fill out all the paperwork. I ended up having an MoD sponsored degree!

(Mike)

Throughout his service, Mike had accumulated a high level of social capital – both 'strong ties' and 'weak ties' (Granovetter, 1983), through high quality soldiering, 'despite' being gay (see 7.2.2.), resulting in a wealth of symbolic capital gained not only through qualifications and promotions, but through respect. As such, Mike's process of leaving was facilitated by his symbolic capital, in that key people within the military made sure that he was well looked after.

In contrast, another consistent theme within participants' narratives of preparing to leave, centred on the military routinely failing in areas of administration and paperwork. Kelli explained, 'I did a year free for the army', as 'they messed up my paperwork so I had to stay another extra year'. As a form of resistance, Kelli used his resettlement for an expensive driving course, refusing to lend his newly qualified body to the military's aims:

I was really pissed off 'cos the army are meant to give you a driving course and they'd been promising me for years. ... at the end, as a big "fuck you" I blew the five grand on a driving course ... then I remember when I came back and had about five months left in the army they were like, "Kelli can you just drive that?". "No!". ... The army may have paid for it, but the military didn't, they're not getting the use out of me.

(Kelli)

For Liam, who also left the military due to injury, administration failures had severe and lasting effects on his ability to navigate 'civvy street' on his return:

There's a period when you're gonna leave, even though I've been injured and I know there's some sort of compensation and pension. You don't actually know what that figure's gonna be until *two weeks* after you leave ... try explain that to your bank. When you've got a house and things to worry about. I'm still suffering from that now. As you know, if you miss a payment that black mark lasts for *six years*. I couldn't even get a mobile phone. ... I'm watching the days until I can get my credit back to normal.

(Liam)

Despite struggling in field conditions of resettlement practices, where a military habitus and forms of capital were not always well aligned, Liam, Harry, Mike and Tom

successfully secured the financial support to complete a degree upon leaving the military, and Gavin completed a close protection course. In the following chapter, particularly section 9.4.2., experiences of transition concerning the transferability of capital gained in the military and during resettlement will be considered further.

8.6. Conclusion

This chapter began by providing a rare insight into the individual, micro level experiences of serving in 21st century conflict, showing how participants' military habitus and capital were deepened and strengthened within fields of war. This included militarised forms of cultural and human capital, as well as dense bonding forms of social capital. The unique conditions of 21st century warfare, namely the blurring of boundaries that have come to characterise the 'war on terror' (Loader and Percy, 2012, see also Degenhardt, 2007, 2013; Kaldor, 2012) – such as the apparent shift from definitions and field conditions of 'war' to 'peacekeeping' – have been demonstrated to generate an additional layer to experiencing physical battlefields, grounded in uncertainty at every conceivable level (Bauman, 2006). This is a new contribution to knowledge, in what is still a relatively under-researched, yet much needed area of 'criminology and war' (Walklate and McGarry, 2015a; Jamieson, 1999). As such, the combat capital gained within the 'war on terror' also appears to be unique.

At an embodied level, combat capital gained through 'experiencing, perpetrating, and witnessing' in Afghanistan and Iraq (McGarry and Walklate, 2011), is bound to the uncertain and contradictory field conditions amid a fluid and 'unwinnable' fight against 'terror' (Bauman, 2006). Despite all participants that had been posted to active combat

expressing how 'proper soldiering' was a source of enjoyment and adrenalin fuelled period of life like no other, this chapter has revealed how the realities of conflict inscribed 'traces of war' within and upon participants' bodies (Walklate, 2016; Walklate and McGarry, 2016b). This has been discussed in terms of the landscapes and faces of war, shown to both disrupt and strengthen the ability for participants to mobilise 'frames of war' (Butler, 2009). Participants carried with them the memories of death, destruction, loss of friends, and the taking of life, as with veterans' experiences of war throughout history (Leed, 1979). Yet unlike previous warfare, the narratives and justifications surrounding these memories were disrupted and punctured upon the return to 'civvy street' by new information and 'truths' – including the questionable legality of the Iraq invasion (Kramer and Michalowski, 2005), and the knowledge that certain soldiering practices they had engaged in broke the Geneva Convention (ICRC, 2018).

At a symbolic level, combat capital is also tied to the unique uncertainties and contradictions underpinning the 'war on terror'. Oliver and Simon ascribed additional 'positive' value to combat experiences gained in Afghanistan and Iraq, due to the nature of fighting within 4th generation warfare (Lind, 2004). As Chapter 3 discussed, 4th generation warfare includes unclear, unknown, and often unidentifiable enemies, who not only use their bodies as weapons, but have changed the 'game of war' through undermining the legitimacy of state sponsored violence and notions of 'security' (Kaldor, 1999, 2012). However, as will be shown in the chapter to follow, the symbolic value of combat capital gained in 21st century conflict can also be recognised as being 'negative', for this very same reason.

The first section of the chapter also highlighted how the military habitus, along with cultural capital embodied through practice, and the dense bonding forms of social capital and camaraderie within military life, provided a framework to deal with the realities of war. This framework for coping had been trained to operate through masculinised forms of dark humour – ‘squaddie banter’ – along with alcohol consumption, which participants expressed continued to structure their practices for dealing with struggle within post-military life. Further, this ‘masculine’ military culture (Higate, 2003), created and sustained in relation to apparent ‘outsiders’, meant that within the data, Mike’s unique experiences stemming from his sexuality, included a continuation of conflict and an added layer of victimisation and harm. This finding adds additional weight to the calls by Heggie (2003) and Bulmer (2011) to pay specific attention to the experiences of LGBT personnel, especially through a victimological lens.

This chapter has also shown the difficulties of maintaining and/or creating relationships to those ‘outside’ of the military institution (‘civilians’), particularly with regard to romantic relationships. This was argued to initially arise from the time spent apart and physical (geographical) distances that form part of military service – such as being posted abroad, particularly to areas of conflict. However, it emerged through the data that the embodied experiences gained in warfare, further distanced participants from those ‘at home’. The ‘traces of war’ were described to (negatively) disrupt relationships (Gavin, Oliver), and in some cases ended them altogether (Kelli, Mike, Liam, Tom). The prospect of starting a family and having children with their partners appeared to be a key reason for leaving the military, with participants (Gavin, Harry, Josh, Liam, Simon) expressing how parenthood was not seen to be combatable with

military life – specifically concerning being absent in the lives of potential children, as well as a ‘shift’ in their habitus to no longer be able to justify a violent profession.

The chapter further demonstrated how participants who had acquired military cultural capital before enlisting (see 6.4.1), and thus had a habitus already aligned and attuned to the demands of military fields, were able to thrive and generate strategy to successfully build a range of capital during service – achieving increased field positions and symbolic capital through promotions¹⁹. Through the continued application of field theory (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990), it has therefore been demonstrated that these same participants were also better placed to access support and resources when preparing to leave the military – such as resettlement provisions to undertake courses and retraining, as well as securing financial support surrounding medical discharge (Liam and Mike). An important finding of this chapter therefore concerns how resettlement support operates on an ‘opt in’ basis – demanding proactive help-seeking behaviours from personnel in order access resources.

It has been argued that the practices required to access resettlement resources when leaving the military, appear to exist in direct opposition to the (‘masculine’) military habitus (Maringira et al., 2015). As Chapter 7 demonstrated, the ‘military habitus’ is formed amid military field conditions and culture that forcefully reject any form of ‘weakness’, including help and support. When this reluctance to grasp opportunities for resettlement support was combined with an absence of, or inability to mobilise, the forms of capital needed to access these processes, several participants (Gavin, Harry,

¹⁹ This includes the symbolic capital attached to ranks, represented (and embodied) through the wearing of recognised (hierarchical) ‘symbolic resources’ – such as the visible symbols of rank, often displayed on uniform through stripes/wings (Gee, 2017).

Josh, Kelli, Simon) left the military in potentially disadvantaged positions. Often participants discussed returning to 'civilian' life without having drawn upon the resources they were entitled to and had earned throughout their service. The forms of capital required included human capital – such as the skills needed to fill in application forms, along with post-service aspirations (i.e. having an idea of what courses/retraining might be useful); social capital – knowing the right people to ask for help and support; and cultural capital – being aware of how the processes of resettlement work within the military institution (participants' narratives appeared to indicate that these were rarely communicated directly).

Finally, this chapter has shown that David was ineligible for any form(s) of resettlement support and resources, due to being 'dishonourably' discharged straight from Colchester (military) prison to 'civvy street'. Chapter 6 discussed how David had entered the military from the care system, holding very low levels of capital (see 6.4.). A main aim of this thesis has been to explore what 'civvy street' means and looks like for FMP in the 21st century (see 5.2.). As the next chapter explores in more detail, David left the military to no 'home', or social networks of support, and was effectively plunged back into the same social harms that he (and others) had enlisted to 'escape' (Hillyard et al., 2004; Pemberton, 2016, see 6.3.1.). David has spent the subsequent years navigating the 'revolving door' of prison (Padfield and Maruna, 2006), with long periods of homelessness and sleeping rough. In addition, David is still battling severe addiction and struggles with his mental health. The final data chapter of this thesis will now consider 'life after' military service in more detail, providing a rich insight into participants' return to a 'post-conflict', 'civilian' life in the 21st century.

CHAPTER 9

Life After:

'in you there is always a sleeping soldier'

'[The] homecomer is not the same man who left. He is neither the same for himself nor for those who await his return ...

What may be most difficult for the homecomer is the transition from one world view and resultant pattern of life away from home (for example, in the military and in war) to another view and pattern of home. Adjustment is often difficult'

Figley and Leventman, *Strangers at Home*, 1980: 109

9.1. Introduction

This fourth and final data chapter, presents the themes that emerged within participants' narratives of 'life after' military service. Although all participants had qualitatively different experiences of navigating and adapting to 'civilian' fields, this chapter demonstrates through field theory how there were many overarching similarities, connected to what has previously been shown to be a 'military habitus' and embodied forms of capital aligned to military fields. As such, this chapter explores the 'traces of war' (Walklate, 2016; Walklate and McGarry, 2015b), carried within and upon participants' bodies through embodied and symbolic forms of combat capital, placing narratives within the socio-political landscapes of 21st century warfare, as well as the field conditions experienced by participants within 21st century 'civilian' society.

The chapter begins with section 9.2. drawing attention to the 'dark side' of social capital (see Chapter 4), experienced through the instant loss of dense, bonding forms of social capital upon leaving the military. Section 9.3. then considers the continuum(s) of conflict within the lives of participants, whereby the previously defined 'outside', becomes participants' 'inside' – placing a focus on narratives elicited around the politics of war; the 'lack of war'; and the military habitus creating barriers to help-seeking and support. Section 9.4. discusses the period of adapting and adjusting to the new and drastically different field conditions of 21st century 'civilian life', where participants' habitus and capital had to align, often through struggle, to navigate and acquire more secure field positions. This section highlights participants' experiences surrounding finding an 'ex-squaddie' or 'ex-forces' identity; finding fields in which they 'fit', and finding purpose that had been lost through leaving the military, as well as a desire to 'give something back'. Finally, the chapter will offer a conclusion, drawing together the chapter sections in a brief discussion, framed in relation to the state, and the socio-political conditions of 21st century warfare and society.

9.2. Feeling the dark side of social capital: 'You lose a big family'

There was a wealth of data reflecting the 'dark side' of social capital (Putnam, 2000, see section 4.2.3), whereby all participants discussed experiences of losing the sense of belonging, support, and resources previously accessible within the dense, bonding forms of social capital within the military institution (see Ward, 2017). This section highlights three themes that emerged in relation to entering the 'dark side' of military social capital: firstly, the loss of a 'family' when leaving the military; secondly the loss of symbolic capital; and thirdly, difficulty in navigating 'civilian fields' to form, access, and maintain new forms of social capital in 'civilian' life.

The first theme, spoken to unanimously by participants, regardless of their experiences of service, was an immediate and lasting feeling of no longer belonging to the 'military family' (Ward, 2017) - often narrated through the embodied memory of shedding uniform:

Gavin: When I left I just remember taking off my uniform, and giving all my kit back. You know walking out with just my box of civvy stuff and a few bits I'd managed to keep, and, I'd left the family. I had my own family like, well Kat and bump (laughs) but it was awful. Felt it straight away. Still feel it now if I'm honest.

Simon: I found it extremely hard for two years. Because of the brotherhood. It's a family. You lose a big family. It's pretty unique. You're never on your own. ... you're not lonely. It's a big family. Um, the difficulty, when you leave, you walk out the bar, you left the Military. You're in your civilian clothing, you're not part of that family. It's that you left your family and that's hard.

As Granovetter (1973, 1983) warned, despite the benefits that are known to come from holding 'strong ties' within homogenous social networks, including high levels of trust and support, a lack of 'weak ties' can be extremely problematic. Not only do those 'outside' these strong social networks feel excluded and potentially subject to social isolation (Putnam, 2000), but the inability to access vital information within social fields through 'weak ties', such as employment opportunities and forms of support, can also be a source of struggle and social disadvantage for those 'inside' (Granovetter, 1983, van Deth and Zmerli, 2010; Bourdieu et al., 1999).

The second theme apparent in participants' narratives about leaving the military family concerns a loss of symbolic capital, stemming from the loss of benefits attached to what Putnam (2000: 136) terms 'thick trust' – based on shared personal experience and honesty within dense, bonding forms of social capital. As Tom explains:

I'd say that drink brought out a certain. Things I didn't know were there. People we lost over in Afghanistan, things I'd seen, and just actually the *whole* mentality of *being* a squaddie, and what that means to you. To be part of that group, that. *Special* thing or whatever. And to just be sort of cut lose into the world, and just be like everyone else.

(Tom)

Within military fields, most participants had succeeded in achieving what had been a driving force behind enlisting – to 'be someone' and feel a sense of purpose and belonging to something 'bigger', and thus to feel needed and acknowledged as being 'worthy' (Fromm, 1941). In addition, embodied and symbolic forms of combat capital, especially when gained in 21st century field of war, were (and are) recognised within military life as holding a positive value – further building trust and reciprocity. As it was shown in Chapter 7, being a soldier meant being 'different' to those on the 'outside', and at times this was narrated through notions of intolerance, often found when bridging or 'weak ties' are absent (van Deth and Zmerli, 2010). As Josh exclaimed, 'they're civvies, at the end of the day ... they're useless. You know, they're not trained are they'.

However, the forms of capital acquired during service, predominantly symbolic capital – whereby participants' rank, uniform, and/or role(s) demanded a certain level of

respect – are not always recognised within ‘civilian’ fields, unless by other veterans, and/or those with a knowledge of military life and culture (Ward, 2017). Further, participants often held a lot of power and responsibility within the military, still at relatively young ages, which was very difficult if not impossible to replace in ‘civvy street’. Simon explained:

You leave as a Land Sergeant or you leave as a Senior Non-Commissioned Officer, the Sergeant Major, or even if you get a commission you leave a Captain. You’re in the same position. Once you go out, you start from zero again.

(Simon)

Leaving the ‘inside’ of military social capital was therefore also experienced as losing a big part of who participants ‘were’, or as it will be discussed in section 9.4.1., losing the ability to draw upon significant aspects of the habitus, due to the change in field conditions.

The third theme to emerge in relation to experiencing the ‘dark side’ of social capital, was that initially, participants also found it hard to generate, access, and maintain new forms of social capital within ‘civilian’ fields. As has been shown in previous chapters, whilst being within dense bonding capital can be positive, it creates ‘walls to the outside’ and excludes those who ‘do not qualify’ (Portes, 1998). Although participants had left the military, their habitus and capital were still aligned to military fields. Cultural and social capital, formed in opposition to ‘civvies’ during service, had been based on a certain level of ‘distrust unless proved otherwise’ (Gee, 2017), discouraging the formation of bridging capital to those in other (non-military) social groups and

networks (Putnam, 2000: 362). An extract from Josh captures the lived experience of this struggle:

It does affect your life ... it's hard to make ties to other people (long pause) and I, I don't kind of give a monkeys about owt and that's sad. I suppose. But, such is life ... I have been close to people, I don't think you really, for me personally I don't think I've ever really opened the door fully. I think you're scared of that ... *massively* struggled with relationships. I get to four years and that's it, done. Finished. End of discussion. I don't know why... usually all my own doing.¹

(Josh)

Within the data, there was a noticeable contrast in opinions surrounding the use of social media to maintain social networks, especially 'weak ties' to those within, and/or who have served in the military. Around half of participants claimed that social networking sites such as Facebook are useful for keeping in touch with friends from the military, especially when separated by large geographical distances. As Kelli states:

Most people are on Facebook. And you're looking, and making comments and you can have a laugh. With people that have moved away mainly. That's the really good thing about Facebook, it brings friends together.

(Kelli)

Mike, Simon and Tom also discussed how Facebook provided a space where squadron and regimental reunions could be organised, as well as the sharing of photographs and narratives from military service and fields of war.

¹ Several participants (Gavin, Josh, Liam, Simon, and Tom) spoke about a '4 year itch', with Simon connecting this to a military 'cycle' of postings that usually repeats itself after around 4 years.

Despite this, other participants claimed they do not use social media, especially avoiding Facebook:

Gavin: No I don't do any of that Facebook shit. "Look how great my life is", or "I've got 700 friends on Facebook but I talk to three people in real life". It's bollocks if you ask me.

Josh: If I see people out and about then great, you know we'll have a beer and we'll have a chat. But it's, I'm not into social media and stuff like that ... the friendships are still there if I see the people in the pub or on the street. I don't get it.

These quotes capture Bauman's (2000) notion that modern societies are characterised by a collapsing of time, place and space, through forever increasing interconnectedness and speed at which humans can communicate in virtual spaces – whilst becoming increasingly disconnected in the physical world. Within the loss of military social capital, the differences between military and 'civilian' field conditions, cultures, and doxa, became even more pronounced than they had been during service, as the habitus – by way of strategy – now had to align and 'fit' within 21st century 'civilian' fields. The next section will therefore consider how all participants discussed a period, which varied in length, in which their habitus and capital had to adjust and shift to being 'inside' and immersed within fields previously constructed as the 'outside'.

9.3. A continuum of conflict and the traces of war: the 'outside' becomes the 'inside'

Most participants would comfortably fit into the state's definition and narrative of a 'successful transition', which is often solely 'measured' in terms of employment (MoD,

2015a, 2015b; Ashcroft, 2014). As Cooper et al. (2016: 157) state, 'It is commonly asserted in the literature on military veterans that the majority make a smooth transition into civilian life', and that it is a minority that 'go on to experience difficulties'. Although employment within the current composition of Western societies is of course an important issue of transition, it is far from the only source of potential struggle faced by returning personnel. As Cooper et al. (2016: 157) continue,

The processes and experiences of transition for Armed Forces veterans are not well understood ... relatively undertheorized is the influence of military culture and what happens when an individual immersed in this culture leaves it and returns to an environment that was previously familiar but may no longer be so.

A consistent theme within the data, was that a major source of struggle upon return stemmed from what Bergman et al. (2014) referred to as a 'reverse culture shock', whereby 'a sense of disorientation can occur when personnel transition ... [as] both the individual's frame of reference and the civilian culture itself may have changed, leading to difficulties in navigating this previously familiar environment' (Cooper et al., 2016: 158).

Although agreeing with much of what Cooper et al. (2016) argue above, I disagree that the 'civilian' environment was 'familiar' to participants. The vast majority of military personnel enlist before they have entered adulthood (Gill, 1997; Levy and Sasson-Levy; Gee, 2017), mirrored in the narratives of participants, meaning they had not yet grasped a 'feel for the game' within *adult* civilian fields before joining (Bourdieu, 1990):

When I was living in the rat race, I always paid my bills. But money wise, I've never been that great with money. I guess. When I was a kid I never had money. I never had pocket money or none of that, we was poor you know (pause) we didn't have anything (pause) and then I guess when I joined the army it was just beer money.

(Tom)

As such, participants' habitus had not developed frameworks for navigating the field conditions within the 'civilian world', and the many responsibilities that involves – such as managing finances and paying various bills – and had further been trained to be distanced from civilian culture(s), norms and values (see Chapter 7).

Despite most participants' experiences of transition fitting within the state defined parameters of a 'successful transition' (MoD, 2015a; 2018a, 2018b; Ashcroft, 2014), their narratives provide a wealth of insights into how the movement from military to civilian fields occurred amid a continuation of conflict, on various levels. The first theme in relation to a continuation of conflict, concerns the struggle that was experienced by participants inhabiting spaces and fields previously constructed as the 'outside', where the habitus and capital were frequently misaligned. Cooper et al. (2016) explain that to understand what is appropriate within a particular field – 'cultural context' – one must have 'cultural competence', akin to Bourdieu's (1990) description of a 'feel for the game'.

As it has previously been shown in Chapters 7 and 8, military life and culture operates within a relatively 'solid' and consistent set of field conditions (Bauman, 2000), with daily practice and strategy produced within strict rules and parameters of what is acceptable – albeit contradictory at times, and subject to change (MacLesich, 2015).

Bauman, (2000: 55), reminiscent of participants' discussions of the 'military bullshit' considered in the previous chapter, states:

disorder is the rule and order is the exception ... "Order", let me explain, means monotony, regularity, repetitiveness and predictability ... [The orderly world] is a tightly controlled one. Everything in that world serves a purpose ... even if it is not clear what that purpose is.

Upon return, participants' narratives detail their experiences of what can be conceptualised as their habitus and capital clashing with 'civilian' fields of culture and practice. As Gavin and Liam describe below, the often taken-for-granted aspects of 'civilian' life (*doxa*), where the habitus needs to be attuned to navigating fields full of choices and responsibility – operating in direct contrast to a military habitus that has been trained to follow orders, with limited opportunities for decision making and personal responsibility, especially in terms of finances:

Gavin: I remember coming out and my wife just asking me to sort the gas and leccy when we moved, and (laughs) fuck me, it was *compare this* and *confused.com* that. I mean, tell you what I never knew paying something like gas could be so complicated. It was horrendous. Think I set it up wrong and all in the end and she had to do it anyway. No idea what I'd have done if I was on my own like.

Liam: The army does everything for you. You have, your wage when you get paid at the end of the month, it lists your accommodation, your food. The net figure that goes in your bank account, that is *beer money*, you know? And you don't really have to worry about any of the rest of it (pause) *immediately* as a civilian, as you know, you've got bills coming out of your ears, for all sorts of things you didn't even think about.

Further, participants often discussed the tensions that arose between their habitus – aligned to team work, ‘selfless commitment’ (Gee, 2017), and living ‘through the group’ (Wadham, 2016: 280) – and a complex ‘civilian’ society based on individualism, competition, and consumption (Bauman, 2000, 2002):

Harry: I decided that I'm never going to work for anybody else again, because the world is full of morons and sycophants, and I've no intention of tolerating them again.

Liam: I came back, and I find that a lot of civilians, are financially orientated. They're just money motivated. That's *all* they care about, they, they don't *understand* why somebody would *want* to do something for somebody else. For free. They can't get their head around that.

Josh: Something so stupid as you can stand at the train station and the train can be half an hour late. Now that would never happen in the army. And people being late for work, and I know things can happen and people can be late and traffic and stuff like that, but it just didn't happen in the army, you get punished for it I think a lot of people are just out for themselves. Just out for what *they* can get, for what *they* can do.

Tom: Modern lives are horrendously complicated. And we didn't have that out there. We didn't have any of the cares that normal people have to care about. There wasn't even anywhere to spend money ... all you got to do is what you're trained to do. And look after your kit, look after your mates, and go and fight. It's a very, simple life. And it makes it hard to come back to what's perceived as the *bullshit* of real life. You know? The rat race. All the stuff that doesn't really matter. But apparently does, because everyone's so engrossed in it ... things are just things. They can

be replaced (pause) people can't. But things can just be replaced, so they don't really matter. And that was really difficult.

Although tensions between cultures upon the return to 'civilian' life are not new experiences (Lifton, 1974; Leed, 1979; Wild, 2003*a*, 2003*b*), returning from war in the 21st century 'civilian world' seems to involve an additional layer to the continuation of conflict.

In deep contrast to military life, which has remained relatively constant throughout history (Clausewitz, 1976 [1832]), twenty-first century society is characterised by fluidity, uncertainty, precariousness, no clear 'rules of the game' – albeit with norms, values, and cultures that are also forever moving and shifting in relation to apparent 'others' (Bauman, 2000, 2002, 2006; Beck, 2009, MacLeish, 2015). An undercurrent of intolerance ran through the data, where in 'civilian' life, those constructed as 'others' were now part of the 'inside':

Josh: in my opinion country's gone massively downhill but we won't get into that (HW: in what way?) well in general I just don't think, I'm from a little town, well a little group of towns and there used to be a lot of community spirit and I just don't think there is anymore ... these small towns are just, just becoming bigger and bigger (pause) once of a day you could walk down' street and say "hello" to everyone. Now I can't as I don't know 'em, and they don't say hello back cos they're ignorant.

Oliver: I lived in part of Birmingham before I joined which was okay. Erm, predominately white. Er, there was the odd black family. Weren't no Asians over that side of Birmingham at all. So, it was really classic Britain. Working families The main thing that I struggle to come to terms with

is now when you get on a bus and you sit there and you hear half a dozen different languages. And nobody speaks English. And you think, fucking hell, what's happened?

When talking about his time spent in prison, Oliver (and David) discussed how 'outsiders' previously defined as 'enemies' were perceived to occupy the same spaces 'inside', symbolically recognised as a source of 'risk':

On a normal wing, a lot of people won't say anything [about being ex-forces] because the extreme Muslim element. I did quite well there. Normally I'd just be, "the bloody Muslims". But it isn't. It's the extreme element. ...That you think, "hard to accept" (Laughs) But this day and age, you have to watch exactly what you say. You say the wrong thing and you're the one in trouble. Which is hard to accept.

(Oliver)

Oliver felt he could only disclose that he was ex-forces when on 'veteran wings' – where there was a shared level of (ex-military) trust. Oliver was conscious of 'Muslim extremism' within prison potentially generating conflict and violence as a result of his military service and symbolic combat capital – and thus, within this framework, presumably being defined as an 'enemy' himself.

This leads to a further key aspect of participants' experiences of the 'outside' becoming the 'inside', where the 'home world' is a physical and socio-political continuation site of 21st century warfare, with the violence of the 'war on terror' spilling over into (Western) 'civilian' fields:

Recently with the attacks [in Brussels], I was on the Metro when it happened at the airport and I heard a lady getting a call saying, “a bomb’s gone off at the airport”. I said, “right, okay, um, then I’m a little bit wary”. Now, it’s come back to me. So when I sit on the tube I sit facing the door so I can see the door, so, my back against the seat. So I, I wouldn’t turn my back to the door now. So suddenly it comes back. So it is in you, basically. ... I look at doors, vehicle movements, I’m looking at windows, ah, you know, any signs that could show that something could happen. These terrorist attacks here in Belgium have brought that back to me. So it’s residual and it remains. I, I think it will stay for the rest of your life, because in you there is always a sleeping soldier.

(Simon)

At the time of interview, the recent puncturing of ‘home’ landscapes via the attacks in Brussels (see Rankin and Henley, 2016) changed the field conditions and shifted Simon’s habitus and daily practices², awakening what many termed ‘soldier mode’ – which can be conceptualised as the frameworks of practice within the military habitus, aligned to fields of war.

The narratives of participants who had played an active role in fighting within the ‘war on terror’ (Gavin, Harry, Josh, Liam and Tom), contained an awareness of being within a ‘contradictory place’, explained by Walklate and McGarry (2015a: 191) as,

A place that is arguably refracted through, and reflected in, the contemporary ambivalent position in which soldiers find themselves in relation to the wider socio-political climate of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflict.

² This was also the case for Oliver, who talked about attacks in Birmingham (see for example, Dodd, 2016)

Below, a selection of narratives capture the essence of what Beck (2009) terms 'risk wars', based on a 'manufacturing' of the terrorist threat (Mythen, 2016), and mobilisation of 'liquid fear' (Bauman, 2006, see section 3.4.):

Josh: I think everyone's scared of everything aren't they. Everything's ruled by politics. But I won't get into that.

Liam: it is just not needed. It really isn't. ... If they put all that money that they put into war into, helping each other and into peace. And:: you know and it sounds utopian and what have you, but that is the reality of it. It is just people scared of their own shadow. And, people will say that *that* is naïve. But, they haven't lived my life. They're the naïve ones.

Tom: I think I have a better *perception* of war and conflict, from having been outside it, and now inside it. ... my general opinion is that Iraq was a pointless waste of time. Afghanistan was a pointless waste of time. You know, Libya. Look at all these countries. They're in fucking turmoil now. ... People, fucking civvies in this country [Britain], have this *luxury* of this high blown moral sense of things. And sit in this civilised, comfortable country. On an island. Isolated from, all this *shit* in the world. Making judgements about a bunch of young men trying to kill each other, because *we said they should!* You know?

Tom's quote draws attention to what was a further cause of the continuation of conflict, whereby participants had to wrestle with the (in)ability to frame their war experiences within a narrative that justified their actions during service (Butler, 2009). The following section will consider the lived experience of returning from war in the 21st century, amid a socio-political context of uncertainty, contradiction, and fluidity (Bauman, 2000, 2002).

9.3.1. Talking politics and war: 'but that's not my place'

It has been shown in Chapter 7 that the 'military habitus' is trained not to include (individual) frameworks for thinking about or engaging in politics. Within the data, it appeared that this aspect of the military habitus still operated within 'civvy street', with several participants claiming multiple times that politics was 'not their place' – apparently seeing political fields as somewhat 'off bounds'. Yet often within the same breath, participants then proceeded to talk politics, especially through the lens of war and military service. Lifton (1974: 39) explains,

Crucial to [the] partial resolution of survivor conflict is the veteran's capacity to believe that his war had purpose and significance beyond the immediate horrors he witnessed. He can then connect his own actions with ultimately humane principles, and can come to feel that he had performed a dirty but necessary job.

In the extract below, Josh's narrative reveals what was a prominent theme within the data, concerning a continuation of conflict through wrestling with the formation of a narrative to justify and make sense of 21st century war experiences:

Deep down you've got to believe you're there for the greater good, regardless of what politics have sent you there in there first place. I mean, it's not my place, but you've got all the arguments about oil and stuff like that when I went out to Iraq. But when you see something like Saddam Hussein's regime get toppled ... you kind of think deep down "I've done the right thing" (pause) then on the other side of the coin you know when you see destruction and death then you kind of, obviously think otherwise. That's going into the politics of it, but that's not my place, to do that. I'm not a politician. I'm the little man!

(Josh)

In contrast, Liam had made politics 'his place', completing a politics degree with his army resettlement support, and becoming politically active and involved within his local community. Although Liam explained his politics and 'frames of war' now rejected and actively opposed those of the military, his narratives contain an embodied tension present within several interviews:

I'm a vegan now! (both laugh) I don't even eat meat, you know. I care about animal welfare and:: the environment and things now ... I mean it's contradictory really, cos I don't agree with war and all the rest of it, you know if I had my way, we'd be changing things big time. But, at the same time, I don't know how you could replace that with something, because, I mean young people today are missing *something*. People *do* need a way to er, to have these outlets. And feel camaraderie. And, and to be *part* of a bigger picture. ... how are we going to give people that self-discipline? And that, that selfless commitment to things?

(Liam)

Here, Liam exposes a prominent theme within the data, that most participants were acutely aware of the harms of war and military service, and the ambiguous justifications the state provided for the 'war on terror', yet remained consistently reluctant to criticise the military.

After much reflection on the data, I have concluded that this reluctance, and what was at times a visible struggle within interviews, stems from the many claims that 'the army made me the person I am' (Tom) – meaning that by default, criticising the military institution was also perceived as directly criticising their very being, and thus all that

they embodied, believed and valued. In other words, criticising the military had the potential to disrupt their habitus, and thus the frameworks used to navigate life and generate practise. Further, participants all held the military in what appeared to be a somewhat paternal light, being grateful for all the military had offered them.

The majority of participants had successfully achieved upward social mobility – out of the social (state) harms discussed in Chapter 6 (Hillyard et al., 2004; Pemberton, 2016) – which had been the shared driver for enlisting. Criticising the military was therefore even more difficult, as participants appeared to feel ‘indebted’ to the (state) institution that had ‘made them’. The most striking example of this continuation of conflict, was elicited in Gavin’s interview. The loss of another close friend in Afghanistan caused a painful rupturing of the narratives he had held around being a soldier, and about the military institution:

A year and a half after I left, my mate I joined up with got killed (pause). He er, also by an IED (pause). And, er, fuck sorry this is harder to talk about than I’d thought. Er [clears throat] something in me changed that day. I was so angry. I was fucking awful to Kat. Treated her like shit. We almost got divorced (pause) I was angry, and I, I had no outlet. Think, I felt guilty I wasn’t there like. I couldn’t do anything, and, and it was my fault he joined up. I fucking encouraged him to join you know what I mean? And he fucking died, and I wasn’t there. And, I dunno just started to question everything I’d done. I’d lost so many mates already. Smithy had killed himself a month before (pause) I threw what was left of my kit out. Couldn’t bear to have it in the house. All the death. Killing. So, I didn’t wear my uniform for the funeral, I wasn’t proud of it. I hated it. You know, it was like I kind of [sighs] I think I did lose it for a while really (pause). They trained us knowing this would happen. We were kids you know what I mean? And we er, now know, I mean we all knew anyway like. But that Iraq was an

official pile of bullshit, you know that report that's just come out?³ And I just remember, well I keep asking over and over, "what was it all for?"

(Gavin)

The inability to easily narrate violent actions as 'just' (see McGarry and Walklate, 2011), or to draw upon the 'frames of war' that had been mobilised during military service (Butler, 2009, see 8.2.1.2.) – whereby killing was neatly justified – presents a further unique context to the combat capital gained within the 'war on terror'.

Combat capital is bound to the fields and landscapes of war in which it is acquired. At an embodied level, combat capital was thus gained through participants' bodily experience of responding to genuine threat and risk in Afghanistan and Iraq (see 8.2.1.). Yet within 'civilian' fields, this embodied capital becomes a lived source of tension, subject to internal and external questioning of the justifications for the soldierly body's actions. The memories of war carried within and upon muscles and flesh, no longer 'fit' within a clear narrative, yet cannot be easily shed, as they operate within the habitus as a 'present past', still guiding and structuring practice (Bourdieu, 1990).

Symbolically, combat capital is also bound to the landscape of war, however at a macro, socio-political level. As such, combat capital is grounded in contradiction, fluctuating greatly between holding positive and negative value, dependent on the field in which it is recognised. The 'unjust' nature of the invasion of Iraq (Kramer and Michalowski, 2005), and arguably the 'war on terror' more generally (Rasmussen, 2006), has meant

³ Gavin was referring here to the Chilcot Report (2016), which has very recently been published before the interview

that combat capital gained within the 'war on terror', is symbolically connected to the politically 'illegitimate' mobilisation of state sponsored lethal violence. Yet in contrast, as it was shown in 8.2.2., combat capital is also connected symbolically to the unique (macro and micro) conditions of warfare – with the additional layer of uncertainty and difficulty in fighting 'terror', causing it to be recognised as holding positive value and respect.

9.3.2. A lack of war: 'trying to find that adrenaline... but it's nowhere'

Although not unique to 21st century conflict, a prominent theme in relation to a 'lack of war' concerned a continuation of conflict within the body and mind, where the habitus no longer had the same legitimate frameworks and field conditions to release the trained and drilled levels of aggression maintained during service. Many participants explained that they played contact team sports, mostly rugby, as a form of release and as an opportunity for some form of camaraderie (and 'banter') – and/or became involved in the 'controlled' channelling of violence through boxing or mixed martial arts (MMA) fighting⁴. Participants narrated aggression as a demand of the physical body that had to be satisfied:

I like to play rugby, to get aggression out and stuff. And, I do a bit of fighting now as well. I've joined a fight club which is alright. Again it just helps to get aggression out, you know I need that release, and that's it really ... if I can get a game of rugby then I'm alright.

(Josh)

⁴ The data contains many parallels with Wacquant's (2004) work around 'bodily capital' and violence.

Simon also used fitness, and more specifically the pushing of the 'machine like' body to limits, in a bid to replace war during his transition to 'civilian' fields – especially to an office-based field of employment:

When I left, for two years I found it extremely hard ... the only way I managed to not return was by doing sports. I used to train 27 hours a week ... I did triathlons, I did Iron Mans, and basically I was swimming in the morning, running lunch time and training in the evenings. ... I'd leave the office and go running in the woods for three hours and come back. I joined a club here too. That really helped me get rid of that energy and aggression which you've got in the military. ... Sometimes I get these phases. Something triggers something in me and I go back to watch these videos of combat in Afghanistan ... They've got GoPros on, they're patrolling along a wall, suddenly bang, contact, one drops down. Say right, "let's get him out". And I says, well, "God, I want to be there".

(Simon)

As Simon's quote highlights, the intense levels of adrenalin during service, especially within the battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq, had created an experiential 'high', absorbed by the habitus and within embodied combat capital, which was addictive and yet very hard to replace in 'civilian' fields:

Oh yeah I miss the adrenalin rush. I mean, you've got somebody shooting at you. Your heart's pumping and (pause) you're always looking for it. I think, not that you're never satisfied, as that's the wrong word. But, not that I'm never satisfied (pause) I have been happy. You just maybe don't know it at the time.

(Josh)

Echoing Josh, Gavin also connected the chase for adrenalin to a period of unhappiness following the death of his friend, as discussed in the previous section (9.3.1.):

It's like I went back into squaddie mode ... trying to fight my way out of it, trying to find that adrenaline and release, you know? Er, but it's nowhere. I had nowhere to do it. Used to argue with my wife sometimes. Well a lot really. Took it out a bit on the doors at work⁵, kind of chasing that high which sounds so stupid. But I wanted that adrenalin. I wanted to escape and to feel that rush again, be back there somehow. I don't know. It's weird. But I ended up basically in a pattern where I'd get slaughtered and almost go out looking for fights. Usually found 'em like (laughs). Lasted around a year that did.

(Gavin)

For Gavin, a continuation of conflict also extended from his inability to seek help. The following section will consider how the military habitus and embodied cultural and combat capital, combined with the field conditions of 'post-conflict' life in 21st century Britain, generated barriers as well as access to help and support within the lives of several participants.

9.3.3. Help-seeking – 'we crack on, we show no weakness'

Within the data, all participants discussed the help and support available (or not) for veterans in a general sense, with David, Gavin, Oliver and Tom discussing their individual experiences of seeking help for various sources of struggle – including addictions, homelessness, and mental health. In addition to providing an insight into the experiences of what is becoming known about veterans' reluctance and/or struggles to seek and accept help (Albertson et al., 2017; Caddick et al., 2015; Dobson et al., 1998; Sharp et al., 2015), this section anchors participants' experiences within

⁵ Gavin was referring here to his job as a private security guard working on the doors of nightclubs

the socio-political context of returning to 'civilian' fields and drawing upon forms of support within 21st century Britain.

As such, it is important to mention that fieldwork took place in 2016, amid violent austerity measures and the continued roll-back of the welfare state – driven by neo-liberal frameworks (Cooper and Whyte, 2017), whereby the voluntary ('third') sector 'mop up' the work and support previously delivered and funded by the state (Corcoran et al., 2017; Corcoran, 2019 *forthcoming*). Although living in Belgium, Simon was still well connected to friends, family, and former colleagues who live in Britain, below capturing the essence of what this section argues:

Often you hear the guy in the pub, bragging about you know his action somewhere. He's not a veteran, not the real one. The real veteran is the one that remains silent and doesn't talk about his actions, and what he's done, and where he's been, you know? And they're the ones that need help. And who it's most difficult to get to. I had a friend that was homeless for quite a long time, and he said you know, "I've been trained not to need help or not to accept help, or not to ask for help". But anyway, what I wanted to say is that Falklands' statistics, look at the numbers of people who committed suicide because no one took care of it. Over an eight-year period I think we lost about 16 people ... [six] are suicide cases. A lot of suicide. People hanging themselves or, yeah, by other means ... The government is doing more. Not enough. Thank god we've got you know, the British Legion and Help for Heroes and things like that. ... I've got friends who are in prison for life, because they've killed or they've committed crime. Because I think they were not looked after.

(Simon)

Chapter 7 has shown that the military habitus and forms of military cultural capital are formed to view help-seeking behaviour as a 'weakness', often connected to those 'outside' (civilians), and thus a 'threat' to be avoided. As Walklate et al., (2014a) discuss, military training and culture operate on the training and reliance of individual and group level 'resilience', to allow for the mass withstanding and overcoming of immense levels of pain and suffering by employees, particularly in the delivery of violence within combat roles amid theatres of war. Josh explains:

As a good soldier you don't ask for help. You crack on. Especially as an infantry soldier. May differ in other regiments or whatever, but for infantry soldiers we crack on, we show no weakness.

(Josh)

At the time of interview, Tom had only very recently sought help for the struggles he had been having with his mental health, claimed to be connected to heavy alcohol consumption. He talked about the process of help-seeking at length. It had taken Tom a long time to realise that he was suffering from high levels of harm, resonating with Taylor et al.'s (2017; Taylor, 2017) work surrounding male veteran survivors of domestic and interpersonal violence:

I have crazy pills now. Er, anti-depressants I think they are. And they seem to work ... I was drinking a *lot*, and that eventually became a bit of a problem. It turned out, I guess there's issues from stuff I'd seen. And just the system I'd been in, that had affected me. And I wasn't even aware of it. ... I was like, "no no no. I don't need to see no one. No head doctor". But then there was one particularly bad incident ... I just burst into tears. It was all this shit to do with the army, and people we'd lost ... I was a right shit state. My mates sort of picked me up and took me to bed. Made sure I was alright. So then it was like, "I think Sam's right.

I probably should go speak to someone". Glad I did ... it does affect you. Even if you don't realise it. The stuff we did and that we do, it's not stuff that you would ever want normal people to have to do, It's not good for you. It's not good for anyone. But it's difficult to admit it.

(Tom)

Due to the supportive and positive 'recovery capital' (Cloud and Granfield, 2008), generated through the social capital held within his relationship with Sam and close friendships on the university campus where he lived, Tom was able to accept he needed support, and overcome the barrier within his military habitus that had been trained to attach stigma and notions of 'weakness' to help-seeking behaviours (Sharp et al., 2015).

For Oliver, this breakthrough in the habitus – shifting and aligning to 'civilian' fields in which frameworks of seeking help for his addictions could be considered acceptable – came during his time in prison. Oliver described what could be thought of as the process of developing the human capital to be able to help-seek, learning to recognise behaviours of drawing upon support as positive practices, rather than negative. In addition, because Oliver had been categorised and governed as a 'veteran offender' (see Murray, 2014), his military capital and combat capital were recognised positively in their symbolic form, opening access to fields offering specialised forms of support:

I've got a lot more information now about getting help. And I'm not frightened to ask to get help now. Whereas in the forces you're thought of as a weak piece of shit... when I told them [probation] I was a veteran, they helped put me in touch with this place [accommodation for veterans leaving prison], so I didn't have to stay in the hostel long at all. Moved here a couple of days later.

(Oliver)

David was also living in accommodation offered by a housing charity, designed specifically to support former military personnel (FMP) leaving prison. Like Oliver, David had spent time on a 'veteran wing' within prison, with his military capital facilitating access to homogenous bonding social capital (see 8.2.3.), as well as forms of tailored support – including the accommodation he was residing in at the time of interview. However, due to government cuts and the rolling back of funding by the state, the housing programme was forced to shift from being all-FMP, to also accommodating 'civilians' leaving prison. As such, what was originally a rare physical and social field in which David felt he 'fit' and could trust the people around him, became a further continuation site of conflict – undermining the help and support that had initially been offered as being specially tailored for FMP:

So it's changed a lot since I've been here. There's been a lot of arguing. A lot of complaints, err, a lot of raised voices with just them people not respecting and just not having the respect to, you know, respect people's things and just being loud. A lot of parties have been going on here a lot of drugs have been taken. And some of us are here to get away from all that crap ... to be honest it just reminds me of prison, you know, cos when you're in prison you look after yourself. Before it was, like, quite cosy, there was respect.

(David)

Within participants' narratives, it was clear that military and combat capital also created a hierarchy of 'worthiness' in relation to who fell 'inside' and 'outside' the ability to claim a 'victim' status, or at a more basic level, to accept that harm had been suffered. This hierarchy of worthiness had no apparent consistency within the data in terms of its specific qualifying categories. However, participants (Harry, Josh, Kelli, Liam, Mike, Simon, Tom) consistently made attempts to apply a framework for

assessing the ‘worthiness’ of claiming harm, usually based on ‘measures’ of combat experience.

Within these narratives, there was a tension between what appeared to be a continuation of the ‘conservative authoritarianism’ drilled within military training and service (Gee, 2017, see Chapter 7) – whereby struggle and suffering is reduced to an individualised framework of personal ‘failures’ and ‘weakness’ – and the knowledge and acceptance that these were actually widespread and systematic issues, connected directly to the military institution (and thus the state) at a macro level. In contrast to Simon’s quote above, where he was very clear to frame the post-service harms in relation to the state, other participants’ (Gavin, Harry, Josh, Kelli, Liam, Mike, Tom) narratives shifted between connecting post-service harms to the military, and the detaching or absence of the state from its responsibility to support FMP:

I feel sorry for those that have seen hard core fighting in Afghan and places like that. Those are the ones who will not be able to reintegrate back into civilian life. Ever. It’s unfortunate but they can’t use that excuse, that “oh it’s because the army made me this way”. Well, yeah and no. You can’t justify things that they do, beating people and fighting, and crime. But at the same time, yeah, they are fucked up. ... you’re an instrument, that’s what we do. Then you expect to come back, and just “turn it off lads”. Yeah, alright, just turn it off. So I dread to think how they feel. I’m jumpy a lot. ... a couple of lads who have been severely affected by the army, who have been blown up quite badly. People are going to them for help. Because they’ve established themselves quite well and dealt with scenarios ... But part of me is like, “I’ve sorted myself out, why can’t you lot?”. But some people do need help.

(Kelli)

Here, Kelli captures the tension of framing the 'soldier as victim' (McGarry and Walklate, 2011), as well as how embodied forms of combat capital – narrated as his friends' lived experience of surviving being 'blown up' – can translate into symbolic combat capital, being recognised and thus holding positive value, fostering support and the building of social capital.

This leads to the next section within this chapter, which explores several aspects of navigating military to civilian transitions (MCT) – drawing attention to how combat capital appeared to be a prominent feature within participants' experiences.

9.4. Navigating 'No Man's Land': Adapting to civilian fields

All participants narrated having to move through a period of varying lengths, where the habitus and forms of capital had to adjust to, and find, new fields and positions to occupy upon the return to 'civilian' life. Although it appeared the majority of participants had successfully achieved this, finding fields where they 'fit', several were still within this cultural and identity 'no man's land', or as Bourdieu (1977, 1990) terms 'hysteresis', at the time of interview – whereby their habitus and capital had not yet managed to align with 'civilian' fields. 'No man's land' – which has formed the title of this thesis – is thus used to capture the unanimous experience within the data, of having to pass through complex processes of adapting physically, culturally, and mentally to 'civilian' fields, embedded in struggle and conflict of varying degrees.

Within all interviews, participants discussed or were asked about what 'civvy street' meant to them – a term routinely and widely by serving and FMP (Cooper et al., 2016). These discussions consistently arrived at the same conclusion: that 'civvy street is

everything the military is not' (Gavin). However, Kelli was one of the only participants (Simon considered very briefly) to deconstruct this term in relation to the role the military played in constructing it:

They put a stigma on civvy street, and part of the military was scaremongering you. "What you gonna do when you get out? There's no jobs out there you know" ... Civvy street is everything that's not military. To people who are in the military and to everybody that are civilians, they don't understand what civvy street is. The terminology probably gets overused and I don't think military lads who say it understand it. You probably look at it as something to be fearful of. Or scared of. 'Cos years of it, it jogs memories of people constantly saying, "no jobs on civvy street. Nothing on civvy street. Civvy street this and that". But I'm having a good time at the moment, and well I wasn't qualified in anything when I left the army. ...The world outside of the military, that's what civvy street is. ... Not good, not bad, it's just a different world.

(Kelli)

Echoing what has so far been presented within this thesis, 'civvy street' was therefore constructed by the military as being the 'outside', attached to notions of 'threat' and 'others' – mobilised through discourses of 'the unknown' and thus uncontrollable, unpredictable, and uncertain field conditions (Bauman, 2006, 2007).

This section and its subsections will unpack this period of moving through 'no man's land' within 21st century society, which was indeed experienced as being uncertain, focusing on three main themes: finding identity; finding the right field; and finding purpose and 'giving back'.

9.4.1. Finding identity

Upon the return to 'civilian' life, all participants expressed how they had to negotiate their identity amid a period of losing the dense camaraderie and bonding social capital within the military 'family' (see 7.2.1.), and the recognition and thus value of their previously held symbolic capital (7.3.2.), whilst now residing in the 'different world' of 'civilian' life (Kelli). These 'losses' combined amid what I am conceptualising as the habitus being thrown into a state of 'shock' (Caddick et al., 2015), in that the usual frameworks for generating practice were no longer available, and/or were not acceptable within 'civilian' fields.

Bourdieu (1977: 79) explains that within the habitus, the 'man of the past' is not sensed,

because he is inveterate in us: he makes up the unconscious part of ourselves. Consequently we are led to take no account of him, any more than we take account of his legitimate demands. Conversely, we are very much aware of the most recent attainments of civilization, because, being recent, they have not yet had time to settle into our unconscious.

At the time of interview, Tom was receiving support and counselling for the difficulties discussed in 9.3.3. Below, Tom captures how through therapy he became conscious of having a 'past self', that had been 'covered over' and replaced with the 'military habitus' (see 7.3.):

It makes you realise, well certainly for me personally, how much of. *Whoever* I might have been when I was a kid. Whatever that personality was, had just been *completely*, not obliterated. But, covered over by the army. And had never been

acknowledged. You know what I mean? And actually talking about how *that* person [taps on one side of the desk] relates to who I am *now* [taps on the other side] I'd never considered it. Never talked about it. As a squaddie, you don't talk about stuff like that ... it was actually quite useful, and. Eye-opening. To actually take a close look at yourself ... what came out of the conversations, was just realising that *actually*. I've spent without realising it, a vast proportion of my time being generally unhappy. Which I'm not anymore.

(Tom)

Gavin also discussed consciously wrestling with what he identified as being three main identities and 'versions' of self:

You know I said about when I lost it, being violent and that? Well after that, 'cos like I said I almost got divorced over it all. I'd agreed to go and get some help. And er, they ended up finding out I'd served, and started to call me a veteran. I'd been called it before like, but when I was having all this therapy and talking about shit, I kept thinking about it. They er, I was made to talk about my life before. You know all the old childhood trauma shrinks love to dig into. But it came out that the version of me before I joined had. Well it was lost basically. I couldn't remember what I was like, what I enjoyed. ... Then there was obviously the soldier version of me. Who I thought I knew. Turned out there was a lot of shit I hadn't known about that me, and I think, I've worked hard to kind of. Distance myself from it. And then there's whoever I am now I suppose.

(Gavin)

Within this narrative, the label of 'veteran' being applied to Gavin during therapy appears to have triggered further reflection regarding his identity post-service, which was still slightly unknown at the time of interview. The following sub-section will consider perhaps the most prominent and striking theme within the data – whereby the label and notions of 'veteran' were passionately rejected.

9.4.1.1. 'I'm not a veteran': Rejecting the 'hero worship bullshit'

All participants discussed whether or not they were a 'veteran', either by raising the subject themselves during conversation, or through one of the last questions of the interview, 'are you a veteran?'. The UK government define a 'veteran' as: 'anyone who has served for at least one day in Her Majesty's Armed Forces (Regular or Reserve) or Merchant Mariners who have seen duty on legally defined military operations' (MoD, 2017: 2). Overwhelmingly, the initial answer involved a rejection of the term, with a justification connected to not having served in the World Wars, and/or due to their age (see Burdett et al., 2017):

Gavin: No. Am I fuck. No I'm not a veteran. I'm not an old man

Josh: No I wasn't in the second world war. No, I'm not a veteran ... although I did get a little badge.⁶

Kelli: Not really, I've got a badge that says I'm a veteran, that the army send you out when you leave and like, veteran that's for old bastards swapping war stories.

Liam: [loud exhale] it's a word for old people isn't it? That were in World War II I think, but no, no not really. No (pause) I'm a survivor I suppose.

Mike: I struggle with that term ... The image is, is engrained in there ... It's, you know, some old dude in a suit, with his beret, and you know, 30 kilograms of bling on the left side of his breast pocket. That, that is the

⁶ This is an example of the 'symbolic resources' (Hale, 2008) discussed in relation to symbolic capital (recognised 'value') and the rejection of civilian forms of cultural capital (see Chapter 7).

image. That's the image that we, we conjure whenever we hear the term veteran.

Tom: No, I don't want to use the term "veteran", because, that in my head is like people that were in World War II, and you know, *proper* wars.

An exception within the data was Harry, who when explaining that he was not a 'civilian' used the term 'veteran', both in its official definition (MoD, 2017: 2), and interestingly, in relation to the 'military habitus' (see 7.3.) – the embodied frameworks that generate practice based on past experience:

I mean, technically, if you serve one day, you're a veteran. So, I do feel like a veteran, because I am a veteran. And there are things that I do, and things that I say, where I, I have been conditioned. And you can't deny that, because I have. It's the training process of breaking someone down, and then, building them back up. And at no point has anybody broken me down, to build me back up as something else. So, I am a veteran, and that's how I am.

(Harry)

Within all interviews, participants proceeded to deconstruct the term 'veteran' further, providing rich narratives around what a veteran identity meant to them, who was perceived to fall 'inside' and 'outside' of this construction/category, and concerning tensions within the term (Burdett et al., 2017). Although these definitions varied in the specific 'qualifying' details, all were anchored in some form of 'ranking' in regard to the symbolic value of combat capital – inherently bound to the fields, or as it has been discussed, 'landscapes' of war in which it is embodied (see 8.2.1.1.). As such, there was

a range of contradictions in who qualified as 'veteran', highlighted below through Simon's narrative:

HW: Are you a veteran?

Simon: No. No. Only recently, because I applied for a pass in Cyprus, they said, "oh you should get a veteran's card". Well, I'm not a veteran because I didn't go to war. I know it's got nothing to do- you're an ex-service person. But no, I don't see myself, no ... It's difficult with who's a real veteran, but I would say anyone who's fought in a recent war ... the Falklands. ... Iraq. Afghanistan you know. These sort of wars.

As it has been shown in Chapter 8, Simon served in landscapes of war within Northern Ireland (Jamieson, 1999, 2015). Yet Simon, like other participants, placed a lower value on his war experiences, claiming others to be more 'worthy' of the title. However, as it was shown in the extracts above, those who have served in these recent wars, do the very same thing – also devaluing their own symbolic forms of combat capital in relation to 'proper wars' such as the World Wars (Tom).

Narratives around who is a 'veteran' were also deeply bound to notions of 'heroism', with a unanimous rejection of a 'hero' label. While there is evidence of military personnel historically resisting 'hero' discourses and narratives (Lifton, 1974; Leed, 1979), the 'blurred' and ambiguous nature of 21st century conflict (Kaldor, 2012) generated a further unique layer within participants' experiences of serving in, and leaving, the 'war on terror'. As it has been argued in section 9.3.1., participants struggled to access the 'frames of war' that enabled life taken to remain 'non-grievable' within 'civilian' fields (Butler, 2009). Thus, participants struggled to narrate the embodied experiences, costs, and consequences of war as 'just'. Within discourses of

'heroism' is the notion that the practices, or qualities leading to the application of the term 'hero', are to be in some way admired and celebrated by others.

Extracts from Tom's interviews have been chosen to support the following discussion, however a number of rich narratives could have been used⁷. Tom's explanations of why he is not deserving of the term 'veteran', along with what he termed 'hero worship bullshit', acutely capture how participants (Gavin, Harry, Josh, Kelli, Liam, and Mike) resisted discourses of celebrated, 'heroic', violence being applied to their bodies and actions. This was mainly due to the negative combat capital attached to the socio-political landscapes of war in Afghanistan and Iraq, but also included other socio-political contexts:

[veterans] are people that *actually* fought for our freedom, you know? Because if they'd have lost, we'd all be either talking German, or at the bottom of an oven in a concentration camp. They, there was an entire generation that had to die, to fight for us to continue to be what we are. Fighting some shitty little, terrorist organisation in Afghanistan, or Iraq, or wherever. It's *not* for the freedom of our country. It's fighting for political ends.

When I first joined, squaddies were just seen as drunk dickheads. People weren't interested in squaddies. Or that's how it *felt*. You had the foot and mouth crisis, so we were there *burning* people's livelihoods. Then with like the whole Iraq, Afghanistan, and there's all these body bags coming back. And it's like, "well yes ... that's what happens" you know? There's a cost. And suddenly it was all like, "*our boys. OUR heroes. Our this, help for heroes, help for this, help for that*". Oh you know, they're *not* fucking heroes. ... NO. I'm not a fucking hero. You know it's almost an insult to people that *are* heroes you know? ...

⁷ Tom's full narrative provided in full in Appendix R

The *millions*, probably millions that have died since we started that war. You know, the fucking *hundreds of thousands* of civilian casualties, countless dead soldiers. The destabilisation of that *entire* region. The rise of IS. The entire villages slaughtered by them (pause) that's a much bigger number, I mean, I'm not even a mathematician. But that's just fucking common sense. That is a much bigger number, of dead people. Than if we'd have just left Iraq alone. But:: George Bush, and Tony Blair. They wanted their war. And you know, if you look at it in that sense. It's just a numbers game. What's better? More dead people, or less dead people? I would suggest, less dead people. So, the war's a complete failure.

(Tom)

What therefore emerged within the data, demonstrated through Tom's words above, was that at a fundamental level, participants were unable to frame a coherent narrative around their experiences and actions within the 'war on terror' as having a positive 'purpose'.

Participants' personal sacrifices; the sacrifices and loss of their friends and colleagues; the ripple effect of violence and conflict, carried within and upon their bodies from the physical battlefield, to the continuum of conflict 'at home'; combined with the knowledge that 'there are more Taliban than there was at the beginning' (Simon), making the war 'a pointless waste of time' (Tom) – were all bound to the embodied combat capital gained within the 'war on terror', and thus the symbolic value it holds. 'Finding identity' upon the return to 'civilian' fields, therefore involved finding or developing frameworks within the habitus that allowed for these 'truths' to exist and be somewhat accepted, whilst also guiding and structuring future practice in a positive way. As such, this lack of positive purpose and justification in 21st century warfare, and

thus the 'negative' value of their embodied and symbolic combat capital will be returned to in section 9.4.3., in relation to participants 'making good' (Maruna, 2001) through 'giving back'.

9.4.1.2. 'I'm not a civilian, I'm not a squaddie, I'm an ex-squaddie'

Another dominant theme within the data surrounding the search for identity, was how all participants had developed what could be thought of as a 'modified military habitus', with a similar discussion of a 'modified military self' provided by Williams et al. (2018). Most participants narrated the initial experiences of navigating through a cultural 'no man's land' – between military and 'civilian' fields – as being fraught with struggle and conflict, characterised by feelings of not 'fitting' within one's surroundings, and thus describing 'hysteresis' (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990):

Gavin: When I came out I remember feeling lost ... it's weird because obviously we moved back to where I used to live, but I just didn't fit in there, it felt different.

Liam: I had a real identity crisis for a while, and you know, you've been all these things, that you've earned and built up. And I felt like, "who am I now?". (pause) you're always- you'll always be, if you've been in the forces, you'll always be ex-army.

This 'identity-challenging "limbo" state (Bamber et al., 2017), or an unsettled, liminal (Vab Gennep, 1960) state where they felt as outsiders to both the military and to the civilian population' (Williams et al., 2018: 8), was resolved by participants developing practice, and thus readjusting their habitus to accept and be attuned to existing in these

'in between' sets of field conditions, whilst still being somewhat aligned to military fields:

Kelli: I think I'll always be an ex-squaddie like, you know it's one of those things. It's deep down in the moral fibre of who served. Yeah I'm just an ex-squaddie, that's what I'd label myself. I say I'm an ex-soldier from the daily routine of doing your push-ups, your sit-ups, your running, your cycling. Just I mean I tell myself now, "could I still pass the fitness?". I'm like, "what fitness test? They're not testing you". But it helps I suppose.⁸

Tom: I actually think of it like. I'm not a squaddie. I'm not a civilian. I'm an ex-squaddie. And there's a distinction, there's a difference there, that will always separate me (pause) Maybe in the things that I say, or in the way that I think. The way I *behave* sometimes. Erm (pause) and just how I perceive myself. And not for a second in thinking I'm *better* than anyone... Just different.

A significant aspect to this 'identity-work' (Williams et al., 2018), involved finding fields in which this 'modified military habitus', along with embodied forms of capital, could operate comfortably and with the potential to thrive.

9.4.2. Finding the right field

At the time of interview many participants had found fields, whether employment, social, and/or physical, in which they felt that they 'fit' and thus belonged. A significant aspect of this search involved finding fields in which their embodied combat capital 'fit' and could be positively drawn upon within practice. Combat capital referring to the

⁸ This is an example of the 'bodily capital' developed within a military habitus formed within field conditions of 'testing' and 'proving' oneself, as discussed in Chapter 7.

collective value of: **Social capital**, through maintaining a sense of belonging (7.2.1.), that although could never replace what had been held within military life, went some way to bridging the loss of a 'military family' (see 9.2.). **Cultural capital**, such as finding fields in which the resource(s) and framework(s) of normalised violence (see 7.2.) and 'squaddie banter' (see 8.2.3.) could be accepted. **Human capital**, in the ability to mobilise skills and practices learned and absorbed by the habitus (See 7.2.1.). **Bodily capital**, through maintaining a (high) level of strength and fitness, whilst also *using* the body within daily practice. And **symbolic capital**, where these above forms of capital are recognised as holding 'value', as well as the (recognised) value held in ranks, qualifications, and medals [i.e. tours completed].

Below, Simon captures how his current field of employment delivers all of the above, driven overwhelmingly by his specific job role and practices – which he defined as 'protocol, logistics, and events':

I'm very happy here because I'm with people who are dedicated, hardworking people. So it's a buzzing place with lots of action, and to me, it's perfect. It's the perfect combination after I've left the military. I lead a four-man team now, um in the office, a quad core team ... and it's very much military style ... and the "nightmare", logistics, that's my job. To move people around. And this is where I've got great skill. This is what they pay me for. ... originally I had this driving job, I didn't know Brussels. But I could map read ... I can memorise the routes very quickly ... when you read a map, you have reference points, and I had reference points ... and now, sometimes I work for two days and two nights, so you know having that stamina, super important. In a way the military has brought a lot to me. Everything I do here, everything I know is based on my, my military is my education as I didn't go to college.

(Simon)

This feeling of the habitus, capital and field being well aligned – what Bourdieu (1990) describes as being a ‘fish in water’ (see 4.3.5.) – was also present within Kelli’s interview, surrounding his job within the fire brigade. Below, he provides an example of how his embodied combat capital directly enhances and facilitates his field position as a firefighter:

I’m jumpy a lot. But sometimes but that’s more with that fucking thing [points to his pager]. But I mean, the one time we got mortared, that was a deep sleep, didn’t have a clue what was going on. “What the fuck is going on here?” Next thing I’m in flip flops, helmet, body armour and my rifle and I’m still half asleep thinking, “right, what the hell happened here?” So that. But that’s something good for this because the majority of the time I’m the first man in. I’m out of bed at 100 miles an hour and out the door and here and I’ve, I’m still in my pyjamas. And everyone’s like, “how did you get here so quick?” I’m like “I don’t know. But, but I’m here, I’m fine”. So I’m quite good that way. It’s, I’m happy with that.

(Kelli)

Gavin worked in security and explained how initially, he had worked for an agency ‘on the doors’ of nightclubs. However, the field conditions of this work appeared to allow embodied forms of ‘legitimate’ violence to be employed, which became a problem during the difficulties surrounding the loss of his close friend discussed earlier (see 9.3.2.):

So I got the job working on the doors with the agency, wasn’t too bad initially. Had a few scraps here and there like (laughs) Every night was different. But er, like I said when my mate died, and I lost it a bit [sighs] ... I was a prick to be honest. And it was just too easy, when these big lads are pissed and giving you

shit you know what I mean? So Kat made me get out of it. Her Dad got me a job working as the security at [local factory], and I've been here ever since. Found it so fucking boring at first, but I genuinely really like it now. Doesn't involve much security like! But it's what I need. It's chilled whilst still being kind of disciplined and (laughs) full of routines!

(Gavin)

As Gavin's narrative above includes, social capital – particularly the 'strength in weak ties' as argued by Granovetter (1983) – played a vital role in how participants gained employment, as well as housing, post-service (Harry, Josh, Kelli, Simon, Tom). At the time of interview, Gavin, Kelli, Mike, Simon and Tom were also in long-term, committed relationships where they felt supported and loved – providing a further 'home' field in which they belonged.

Despite most participants gaining employment or embarking on a university degree relatively quickly after leaving, many expressed how they had felt the struggles of modern employment fields – characterised by precariousness, uncertainty, and a strategic dismantling of worker's rights and sources of support (see for example Tombs, 2014, 2015; Tombs and Whyte, 2007, 2010a, 2010b). As Bauman argues:

Once the employment of labour has become short-term and precarious, having been stripped of firm (let alone guaranteed) prospects and therefore made episodic, when virtually all rules concerning the game of promotions and dismissals have been scrapped or tend to be altered well before the game is over, there is little chance for mutual loyalty and commitment to sprout and take root. (2000: 148)

Participants (David, Gavin, Harry, Josh, Simon, Tom) described the first couple of years after leaving the military as moving between temporary jobs, fixed-term, and zero hours contracts, and seeking employment from various agencies – where work patterns were rarely consistent.

In contrast to other participants, David explained how he left the military straight from Colchester prison, with no resettlement support offered, ‘to nothing and no one’. Due to an absence of bonding or bridging forms of social capital, he struggled to find work, and when he did, it was often very limited hours, within ever changing work patterns and shifts – rarely generating enough income for him to support independent living. Below, David’s narrative captured what he referred to as a ‘downward spiral’, leading to the ‘revolving door’ of prison (Padfield and Maruna, 2006) that appeared to stem from a state of hysteresis – where his habitus and limited forms of capital were poorly aligned to ‘civilian’ fields, generating extreme struggle and conflict:

I bummed around for a bit, worked a little bit, you know where I could. And I ended up getting in trouble. People in the street, fighting you know, just crazy things. I met my girlfriend at the time and she got pregnant with my daughter. Think I was 21, we’d only been going out a couple of months. I was a binge drinker, and she said, “we’ll have this kid, it’ll quieten you down” (pause) and I just went the complete opposite ... I started getting arrested, started going to court, ended up going to prison. First time was 18 months for assault ... my missus come in and left me ... I was in HMP Gloucester and since then I’ve just been spiralling out of control. The drugs went from smoking a bit of weed to sniffing a bit of cocaine. And then I started smoking crack cocaine. And before I knew it I had a habit and I’m doing not nice things to get money. Causing crime and stuff like that ... so the last seven years I’ve been in and out of prison.

(David)

David was homeless and slept rough for a number of years in between the numerous periods spent in prison⁹. In the sub-section below it will be shown that for David, prison provided the field conditions he was searching for – of discipline, routine, stability and predictability – everything that he and others experienced 21st century society not to be (Bauman, 2000, 2002).

9.4.2.1. From one institution to another (to another)

Several participants had ‘found the right field’ within institutions – namely prison (David) (Oliver had also been employed as a prison officer); university (Liam, Mike, Tom); and the fire brigade (Kelli) – which offered a familiar sense of belonging to an ‘inside’ that had been lost when leaving the military (see 9.2.). Tom explained how after leaving the military for the first time, there had been a period of homelessness and sleeping rough. His rejection of the ‘rat race’ – modern life that operates on capitalist models of competition and consumption – had been so strong that he craved escape, eventually leading him to re-join the army (see 6.3.). When Tom left for the second time, he had arranged to use his army resettlement to undertake a degree, finding that the field conditions of living on a campus-based university greatly facilitated his transition:

It was just like swapping one institution for another. You know it’s just like an army camp really. I probably felt, maybe a little bit (pause) *isolated* as a mature student. Just because, you know all the eighteen year olds, running around. ... So I just wandered down to the postgrad bar erm (long pause) been stuck in

⁹ This involved a period of homelessness and sleeping rough in Paris – see biography in Appendix B

there ever since to be honest ... I mean that place has been an absolute life saver ... whenever I go in there's a friendly face and someone you can have a beer with.

David talked at length about how his life had been characterised by a search for stability, structure, and discipline, below explaining how he found these desired field conditions within prison:

It was like I was craving for that environment again ... the worst thing what ever happened to me is I went to prison the first time because that was it then. It was just like, "ahh", I got that environment back ... You get institutionalised in that sort of environment. And because I've been [sniffs] I've been in that kind of environment pretty much half my life, you know, with care homes ... and having that, sort of, routine all the time and having someone tell me what to do. Then it's hard when you've got to think for yourself ... the structure and that, it was just like. I kind of just tried to do things then to stay in, got into fights. I was only out a couple of weeks and I was banged back up ... But I just need that structure now you know? That I originally had in the army. Kind of got that from care a little bit. So I've moved, well really from one institution to another, to another.

(David)

In a further continuation of conflict, and one of the main driving forces behind David craving the field conditions offered within prison, was that in addition to being a space and place of discipline and structure, it also provided a much needed site in which he could tackle his addictions:

So, I've been in jail 10 times now. It's about seven years. And I, kind of, um, when I was going back to prison, like, it wasn't enough. Being in prison I wanted to be away from everyone else, so ... I took a screw hostage because I wanted to go to the segregation unit. ... because there's a lot of bullying in prison, and it's

mainly drugs ... So I had to be in seg, away from them all, and I can say they're animals because I've been there myself ... I always find when I go to prison I keep away from all the drugs and use that as my, like rehabilitation. So I've never used in prison. I've always used that as my get healthy, get my mind straight. Because you can't do that in civvy street. There's no support or help, or space away from all the crap you know?

(David)

Again, the context of this narrative is important, and must be framed in relation to the state. David had moved from the care system; to the military; to prison(s) (military and subsequently 'civilian') – all of which are state institutions. David had spent several years sleeping rough, unable to access housing support. He was constructed and 'managed' as 'low priority' (David), due to being a 'single male' within the austerity driven housing crisis in Birmingham (Paton and Cooper, 2017; McCulloch, 2017). As Sim (2017: 195) states:

The pitiless rolling back of already beleaguered welfare services has resulted in the demonization and subsequent detention of increasing numbers of these individuals – neoliberalism's "social junk" – who have been hoovered up and violently and mortifyingly swept into the criminal justice system.

At the time of interview, David still appeared to be suffering from the mismatch of his habitus and capital, within the punitive field conditions of 21st century society – unable to generate the practices required, and at times *forcefully* demanded (Cooper and Whyte, 2017), to be able to secure stable field positions – such as independent living and employment. For example, David had been sanctioned for missing a meeting about his jobseeker's allowance, due the train having been delayed following his monthly visit to see his daughter. However, through his military capital, he had been able to

access a positive source of support and stability within the housing organisation, allowing him to begin to rebuild the relationship with his daughter, which had become his key driver and purpose for staying sober.

9.4.3. Finding purpose and 'giving back'

The last section within this final data chapter considers what was another striking theme, surrounding participants' quest for 'purpose', as well how for many their daily practices are now generated within a framework geared towards wanting to 'give something back' (Josh). Becker (1973) argues that a fundamental driver is to feel that one has purpose – stemming from the knowledge that we as humans are mortal beings, with death therefore being an inevitable and ever-present feature of life. That within our lives, we have 'achieved something', and perhaps even left a lasting, somewhat permanent legacy behind, to show for our time on earth (ibid.).

At the end of each interview, if it had not already emerged naturally through conversation, I asked participants, 'and what about the future?'. Answers to this question varied greatly in terms of specific details, with those who had found fields in which they comfortably 'fit' expressing long-term, general aims and goals – such as getting married and having children, to the short-term, very specific goals expressed by David (and Oliver), who was in precarious and uncertain field conditions:

Just taking each day. Every day, every day the main thing is to stay clean, keep out of trouble, and try and see my daughter and be there for her best I can. I don't want to put too much on myself because it can be overwhelming and I could end up relapsing do you know what I mean. So yeah, just each day at a time.

(David)

However, these narratives about the future were consistently anchored in notions of 'purpose', 'belonging', and making a positive impact in the world by 'giving back'.

Not uncommon to narratives surrounding MCT, is that the rapid and large-scale losses associated with leaving the military – of being part of something 'bigger' (Williams et al., 2018; Ward, 2017) – also involve a loss of purpose that has to be replaced somehow within 'civilian' fields. Section 8.5. discussed how a key factor in leaving the military was the prospect or reality of starting a family, generating what was described by Gavin as an immediate purpose – of being a father – that was no longer compatible with military service. Being a parent was also framed as a being a strong sense of purpose in a number of participants' lives (Harry, Josh, Kelli, Liam, Simon). Below, Kelli considers parenthood, as well as finding fields in which his military habitus 'fit' - narrated through his quest to find purpose:

Anyone leaving the military seek a place and a purpose. I was missing something. So obviously I joined the Police and Special Constable, that gave me a bit of purpose, but I realised I didn't like it. This [being a fire fighter] was always the goal. It gives you a purpose so to speak, you know, it's, it's not the be all and end all, don't get me wrong. I think when kids come along I'll have to retire from here because kids are more important. ... I probably had a couple of years where like what I was saying, mentioned before there's no purpose. And I need a purpose in life to do things you know, civilian, you know, soldier you shoot at things you know and police officer you arrest people. They like doing that. Fire-fighter I rescue cats but it's a purpose in the world. ... I mean maybe when I become a parent then I'll find a different purpose then that will fulfil that role you have in your life that you need. But yeah the, those sort of borderline

meaning in life I need a purpose, I need it, I'm a worker bee but I need a purpose.
I can't be a worker bee without a purpose.

(Kelli)

For Tom, his purpose in life was deeply connected to his girlfriend. However, within his discussion of looking forward to moving in together, his narrative also reveals the sense of purpose he gained through learning – to live a more settled and ‘permanent’ life, expressed through the owning of physical objects such as books:

I was drinking too much anyway, but it's nice to, it's easier because it's kind of doing it *for* someone. Because I'm doing it for Sam, because we want to move in together. And she wants to have babies ... so that's the focus of my attention. I care about Sam and not much else ... but the next thing is moving which I'm looking forward to. I'm not a squaddie anymore, and I'm doing well at uni and stuff. I need to stop living like a squaddie. I've always existed in these tiny little rooms. Whether the barracks, or here now on campus. You know a space the size of a room. Has been my whole world. And I need to stop doing that. And start living like a human being ... I can start to actually own (pause) *own* stuff again, you know? Rather than this, obsessive compulsive need to not own too much stuff, in case I have to move on (pause) which comes from being a squaddie. So, I like, I want to have like a bookcase. With lots of nice books on. I want a proper house. With *separate rooms!* (laughs) I want books on a book shelf. ... but yeah, in my immediate mind, it's just her.

(Tom)

During the analysis of Tom's interviews, it emerged that the accumulation of knowledge had become a valued purpose in life, appearing to represent a distancing from his former violent life as a soldier – which he connected to being ‘too stupid to do anything else’ (Tom, see 6.2.2.). Having a book case with books on it, therefore seemed

to operate as a 'symbolic resource' (Hale, 2008), (symbolically) representing a forward movement towards a 'positive' building of cultural and human capital, experience, and purpose through his degree.

As it has been shown in sections 9.3.1. and 9.4.1.1., participants who had served in 21st century conflict were unable to frame a narrative around their war experiences as having a 'positive' purpose. Further, they had to wrestle with the knowledge that their actions, including lethal violence within the 'war on terror', had contributed to what is now well known to be lasting damage and turmoil in the Middle East (McGarry, 2017; Stansfield, 2007; Whyte, 2007, 2010). This included harms to the communities they had been embedded within and at times personally helped (see Duncanson, 2009), as well as to the wider socio-political landscapes of Afghanistan and Iraq. As such, participants recognised that their embodied combat capital – acquired within, and thus still connected through their bodies to the landscapes of war – held a negative value. The known damage that their 'taking' had had – albeit of course within a wider context and mass chain of hierarchical responsibility, along with the state sponsored mobilisation of 'legitimate' lethal violence and weaponry – generated a desire to 'give back'.

Several participants discussed attempts to rebalance the harms (see Maruna, 2001) or in some way 'repay' the costs of war, through holding a very clearly defined sense of purpose – allowing the habitus to generate strategy and practice that has a positive impact within the world. At the time of interview, Josh was working as a residential support worker for young people aged 15-18 within the care system:

If I can make a difference in one in every 50 kids that I see, 'cos I work primarily with kids from bad backgrounds, going down a bad road themselves, and you can see your younger self in them, you know before I joined the army. So if you can get them on the right track ... it's rewarding you know. I dunno maybe the sense of giving something back. ... maybe that's why I do what I do. 'Cos it feels like I'm giving something back. I don't know.

(Josh)

Liam explained how he had found purpose in politics, generating a wealth of measurable positive impact through his (tireless) local campaigning for the Liberal Democrats:

We went from being, and this constituency was as hard-core Tory as they get, we went from *nothing*, from zero to er, they got 37 and we for 36! It was just a whisker... one of the first ever doors I knocked on, somebody wanted a nursing home built ... in the end we got a three-million-pound nursing home built! Which is now transforming lives ... it was phenomenal really. All resulting from this decision to get into politics. The amount of things that happened, even like getting people disabled parking spaces. And just giving something back.

(Liam)

The final extract to be included here, is taken from Oliver's interview. Despite not having served in 21st century conflict, Oliver also discussed feeling the need to 'give back' – described as being connected to his military service, alcoholism, and resultant divorce, as well as stemming from the behaviours that had resulted in his

imprisonment. Below, he narrates how he found purpose in what was an incredibly dark time in prison, on an indeterminate (now abolished) IPP sentence¹⁰:

I stood up to a few bullies in prison, not for myself like¹¹ ... he shared my cell and was picking on these lads with mental problems. And one day he beat living crap out of this lad, and had keyed him. And come back, got rid of his t-shirt, got the key and threw it out the window into the yard next door. Evidence all gone. ... I called the officer and told them. And that started my change. That was the first step that I took to looking after myself as well as others, And it was the first time in a long time that I'd felt really good about myself ... yeah you can give money to charity, but it's just money to charity. It's not physically doing something. And I think to make yourself feel good about yourself you have to go that step further. And that's what I did then, in that incident. In that moment. I gave something back.

(Oliver)

9.5. Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated how the concept of 'combat capital', along with field theory (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990), can provide a useful theoretical framework for making sense of the complex movements and transitions between military and civilian fields. It has placed participants' experiences of return within the socio-political landscape surrounding fieldwork, arguing that leaving the military in the 21st century involves additional layers to the continuation of conflict. Firstly, conflict operated on a continuum, from the embodied combat capital and traces of war anchored in the physical landscapes of the battlefield, to the macro, socio-political landscape(s) of the

¹⁰ 'imprisonment for public protection' – abolished in 2012 but not for existing prisoners (see Allison, 2017; Beard, 2017; Bettinson & Dingwall, 2013). Allows the state to detain IPP prisoners indefinitely.

¹¹ Oliver explained this was because he was 'ex-military' - i.e. another example of symbolic combat capital in action, where he was not the target of bullying as he gained instant 'respect' due to his veteran/ex-military status

'war on terror' – founded in ambiguous and contradictory justifications (Kramer and McInnes, 2003; Michalowski, 2005), amid a blurring of boundaries at every conceivable level (Kaldor, 2012; Degenhardt, 2007, 2010, 2013). Secondly, conflict was also inherently connected to the state, stemming from returning to the field conditions of 21st century British society – characterised by individualism, fluidity, and structural precariousness (Bauman, 2006, 2007), amid the punitive rolling back of the welfare state within violent austerity measures (Cooper and Whyte, 2017).

It has been shown that the military habitus and embodied forms of capital must pass through a period of 'no man's land' – whereby all participants initially found themselves to be 'outsiders' to both military and 'civilian' worlds, having to survive field conditions fraught with conflict and struggle, with no clear 'rules of the game' (Bauman, 2000). Most participants had successfully navigated this transition at the time of interview, adjusting to a 'modified military habitus' (see also Williams et al., 2018) – often referred to by participants as being an 'ex-squaddie'. This modification involved the development of practices within the habitus, generating strategy in order to assume and maintain 'civilian' field positions such as employment or a place at university.

For all participants, practise was still guided by frameworks aligned to military fields, drilled into their bodies and minds – and thus habitus - during military training and service (see 7.3.). This has been shown to include the military habitus acting as a barrier to help and support, through help-seeking behaviour still being seen and thus constructed as a form of 'weakness' to be avoided. Further, for some participants, the habitus was still guided by an embodied desire, and at times 'need', to still be a

'machine' (Gavin, Josh, Simon) – continuing to test and push the body to extremes in a search for adrenalin and/or as an outlet for the trained levels aggression (and sometimes violence).

This chapter has therefore argued that for those who had found fields in which they could use these military frameworks, and forms of embodied and symbolic capital attached to service (Gavin, Josh, Kelli, Liam, Simon), the transition to 'civilian' fields appeared to be less fraught with conflict. Social capital – in particular the 'strength in weak ties' found in bridging capital (Granovetter, 1983; Putnam, 2000) – greatly assisted in 'finding the right field', through information about job openings, and equally importantly, facilitating a greater socialisation within 'civilian' culture (see Cooper et al., 2016). In contrast, those who held low levels of social capital (David and Oliver), and a habitus and capital misaligned to the fields in which they occupied (Tom), the return to 'civvy street' was, and still is, characterised by conflict.

An important finding presented here, concerns the lived experience of the difficulty or for some an *inability* to frame their actions within the 'war on terror' as 'just'. Due to being immersed in socio-political 'civilian' fields, where the 'frames of war' (Butler, 2009) previously drawn upon are disrupted, participants appeared to be unable to construct narratives around 'experiencing, perpetrating and witnessing' in Afghanistan and Iraq (McGarry and Walklate, 2011) as holding a 'positive purpose'. As such, it was demonstrated that participants seemed to recognise the negative value of their embodied and symbolic combat capital, leading to a passionate rejection of a 'veteran' label, and to the resistance of their violence being celebrated through 'hero worship bullshit' (Tom). Instead, it has been further shown that participants made

efforts to re-dress the balance of harm, by embodying a positive purpose that allowed them to feel they were in some way 'making good' (Maruna, 2001) and 'giving back'.

Finally, I hope that it has become clear through this last data chapter, that despite the majority of participants expressing how their service had been enjoyed and had generated the upward social mobility they had originally enlisted to achieve, there is a continuation of conflict, deeply rooted in the state, that runs throughout the data and thus within the lives of participants. The traces of war carried within and upon participants' bodies must be connected to the state (see McGarry, 2017; Walklate, 2016), allowing its role in (re)producing the many harms that have been raised within this thesis to become visible and thus accountable. Combat capital has been argued and demonstrated to be a 'thinking tool' which helps this process – bringing the state firmly within the scope of analysis and thus critique.

I will now offer a final conclusion, tying together the four data chapters through the main theoretical framework of 'field theory' employed within this thesis (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990). The concept of 'combat capital' developed within these data chapters will be presented as a new 'thinking tool', helping to make sense of the complex experiences of serving in, and leaving, 21st century theatres of war. Further, combat capital draws attention to the ways in which serving in theatres of war can be more or less 'valuable' – dependent on the field conditions in which it is formed and subsequently recognised. This final conclusion will therefore anchor the thesis within the socio-political landscapes of 21st century warfare, as well as the 'civilian' field conditions of 21st century society – through the lens of participants' experiences and voices elicited within this research.

CHAPTER 10

Conclusions:

Combat Capital, a New 'Thinking Tool'

At night with the stench of death in the air
Blood on our hands.
We don't stop to care, fathers brothers sisters an' mothers
We don't stop to ask why.
...
As friends fall we still March on
Never taking time to reflect if it's
Wrong.
We are solders we March on.

'Josh', *Not a Metaphor but a Soldier's View*, 2017
(Appendix L)

The chapters presented within this thesis have built upon one another, demonstrating a number of novel contributions to knowledge. Most notably, this includes the new concept of 'combat capital' – the embodied and symbolic 'value' of war experience (Wilkinson, 2017) – which helps to answer the overarching research question that has guided this thesis:

- How do experiences of serving in 21st century theatres of war impact on the return to civilian life?

Through the voices and experiences of 10 (white, male, British) former military personnel (FMP) – nine who served within the Army in a variety of combat roles, and one in the RAF as a chef – it has been shown that experiencing theatres of war in the uniquely 'blurred' nature of 21st century warfare, impacts on the return to 'civilian' life qualitatively differently compared with veterans of previous conflicts (see Leed, 1979; Lifton, 1974). Crucially, it has been demonstrated that this difference is bound to an additional layer of uncertainty, both within the physical (battle)field conditions of the 'war on terror', and within the precarious socio-political landscapes in which the war was waged, and to which participants return in 'post-conflict' 21st century life.

In response to the significant gaps in knowledge identified in Part I of the thesis, the research question was answered in Part II by addressing the three main aims, to:

1. provide a theoretical framework, including the new conceptual tool of 'combat capital', to better understand military to civilian transitions.
2. explore what 'civvy street' means and looks like for British veterans, and whether a 'post-conflict' life exists in the 21st century.
3. understand and explain how British veterans make sense of their identities post-service.

This conclusion will move through these three aims, to demonstrate how they have been achieved. In light of the findings presented in the thesis, recommendations will be made for policy makers and for future research.

10.1. From One Field to Another: Forming Combat Capital

Using Bourdieu's (1977, 1990) 'field theory' and 'thinking tools', this thesis breaks new ground in 'criminology and war' (Walklate and McGarry, 2015), adding 'combat capital' to knowledge (Wilkinson, 2017), and providing a comprehensive theoretical framework to better understand military to 'civilian' transitions (MCT). This conclusion ultimately argues the need for policy makers and future research to think carefully about MCT as a complex movement from one 'field'⁷⁴ to another. When moving between military and civilian fields, former military personnel (FMP) must navigate through a period of adjusting and adapting to the drastically different field conditions⁷⁵ of uncertainty in 'civilian' life ('civvy street') (Bauman, 2007), compared with the highly structured, disciplined, and 'masculinised' violent institution in which they have been deeply conditioned to operate (Cooper et al., 2016; Godfrey 2008; Hale, 2008).

⁷⁴ 'Field' captures the physical, social, and symbolic 'arenas' (spaces) in which people operate, and the field conditions of these spaces. Bourdieu (1977) maintains 'field' is bound to the notion of struggle, where humans as social beings enter into competition for resources and positions within the field.

⁷⁵ For words, concepts, and terms highlighted in grey (or in blue if reading electronically) see Glossary

It was shown in Chapter 7 that the 'military habitus' (Maringira et al., 2015) was formed during initial basic training⁷⁶, which was described unanimously by participants as the body and mind being 'broken down' and 'built back up' amid hostile field conditions (Ben-Ari, 1998; Gee, 2017; MacLeisch, 2015; Woodward, 2000). The 'military habitus' has therefore been argued to be an embodied framework of 'soldierly practice' (Cooper et al., 2016; Hockey, 2009, 2017; Jenkins et al., 2008; Maringira et al., 2015), drilled deeply into the body and mind through intense repetition and (individual and group) punishment. The 'military habitus' appears grounded in an inherent need to 'prove' oneself 'worthy', through the constant passing of 'tests'; a trained enjoyment of challenge and violence; and a refusal to display any form of (perceived) 'weakness'.

Chapter 7 highlighted how participants had to draw upon and quickly build a range of resources (*capital*), in order to survive the forceful (re)structuring of their fundamental sense of identity and 'being' (*habitus*). I have referred to these resources as 'military capital'⁷⁷, which are formed in response to the often-painful struggle of navigating and succeeding in basic training (*field*), whilst developing 'soldierly practice'. 'Military capital', along with the 'practical mastery'⁷⁸ (Bourdieu, 1977) of war experience discussed in Chapter 7, form the core components of 'combat capital' (Wilkinson, 2017).

⁷⁶ Basic training, or 'phase 1', is the initial 10-14 weeks of military service which recruits must pass through in order to enter 'phase 2' trade training and gain employment

⁷⁷ Swed and Butler (2015) have also referred to 'military capital' – comprising of human, social, and cultural capital (see p. 126). – within the context of the Israeli military, and subsequent employment in the 'hi-tech' sector. Swed and Butler's (2015) conception of 'military capital' does not appear to include bodily or symbolic capital.

⁷⁸ 'practical mastery' – the coming together of theory (military training) with practice (soldiering), to perfectly align with the field (war) – resulting in survival

'Combat capital' is formed when 'military capital' (a collection of militarised resources) combines with the unique experiences gained in the physical battlefield, to take on further embodied and symbolic 'value' – recognised both "inside" and "outside" of military fields. 'Military capital' includes: social, cultural, human, bodily, and symbolic forms of capital, aligned to military fields and the battlefield. The value of embodied and symbolic 'combat capital' is anchored in, and thus dependent on, the landscapes of war – the physical and socio-political (battle)field conditions in which it is acquired and subsequently recognised.

Potentially the most novel contribution to knowledge offered by the thesis, is the theoretical 'bringing together' of 'military capital' with the uniquely embodied experiences of the physical and socio-political (battle)fields of war, absorbed by the 'military habitus' through the soldier's body – captured by the concept of 'combat capital'.

This framework forms a new 'thinking tool' to help conceptualise the collection of (embodied) resources that FMP bring to bear on their MCT – 'military capital' and the additional layer (if acquired) of 'combat capital'. Crucially, by anchoring this 'thinking tool' in the socio-political context in which war experiences and MCT take place, 'combat capital' holds the power to trace how militarised forms of capital and war experiences are carried into 'civvy street' through the body (embodied combat capital), and how these resources are drawn upon and responded to during transition(s) (symbolic combat capital). Combat capital therefore adds a novel theoretical lens to the growing literature of 'criminology and war' (Walklate and McGarry, 2015a, McGarry and Walklate, 2016), to help understand how FMP's embodied and symbolic 'value' of war experience – 'combat capital' – may fluctuate on a positive to negative continuum of 'worth'.

Through the voices of the FMP who took part in this research, Part II of the thesis has illuminated MCT as a period of fundamental struggle and ‘ordinary suffering’ (Bourdieu, et al., 1999), and at times, as an acute conflict that must be overcome. It has been shown that at the heart of this struggle, is the lived experience of the ‘military habitus’⁷⁹ (Maringira et al., 2015) having to ‘shift’ (often painfully⁸⁰) to the new field conditions of post-service life. This involves finding and/or adapting to ‘civilian’ fields, in which embodied forms of ‘military capital’⁸¹ and if acquired, ‘combat capital’⁸², can be drawn upon in order to align with the demands of ‘civvy street’ in the 21st century. Chapter 9 conceptualised ‘finding the right field’ as a period of ‘no man’s land’ that must be navigated, survived, and passed through, in order to ‘fit’ within ‘civilian’ life; grasp secure field positions; and (re)discover a sense of belonging and purpose in post-service life.

This thesis urges that in order to fully understand MCT and to begin to think about how better to support FMP during this complex process, the ‘military habitus’, along with ‘military capital’ and ‘combat capital’ (the militarised resources FMP bring to post-service life), should be traced back to the military field conditions in which they are originally formed and (forcefully) constructed (Chapter 7). Mike’s and Simon’s narratives (chapters 7 and 8) provide a rare insight into these field conditions, where they experienced the ‘dark side’ of social capital (Portes, 1998, Putnam, 2000). Their ‘othering’ (Mike’s due to his sexuality and Simon’s due to being identified as ‘non-

⁷⁹ Embodied frameworks for understanding and responding to the world, structured through past experience which structures future practice, and aligned to military fields.

⁸⁰ Bourdieu (1977, 1990) maintains that when the habitus must ‘shift’, this is usually marked by a period of suffering, in a range of lengths and severities, while the very frameworks of being are re-worked in order to try and grasp the practice and capital required in the new field conditions

⁸¹ Defined in Chapter 4 as the collective resources of social, cultural, human, bodily, and symbolic forms of capital acquired in basic training and military service.

⁸² The ‘value’ produced when ‘military capital’ and war experience combine.

British'), adds weight to the importance of exploring how the power structures and hierarchies of the military institution are experienced by minority groups (Higate, 2003, 2012a). This includes LGBT personnel (Bulmer, 2011; Heggie, 2003) and black and minority ethnic (BME) groups, whose voices and experiences are absent in this research. I stress the need for further exploration into the military institution as being in need of rigorous and critical analysis and discussion, building on the work of McGarry and Murray (2017, 2018).

10.2. 'Civvy Street' in the 21st Century: A Continuum of Conflict

Within this thesis, 'combat capital' has made visible the 'traces of war' (McGarry and Walklate, 2011), carried within and upon former military personnel's (FMP) muscles and flesh, revealing a continuum of conflict within the lives of participants. By applying the theoretical framework of 'combat capital' and 'field theory' (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990) to the rich narratives of 10 FMP, the thesis meets the second aim of the research, and provides a rare glimpse into the complexities, uncertainties, and precariousness of 'civvy street' experienced in 21st century life (Bauman, 2000, 2007). This research has used 'combat capital' to 'peer through the looking glass' of the individual former soldier (Walklate and McGarry, 2011), revealing how this continuum of conflict is deeply connected to the state and its institutions, running throughout the life course of participants in various forms and degrees of severity. Chapter 9 argued this continuum exists on two main levels: firstly stemming from the continuation of the 'war on terror' in the domestic ('civilian') sphere (Bauman, 2002; Beck, 2002; Murray, 2016), and secondly, anchored in the disadvantaged socio-economic conditions of 'civilian' life.

In Chapter 8, the voices and experiences of participants presented speak directly to the gaps in literature identified in Chapters 2 and 3. A rich insight has been provided into the lived experiences of being employed by the British state to deliver violence within the uniquely 'blurred', ambiguously 'justified', and legally contested American and British led 'war on terror' (Degenhardt, 2007, 2010, 2013; Kaldor, 2005, 2012; Kramer and Michalowski, 2005; Loader and Percy, 2012; Whyte, 2007). In Chapter 9, 'combat capital' provided a framework to understand and theorise what appeared to be an embodied tension surrounding the 'traces of war' (McGarry and Walklate, 2011). Embodied 'combat capital', grounded through participants' bodies to the battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq, was entangled with (negative) symbolic 'combat capital', due to an inability to coherently narrate the violence of war in post-service life as having 'positive' purpose. The 'combat capital' gained in Afghanistan and Iraq, is therefore inherently connected to the arguably 'unwinnable' and 'unending' nature of the 'war on terror' (Mythen, 2016; Rasmussen, 2006; VanMuster, 2004) – leading to an extension of conflict that permeates experiences of MCT.

'Peering through' the individual lens of the 10 FMP who took part in this research has also made a much broader continuum of conflict visible – beginning in 'life before' enlistment in the Armed Forces (Chapter 6), and deeply connected to state institutions, including the care system and the criminal justice system (Chapter 9). Chapter 5 discussed the innovative, in-depth methodology used within this research. The method incorporated free-association narrative interviewing (Holloway and Jefferson, 2008), with the use of photos and objects 'meaningful' to participants (Jenkins et al., 2008; Halkier et al., 2011). This generated rich narratives which spanned the life course,

allowing the thesis to fully emerge from, and be grounded in, the voices and experiences of those who took part.

The rich insight into participants' 'life before' military service (Chapter 6) becomes essential when conceptualising MCT as a movement from one field to another (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990). Part II of the thesis demonstrated how the 'pre-military habitus and capital' are essential to fully understand and explore MCT. Those who entered the military with a wealth of positive forms of capital and a habitus aligned to the building of 'military capital', appeared to leave in a much better 'field position' to navigate the complexities of MCT, compared with those who entered the military with low levels of resources (see also Gee, 2017). This finding has significant implications for MCT, especially when connected to the recruitment strategy of the Armed Forces, which specifically targets areas of socio-economic disadvantage to fill lower ranks, predominantly for active (Army) combat roles (Morris, 2017*b*, 2017*c*).

Chapters 6 and 9 deeply connect here, resonating with the literature (Ashcroft, 2014; Howard League, 2011; MacManus et al., 2012), to demonstrate how the vast majority of participants returned to the same 'civilian' fields from which they had enlisted to 'escape'. However, these 'home' conditions, characterised by what Pemberton (2016) terms 'autonomy harm', were described by participants to have worsened upon return, amid the socio-political context of the 'violence of austerity'⁸³ (Cooper and Whyte, 2017). 'Military capital' and 'combat capital' clearly hold a wealth of positive transferable potential within MCT, demonstrated in the narratives of many

⁸³The documented damage caused by cuts to public spending, as a means of reducing public debt in the wake of the Global Financial Crisis of 2007/9 – under the name of 'austerity measures' (Cooper and Whyte, 2017).

participants. Yet through 'field theory' and 'combat capital', this thesis has drawn attention to the significant reduction and restriction in the opportunities to 'spend' these forms of militarised capital, resulting from the increasing uncertainties of 21st century life in 'civvy street' (Bauman, 2007). This thesis has demonstrated what can happen when FMP are unable to transfer 'military capital' and 'combat capital' to post-service life, and/or their 'military habitus' is unable to shift and align to 'civilian' fields.

Using Bourdieu's 'thinking tool' of *hysteresis*, Chapter 9 argued that the mismatch between the 'military habitus', 'military capital' and 'combat capital', and 'civilian' fields, created avenues for 'ordinary suffering' (Bourdieu et al., 1999) and for acute harm(s) (see Albertson et al., 2017; Ragonese and Murray, 2017). This suffering has been shown to stem from the struggle to grasp secure field positions needed to survive and thrive in 'civilian life' – including employment, housing, support networks, and sources of happiness. The findings and the theoretical framework of 'combat capital' (Wilkinson, 2017) offered in this thesis, present a strong case for the continued need for research into how MCT are experienced, and to specifically consider the ways in which the challenges of transferring militarised forms of capital, including 'combat capital', can be understood and supported.

10.3. 'Who Am I Now?': The Modified Military Habitus

To address the third and final aim of the research, the four data analysis chapters (6,7,8, and 9) presented within this thesis, demonstrate how 'combat capital' and 'field theory' (Bourdieu, 1997, 1990) reveal a deep insight into how 10 British former military personnel (FMP) make sense of their identities post-service. I have chosen to use the words of Liam for the title of this section. Liam discussed his identity in the interview

by initially posing a question to himself, of 'who am I now?'. This resonated with many of the discussions in which participants engaged, surrounding their post-military identities. These identities appeared to be actively (re)constructed and reworked within the interviews, indicating a still unresolved narrative of 'who they are now'. However, firmly present within all discussions around post-military identities, was what Chapter 9 identified to be a 'modified military habitus' (see also Williams et al. 2018, who discuss a 'modified military self').

The data shows all participants constructed their identities as being somewhat 'between' the military and 'civilian' worlds – no longer able to claim a 'soldierly' identity (as no longer in the military), yet making clear they were not, and never would be, 'civvies'. Participants inserted their former military identity or status into their framing and descriptions of 'who they are now', including 'ex-forces', 'ex-Army', 'former soldier', or most commonly, 'ex-squaddie' (Chapter 9). Participants explicitly communicated their awareness that their military training and service had fundamentally altered their very sense of *being* – their *habitus* – referring to their views, behaviours, experience, practice, and frameworks for understanding and responding to the world.

The findings of Chapter 9 offered a novel insight into how the military habitus is drilled so deeply through the body to the mind, it still structured participants' daily practice in 'life after' military service, in varying forms. An important finding for continued future research, concerns how the military habitus created barriers to participants' abilities to engage in help-seeking behaviours (Caddick et al., 2015; Cooper et al., 2016; Sharp et al., 2015). Echoing the literature (DeVisser et al., 2009; Dobson et al., 1998;

Tsai et al., 2012), several participants discussed how it had taken them several years to admit that they needed help and support, and often even longer to actually accept this support. This should be traced to the formation of the military habitus within the military institution, designed and aligned to fields which reject practices of accessing and/or accepting help.

One of the most striking findings presented within Chapter 9, was the unanimous rejection of the term 'veteran' as being part of post-service identities. Several participants acknowledged that by definition they were 'technically a veteran', where the Ministry of Defence define a veteran as, 'anyone who has served for at least one day in Her Majesty's Armed Forces (Regular or Reserve)'⁸⁴ (MoD, 2017: 2). However, discussions around a 'veteran' label, and subsequently around the term 'hero', frequently shifted to reveal a collision of the politics and 'frames of war' (Butler, 2009), with embodied 'combat capital'. This resulted in an often-passionate refusal of the term 'veteran' being applied to participants' identities and bodies, and notably, to a celebration of their violence in war. Building on the work of Murray (2015, 2016), which calls for a thorough 'reimagining of the veteran' and the violence of warfare, this thesis argues the need to further explore the experiences and 'identity work' (Higate, 2012*b*) of former military personnel, where a 'post-conflict' life no longer appears to exist. Instead, the continuum of conflict demonstrated in this thesis, suggests that 'civvy street' in the 21st century is a potential 'no man's land'.

⁸⁴ The definition also continues to state, 'or Merchant Mariners who have seen duty on legally defined military operations' (MoD, 2017: 2)

10.4. Final conclusions

The final chapter of the thesis was opened in the same way that Chapter 1 began, through the words of 'Josh' – a former British soldier of the Army Infantry. Josh served in the 21st century 'war on terror', and 'experienced both the traumatic and residual impacts of conflict in a more commonplace way' (McGarry and Walklate, 2011: 905). The extracts from Josh's poem, *Not a Metaphor but a Soldier's View* (2017, Appendix L), have been used to frame this final chapter, as they powerfully capture the lived experience of holding the collective resources ('value') of 'combat capital' (Wilkinson, 2017). Josh's words, 'Blood on our hands', draw attention to the embodied traces and costs of war, deeply connected to the physical battlefield. These costs are grounded by Josh in relation to the symbolic 'worth' of war experiences, anchored in the socio-political context(s) in which he (and others) struggled to frame lethal violence as being 'just': 'As friends fall we still March on / Never taking time to reflect if it's /Wrong'.

As with the majority of participants who took part in this research, Josh fits the state definition of having 'successfully transitioned' from the military to post-service life, measured by the sole indicator of 'employment outcomes, six months after leaving' (MoD, 2018a: 1, see also Ashcroft, 2014). However, as the pages of this thesis have clearly demonstrated, experiences of military to civilian transitions are far more complex than simply 'getting a job'. Despite the limitations of this research, most notably the small sample size, the findings presented in this thesis powerfully resonate with wider literature, highlighted throughout Part II. The deep insight gained into the life course of participants, and the richness of the theoretical framework offered by the new 'thinking tool' of 'combat capital' (Wilkinson, 2017), renders the experiences and

voices of David, Gavin, Harry, Josh, Kelli, Liam, Mike, Oliver, Simon, and Tom, too significant and too loud to ignore.

To conclude, I do not wish to remove the positive aspects of military service, expressed by the majority of participants. However, as Bourdieu (in Bourdieu et al., 1999) advocates, as researchers we have a responsibility to make harm and suffering visible, especially when connected to state institutions, whenever and wherever it is found.

Producing awareness of these mechanisms that make life painful, even unlivable, does not neutralize them; bringing contradictions to light does not resolve them. But, as sceptical as one may be about the social efficacy of the sociological message, one has to acknowledge the effect it can have in allowing those who suffer to find out that their suffering can be imputed to social causes and thus to feel exonerated; and in making generally known the social origin, collectively hidden, of unhappiness in all its forms, including the most intimate, the most secret.

Contrary to appearances, this observation is not cause for despair: what the social world has done, it can, armed with this knowledge, undo.

Bourdieu, *The Weight of the World*,
in Bourdieu et al., 1999: 629

I now close this thesis by giving the final space to 'Josh'.

'We have to believe that we are in
The right or how could we sleep at
Night'

Not a Metaphor but a Soldier's View, 2017

Appendix L

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Appendix A

Glossary

- 21st century warfare:** British military engagement from the year 2000 onwards, mainly referring to the wars in Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003) led by America and Britain under the banner of the 'war on terror'.
- Austerity:** Systematic government cuts to public spending, claiming to reduce public debt. Cooper and Whyte (2017: 1) document the 'devastatingly violent consequences of government policy conducted in the name of "austerity"', stating:
'[This book is] about the toll of death and illness and injury that so-called austerity policies have caused. It is about the life-shattering violence cause by decisions that are made in parliamentary chambers and government offices. This book is about the violence of politics.'
- AWOL:** Absent without official leave
- Berm:** artificial ridge/embankment - Tom described crossing the berm between Kuwait and Iraq during the initial invasion.
- Boardwalk:** Tom explained that in Kandahar, Afghanistan, the military based for US and UK troops a large wooden boarded walkway had been erected 'round a dusty football area', with a hockey rink, volley ball area, café's and shops.
- Bodily capital:** The embodied and symbolic value of skills, strength, and endurance of the body and its abilities, which becomes recognised and thus 'worth' something dependent on the field conditions in which it is found. Bodily capital originated within *Body and Soul* (Wacquant, 2004), where Wacquant trained to be a boxer, and provided a rich insight into the cultures and 'masculine' bodily practises that formed a resource (capital) within the field. Bodily capital is a component of the new concept of combat capital, developed within this research.
- Capital:** Although 'capital' can be equated to being purely a 'resource', within this thesis, I aim to maintain Bourdieu's notion of capital, whereby capital is *a resource tied to field*

conditions. For example, bodily strength and endurance are a resource, however they only become 'bodily capital' in a field in which they are needed to obtain field positions and achieve field goals – such as operate heavy machinery and weaponry in the field of war.

- CESSAC:** Church of England Soldiers', Sailors' & Airmen's Club
- Clearing:** Military term used to capture the process of 'removing' enemy forces and 'eliminating' organized resistance within an assigned area – done through destroying, capturing or forcing withdrawal of enemy forces. Can also include the removal of civilians to secure an area. 'Clearing' usually precedes advancement of territory.
- Combat capital:** The 'value' produced when 'military capital' (social, cultural, human, bodily, and symbolic forms of capital) combines with war experience. This value is grounded through the body to the (micro level) physical conditions of the battlefield, which in turn are anchored in the (macro level) socio-political landscapes and 'frames of war' (Butler, 2009) in which war is waged. As such, combat capital operates on a continuum of positive to negative value, fluctuating in relation to the contexts in which it is formed and subsequently recognised.
- Comms:** Communication systems
- Convoy light:** The 'tiny little light that glows, on the back axle of a vehicle. So the one behind you can see it. Like a tiny little firefly thing, that you follow' (Tom).
- Cultural capital:** Cultural capital originates from the work of Bourdieu (1977), to capture the valuable resource of understanding and being able to draw upon and perform the often unspoken values, behaviours, and practices deemed 'acceptable' within a certain field (i.e. doxa). Cultural capital is a component of the new concept of combat capital, developed through this research.
- Dog tags:** two metal plates worn on a metal chain around the neck – have military ID number on and are used to identify bodies in war (Mike explained the smaller tag was to tied to a big toe in the event of death)

- Doxa:** The ‘rules of the game’ within a field, usually learned and embodied through culture (cultural capital), to reveal the often unspoken but widely understood practices and ‘knowledge’. Doxa is not fixed, changing with the conditions of the field and through action (i.e. agents can resist), but operates within hierarchies of power and domination (Bourdieu, 1984, 2000). There can be multiple doxa in one field, and one (or more) doxa can operate across fields. For example, ‘masculinity’ as a collection of practices, values, and hierarchies of power, hinges on an ideological construction of an ‘ideal’ type of man (not a tangible reality, Woodward, 2000). As shown in Chapter 6, ‘military masculinity’ is not taught directly, but is embodied and absorbed by the habitus during basic training, structuring practice in relation to cultural capital and doxa.
- Economic capital:** This refers to what is perhaps mostly associated with the word ‘capital’ – meaning money, and tangible assets such as property. Economic capital does not feature heavily within the thesis, reflecting its minimal use by participants.
- Embodied** Embodied is used within the thesis to refer to practices, experiences, and/or field conditions absorbed within the body. For example, in Chapter 7, participants talk about how the intense repetition of bodily movements – ‘drills’ – within basic training, led to the body responding automatically, without conscious thought, to certain situations including firing a weapon. These skills of operating weaponry can therefore be described as having been *embodied* – i.e. carried within and upon muscles and flesh.
- Epistemological:** The theory of knowledge – justification and rationality for beliefs, explained through the starting points and processes of ‘how we know what we know’.
- Field:** *Field* refers to the physical, social and/or symbolic space(s) in which agents (people) are located – and can exist on multiple, often overlapping levels. Essential to the notion of ‘field’ are conditions of struggle which agents must ‘navigate’ in order to grasp or maintain field

positions. This is a fundamental 'thinking tool' of Bourdieu (1977, 1990), and must be understood in relation to habitus, and capital. Ultimately, the field conditions of a particular space ('field') contribute to the guidance of 'strategy' – to determine behaviours and responses to the social world. Yet 'field' can also be *shaped* by and through people's actions.

Field conditions:

These are the 'characteristics' of a field, which Bourdieu (1977, 1990) argues operate on many levels, and generate 'push' and 'pull' type effects on agents (people) and strategy. For example, within the 'field' of war, field conditions may consist of the physical characteristics of the landscape, such as the urban locations of Iraq demanding a 'push' towards different 'strategy' – tactics and behaviours – to the field conditions of the mountains. Further, field conditions in war may also operate on a 'symbolic' level, where the military culture and hierarchy may still demand a 'pull' towards behaviours of protocol and procedures, which may potentially create tension in relation other field conditions – such as immediate threats to life.

Field positions:

Bourdieu (1977, 1990) is clear that any social interaction takes place within a struggle – whether conscious or unconscious – for resources, in order to grasp opportunities and 'security' – termed 'field positions'. These may be explicit positions, such as a job, or may be symbolic, such as respect earned within the military hierarchy, which determines the 'positions', i.e. 'ranks', of people in order of perceived and/or recognised 'importance'. Field positions are inherently linked to struggle, and to Bourdieu's notion of hysteresis – which captures the inability to grasp field positions, due to a mismatch between habitus, capital, and field.

FMP:

Former military personnel – used interchangeably within the thesis to refer to 'veterans' – i.e. those who have been employed by the military.

'Get your head down':

Meaning 'get some sleep'

Glasshouse:

Military prison, usually meaning Colchester prison.

Habitus:	<i>Habitus</i> is the internalised and embodied framework for making sense of and responding to the world, where past experiences structure and guide future practice. In other words, who we are at this precise moment in time, is the cumulative result of all that has gone before – and this (past) embodied history informs and shapes our (future) decisions and behaviours. ‘Habitus’ is not fixed, shifting and adapting to ‘fit’ the field in which it is located, and in relation to the capital held. Bourdieu (1977, 1990) stresses that <i>habitus</i> is most significantly shaped by early experiences, which hold the greatest weight in the structuring of future practice.
Head Shed:	Person occupying the highest position in the chain of command
Human capital:	Human capital refers to the ‘value’ held in a person’s sills, knowledge, and aspirations. It can be embodied – such as the intensely ‘drilled’ practises within basic training which can be delivered automatically, and also recognised symbolically, such as degree certificate indicating a certain level of ‘valuable’ learning, i.e. skills and knowledge. Human capital is a core component of the new concept of combat capital, developed within this research.
Hysteresis:	When a person’s habitus and capital are poorly aligned to the field and doxa, resulting in a feeling of being a ‘fish out of water’ – in that the field conditions are noticeable ‘wrong’, leading to extreme struggle and an inability to grasp field positions.
Ibid.:	Ibid. is used within academic references (the circular brackets containing the author(s) last name, year of publishing and potentially a page number) to indicate that the information being discussed has come from the same source as the previous reference used.
ITC:	Infantry Training Centre
Military capital:	Military capital has been developed through this thesis, particularly within Chapters 4 and 7, to refer to the collective resources (forms of capital) developed initially

within basic training – including bodily capital, cultural capital, human capital, social capital, and symbolic capital – that are the components of the new concept of ‘combat capital’ developed within this research. Swed and Butler (2015) have also referred to ‘military capital’ – comprising of human, social, and cultural capital (see p. 126). – within the context of the Israeli military, and subsequent employment in the ‘hi-tech’ sector. Swed and Butler’s (2015) conception of ‘military capital’ does not appear to include bodily or symbolic capital.

- MoD90:** Service ID card
- Neo-liberalism:** Neo-liberalism refers to conditions and political ideas that favour the ‘free-market’ forces of capitalism, often connected to ‘free trade’, and the ‘unregulated’ flow of goods, achieved through the de-regulation of control in the economic market and business, often transferring control of economic factors away from the public sector, into the private sector.
- NAAFI:** Navy, Army, and Air Force Institutes (NAAFI) – the official trading organisation of HM forces, providing retail and leisure services to the British Armed Forces (NAAFI, 2018). Participants regularly used ‘NAAFI’ to refer to the military bar that they drank in: ‘we were in the naffi, having a beer and that’ (Gavin).
- OP:** short for ‘operation’
- Phenomenology:** Phenomenology concerns the study and philosophy of *experience*, where ‘reality’ is connected to how objects and events, ‘phenomena’, are experienced within consciousness – in other words, how we understand, react, and make sense of the physical world around us.
- Porridge:** military prison sentence – usually served in Colchester, aka the Glasshouse: ‘you might get a few weeks porridge for that’(Josh).
- Positivist:** An approach to criminological research which is tasked with ‘testing’ something – often in the search for the ‘causes of crime’ – which must be in some way ‘measurable’. This style of research is predominantly focused on the individual, often neglecting the wider,

socio-economic conditions surrounding behaviours defined as 'criminal'. In the process, this type of research often obscures or removes the role of the state in the analysis of the topic, and in the findings presented.

Practical mastery

Practical mastery is a term used by Bourdieu (1977) to refer to the coming together of theory and practise within field(s), through *doing*. For example, Chapter 7 details how participants learned the theory and practises required for war, but only when these skills came together with practical knowledge of the field, could theory and practice combine to form 'practical mastery'. Bourdieu explains practical mastery – where habitus, capital, and field are well matched - leads to a feeling of 'ease', where forming strategy and navigating the field conditions comes apparently 'naturally'. The direct opposite of practical mastery is hysteresis.

Recovery capital:

A framework to understand the collective value of social capital (supportive networks), physical capital (money and assets), human capital (aspirations, skills and health), and cultural capital (beliefs, values and attitudes, linked to social conformity – i.e. 'norms'), in the transition from drug dependence to 'recovery' – coined by Cloud and Granfield (2004, 2008). Recovery capital fluctuates on a positive to negative continuum, dependent on the context in which it operates. Recovery capital formed the basis for the creation of the new concept of 'combat capital', created and presented in this thesis.

SA80:

NATO issued assault rifle

Social harm(s):

Social harm, also referred to as 'zemiology', is the study of harm. This is an approach developed by critical criminologists (see Hillyard et al., 2004; Pemberton, 2016) in response to the narrow definitions of 'crime' within Criminology, often restricted to laws and individual behaviours defined as 'criminal' by policy makers. Social harm seeks to draw attention upwards, widening the focus to consider the harms caused by organisations and by the state. 'Social harm' or 'social harms' are also used within the thesis to capture the collective harms of the state cause to citizens, namely systematic conditions of poverty,

exclusion, the punitive roll back of state support (welfare), resulting in a web of harms and restrictions to life chances ('autonomy harm' [Pemberton, 2016]).

Stag: short for 'standing guard', also used to captured the 'staggered' system for watching over the camp: 'if you were on stag. That was boring. You'd sit there for twelve hours staring into the day time or night time, whatever ... you're the eyes and ears of the camp'.

Strategy: Bourdieu maintains that people's behaviours and actions within field(s) is always guided in part by a (conscious or unconscious) calculation of 'profit' (meaning 'advantage' of some kind), referred to as 'strategy', and deeply connected to field conditions and field positions. This may be an explicit process and 'plan', for example to secure a new job position – which may require a number of 'knowable' steps. Or, it may be an unconsciously guided series of decisions, often based on (embodied) past experience.

Squaddie Banter: A learned and embodied resource of cultural capital, hinging on the use of humour as a coping mechanism via distraction and story telling

Symbolic capital: Symbolic capital is the form that resources (forms of capital) take when recognised as holding value. Symbolic capital is often linked to culture (doxa) and field conditions, which dictate the 'worth' of certain attributes. For example, the rank stripes on military uniforms are *symbolically* recognised as representing a certain position within a structure and hierarchy of field positions, which then determine the 'worth', 'value' and ultimately 'power' held within that rank. However, if these same uniform stripes were in a 'civilian' field – where the agents are unaware of military ranks and hierarchies, these 'symbols' may not be recognised as holding value. Symbolic capital is a component of the new concept combat capital developed in this research.

Symbolic resources: Symbolic resources' are described by Hale (2008, qua Zittoun, 2006; Zittoun et al., 2003) as relating to cultural reference points within situations, that indicate how we

are to act, react, or *be* in this particular setting. For example, the various types of uniform and items of kit within the military, communicate the ranks, roles, and hierarchies within the institution, to which behaviour (and 'respect') must be appropriately aligned.

Theatre:	Referring to the physical battlefield, or conflict zones
The state	'The state' is used within this thesis in line with Bourdieu's (2014: 31) dual conception, referring to (1) the 'bureaucratic apparatus that manages collective interests', and (2) in the 'sense of the territory on which the authority of this apparatus is exercised'.
The West:	The West is used within this thesis to refer to Europe and North America
VCP:	Vehicle check point
Veteran wing:	A specified area within the prison housed only by 'veterans' – those with former military experience. This may be a single wing, or a larger area (see Murray, 2013).
Violence of austerity:	The documented damage caused by cuts to public spending, as a means of reducing public debt in the wake of the Global Financial Crisis of 2007/9 – under the name of 'austerity measures' (Cooper and Whyte, 2017).
Warrior:	Armoured vehicle

Appendix B

Participant Biographies

David is a 34 year old white male, who was originally born in Galway, Ireland, and moved to Gloucester when he was eight years old. David explained that his mother suffered deeply with addiction, and that due to her 'violent boyfriends', he 'moved around a lot as a kid' – often leaving childhood friends behind. At the age of 10, David and his six brothers and sisters entered the care system. Four of his siblings were adopted, and he and his sister 'Lily' remained 'in care' until they were 16. During this time, he was subject to extreme violence and bullying within care homes, and became engaged in escalating behaviours defined as criminal, including substance (ab)use and theft. David's Barnardo's (children's charity) worker suggested that he join the Army at the age of 16, which he did – entering the military directly from the care system. He explained that he 'didn't really know' what he wanted to do in the Army, and was allocated to the Infantry as a 'front line combat soldier'. Unlike the other nine participants in this research, David was not posted to an area of conflict during his service. He also experienced basic training differently to the majority of participants, describing it solely in terms of being a painful period of violence and suffering. Shortly after passing trade training, he restarted (ab)using substances, in addition to becoming increasingly involved in fighting people 'inside' and 'outside' (civilians) of the military. This led to David being sent to Colchester military prison (the 'glasshouse') on three separate occasions, including for going 'AWOL' (absent without official leave) and for being tested positive for cocaine. He was eventually discharged straight from the 'glasshouse', or as David put it, 'kicked out', without any form of resettlement or support – to no one and nothing in 'civilian' life. He was quickly imprisoned within the 'civilian' criminal justice system, amid what he described to be a 'rapid downward spiral' – including long periods of homelessness and sleeping rough, addiction, theft, violence, and depression – to which he self-medicated with increased substance (ab)use. David also became a father, however experienced long absences from parenting as he moved in and out of prison. He also spent a significant amount of time sleeping rough in Paris, after initially intending to join the French Foreign Legion, but changing his mind due to wanting to maintain a relationship with his daughter. At the time of interview, David had recently left ('civilian') prison for the 10th time, and was dealing with substance withdrawal and adjusting to life 'on the outside' - having moved from the care system, to the Army, to military prison, and finally to the 'civilian' prison system, spending the vast majority of his life in state institutions. He has (re)formed a positive and supportive relationship with his Mum, who has been 'clean' from alcohol and other drugs for nine years. She helps financially with David's visits to see his daughter twice a month, as he explained his income support does not cover the cost of the train tickets. David expressed that his daughter is his current focus, alongside doing what he can to look after and repair his health and wellbeing.

Gavin is a 36 year old white male, who grew up near Preston, Lancashire. He has several brothers and sisters, and discussed at length the difficulties he had experienced as a child. These included the painful separation of his parents when he was young, being sexually abused as a child by someone close to the family, and being raised amid challenging circumstances of poverty and disadvantage. Gavin struggled severely at school, due to what he pinpoints as being undiagnosed (severe) dyslexia, with reading and writing being particularly challenging areas. He has always excelled at sports, but was unable to fully explore this natural talent while at school, due to his parents struggling to support the costs of transport, time, and financial resources needed to allow for extra-curricular activities. Gavin described always being surrounded by a strong group of friends at school and where he lived, seeming to come from a relatively small and close-knit community. He joined the Army Infantry at 16, with a close friend who was later killed in combat, after Gavin had left. He explained that he and his friend enlisted due to a lack of opportunities, and a shared desire to 'make something of life'. Due to his physical abilities and competitiveness, Gavin excelled in basic training, setting the tone for the rest of his service – being promoted a number of times. He was among the first to be posted to Afghanistan in 2001, and later to the initial invasion of Iraq in 2003, explaining that he had initially volunteered to stay longer in 'theatre' (war) and to return. In total, he completed four tours of Afghanistan and two of Iraq. Gavin was one of only two participants who has maintained a romantic relationship through the majority of service, however described in detail how the impact of war almost led to him and his wife almost separating on a number of occasions. He served a total of 12 years in the Army, completing additional tours of Cyprus, the Falkland Islands, Germany, and Northern Ireland, in addition to a wealth of training exercises in various locations around the world. Gavin left the military because he wanted to start a family with his wife, and did not wish to return to war again. Upon leaving, he returned to live in the same area where he had grown up, and hugely struggled to adjust to civilian life. His relationship once again became strained, especially when his son was born. He had used his resettlement to do a close-protection course, working in a number of different agency jobs before finding his way into the security industry. He then worked predominantly on the doors of nightclubs in conditions of precarious employment and short-term contracts, with non-fixed hours. Following the death of his close friend, he described engaging in violence at work, and his mental health severely declined. It took him a long time to seek help, and claimed that without his wife, he would have likely taken his own life. Due to being 'unable to control' his aggression, Gavin left his job and has worked as a security guard at a local factory ever since. At the time of interview, he explained he runs and plays rugby regularly, and that he is much happier and is enjoying family life. However, he also made clear that he is still struggling to deal with the loss of his close friend, and others lost in war and at home through suicide.

Harry is a 42 year old white male, who grew up near Blackburn, Lancashire. He did not seem to want to talk about his childhood, but mentioned that he had left home at 16 to move in with his uncle, and was allocated a council flat at 17. He has a number of siblings, and described his teenage and adolescent years as heavily revolving around the use of cannabis with his brother(s), moving between working in various low paid jobs, and claiming income support. He also discussed engaging in 'petty crimes' with his eldest brother, who had spent time in prison on a number of occasions. Harry described the area in which he grew up as being characterised by people having children at young ages and living in supported accommodation. Harry joined the military at the age of 21, after becoming 'fed up' with 'taking drugs and messing about'. He joined the Army Infantry, although explained that the Army had wanted him to become a helicopter engineer or to be sent to Sand Hurst for officer training, as he was 'identified as being intelligent'. He refused and served as a front-line infantry soldier, as he had intended to do. One of Harry's brothers was still serving in the Army at the time of interview. As he was slightly older than most recruits, Harry excelled in military training, explaining that because he was advanced in his physical development and growth, he was able to carry much heavier weight and equipment. Notably, Harry's first day in military training was September 11th, 2001 (9/11). After basic training and phase 2 training, he was quickly moved out of the Battalion (on his second day), to join a Senior Company. Although Harry maintained this was 'luck', it seemed clear from his narratives that the Army recognised his potential and moved him into positions where he could develop further. He then explained he was able to access a wealth of opportunities, including becoming a qualified mountain leader, and thoroughly enjoyed his service. He expressed a specific enjoyment of learning, especially within weapons training. Harry completed a number of tours, including Cyprus, Iraq, the Falkland Islands, Germany, and exercises around the world. He did not seem to want to talk about his service in Iraq, other than to say he had fun there. Harry bought a house whilst in the Army, to prepare for his return, meeting his (now) wife who sold him the house. He decided to leave the military shortly after this to start a family. He used resettlement to complete a degree in English and then went on to complete a PGCE. However, although working in several schools, he left teaching and is now becoming a writer. It did not appear at the time of interview that Harry had found a 'field' in which he 'fits'. He struggled with the culture of civilian life, claiming that particularly within fields of employment he 'can't stand "civvies"'. Harry seemed very keen to express (many times) that he had not seen any trauma, despite this never being raised (by me) in interviews.

Josh is a 35 year old white male, who grew up in a small post-industrial town in Lancashire. His parents separated when he was young, and he has two brothers and a sister. Josh refers to his stepdad as 'Dad', who is an important part of his life, and has always had a turbulent relationship with his Mum and siblings. School and learning were difficult for Josh, although he always had lots of friends and enjoyed the social aspect of education. He joined the Army at 16 to escape a 'life of crime', stemming from his perceived lack of educational achievement and lack of opportunities. Josh also saw the Army as a way to travel and see the world, in addition to making his Dad proud. Before joining the military, Josh had attended Army Cadets regularly, which allowed him to excel in basic training – notably in terms of fitness and weaponry skills. Josh claims he has always loved fighting, even before the military, and during his service was sent to Colchester military prison twice. This led to his rapid promotion at a young age, due to the increased fitness from the prison regime. He spent six and a half years in the army, and completed a range of tours, including Iraq, pre- and post-war; the Falklands; Germany; and Cyprus. Josh loved his service, was part of a very close team, and took full advantage of the sports and opportunities offered by the army, regularly volunteering himself for new things. He left the military to start a family with his girlfriend at the time, as well as citing the changes to his regiment that meant restrictions to promotions, and an influx of new people. Josh did not make use of the (limited) resettlement options available, and found employment quickly, initially with the local council as a labourer. He has had a number of different jobs since then, and now works with troubled young people as a residential care worker. Rugby has been immensely valuable to Josh, providing a space to release aggression in a controlled environment, as well as being part of a close-knit team of friends. In addition, he has very recently taken up mixed martial arts (MMA) fighting. Josh has always found relationships difficult and has two young children from different relationships, who he tries to see regularly as they are his 'driving force' in life. At the time of interview, Josh was married to the mother of his youngest child.

Kelli is a 34 year old white male, who is currently living in a small village near Pendle, where he had originally been raised. He was adopted at a very young age, and suffered the subsequent loss of his (adopted) mother at the age of seven. Kelli did not wish to talk much about his childhood, but discussed how he had not been interested in school. He worked in a local fish and chip shop as a teenager, and completed a Public Services course at college, specifically because he had always wanted to join the Army. Kelli joined the Army infantry at the age of 17, and expressed basic training was a positive experience, in which he did well. The majority of Kelli's discussions about life during the military were focused on his war experiences in Iraq, in which he served in an active front line role. He was posted to Iraq at the age of 18, in what he described to be 'the tail end of the war'. The blurring of roles between fighting and peacekeeping in Iraq formed a significant experience within his narratives, where he explained he and others were 'left with a city to police' with no training and 'no idea' what they were supposed to be doing. Kelli enjoyed serving in theatres of war, and volunteered to stay longer in Iraq. Kelli made clear he did not have a romantic relationship during his 6 years in the military, as he described the lifestyle as being incompatible with having a girlfriend. This was mainly due to the perceived negative impact the lifestyle would have on a partner – involving long periods of absence and the risks associated with war. When leaving the military, Kelli explained the Army 'messed up his paperwork', meaning he had to serve an additional year. During his service, he completed various tours, including Cyprus and Germany, and used his resettlement resources on an 'expensive driving course'. Kelli quickly found employment as his Dad knew about a job opening in a local factory, meaning he started work 3 days after leaving the Army. He explained that he was working closely with four other (older) veterans, which eased his transition to civilian life, as he was still able to draw upon militarised culture and 'squaddie banter'. Since then, Kelli has worked as a police community support officer (PCSO) in addition to full time work, and at the time of interview, he was training to join the fire service – which he made clear his military training and 'ex-squaddie' identity was well suited to, allowing him to find a strong sense of purpose. He played rugby a lot when he first left the military, and expressed his love of the outdoors - making time whenever he can to be outside and be physically active. Kelli had recently got engaged and was looking forward to getting married in the following year.

Liam is a 37 year old white male, who focused his discussions of childhood around the turbulent and violent relationship with his step-Dad, which resulted in him entering the care system as a teenager - after describing that his family 'disowned him'. His step-Dad and brother were both in the Army, and he explained that although he had mainly joined the military as a 'route out' of a lack of opportunities and socio-economic disadvantage, he had also been driven by a desire to 'beat' his brother and step-Dad. He achieved this, discussing how he was promoted to a higher rank than they had reached. Liam talked at length about his experiences at school, discussing how he had known he was clever, but did not enjoy the education system, and felt let down by school restricting his chances to achieve high grades in his exams. He also discussed his time in care in detail, explaining how he became somewhat of a 'ringleader' in the resistance against the poor treatment of the children and young people. This resistance resulted in the sacking of who Liam described to be the 'most horrible' staff member working in the care home. During his time in care, he became extremely interested in the self-taught creation and use of radio communication technology, finding a lasting sense of enjoyment that led to him joining the Royal Signals in the Army - being a valued and highly skilled signaller. He completed active tours in Kosovo and spent time in Iraq. Liam became a physical instructor (PT), placed in charge of delivering basic training to 'thousands' of recruits, many of whom he trained specifically for the war in Afghanistan. Liam made clear that he seized every opportunity available during his service, gaining a vast range and wealth of qualifications, eventually becoming qualified in skydiving and parachuting. Liam was injured on a parachute jump during a demonstration, and entered into a voluntary redundancy scheme for injured personnel. During his time in the Army, he was married three times, and made clear that this was because it would have been impossible to have a relationship without being married. At the time of interview, he had recently become a father to his first child with his fourth wife. Notably, Liam made full use of all the resettlement resources available, completing the relevant educational courses needed to access a degree course at University. He completed a degree in Politics, and at the time of interview was very politically active in his local community. Liam has maintained many social connections to those he served in the Army with and attends a range of veteran events yearly.

Mike is a 40 year old male, who grew up in Liverpool with his Mother and sister, framing his childhood as having always wanted to join the Army. He claimed that school was enjoyable due to being surrounded by lots of friends, and that he had been intelligent but had never applied himself, as school had never interested him. The overarching theme and focus of Mike's interviews was his sexuality. Mike had spent several years in the Army cadets as a teenager, which he kept very much private and to himself. During this time, Mike explained that he was struggling significantly with his sexuality, at a time when it was illegal for LGBT personnel to serve in the Armed Forces. He served with the Territorial Army (TA, now 'Army Reserves') for a number of years, culminating in him being posted with the infantry to an active tour in Bosnia. This followed a particularly challenging time in his life course, where he suffered a difficult break-up with his first (and secret) boyfriend, after which he attempted suicide. Being posted to Bosnia was therefore used as a positive 'escape' from these home struggles, however, at the end of the tour, Mike was not ready to join the military and 'sign away' his sexuality. He returned to Liverpool, and eventually moved to Blackpool to spend a couple of years working in a number of gay bars. Mike described being fed up with 'dead end jobs' and joined the Army at the recruitment centre in Blackpool, enlisting with the Royal signals. Due to his wealth of previous military service and training, Mike thrived in basic training and beyond, being awarded a number of prizes during his service. He was able to grasp a wealth of opportunities, and travelled the world during various tours and exercises. Notably, Mike was instrumental in the initial invasion of Iraq in 2003, working with American forces to provide 'forward communication' for advancing British troops following behind. He was also severely injured in Iraq, in the midst of a sandstorm and a lack of staffing – resulting in an extreme incident involving a large piece of communication kit that damaged his back and neck. After Iraq, he explained how he had been very angry and ended up breaking up with his boyfriend at the time as a result. Mike was relocated to the SAS headquarters in Hereford, to work in a desk job while he recovered from his injuries. During his service, Mike formed a wealth of lasting friendships, and gained rare access to the friendships and support of the Army 'wives and girlfriends' (WAGs) on base. He also framed much of his service as having to battle against exclusion and at times violence, stemming from his sexuality. After 11 years in the Army (with an additional 3 years completed with the TA), Mike left due to injury, after a severe car accident in Germany, that once again damaged his neck and spine. He gained full access to resettlement support, and secured the funding to complete a degree – to which he subsequently went on to complete a Masters. At the time of interview, Mike was enjoying studying, and described being happily married. However, he made clear that his life is 'ruled by drugs', due to his back causing a permanent chronic pain condition, which requires powerful daily medication.

Oliver is a 56 year old white male, who grew up in Birmingham within a large family of seven brothers and sisters. Oliver described his childhood up to the age of eight as being the 'happiest time of [his] life', where he had no worries and had lots of friends. The turning point in his life course came from a combination of grieving the death of one his brothers, his other older brothers and sisters leaving the family home, in addition to him moving to secondary school – which was much further away and involved a number of bus rides. Oliver described this time as a painful loss of his friendship group, from which he never recovered – finding it very challenging to make friends from then on. He also found school itself to be a struggle and spent a lot of time truanting. He worked in two retail shops on a 'Youth Training Scheme', which he characterised as valuable experience, but 'exploitation' due to the extremely low wage. Growing up in a military family where his Step-father and brothers served in the RAF, Oliver enlisted as a chef in the RAF at the age of 18. Basic training and trade training were described as being immensely challenging, especially due to the heavily based classroom learning required as a trainee chef. In addition to joining the RAF to escape a lack of opportunities, Oliver had also joined with hopes of forming the deep friendships in the military that his life was lacking. However, as chefs predominantly move alone, he characterised his service as being an extension of loneliness and suffering – to which he used alcohol and gambling as coping mechanisms. Oliver got married during his service, with his wife working on the RAF base. He was posted to various locations around the world, including Cyprus, the Falkland Islands and an active tour in Kosovo. As his addictions worsened, Oliver became involved with the military punishment system, spending time in Colchester military prison – the 'Glasshouse' – after an alcohol related incident involving theft. He found his time in the Glasshouse extremely challenging, as he explained the intense physical regime was aligned mainly to Army personnel, who had to maintain a much higher level of fitness than he did as a chef in the RAF. Upon leaving military prison, he was subject to extreme stigmatisation by the RAF for having being imprisoned, resulting in the ultimate refusal to renew his employment contract. This meant that Oliver left the military relatively unprepared and not wanting to leave. He explained that without his wife he wouldn't have survived this time, as she 'took care' of all the arrangements needed to move into 'civilian' life. He worked for the Prison Service as a prison guard, however lost his job due to a drink-driving incident. He described how his addictions escalated, and that he got divorced from his wife of over ten years. He discussed having almost attempted suicide after his divorce. Since then, Oliver became involved with a number of partners and became a father, however was imprisoned for sexual offences on an indeterminate sentence. At the time of interview, he had recently left prison after 10 years, and was living in veteran specific supported accommodation. During his time in prison, he expressed a turning point in his life, when he started to help others less fortunate than himself, in surviving the harsh and violent prison environment he described. Oliver was focused on rebuilding the relationship with his daughter, staying clean from alcohol, and eventually wanted to find employment and secure his own housing.

Simon is a 50 year old male, who grew up in Belgium near a large military base. His father had been a Guardsman in the British military and was still heavily involved with the military, working for the War Grave Commission in Belgium. He described his childhood as 'having everything he needed', but that due to both parents working long hours and a number of jobs to support the family, he and his sister had not received enough love, affection and quality time as children. Although Simon described a happy childhood surrounded by military personnel and culture, he overwhelmingly framed this time as being largely misunderstood, due to what he now knows is attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD). He struggled severely at school because of this, finding it extremely difficult to learn in a seated classroom environment – despite knowing he was intelligent. At the age of 16, Simon had to move out of the family home due to conflict with his parents and moved to Scotland to live with his uncle for a short time. He had always known he wanted to be in the military from being very young, but explained that seeing the Falklands war on television had cemented this desire. He originally enlisted in the Navy at the age of 16, completing basic training. However, he left the Navy (paying his way out), after deciding that it was not what he wanted to do – going straight to the Army recruitment centre on the same day he left. Due to the family history of his Father and Grandfather serving in the Royal Guards, Simon was placed in the same regiment, completing his training in the same buildings and locations – explaining he 'scrubbed the very same wooden floors as they had done'. Because of his French accent, he was originally 'othered' by his instructors and subject to bullying. However, as he was extremely physically fit, and had been fully socialised in military culture, Simon excelled in training and had a very successful career, being promoted a number of times. He served in a difficult active combat tour in Northern Ireland, describing losing a number of men in battle, and subsequently at 'home' through suicide (16 men in total). He also served in a wealth of tours and exercises around the world. Simon transferred from the Guards to complete his service with the Parachute Regiment (Paras), eventually leaving the military because of a lack of war. He returned to Brussels, and quickly found employment as his parents knew of job openings. He originally worked as a driver, and then as an armed security guard – which he left due to a 'lack of discipline'. Simon then found a high-pressured job working in events and logistics, leading to a 20 year career well suited to his militarised identity. He described that although meeting his wife and being happily married, he suffered two very difficult years after leaving the Armed Forces, where he wanted to 'go back' every day. To survive this, he engaged in intense physical training (over 27 hours a week), and was still incredibly physically active at the time of interview. He has a daughter, who was about to start university, and thoroughly enjoys his job, which provides much needed 'action' and pressure – in which he thrives.

Tom is a 38 year old white male, who grew up in a Southern post-industrial town, characterised by high levels of unemployment and a lack of opportunities. He has two brothers and two sisters, and his mother raised the family as a single parent on income support. As a child, Tom described himself as being shy with no confidence, and only wanted 'to be outside climbing trees'. Due to the lack of employment opportunities in the area, Tom went to college and subsequently started a degree, however he left in the first year. Although Tom had never thought about joining the Army before, he saw it as an opportunity to gain the discipline and structure he needed, as well as providing employment and opportunities. He first joined the Army artillery at 19, and re-joined at 28, serving over 10 years in total. In Tom's first 4 years in the Army, he spent time in France, completed peacekeeping tours in Cyprus, was part of the initial invasion of Iraq, finally spending a month in Canada. He left the Army not long after his return to the UK, due to the lack of future postings to areas of conflict, living as a 'civilian' for 4 years. After breaking up with his fiancé at the time, Tom moved to Canada without telling his family and friends. On his return he was homeless for a while, before re-joining the Army amid the height of the recession. In his second time in the Army, Tom served 6 years, completing various tours and exercises, most notably Northern Ireland and two postings to Afghanistan. His interviews contain a wealth of depth into his war experiences, describing the initial invasion of Iraq in immense detail, as well as discussing the violence of apparent 'peacekeeping' tours in Afghanistan. War was described to be an overwhelmingly positive experience, leading to a wealth of lasting friendships and social connections. He left the Army due to the ending of conflicts, and his regiment being amalgamated with another amid funding cuts, which had led to a number of his close friends deciding to leave. Although serving 10 years in total, he was not eligible for resettlement as he had not served over 6 years continuously. However, Tom did make use of the Army's funding to complete a degree, and at the time of interview was coming towards the end of his final year. At the time of interview, he had recently been receiving counselling and support for his mental health, which he traced to his war experiences and delayed grief for those lost – 'brought out' by heavy alcohol consumption. Tom described being happy for the first time in a long time, and was looking forward to moving in with his girlfriend, who he described to be his only focus.

Appendix C

Ethics Form

ETHICAL REVIEW PANEL

APPLICATION FORM (STAFF AND PGR STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECTS)

Section A - Applicant's details

A1	Project title	No Man's Land? 21 st Century theatre of war experiences and their impact on former military personnel returning to post-conflict life
A2	Name of researcher	Hannah R Wilkinson
A3	Research Institute or School	Research Institute of Social Sciences
A4	Correspondence address	CM1.03 Claus Moser Research Building Keele University Keele Staffordshire ST5 5BG
A5	Keele E-mail address	h.r.wilkinson@keele.ac.uk
A6	Work telephone number	01782 733731
A7	Type of application	PGR
A8	Please give supervisor name and contact details if PGR application	<u>Lead Supervisor</u> Ronnie Lippens: r.lippens@keele.ac.uk CBB1.023 – 01782 733263 <u>Second Supervisors</u> Evi Girling: e.j.girling@keele.ac.uk Samantha Weston: s.k.weston@keele.ac.uk
A9	Project start date	Jan/Feb 2016
A10	Project end date	September/October 2016

Section B - Project details

B1	<p>In lay terms provide a brief summary of the project including the background and rationale for the proposed research and the hypotheses or research question(s) (max 500 words).</p> <p>This project will explore the impact of serving in combat roles in 21st century conflict on former military personnel returning to 'civilian' life. Although the arena of 'war criminology' has grown within recent years, the focus has remained on veterans that have been involved in the criminal justice system, neglecting the everyday experiences of returning from conflict. Situating these experiences in the context of what military personnel return to, what post-conflict life is, and what 'civvy street' means for these individuals, will provide a unique contribution to knowledge. Placing a rare criminological focus on those that have not necessarily been 'criminal' or suffered 'obvious' harm, this research will uncover the voices of former military personnel that do not appear to fit the constructions of the veteran as 'offender' or 'victim'. By exploring experiencing, identity and support networks, allowing participants to guide</p>
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	<p>the research through the use of photos and/or objects, this project will offer a deep insight into the complex process of returning from conflict.</p> <p>The main research objectives of this research project are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand how the experiences of former military personnel that have served in 21st century armed conflict impact on their return to post-conflict life - Contextualise the return to civilian life, examining what former military personnel return to, as well as providing an insight into what 'civvy street' means for these individuals. - Explore the ways in which characteristics of 21st century conflict affect experiences of leaving combat and the construction and maintenance of veteran identities. <p>Research Question: 'How do experiences of serving in 21st century theatres of war impact on the return to civilian life?'</p>
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B2	<p>In lay terms outline the type of procedure(s) and/or research methodology (eg observational, questionnaire, interviews, experimental) to be employed (max 500 words).</p> <p>METHODOLOGY</p> <p>This project will draw upon a number of methodological influences and will strive to retain a degree of flexibility within the method, so as not to restrict the data and findings. It will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reviewing and analysing existing literature on veterans and 'war criminology' - Policy and documentary analysis surrounding former military personnel - In-depth interviews incorporating photos (photo elicitation) and objects, with former military personnel that have and have not served in active combat, which will take place in two waves: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The core group of former military personnel that are considered 'typical' – these will be personnel that are not known (before contact is made) to have any involvement in the criminal justice system, armed forces charities and support groups, homeless and/or housing organisations or mental health support organisations. 2. A smaller 'atypical' group that are contacted through organisations and support groups and represent former military personnel that have experienced 'obvious' struggle during their return to post-conflict life <p>As this project is concerned with exploring the experiences of former military personnel and their return to post-conflict life, the narratives gained through in-depth interviews and discussions around the photos and items brought to the interview will provide the core data for this research. Photo elicitation can capture experiences and thoughts in ways structured questions may not, as well as creating topics for discussion guided by the participant.</p> <p>CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS</p> <p>Interviews are expected to last between an hour and an hour and a half. Participants will be given all relevant information and materials beforehand, including being asked to bring a small number of photographs and/or objects (approximately 10) to the interview. They will have chance to ask questions and to complete the written Consent Form 1 (attached). Only when participants have agreed to take part and are clear about what the research involves will interviews be arranged and then take place.</p>
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	<p>Interviews with participants that have not brought items will follow Topic Guide 1 (attached), which will lead to an in-depth interview. Prompts and follow up questions will be used where necessary, depending on interviewees' responses, in both interview styles. For participants that bring photos/objects, the interviews will be unstructured and will be guided by the items brought. These interviews will use Topic Guide 2 (attached). Interviews will be recorded on a Dictaphone and will be transcribed by myself. Notes will be made during and after the interview, particularly surrounding the photos/objects as these will not be copied/stored in any way (they are purely to facilitate the discussion).</p> <p>FIELDWORK LOCATIONS</p> <p>All empirical research will take place in the UK. The two interview sites will be Burnley and the surrounding area, and Stoke-On-Trent. Interviews will take place in a location tailored to each interviewee and will be in public spaces (such as community centres or council offices). Locations will be selected on a case by case basis, with the safety of the researcher being a priority. The Lone Worker Policy will be followed at all times.</p> <p>Remember to attach questionnaire or interview questions.</p>
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B3	<p>Describe the characteristics of the participant group, and the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Indicate the sample size, with an explanation of how this sample size was decided/calculated.</p> <p>INCLUSION CRITERIA</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants that have been (but are no longer) employed by the British military and completed basic training as a minimum (which is on average 12 weeks). This includes employment with the British Army, Navy and Royal Air Force. Former personnel can have served in any rank or any occupation. 2. Former military personnel that have engaged in 21st century conflict. This will be defined as personnel that have served in active combat (at least once) in Afghanistan and/or Iraq. 3. Although there are no exclusion/inclusion criteria in regards to age, it is anticipated that participants will fall within the ages of approximately 25-55. 4. Participants living in Burnley, Lancashire and the surrounding areas or Stoke-On-Trent and the surrounding areas will form the starting points for sampling. Due to a snowballing method – the sampling may extend beyond these areas. <p>JUSTIFICATION FOR CRITERIA</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All participants must have completed basic training as a minimum (usually 12 weeks) as this is required to become an employee of the British military. 2. This research is interested in the effects of serving in 21st century conflict on the return to civilian society. As such, it is necessary to have a group of former military personnel that have served in combat and one group who has not, so that some comparison may be made. Afghanistan and Iraq have been selected as they are the main wars of the 21st century. 3. It must be stressed that no age criteria will be in operation. However, because this study is concerned with 21st century conflict and is looking at Afghanistan and
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	<p>Iraq, it is likely that participants will fall within this age range. It is also desirable (although not essential) for participants to be within this age range as part of the methodology is interested in narratives. Narratives change with age and experience.</p> <p>4. Burnley and the surrounding area is a former place of residence and contacts with former military personnel exist here. This may be used to form a network of potential participants. Stoke is the researcher's current area of residence.</p> <p>Throughout sampling, I will aim to create as diverse a sample as possible, including former personnel from different ranks and roles within the military, as well as varying socio-economic backgrounds. The ideal sample would consist of the following participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 that have experienced 'hand to hand' or 'on the ground' combat (infantry) • 5 that have supported combat (i.e. signals/intelligence gathering) • 5 nurses/medics or other professionals (chefs, engineers etc.) • 5 that have not been present in a theatre of war <p>(This is an example and numbers/professions may vary)</p> <p>The sample size of approximately 20 participants has been decided following discussions with my supervisors, who have experience conducting qualitative research. It was agreed that this is a realistic sample size both in terms of recruitment and the transcription and analysis. A larger sample is likely to be unrealistic in the time frame of this research.</p>
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Section C - Ethically sensitive, challenging or issues of risk

C1	<p>Will the research involve deceased persons, body parts or other human elements such as blood, hair or tissue samples (including saliva and waste products)? No ✓</p> <p>If yes, please discuss this project with Dr Alan Harper, Human Tissue Officer on 01782 674472 / 734654 or e-mail a.g.s.harper@keele.ac.uk. Please cite the reference number given by Dr Harper for this research project below;-</p> <p>Reference number:</p> <p>If yes, please give details with reference to the Human Tissue Act 2004.</p> <p>Human Tissue Act can be accessed via https://www.hta.gov.uk/human-tissue-act-2004</p>
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C2	<p>Outline any potential risks to individuals, participants and members of the research team; the measures that will be taken to minimise risk; and the procedures that will be adopted in the event of an adverse event.</p>
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The potential negative consequences that might occur mainly concern the recall of potentially traumatic events. After reading a number of papers concerning the ethics surrounding trauma and research⁸⁵, a common theme within trauma research is that the ethical focus should not be placed on 'whether participants will become distressed by the research, but rather on whether the study is designed in such a way that the final outcome will be a positive one for participants' (Brabin and Berah, 1995: 165). Participants will be supported as much as possible during the interviews and it will be made clear that they can stop at any point.

Another way in which this will be managed is by allowing participants to bring photos/items to the interview, as well as leaving the interview questions very open. This will mean that the participant actually decides what experiences they wish to discuss and which stories to share (Harper, 2002; Oliffe and Bottorff, 2007; Jenkins et al., 2008); instead of the researcher asking about certain events/experiences. By allowing participants to lead the interviews, they are able to determine the directions, limits and exact subjects of conversation – disclosing only what they are happy to. This can also go some way to addressing the power imbalances that can occur between researcher and participant (Miller et al., 2012; 40), as well as meaning that any discussions of trauma, or experiences that the participant finds difficult to discuss, have been selected by the interviewee and not the researcher.

At the end of the interview there will be discussion. This discussion will involve asking participants if they have any questions and whether there is anything that they would like to add to the interview or clarify. Every participant will also be given a Further Support sheet (attached) that offers signposting to various types of help, support and guidance.

Another potential negative consequence that might occur from participating in the research is participants disclosing information that I, in line with Keele's ethical guidelines, may have to pass on to relevant authorities, thus breaching confidentiality. This will be managed by making it clear within the information sheet and consent forms (attached) that when there is a risk of immediate harm to themselves or others, I have a duty to pass this information on.

Although negative consequences have been discussed above, the intention of this research is to explore experiences of former military personnel and their lives. The aim is to understand more about the return to post-conflict life and it is important to remember that what former military personnel may consider to be traumatic may be different to what others consider to be traumatic. McGarry and Walklate (2011), for example, write about the 'ordinariness' of war for former military personnel and that to these individuals traumatic experiences were a feature of everyday life. Thus, talking about them is an essential part of discussing their stories and, ultimately, my research

A further ethical issue concerns the effects of this research on me, the researcher. During the interviews, there may be some challenging information and narratives. For example discussions around the nature of war and conflict, traumatic experiences and personal struggle. This is something that the researcher is conscious may have an effect on her wellbeing. To manage this, a research diary will be kept and used to note down feelings and thoughts post-interview and will allow for reflexivity throughout the project. There will also only be one interview scheduled per day, preferably with

⁸⁵ See Brabin and Berah, 1995; Cook and Bosley, 1995; DePrince and Freyd, 2004; Becker-Blease and Freyd, 2006

	<p>by making participants aware of the potential negative consequences of participation, of their right to withdraw, and giving them the power to discuss whatever topics and information they wish to disclose. Interviews will be arranged for a time and location of the participants choice (as far as is possible – i.e. location must be suitable) and participants will be provided with a list of contacts that offer further support at the end of the interview (See ‘Further Support’ attached).</p> <p>The sub-group of participants may be contacted through organisations (see example email attached) that work with veterans that have experienced obvious struggle, such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). These participants may be more likely to be ‘vulnerable’ and will be protected by making contact through the appropriate gate keepers.</p> <p>There may be a chance that participants have physical disabilities. This will be considered on a case by case basis and the main areas of support will be to ensure that interview locations are suitable. This is not considered to be an issue that is likely to pose difficulties within the research and is something that the researcher will be aware of during the arrangement of participation.</p>
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C5	<p>Will participants be deceived in any way about the study? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, describe the nature and extent of deception involved, including how and when this deception will be revealed and who will administer this feedback (debrief).</p>
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SECTION D - Recruitment & consent process

D1	<p>Indicate how potential participants will be identified, approached and recruited and outline any relationship between the researcher and potential participant.</p> <p>SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS AND RECRUITMENT</p> <p>Sampling will fall into two main stages. The first stage will involve forming the ‘core’ group of interview participants and the second will form the second, smaller wave of interviews. Consent will be gained by participants expressing that they wish to take part in writing – either by email or post.</p> <p><u>Stage One</u> will involve drawing on existing informal contacts with former military personnel. Through these contacts a snowball style method will be used to contact other potential participants and generate approximately 10-15 participants to form the core group. This process will involve emailing existing contacts about the research (the email will have the letter of invitation, information sheet and consent forms attached) and asking if they could pass the details of the project onto any former military personnel that they might know. All potential participants will be required to ‘opt in’ to reduce the effects of implied consent. (Example email attached)</p>
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	<p><u>Stage Two</u> will draw upon existing contacts with organisations such as Combat Stress (a veteran’s charity) and Unlock (a charity that works with people with convictions). These organisations will be used as ‘gatekeepers’ to form a small group of between five and ten potential participants. This process will involve emailing the relevant person within each organisation and asking if they could pass the details of the study onto any former military personnel that meet the criteria. (Example emails attached)</p> <p><u>Stage One Contacts</u> – my ex-husband was formerly in the military and, for my undergraduate dissertation, put me in touch with other former military personnel (who I did not know/ had no relationship with prior to the research). These networks still exist and can be drawn upon as one of the starting points within this research. A snowball method will be used which will mean the potential participants will not be known to me prior to this project.</p> <p><u>Stage Two Contacts</u> – these contacts have been made through attending conferences and networking. They would be acting as ‘gate keepers’ to former military personnel. As such there is no relationship to the potential participants.</p> <p>Remember to attach copies of posters, advertisements, invitation letters/e-mails to be used as part of the recruitment process with version numbers included in the footer.</p>
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D2	<p>Describe the process that will be used to seek and obtain informed consent.</p> <p>Participants will be fully informed about the research before interviews begin, both in written form (see attached Information Sheet) and verbally. The information sheet will provide participants with an understanding of the aims of the research and any potential negative consequences that might occur as a result of taking part.</p> <p>Potential participants will be given all materials to read and will be made aware of their ability to ask any questions they may have. This includes being sent copies of the consent forms to look at in advance and ask questions, to further allow for an informed decision regarding participation and what this involves.</p> <p>Interviews will then be arranged and, on the day, will be given another opportunity to read the information sheet as well as ask any questions they may have. They will also be asked to complete Consent Form 1 at the beginning, and Consent form 2 (for the use of quotes) at the end - and will be reminded of their right to withdraw from the research without giving reason.</p> <p>If you answered yes to C4 (your participants are children or vulnerable adults) explain how you will ensure that individuals in these groups are competent to give consent to participate in this study.</p> <p>It is not possible to know before-hand whether participants will be lacking in mental capacity. If it becomes apparent at any time that participants may be particularly vulnerable and are not capable of providing valid informed consent, this will be dealt with by halting their involvement in the research and signposting them to the relevant help and support immediately.</p> <p>Every participant will be given the Further Support sheet (attached) following the interview.</p>
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	Remember to attach your information sheet and consent form with versions numbers & date included in the footer Templates available from http://www.keele.ac.uk/researchsupport/researchethics/
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D3	Will consent be sought to use the data for other research? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Will consent be sought to contact the individual to participate in future research? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
----	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

D4	Can participants withdraw from the research? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If yes , state up to what point participants are able to withdraw from the research Participants are able to withdraw at any point within the research. If yes , outline how participants will be informed of their right to withdraw, how they can do this and what will happen to their data if they withdraw. Participants will be informed about their right to withdraw in the Information Sheet, as well as verbally, both before their agreement to take part and on the day of the interview. They can withdraw in writing (by email or post). Data will be removed from the research (and destroyed) and will not appear in the thesis. If no , explain why they cannot withdraw (eg anonymous survey).
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SECTION E - Confidentiality and anonymity

E1	Outline the procedures that will be used to protect, as far as possible, the anonymity of participants and/or confidentiality of data during the conduct of the research and in the release of its findings. At the end of each interview, a pseudonym will be agreed. The researcher will then refer to this pseudonym throughout the rest of the research project and in the thesis. If other people are mentioned in the interview, names (and locations if necessary) will also be replaced with pseudonyms. Photographs/objects will not be copied or kept and will only be used within the interview. Any quotes used (assuming participants complete Consent Form 2 for this) will not include confidential information.
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SECTION F - Storage, access to, management of, and disposal of data

F1	Describe the research data that will be stored; where it will be stored and for how long; the measures that will be put in place to ensure the security of data; who will have access to the data; long term data management plans following completion of the project; and how/when data will be disposed of. No photographs/objects will be copied or stored and will only be used within the interviews to facilitate discussion. Audio recordings of the data will be stored on a
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password protected memory stick and will be destroyed following transcription. Transcribed copies of the data will be stored electronically on a password protected computer in a locked (personal) office and, when moved, a password protected memory stick. Hard (paper) copies of the data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in a locked (personal) office when not in use. Paper copies will be destroyed immediately after use. The hard copies of the transcripts may also be viewed by my supervisors, Ronnie, Evi and Sam and will be destroyed following completion of the PhD. Electronic data will be stored for a maximum of 10 years (password protected memory stick) and will be removed from the office computer upon completion of the PhD.

SECTION G - Other ethical issues raised by the research

G1	Are there any other ethical issues that may be raised by the research? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	If yes, please give details.

SECTION H - Other approvals required

H1	Does the project require researcher(s) to have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	If yes , have you attached a confirmation of satisfactory DBS check memo? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	Does the project require National Offender Management Service (NOMS) approval? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Does the project require NHS Research Development (R&D) Approval? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Does the project require approval from another organisation? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

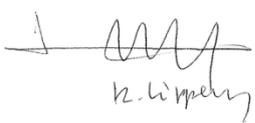
SECTION I - Checklist

I1	Please list the documents attached to this application		
	Document	Version number	Date
	Information Sheet	2	28/01/2016
	Consent Form 1	1	15/12/15
	Consent Form 2	1	15/12/15
	Letter of Invitation	1	15/12/15
	Example Email – Participant	1	15/12/15
	Example Email – Organisation	1	15/12/15
	Example Email – Organisation 2	1	15/12/15
	Topic Guide 1	1	15/12/15
	Topic Guide 2	1	15/12/15
	Further Support	1	15/12/15

SECTION J - Declarations

J1	<p>Declaration by researcher</p> <p>I confirm that:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The form is accurate to the best of my knowledge • I will abide by the University's ethical requirements • I will inform the panel of any changes to the project • I am aware of my responsibility to be up to date and comply with the requirements of the law and any relevant professional guidelines
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	Researcher name (in capitals) HANNAH R WILKINSON
	
	Researcher signature
	Date 28/01/2016

J2	Declaration by supervisor (PGR applications only) I confirm that:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application has been appropriately peer reviewed • I have read the application and am happy for it to proceed for ethical review • The application is accurate to the best of my knowledge • The project will comply with the University's ethical requirements • The applicant will inform the panel of any changes to the project • I am aware of my responsibility to ensure that the applicant is familiar with and complies with the requirements of the law and any relevant professional guidelines
	Supervisor name (in capitals) RONNIE LIPPENS
	Supervisor signature I agree, R. Lippens (r.lippens@keele.ac.uk)  R. Lippens
	Date 28/01/2016

J3	Declaration by Faculty Research Office/Research Institute Director, Centre/Theme Head, or Head of School (Staff applications only) I confirm that:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application has been appropriately peer reviewed • I have read the application and am happy for it to proceed for ethical review • The form is accurate to the best of my knowledge • The project will comply with the University's ethical requirements • The applicant will inform the panel of any changes to the project • I am aware of my responsibility to ensure that the applicant is familiar with and complies with the requirements of the law and any relevant professional guidelines
	Name (in capitals)
	Post
	Signature
	Date

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Keele University

Appendix C1

INFORMATION SHEET

PROJECT TITLE: 21st century theatre of war experiences and their impact on former military personnel returning to post-conflict life

AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

This project will aim to capture and explore the experiences of former British military personnel and their life stories. The research also aims to contribute to knowledge about former military personnel and to provide a greater understanding of their lives.

INVITATION

You are being invited to consider taking part in the research study '21st century combat experiences and their impact on former military personnel returning to post-conflict life'. This project is being undertaken by Hannah Wilkinson, a PhD Student at Keele University.

Before you decide whether you would like to take part, it is important that you understand why this research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read this information carefully and discuss it with friends and relatives if you wish. If anything is unclear, or you would like to ask any questions, please get in touch for more information (see page 2 for contact details).

WHY HAVE I BEEN INVITED?

You have been invited as:

- a) You have formerly been employed by the British military and completed basic training as a minimum or;
- b) You have formerly been employed by the British military and have served in active combat in Afghanistan and/or Iraq or;
- c) Through conversations with other former military personnel that have been participants in this project, you have expressed an interest in taking part in the research and meet the criteria of either a) or b) above

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART?

You are free to decide whether you wish to take part in this research. If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to sign Consent Form 1, which is for participation in the research, and Consent Form 2, which is for the use of direct quotations – on the day of the interview. You will remain free to withdraw from this research at any time, without having to give reason. You can withdraw from the research in writing, either by email or post, simply stating you no longer wish to take part.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I TAKE PART?

If you agree to take part, an interview time and location will be arranged to suit you. You will be interviewed to share your life experiences and are invited to bring a small number of photos and/or objects/items that are meaningful to you (approximately 10) to the interview. These can be in physical form (a photo or object) or in electronic form (on a smart phone for example). If you chose to bring photos and/or items, they will not be copied or recorded and are only used within the interview. You will be asked open questions that will form the basis of a conversation. It is estimated that the interview will last between an hour and an hour and a half, and will be audio recorded using a Dictaphone.

At the start of the interview you will be asked to sign Consent Form 1 which is for participation. After the interview, you will be asked to sign Consent Form 2. Consent form 2 is to confirm that you are happy for direct quotes from the interview to be used in the research and PhD thesis. Your identity will remain confidential throughout.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF TAKING PART?

There are no direct benefits. However, your participation will be an important contribution to what is still an under-researched area. It will also contribute to a fuller understanding of former military personnel and their return to civilian life. A possible benefit of taking part will be the personal experience of the interview and sharing your story. In participating you will help construct much needed knowledge about former military personnel that does not simply rely on documents, but listens to and presents the voices of those that have been involved in the experiences being discussed.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF TAKING PART?

The possible risks of taking part include potentially finding it difficult to talk about certain experiences or memories. You are, however, free to discuss any information you wish and the experiences you discuss will guide the interview. At the end of the interview you will be made aware of multiple places for support and advice.

HOW WILL INFORMATION ABOUT ME BE USED?

The transcript (written copy) of your interview will be used alongside other interviews and sources – including literature and policy documents– for a PhD thesis. Your interview transcript may also be used, solely by the researcher, to present papers at conferences and to discuss the research. Any reference to your words will be done so anonymously, by replacing your name with a pseudonym. The photos and/or items you bring will not be copied or recorded.

Interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher. After transcription, the audio recording will be stored securely and will only be accessible to the researcher until it is deleted. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the project and your name (and any other names mentioned) will be replaced with

pseudonyms. I have to work within the confines of current legislation (law) over such matters as privacy and confidentiality, data protection and human rights. Offers of confidentiality may be compromised and overridden in circumstances where I am concerned for the immediate harm to yourself or others. If this occurs, I must pass this information to the relevant authorities.

WHO WILL HAVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT ME?

All information and data will be stored securely and accessed in line with Keele University's ethical regulations:

- The audio recordings of interviews will be stored electronically in a password protected project within the software NVivo, on a password protected computer in a locked (personal) office.
- The transcribed data will be stored electronically on a password protected computer and, when moving the data, a password protected memory stick. Any hard copies of data (i.e. printed copies of transcripts) will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in a locked (personal) office when not in use.
- All data will be stored in line with the guidelines from Keele University and will be retained solely by myself for the purposes of my PhD and future research for a maximum of 10 years.

WHO IS FUNDING THE RESEARCH?

The Keele University Research Institute of Humanities and Social Science

WHAT IF THERE IS A PROBLEM?

If you have concerns about any aspect of this study, you may wish to speak to the researcher who will do their best to answer your questions. You should contact Hannah Wilkinson in this case. Alternatively, if you do not wish to contact the researcher, you may contact the lead supervisor of this project, Professor Ronnie Lippens. If you remain unhappy about the research and/or wish to raise a complaint about any aspect of the way that you have been approached or treated during the course of this study please contact Nicola Leighton, who is the University's contact for complaints regarding research.

Hannah Wilkinson
h.r.wilkinson@keele.ac.uk
01782 733731
CM1.03
Claus Moser Building
Keele University, ST5 5BG

Prof. Ronnie Lippens
r.lippens@keele.ac.uk
01782 733263
CBB1.023
Chancellor's Building
Keele University, ST5 5BG

Nicola Leighton
n.leighton@uso.keele.ac.uk
01782 733306
Research & Enterprise services
Dorothy Hodgkin Building
Keele University, ST5 5BG



Keele University

Appendix C2

CONSENT FORM 1 – Participation

PROJECT TITLE: 21st century theatre of war experiences and their impact on former military personnel returning to post-conflict life

NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS OF RESEARCHER:

Hannah R Wilkinson
 Faculty of Humanities and Social Science
 Email: h.r.wilkinson@keele.ac.uk
 Phone: 01782 733731
 Address: CM1.03
 Claus Moser Research Centre
 Keele University, ST5 5BG

Please tick box if you

agree with the statement

- 1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated
 (version no) for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions
- 2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw
 at any time
- 3. I agree to take part in this study
- 4. I agree to the interview being audio recorded
- 5. I agree to allow the dataset collected to be used for future research projects

 Name of Participant Date Signature

 Researcher Date Signature



Keele University

Appendix C3

CONSENT FORM 2 – Use of quotes

PROJECT TITLE: 21st century theatre of war experiences and their impact on former military personnel returning to post-conflict life

NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS OF RESEARCHER:

Hannah R Wilkinson
 Faculty of Humanities and Social Science
 Email: h.r.wilkinson@keele.ac.uk
 Phone: 01782 733731
 Address: CM1.03
 Claus Moser Research Centre
 Keele University
 ST5 5BG

Please tick the box if you agree with the statement

1. I agree for my quotes to be used for this research

2. I agree for my quotes to be used in future research/publications

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Researcher

Date

Signature



Keele University

Appendix C4

LETTER OF INVITATION To take part in a research project

PROJECT TITLE: 21st century theatre of war experiences and their impact on former military personnel returning to post-conflict life

(This, along with the Information Sheet and Consent Forms 1 and 2 will be sent to all participants. These will be sent via email or post, or handed out in person to each potential participant)

Hi,

My name is Hannah Wilkinson and I am a PhD Student at Keele University. As part of my research I am conducting interviews with individuals that have formerly been employed by the British military.

I am inviting you to take part in my research project and to provide your own life experiences. You have been invited as:

- d) You have formerly been employed by the British military and completed basic training as a minimum or;
- e) You have formerly been employed by the British military and have served in active combat in Afghanistan and/or Iraq or;
- f) Through conversations with other former military personnel that have been participants in this project, you have expressed an interest in taking part in the research and meet the criteria of either a) or b) above

Before you decide whether you would like to take part, it is important that you understand why this research is being done and what it will involve. Enclosed here are:

- An Information Sheet - with details about the study
- Consent Forms 1 and 2 - which will be completed on the day of interview

These documents include information about anonymity, which will be ensured before publication of this research. If you do take part, you will be asked to sign two consent forms on the day of interview – Consent Form 1 for your participation and Consent Form 2 for the use of quotes (form 2 will be signed after the interview).

Please take time to read this information carefully and discuss it with friends and relatives if you wish. If anything is unclear, or if you would like more information, please ask me (see contact details below).

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you would like to participate, or have any questions about the project, please contact me. Alternatively, you may contact the lead supervisor of this project, Professor Ronnie Lippens.

Hannah Wilkinson
h.r.wilkinson@keele.ac.uk
01782 733731
CM1.03
Keele University, ST5 5BG

Prof. Ronnie Lippens
r.lippens@keele.ac.uk
01782 733263
CBB1.023
Keele University, ST5 5BG

Appendix C5

EMAIL EXAMPLE 1 – existing contact

From: Hannah R Wilkinson, h.r.wilkinson@keele.ac.uk

Subject: Invitation to take part in research

Hi

I am currently doing a PhD at Keele University and am emailing to ask whether you, or any other former military personnel you know, might be interested in taking part in my research? I have attached an Information Sheet that contains details about the research and participation, as well as Consent Forms 1 and 2 for you to look at in advance (these would be completed on the day of interview).

Please feel free to ask me any questions you may have. You can use this email address: h.r.wilkinson@keele.ac.uk or my office phone number: 01782 733731. If you are happy to take part after reading the Information Sheet and asking any questions, please reply to this email or get in touch by post using the following address: Hannah Wilkinson, CM1.03, Keele University, Keele, Staffordshire, ST5 5BG.

If you know of any former military personnel that may be interested in taking part in this research, please either forward them this email with all the documents attached, or ask them to get in touch with me via email or phone and I will send them the details of the research.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Hannah

Please consider the environment before printing this email.

This email and its attachments are intended for the above named only and may be confidential. If it has come to you in error you should not copy or show it to anyone; nor should you take any action based on it, other than to notify the sender of the error by replying to the sender. Keele University staff and students are required to abide by the University's conditions of use when sending email. Keele University email is hosted by a cloud provider and may be stored outside of the UK. Any views or opinions expressed by the author of this email do not necessarily reflect the views of Keele University.

Appendix C6

EMAIL EXAMPLE 2 – known veteran organisation (contact has already been made)

From: Hannah R Wilkinson, h.r.wilkinson@keele.ac.uk

Subject: PhD Research

Hi (Contact Name)

Following our recent discussion (Insert place/date of discussion) , I am emailing to ask if you might be able to forward the details of my research to any former military personnel that might be interested in participating in a small research project.

The project is primarily interested in the experiences of former military personnel leaving the military, as well as those that have left the conflicts of Afghanistan and/or Iraq. Personnel can have served in any Armed Force within the British military, for any length of time (as long as basic training was completed), can be any age and can have left the military for any reason. It is desirable that potential participants live in Stoke-on-Trent and the surrounding areas, or Burnley (Lancashire) and the surrounding areas. Participation will involve an informal interview, lasting approximately an hour and a half, which will be recorded and transcribed by myself. Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained, and the interviews will be used for my PhD thesis.

I have attached an Information Sheet and Consent Forms 1 and 2 (which would be completed on the day of interview). If you think that you might be able to forward this email to anyone that might be interested in taking part, or pass on my contact details, that would be very much appreciated. Should anyone wish to take part, they are free to get in touch and ask questions and can participate by sending me an email or getting in touch using the contact details provided. I am not looking to recruit large numbers, so even one person would be fantastic!

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Hannah

Please consider the environment before printing this email.

This email and its attachments are intended for the above named only and may be confidential. If it has come to you in error you should not copy or show it to anyone; nor should you take any action based on it, other than to notify the sender of the error by replying to the sender. Keele University staff and students are required to abide by the University's conditions of use when sending email. Keele University email is hosted by a cloud provider and may be stored outside of the UK. Any views or opinions expressed by the author of this email do not necessarily reflect the views of Keele University.

Appendix C7

EMAIL EXAMPLE 3 – veteran organisation (where no previous contact has been made)

From: Hannah R Wilkinson, h.r.wilkinson@keele.ac.uk

Subject: PhD Research

Dear (Contact Name)

My name is Hannah Wilkinson and I am a PhD student at Keele University. I am emailing to ask if you would consider forwarding the details of my research to any former military personnel that might be interested in participating in a small research project.

The project is primarily interested in the experiences of former military personnel leaving the military, as well as those that have left the conflicts of Afghanistan and/or Iraq. Personnel can have served in any Armed Force within the British military, for any length of time (as long as basic training was completed), can be any age and can have left the military for any reason. It is desirable that potential participants live in Stoke-on-Trent and the surrounding areas, or Burnley (Lancashire) and the surrounding areas. Participation will involve an informal interview, lasting approximately an hour and a half, which will be recorded and transcribed by myself. Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained, and the interviews will be used for my PhD thesis.

I have attached an Information Sheet, with details about the research and Consent Forms 1 and 2 (these would be completed on the day of interview). If you think that you might be able to forward this email to anyone that might be interested in taking part, or pass on my contact details, that would be very much appreciated. Should anyone wish to take part, they are free to get in touch and ask questions and can participate by sending me an email or getting in touch using the contact details provided. I am not looking to recruit large numbers, so even one person would be fantastic!

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Hannah

Please consider the environment before printing this email.

This email and its attachments are intended for the above named only and may be confidential. If it has come to you in error you should not copy or show it to anyone; nor should you take any action based on it, other than to notify the sender of the error by replying to the sender. Keele University staff and students are required to abide by the University's conditions of use when sending email. Keele University email is hosted by a cloud provider and may be stored outside of the UK. Any views or opinions expressed by the author of this email do not necessarily reflect the views of Keele University.



Keele University

Appendix C8

INTERVIEW TOPIC GUIDE 1

For participants that didn't bring photos/objects

PROJECT TITLE: 21st century combat experiences and their impact on former military personnel returning to post-conflict life

Before the interview begins, an informal conversation will take place between the participant and the researcher. This conversation will explain the interview process, will give the participant another chance to read the information sheet and will aim to put the participant at ease. Consent Form 1 will be completed. The audio recorder will then be switched on.

The interview will be led by the participants' answers. Relevant or interesting issues will be picked up on and expanded, whilst also aiming to cover the topics of interest. These questions are a guide and will not necessarily be asked in any particular order. There are a number of questions that will be asked at the end, should the answers not come up naturally in conversation. At the end of the interview, each participant will be asked if they would like to add anything to the interview and whether they have any questions. They will then be asked to sign Consent Form 2 – for the use of direct quotes. They will also be given the Further Support sheet.

EXAMPLE TOPICS/QUESTIONS

Life before the military

Talk to me about life before you joined the military..

What were things like at school?

Who were the important people in your life?

What did you do in your spare time?

Military service

How did you feel when you first joined the military? What were your expectations?

Tell me about your time in the Army/Navy/RAF..

Pick up and expand on what is said..

When you came back from Afghanistan/Iraq, how did you feel? What were your thoughts getting off the plane?

Why did you leave the military?

Life after the military

What did you do after leaving the Army/Navy/RAF? How did you feel when you first returned home?

What are your experiences of work outside of the military?

Relationships

Tell me about the important people in your life

What is your social life like?

How have relationships/friendships changed or developed throughout your life?

Are you still in contact with people from your time in the Army/Navy/RAF?

Probes

Tell me more about that

Could you go into more detail?

What do you think led to that?

How has that affected you?

Questions to ask if answers don't come up through conversation

Participant's age

How old were you when you joined?

What was your position/rank?

How many years did you serve?

Were you posted to Iraq and/or Afghanistan? If yes - how many times?

Is there anything that you would like to add to the interview? Do you have any questions?

***GIVE FURTHER SUPPORT SHEET after signing Consent Form 2 and having conversation after the interview.**

Thank you so much for your time and participation, if you have any questions after today please get in touch.



Appendix C9

INTERVIEW TOPIC GUIDE 2 For participants that bring photos/objects

PROJECT TITLE: 21st century theatre of war experiences and their impact on former military personnel returning to post-conflict life

Before the interview begins, an informal conversation will take place between the participant and the researcher. This conversation will explain the interview process, will give the participant another chance to read the information sheet and will aim to put the participant at ease. Consent Form 1 will be completed. The audio recorder will then be switched on.

The interview will be led by the photos and/or objects that the participant has brought to the interview. These may be in physical form or electronic (on a mobile phone for example). Relevant or interesting issues will be picked up on and expanded and, where possible, the topics of interest will be covered. The aim of this method (photo/object elicitation) is to allow the participants to guide the research and discuss topics, ideas, thoughts and stories that are important to them. There are a number of questions that will be asked at the end, should the answers not come up naturally in conversation. At the end of the interview, each participant will be asked if they would like to add anything to the interview and whether they have any questions. They will then be asked to sign Consent Form 2 – for the use of direct quotes. They will also be given the Further Support sheet.

EXAMPLE TOPICS/QUESTIONS – Questions may also be taken from Interview **Topic Guide 1** if the participant is not talking at length around the photos/objects.

Topics of interest

Life before the military
Military service
Life after the military
Relationships

Questions

Talk to me about this photo/object
What made you bring this with you today?
Describe what is happening here (photo)
Why is this object important?
This is interesting, can you tell me more about it? (referring to photo/object)

Probes

Tell me more about that

Could you go into more detail?

What do you think led to that?

How has that affected you?

Questions to ask if answers don't come up through conversation

Participant's age

How old were you when you joined?

What was your position/rank?

How many years did you serve?

Were you posted to Iraq and/or Afghanistan? If yes - how many times?

Is there anything that you would like to add to the interview? Do you have any questions?

***GIVE FURTHER SUPPORT SHEET after signing Consent Form 2 and having conversation after the interview.**

Thank you so much for your time and participation, if you have any questions after today please get in touch.



Keele University

Appendix C10

FURTHER SUPPORT

PROJECT TITLE: 21st century theatre of war experiences and their impact on soldiers returning to post-conflict life

Following the interview, here is a list of places in which to gain further support should you require it. The researcher may discuss this after the interview and make suggestions and/or recommendations if necessary.

Combat Stress

The Veterans' Mental Health Charity

Phone Number: 0800 138 1619

Email address: combat.stress@rethink.org

Website: <http://www.combatstress.org.uk/veterans>

Forward Assist

Forward Assist is a veteran support charity and provides advice, information and guidance, 'life changing' projects and opportunities to former servicemen and women.

Phone number: 01912 943539

Website: <http://www.forward-assist.com/contact>

Military Veterans' Service (Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust)

The Military Veterans' Service offers mental health support for ex-service personnel in Lancashire and Greater Manchester.

Phone Number: 0300 323 0707

Online referral form: <https://referrals.penninecare.nhs.uk/>

Email address: mviapt.enquiries.nw@nhs.net

Website: <https://www.penninecare.nhs.uk/your-services/military-veterans-service/>

NHS Health Helplines

There are links to a vast number of different health concerns here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/symptom-checker/>

This page has a wealth of contacts for a whole range of different mental health needs:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/mental-health-helplines.aspx>

You can also call the NHS non-emergency line on: 111

RFEA (Regular Forces Employment Association)

The RFEA are a job-finding service that generates quality and sustainable employment for service leavers.

Website: <https://www.rfea.org.uk/contact-us/contactus> (online form that gives the options of the RFEA contacting you by phone or email)

RFEA – Project Nova

Project Nova supports ex-forces personnel who have entered police custody. This project is run in partnership with Walking with the Wounded (WWTW), Norfolk and Suffolk Police Force and the Forces in Mind Trust.

Phone Number: 01212 360058

Website: <https://www.rfea.org.uk/contact-us/contactus> (online form that gives the options of the RFEA contacting you by phone or email)

SSAFA – Soldiers Sailors and Airmen Families Association

SSAFA is the UK's oldest national Armed Forces charity and provide a wealth of support and guidance for Regular and Reserve former military personnel and their families.

Phone number: 0845 241 7141 or 0207 403 8783 from a mobile

Website: <https://www.ssafa.org.uk/about-us/contact-us>

The Royal British Legion

Comprehensive knowledge base aimed at all members of the armed forces, past and present and their families. They can provide advice to help you access the support that you and/or your family need.

Phone Number: 0808 802 8080

Website: <http://support.britishlegion.org.uk/>

Veterans and Reserves Mental Health Programme (Formerly Medical Assessment Programme)

DCMH Chilwell

Chetwynd Barracks

Chilwell

Nottingham

NG9 5HA

Phone Number: 0800 032 6258

Email address: aphcsedcmhchl-vmhmp@mod.uk

Veterans UK (Including access to the Veterans' Welfare Service)

Veterans UK

Ministry of Defence

Norcross

Thornton Cleveleys

FY5 3WP

Phone Number: 0808 191 4218

Email address: veterans-uk@mod.uk

Appendix D

Example of a strong theme emerging through FANI⁸⁶

One starting point frequently used within interviews was ‘talk to me about Iraq/Afghanistan’, a deliberately open prompt. Interestingly, all answers began with reference to the heat and impact of the environment on the body:

Josh: ‘hot. It’s fucking hot! It’s hot it’s humid’

Kelli: ‘yeah, fuck, it’s hot. But everything just took you by your throat. Literally, the moisture in your body just went completely... a couple of lads went down with heat exhaustion’

Tom: ‘fucking sweating your tits off, in *full* body armour and combat helmet, in 60 degree heat’

This suggested that the bodily experience of the intense heat was not only a shared memory, but one that appeared to be most important and readily available when asked about these theatres of war. In other words, the ‘free association’ prompt allowed a clear insight into a *shared experience* of serving in these areas of conflict, highlighting the importance of the body in relation ‘work’, but also in terms of the impact of the physical landscape and environment on the body – which appeared to collectively be the strongest memory of that time. This theme therefore helped form section 8.2.1.1. within the thesis – ‘Landscapes of war’.

⁸⁶ Free Association Narrative Interviewing (see Holloway and Jefferson, 2000, 2008)

Appendix E

Process for achieving informed consent

Informed consent was gained by fully explaining the research to potential participants, either in person, over the phone, or in writing, and answering any queries they might have. It was also explained on several occasions that participation was voluntary, and that consent could be withdrawn at any point (including after the interview), without having to give reason. I did not place a time limit on the withdrawal of consent – other than the submission of thesis, which had originally (at the time of fieldwork) been scheduled for September 2017 – even though I fully understood this could potentially affect the writing of the thesis, should a participant withdraw in the latter stages of the project. This was a deliberate decision, made in relation to the topic of research and thus the potential for difficult discussions around war and violence to take place – which they did on a number of occasions. As such, I wanted participants to feel that at any point up to submission, they had the freedom to decide not to participate. No participants withdrew their consent at any stage of the research.

The research was introduced to potential participants by describing what it was about, why it is being conducted, and how the findings and data will be used. Participants were given a letter of invitation and an information sheet (See Appendix C1), explaining why they had been approached, the purpose of the study, and to describe what participation would involve. After reflecting on previous research with veterans (Wilkinson, 2012), I also provided a copy of the consent forms (Appendices C1 and C2) to allow participants to view them and ask questions before being in an interview

setting. It was made clear that the consent forms did not need to be signed until the day of interview, but that they had been provided in advance to look at and ask questions. Every potential participant was assured of confidentiality and that all data would be used anonymously, and that participants would be identifiable only to the researcher.

Where participants offered to discuss the research with potential participants (as per a snowballing technique), they were provided with my contact details, a letter of invitation, the information sheet, and a copy of the consent forms to pass on (see Appendices C1 – C10), and advised that should their contact be interested, they should make direct contact with me, or provide permission for me to contact them. This ensured that all participants received sufficient information about the research from myself, to enable properly informed consent.

At the start of the interview, I discussed the information sheet with participants, and asked if they had any questions, and Consent Form 1 was completed. At the end of the interview, Consent Form 2, for the use of direct quotes, was completed following a brief discussion about how data will be used. Some participants arrived at the interview with completed copies of both consent forms, expressing they were more than happy to take part in all aspects of the research. In these instances, I still had a discussion of the information sheet, and suggested that the forms be exchanged at the end – thus ensuring that participants still felt they had the option of changing their mind about participation and the use of quotes following their interview. Participants took home their copies of the consent forms, as well as the Information Sheet and a Further Support Sheet (See Appendices C1, C2, C3, C10).

Appendix F

Process for maintaining anonymity and confidentiality: participants' identities and data

a) During the interview

It is essential to guarantee confidentiality to participants in a study such as this, especially where discussions of violence and behaviour defined as criminal may occur. Participants were assured that their responses and data were confidential, and that no information which could be used to identify them would be made available without their agreement to anyone, apart from in the circumstances outlined below.

In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, should an interviewer become aware of a situation where there is an identifiable risk of harm to participant or someone else, especially someone who cannot speak for themselves – for example a child or vulnerable adult – they must inform the relevant authorities. As such, when informed consent was gained, participants were made clear of this exception to confidentiality on the Information Sheet and Consent Forms:

I have to work within the confines of current legislation (law) over such matters as privacy and confidentiality, data protection and human rights. Offers of confidentiality may be compromised and overridden in circumstances where I am concerned for the immediate harm to yourself or others. If this occurs, I must pass this information to the relevant authorities. (Information Sheet, Appendix C1)

Before interviews commenced, participants were reminded of this exception to confidentiality.

To maintain confidentiality during interviews, only the interviewee and myself were present, with the exception of one interview – where the participant was living in shared accommodation for people that had recently left prison, and two staff members entered (unannounced) briefly. Although only a short presence and interruption, this did cause the participant some anxiety about what the staff may have overheard, and whether they had been listening before entering. After the interview, I made sure to speak with the staff members, and reassured the participant subsequently that nothing had been overheard (which I was assured it had not). At the end of each interview, participants were invited to select their own pseudonym – some participants chose a name, others did not. If a name had not been chosen, I assigned one and agreed it with the participant.

b) Of data stored

To ensure that confidentiality, anonymity, and security of data stored, data was kept through the research in a variety of ways, to which the following principles applied:

- Interviews were recorded on a digital Dictaphone that has internal memory, and backed up as MP3 files onto a password protected hard drive, and my non-networked computer.
- I transcribed the majority of interviews, however a small number were sent to a professional service for transcription, where all staff sign a pledge of confidentiality before reception of files.
- Informal fieldwork notes were kept in two formats: hand written notes and voice recordings on my Dictaphone (stored as MP3 files and backed up as above). These were used mainly as an exercise after interviews, as my own form

of 'de-brief', and were used reflexively. No formal analysis was conducted on fieldwork notes.

- Only I had access to this material. With the exceptions implied above, all material was kept in my locked university office at all times.
- Hard copies of transcripts and notes, as well as all paper traces (for example signed consent forms) were kept in either a lockable filing cabinet or lockable cupboard in my office when not in use.
- Electronic files were kept on a password-protected hard drive or memory stick (that when not in use were also locked in cabinets) and in the hardware of a non-networked computer drive, protected by passwords, in a locked office.
- Anonymisation of the data and use of pseudonyms commenced when the interviews were first transcribed – this included removing and/or replacing any information that may lead to the identification of participants, such as places, dates, and references to military operations.
- Voice recordings were destroyed once the transcription process, involving quality control, was complete – which was only required for the small number of transcripts that were sent to a professional transcription service (Aldridge et al., 2010; Bryman, 2012).

Appendix G

Reflections on recruitment

All 10 participants were white males who had served in the British Armed Forces, 9 in the Army, and 1 in the RAF. Extreme efforts were made to interview female veterans, and direct contact (sending of Letter of Invitation and supported documents) was made with 3 women, all of whom did not wish to take part for reasons that are unknown. Efforts were also made to recruit participants that had served in the navy, however the direct contact made with 3 potential participants was unsuccessful. The 10 men interviewed, although many were promoted during their service, all joined the military in low ranks, and could be seen to hold lower levels of capital (mainly financial and cultural) upon entering. This means that this research has not gained insight into the higher ranks of the British military, where it is likely that different levels of capital may be held. This is an important area for future research. The range of roles within the armed forces was also of interest when sampling, and several attempts were made to get in contact with veterans that had served in medical roles, combat roles performed at a distance (for example controlling drones), and in the military police.

One former Army medic discussed participation, however along with other potential participants, did not wish to take part following the receipt of the relevant documents. Although non-participation and non-response are common features of the research process (Bryman, 2012), it is felt that the non-participation in this research, both male and female, seemed to stem directly from receipt of the documents provided, as most people had seemed very keen to participate before this point. Although I have no concrete evidence of this, I think the level of detail in the information sheet was too

much (albeit necessary) and that having to sign consent forms made potential participants very wary about the research. Trust has been a prominent feature within the data, and I think also reflected in recruitment. One participant that did take part explained that he had struggled to read the documents, as reading and writing 'did not come easily' to him. The presentation of research information in writing may also have been an issue for other potential participants. In future research with former military personnel, I would seek to explore different and multiple ways of presenting information, such as a short video and/or audio recording to accompany the documents.

Appendix H

Process of sampling

Identifying 'invisible' veterans

'Invisible' is used here to refer to veterans that are currently absent from criminological literature (and arguably the majority of literature on veterans), as the focus so far has been on those that are 'obviously problematic', namely those that have been or are in the CJS – 'criminal', or those that have experienced 'obvious struggle', such as problems with homelessness, mental health, drug abuse, and/or issues with PTSD and injuries – often constructed as 'victims' (McGarry and Walklate, 2011). As such, it was decided that the core group of potential participants should not be drawn from the CJS, or from organisations, charities, and/or services working with veterans. Unsurprisingly, identifying and approaching 'invisible' veterans without the aid of organisations and/or gatekeepers was not without challenges.

The initial way that the core group of participants was identified was through existing contacts to former military personnel, acquired in previous research (Wilkinson, 2012). A convenience and purposive snowballing technique was used for sampling (Coyne, 1997), which proved successful. Initial contact was made with people that had taken part in my previous research, living in the areas surrounding Burnley, Lancashire, who put me in touch with a number of individuals I did not know, and gave them the Letter of Invitation. Some of these people got in touch with me, and some passed the information onto others they knew. 'Invisible' veterans were also reached through networking at military events, conferences, and various talks where I discussed the recruitment process, and people came forward to volunteer or passed

my details onto veterans they knew. This meant that the initial network of potential participants quickly widened, and was not confined to one geographical area, but instead spread across England, including Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Staffordshire. One participant who now lives in Belgium also took part, and was initially contacted by someone that had been present at one of my early conference papers, in 2015. A total of 8 'invisible' participants were gained through these purposive snowballing techniques. The subsample of 2 'visible' veteran participants was formed through a second wave of sampling.

Identifying 'visible' veterans

The sampling of 'visible' participants was a separate wave of sampling, which began as saturation was being achieved in the core sample. Various veteran organisations were considered, however the housing organisation in Birmingham were made aware of my research through a colleague, and rather unexpectedly were keen for me to come and talk to staff and residents about my work. I left several Letters of Invitation and Information Sheets with residents and staff, and received an email the same week from the first 'visible' participant who expressed his desire to take part. Although several other veteran residents inquired about the research, it was not for another three or four months before the second participant confirmed their participation. After these two interviews within the sub-sample had been conducted, it became clear that the data collected had far exceeded expectations in richness, and that saturation had been achieved across both participant groups (Bryman, 2014: 426).

Appendix I

Transcription System

Adapted from King and Horrocks (2010), 'based in part, on Poland, 2002 – "A basic transcription system"' (cited in King and Horrocks, 2010: 145-146, figure 9.1)

Interview feature	Representation	Notes
Emphasis	Italics Capital letters Colons: (::)	Italics: stressed words Capitals denote shouting/loud tone Colons indicate stretched sounds
Pauses	Very short pauses: comma (,) Pause: full-stop (.) Longer pauses of 2+ seconds: (pause) (long pause) (very long pause)	King and Horrocks (ibid.) suggest that under a second is a 'very short' pause. A pause being a second. Particularly long pauses –those over two seconds are advised to be noted, either with notation (long pause) or by timing the pause in seconds.
Interruptions	Hyphen placed at the point of interruption	
Overlapping speech	Hyphen as for interruption, but the overlapping comment(s) proceeded with (overlap). Where the overlapping section ends, noted with (end overlap.)	King and Horrocks (ibid.) suggest only use the latter where there are more than a few syllables of simultaneous speech by both parties.
Audibility Problems	[inaudible]	
Laughing, coughing and similar features	Round brackets: (both laugh)	
Tone of voice	Marked in brackets: (ironic tone) (aggressive voice)	Where the participant's (or indeed interviewer's) tone of voice clearly indicates how a section of speech is intended to be understood
Direct speech	If the participant is directly quoting another person or themselves, this section is placed in speech marks.	If this is accompanied by a clear mimicking of another's voice, or a distinctive change in tone to their own voice, this is noted in brackets as above.
Non-verbal communication	Distinctive NVC that reinforces meaning, noted in square brackets: [sighs]	

Appendix J

Process of analysis

Following multiple read-throughs of interview transcripts to ensure familiarity with the content, data was first coded line by line, generating a long list of ‘basic themes’ (Attride-Sterling, 2001). This was done initially on paper copies of transcripts, before then coding line by line within NVivo – electronic software that allows for the arranging, sorting, and managing of large, particularly qualitative, data sets. Although quantitative data was never a focus of this research, the ability to see the number of data ‘items’ coded to each ‘node’ (theme) within NVivo allowed for dominant themes within the data to be captured visually – helping to determine some of the themes chosen to be presented within this thesis:

Nodes			
Name	Sources	References	
4 year itch	3	5	
Addiction	4	20	
Adulthood Man	5	14	
Alcohol	7	33	
American military	3	10	
Belonging	8	42	
Blurring of Boundaries	10	33	
Civvy street	10	91	
Contrast	7	41	
Decision making	8	29	
Discipline	8	36	
Equipment and resources	9	44	
Giving back Making a Difference	6	19	
Guilt	3	3	
Help seeking	8	46	
Humour as a coping mechanism	8	22	
intolerance	9	32	
Lack of war	8	25	
Memory	5	12	
Military as negative	5	31	
Opportunities	9	26	
Playing war	7	11	
Politics	10	75	
Proper soldiering	5	29	
Punishment	7	31	
Purpose	9	51	
Realising potential Challenge	10	44	
Relationships	9	75	
Resilience	6	24	
Resistance	4	21	
Responsibility	9	62	

As there are 10 participants (‘sources’), this indicates that all spoke to this theme

‘References’ refer to the number of items coded to the theme – i.e. sections of data. ‘Talking politics’, formed an important section within the thesis (see. 9.3.1.)

Screenshot taken from NVivo, showing a small section of themes coded to

Basic themes were then clustered based on larger, shared issues to create 'organising themes', which were then captured by 'global themes' - a single overarching statement, metaphor or concept that 'encapsulates the main point of the text' (Attride-Stirling, 2001: 392). An example of a 'global theme' that emerged is 'the military as an escape', which formed section 6.3. of the thesis - capturing the various reasons participants discussed for joining the military, all of which hinged on the military as providing a 'route out' of a range of socio-economic circumstances.

The final step, although it was not completed faithfully for all data and themes in this visual way, was to produce a 'web-like' representation of how these three tiers - basic, organising, and global - link together. This is very similar to the web-like maps used within grounded theory (see Corbin and Strauss, 1990). The next challenge was to identify and arrive at the stable concepts and themes central to the analysis, providing meaning and beginning to shape an overarching 'story' that runs through the data. As the data is so rich, this final stage - of deciding which themes to present in the thesis - posed most challenging.

I found that by creating an excel spreadsheet which summarised my analysis and the life stories of participants, as well as the themes they discussed - clearly noting which global themes appeared most prominent within their individual narratives - helped to visualise the data in another way. This allowed the connections between participants' stories to be seen clearly in one place, ultimately assisting in the difficult task of selecting the themes to present, along with the sections of data to use in the thesis.

Appendix K

Examples of my reactions to the data & interpretation

The main concern throughout this research process was whether I could ever truly understand these stories and do them justice. An extract from an audio recording made following a phone conversation with my supervisor, after having just left a particularly difficult interview, captures this:

I just don't know how I'm going to do justice to these stories. They are so heavy and loaded with so much, that I am worried I might overlook things. It feels painful that I might, or likely will, disrupt some aspect of who they are. In many ways, they see the harms. I am struggling to reconcile that some of these stories - this one was particularly hard - affect me so much, yet that is the extent of these experiences for me. I have not felt them, have not lived them, merely heard them. I have just spoken to Sam about how I am worried about causing harm by dragging up all this information from people, or in how I present it. But she's right, as are the participants - it's important.

Hannah, *Research Diary*, 10/11/2016

A note made following a difficult day of analysis shows a small insight into one particularly memorable reaction to the data, and thus interpretation:

When I am reading all this, it affects me so much and I am upset, angry, and currently moved to tears (sobbing in my office!). Yet when I was in the interview, I employed a very similar level of detachment that participants talk of. I was 'at work', and it didn't affect me. Hearing about the violence becomes 'normal'. I barely flinched or reacted when hearing about death, or even seeing pictures of death. Whereas sat in my office, with the voices and words, I struggle

to employ that same detachment. This is real life. War is sh*t. Violence is sh*t. And it destroys lives, and tears communities apart. It displaces mass numbers of the population, and destroys landscapes, homes, play areas, and life of all forms.

Participants often discuss it in positive terms, in that they looked forward to going and doing what they were trained for. But the more I read these stories, the more I see harm. Today I read (and re-read!) Josh's discussion of Afghanistan, where he claimed that he and many other soldiers he served with had "nothing to lose", as they were "single soldiers". Towards the end of the interview, he described the Afghan enemies in the same terms - 'they have nothing to lose'. Although he did so initially with regards to them employing unconventional tactics, the connection was there. You have two sets of young men, both pit against each other for the purposes of war, yet sharing so many similarities. I have cried for a while, got angry even more, and thankfully shared all this with Eleonora in my office - who is also studying war and experiences of veterans from Argentina. She said to write it down as it helps.

Hannah, *Research Diary*, 20/01/2018

Appendix L

Not a Metaphor but a Soldier's View

Josh's Poem, 2017⁸⁷

The hot sun beat down on our kevlar heads
The metal of our rifles burned to the touch
Boots melting in the afternoon heat.

Yet we March on for queen an' country we March on for pride an' honour.

We taste the sand on our parched lips as bullets fly, shrapnel from grenades, booms
an' echo's in the air.

Yet we March on.

No time to be scared or to think.
We are machines we are trained this is what we do

We March on.
Taking house by house room by room
Bang crash boom.
We don't look we don't see
We march on.

We don't take time to ask who or why
We are there to do or die
We March on complete the task
Do as commanded we dare not ask.

At night with the stench of death in the air
Blood on our hands.
We don't stop to care, fathers brothers sisters an' mothers
We don't stop to ask why.

We March on.

As friends fall we still March on
Never taking time to reflect if it's
Wrong.
We are solders we March on
We have to believe that we are in
The right or how could we sleep at
Night.

We March on through the heat
Through the pain through the Blood
Knowing there is nothing to gain
Yet we March on.

⁸⁷ This poem was sent to me by Josh post-interview via email – the aim being to capture war for those that have never 'been there'. Some minor spelling errors have been corrected, but presentation, punctuation, and wording are all Josh.

Appendix M

'This Is Belonging' Army Campaign



THE BENEFITS OF BELONGING IN THE ARMY

A sense of belonging may sound like a small thing. Yet it fuels you as much as food and water, because it doesn't just feed your body, it feeds your mind and soul.

The stronger the sense of belonging - the stronger you become.

Sure, you could look for belonging in a football team or club, but the sense of belonging you'll find in the Army - well, that's the next level.

When you've trained together side by side, learnt things no classroom can teach you and fought with each other, for each other - that creates a bond like no other. A bond that lasts a lifetime.

Belonging sees you through whatever life - on or off the battlefield - may throw at you.

This is belonging.

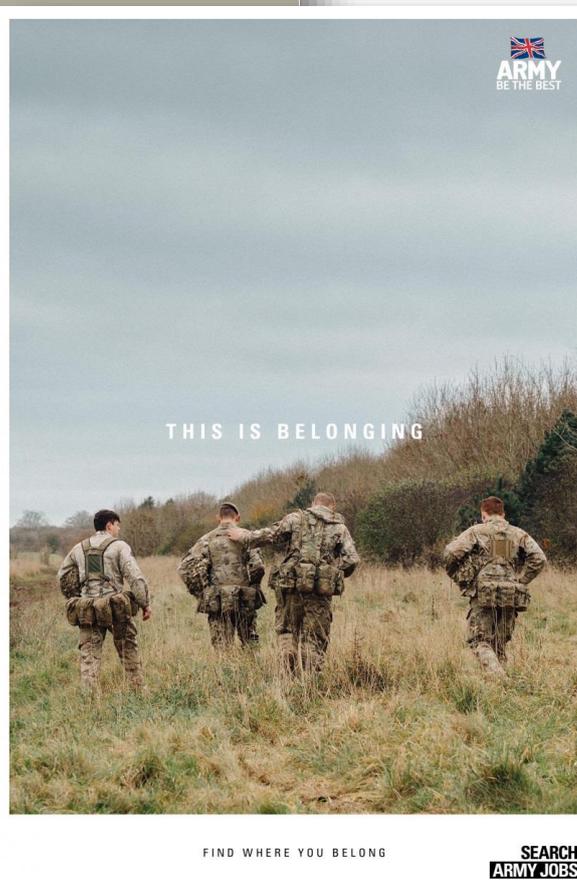
WHY SHOULD YOU JOIN?



THIS IS BELONGING

FIND WHERE YOU BELONG

SEARCH
ARMY JOBS



THIS IS BELONGING

FIND WHERE YOU BELONG

SEARCH
ARMY JOBS

Appendix N

THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

I _____ SWEAR
BY ALMIGHTY GOD THAT I WILL BE FAITHFUL
AND BEAR TRUE ALLEGIANCE TO
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II,
HER HEIRS AND SUCCESSORS
AND THAT I WILL AS IN DUTY BOUND
HONESTLY AND FAITHFULLY DEFEND
HER MAJESTY, HER HEIRS AND SUCCESSORS,
IN PERSON, CROWN AND DIGNITY
AGAINST ALL ENEMIES AND WILL
OBSERVE AND OBEY ALL ORDERS OF
HER MAJESTY, HER HEIRS AND SUCCESSORS
AND OF THE GENERALS AND OFFICERS
SET OVER ME.

Provided by a participant

Appendix O

Tom's extended narrative of invading Iraq

HW: yeah (pause) and when you said cluster fuck (pause) in terms of Iraq (pause)

Tom: well (pause) I mean on different levels. I imagine there's cluster fucks at a higher level (HW: mmm) which I'm not- wasn't aware of at the time (pause) but for me *personally*, it was a cluster fuck. erm (pause) obviously once the, the order had come through. We'd been waiting for about three weeks, in Kuwait. For you know, the politicians to make up their minds (HW: mm) (pause) and they said, 'right we're going in'. And we breached the berm [artificial ridge/embankment], cos there was like this massive sand berm that goes all the way around Iraq. And then they breached it. And all the, front line fighting soldiers pushed through (pause) erm you know that, that night it was just like (pause) fucking fireworks you know what I mean. You could hear everything in the background going off, it was brilliant.

You know and then everyone was there lined up in convoys. You know an *entire* armoured regiment with all our kit, and vehicles and everything. That we'd been checking, and re-checking, and checking and checking and checking, and of course, one of the things that you check, is your convoy light (HW: mmm) cos you move up in darkness. (HW: yeah) cos you don't have your headlights on. Because that would just give you away (HW: yeah) so:: you have this tiny little light that glows, on the back axle of the vehicle. So the one behind you can see it. Like a tiny little firefly thing, that you follow. So you know, [deeper voice] 'make sure, make sure, MAKE SURE, your convoy lights work'. Cos if they don't, you've got nothing to follow (pause) and:: the guy that had been going around saying this. [deeper voice] 'make sure they work, make sure they work', hadn't checked his own (pause) and er, course we had a right collection of old shitty vehicles and that. Some were more modern than others, more powerful. Wolf Land Rovers that were faster, and erm. What we used to call the Daddy Drops, is a big Foden. Vehicle with an arm on the back, that can pick up dismantable wracks and stuff (HW: ok) and then you had these RB-44s, these shitty old Reynolds Boughtons that should have been decommissioned donkeys years ago. It's like, baggage trucks and stuff like that. And I was driving one of them.

So, when we would move as a regiment. I would have to drive that (HW: ok) with, there was like. There was my vehicle commander, which was someone as the same rank as me, just in the other seat (HW: mmhmm) (pause) erm (pause) and:: three guys in the back. Just laid on the baggage. Just laid on like the bags and stuff, and the equipment. you know, they didn't have seats, or seat belts or nothing like that! They're just laid in the back (HW: laughs) and a generator on the back right. And this thing was not powerful. You know, it wasn't, really capable of towing what it was towing and

stuff (HW: yeah) so it was *slow*, we was moving up, *creeping* up. You know you've got tens, tens of thousands of troops trying to move through, this opening they've made, *into* Iraq. And then go wherever they're supposed to go (pause) and start *doing* their job (pause) and of course the infantry have swept through. And killed everything that fucking moves. Blown everything up. And there's just c- fucking shit and carnage everywhere. And erm. Creeping forward and that.

And of course, people are getting bogged in cos its sand and all sorts. And *finally* we get onto the roads. And we sort of speed up a bit (long pause) [taps on desk to indicate positions] the guy in front (pause) no convoy light. I've *half* the regiment behind me. Following *me*. You know. Each person is following the other person. And:: they drive off too quick. And this is in the middle of a sand storm at the same time. So:: there's a *war* going on. Right. There's a *sand storm* going on. I'm moving through somebody's else's fucking country that we've just invaded. And I don't know where the front of my convoy is. Right! And I'm only like, what was I at the time? 22? (long pause) 21. Yeah 21 I think. You know? I ain't really got a clue what I'm doing. Yeah I'm a squaddie and stuff, but like most squaddies, I just make it up as I go along sorta thing. (HW: yeah)

So:: I'm driving along these roads. I've got *NO* idea if I'm driving the correct way. Into Iraq. I was just, I was on this road when I lost them, I'll keep driving straight. Don't turn off. Just keep driving straight you know? (HW: yeah) And they're nowhere to be seen, I mean they're fucking long gone. And they haven't *bothered* to check if anyone's still behind them. So I've got *half* the regiment following *me!* (pause) course there's a sandstorm, I can't even see the road, right. And we're driving along. Dead, dead, slow. Right. looking for see if there's a white line at the edge of this road (HW: yeah) and erm, I've got Dabby leaning out of the window, and he's going, [different voice] 'yeah yeah, oh no, left a bit', and occasionally, we'd *almost* gone off the road. And there's a big drainage ditch at the side.

And I've got three guys in the back, that would have been, possibly killed (pause) and I'm fucking F-ing and blinding. [imitates driving and squinting in front] 'BASTARDS, FUCKING CONVOY LIGHTS, FUCKING' this that and the other. I mean, I was fucking *fuming* (HW: yeah) and this is not a situation in which you want to be lost (HW: no!) so much for my. For the glorious invasion of another man's country. I didn't even know if I was *in* his country. (pause) driving along. And, the only time I've *ever* thought, 'thank god for the RMPs' [Royal Military Police] (pause) right, cos there was this one, this *lone* guy. This lone RMP, with his motorbike. Stood at the, at this junction of this road. With a red sigh loom. and I can just see it coming out of the distance, out of the sand and the shit, and I pull up, and I'm leaning out the window [deep voice] 'alright mate? Where the *fuck* is my regiment?' (HW: laughs) and he's just like, I mean I didn't even know what rank he was. I might have been swearing at a sergeant major for all I know, like 'where the fuck's my regiment?'. He went, [different voice] 'Just go that way [pointing] everyone's going that way' (pause) waves me down this other road.

And it's a good job I'd have seen him, as otherwise I'd have just carried on going straight past like. So yep yep, I turned left down this road. Mile after mile after mile. No sign of my regiment. And I think (pause) there might have been another guy waving us as well. We turned another way. (HW: yeah) but eventually (pause) right, driving along. Still a sandstorm. Out of nowhere, my convoy is- the rest of the convoy is in front of me. Parked up on the side of the road. Yeah, still no convoy light. Course, it's a sandstorm. I can't see anything. So I *literally* almost goes into the back of this vehicle. And *everybody* almost goes into the back of me (HW: laughing) Pffft, I mean, I was just a gunner. I was just a private soldier. I jumped out of this thing, I ragged his door open, I was like [shouting] 'YOU FUCKING WANKER'. And he was a sergeant! And I'm just fucking F-ing and blinding at him, [shouting] 'YOU FUCKING CUNT. FUCKING LEFT HALF THE REGIMENT BEHIND. DRIVING OFF TOO FAST. NO *FUCKING CONVOY LIGHT*. You've been going on for WEEKS about FUCKING. CONVOY LIGHTS.' and he was like, 'alright mate, alright, calm down, I'm sorry I'm sorry, I'm like 'YOU'RE A FUCKING *WANKER*' and then I calmed down, and I was like, 'oh shit I've just spoken to a sergeant like that' [both laugh] but yeah (pause) fucking hell (long pause)

[sighs] Looking back though it was funny [laughs] you know what I mean, fucking, it's not like in the films [both laugh] (pause) I mean, yeah, my first look at Iraq was the next day when the sandstorm had cleared. And I woke up. Covered in sand. And it was like, 'oh. great. more desert' and a few burnt out T-72s and T-54s [Soviet battle tanks, first introduced after the second world war] around the place you know? A few, some stuff still smoking and that.

Appendix P

Mike's extended narrative of 'fishing' in Bosnia

This was the picture that contains the dead body. At the time, on reflection, it's quite a, you know, disgraceful, sort of, way to look at things but, and especially the way to act as well, um. We found – across this period, particular period, we found a total of four dead bodies and what we found out later, what was happening was the police, the Bosnian police, were actually setting up static or, you know, very abrupt checkpoints and just stopping traffic. Ah, they were stopping people and never found out who or anything, any details, but apparently, they were stopping Bosnians on the road, in their vehicles, shooting them, dumping them in the river and stealing all their possessions as they were fleeing or whatever it was, so eventually, because we were in the dam, eventually, the bodies would come down to the dam. We found four at separate times.

The first one, we called Bob because he was bobbing up and down in the water. The second one we called Duncan, as in dunking a donut. It had to be very specific. It had to be dunking the donut. The third one, I can't remember what we called him now. I think it was actually this one. No, not this one. This was the fourth one. I honestly can't remember the name of the third one now but it was equally as distasteful, but the fourth one, we called Rocky, because he was cut on the rocks so that's the photograph there. It's not the most pleasant of pictures. Thankfully, I didn't have a zoom on the camera. It was quite a drop from where we were stood to actually where the body was. Um, and incidentally, there's a little story behind this one as well, because we had to get the bodies from the water level up about 50 foot to the footpath, and the only way of doing that was. You can see this, sort of, rope thing that's going along. We had this humungous rope with a big, massive, dirty, great big hook on it and the only thing we could do was to throw it down, try and, sort of, hook it on somewhere.

Um, the first attempt, I mean. Obviously, up here, you can't see it but up here, there's, like, 20 squaddies, all stood around, you know, and they're throwing it down. The first one must have hooked him on the wrong side. The other side of his face and he literally tore his face off. Half off, anyway, and everyone just looked at each other and laughed. Burst out laughing. That was, kind of, you know. If I look back on that now, I just think to myself, that was a coping mechanism, you know. As well as that, though, it was also a case of, um, you know, normal people would get upset by that. Normal people wouldn't be too pleased. They'd probably be vomiting or something but it was, kind of like, a sick attitude, was the in thing, the manly thing, not the not showing weakness kind of way.

So, um, in the end, um, one of the other guys, one of the big, massive, humungous built guys, he come in and he threw it down and he hooked it into the chest cavity and that was, we were able to drag it up with that, and, um, when we got him right to the very

edge, um, you know you always have. Well, maybe you don't. For me, anyway, typically in any social groups that I've belonged to, like, the group that I hung around with when I was a teenager, or the group that I was generally knocking around with in the army, and you do, sort of, go from group to group to group. You always have the gobby one. You always have. And do you know what? I don't know what it is. I think it's a genetic thing because they have to be five foot two, skinny as a rake and the mouth on them is just unbelievable.

We had one of them in this particular group and he was literally, again, you can't see it. I think you can in one of the other pictures but there's, like, a rail going around. It's just like a metal rail, kind of thing, and he was just sat on the rail, just, kind of, looking down and he was just giving everyone, you know, grief. Fucking lift it up, come on, you faggots, you know, this, that and the other, and, um, it was just like that constant barrage of crap. So anyway, eventually got this fella up to the top, um. Now, you don't mind me being crude, do you?

HW No.

Mike Well, some of the comments were, I wonder what his cock would look like after four weeks in the river. Another one was, his foot – when we got him to the top, his foot fell off and, like, he nearly ended up back in the water because people were laughing and rolling around on the floor. Again, it's really inappropriate, um. Some people were commenting that they'd like his Levi's, his jeans. Um, and it was just, ah .When I look back, I do honestly think that it wasn't somebody we knew and I think it was a case of, well, and I don't, I'm not intentionally being disrespectful to you. I'm just keeping the mood light, you know, if that. Because it's a way of coping, but no one would touch the body, because it was on the lip and we had to get it up and over this little thing and, um, you know, trained killers, as we were, it was like, you grab it. I'm not fucking touching it, you know, things like that. Well, anyway, again, the big lad who'd got the hook in the first place, and when I say big, he looked like an orangutan. He looked like a gorilla. He was humungous. He was one of what we call the LED lads, and all they do, day in, day out, is, like, bench press with Land Rovers. It's ridiculous. They, one of his arms was my torso.

HW Gosh, yeah

MI Yeah, so he was a proper meathead and he just turned round and he went, get out the fucking way you fucking faggots, and he grabs this body by both shoulders and he dragged it up over. You know, to get it over the lip, and as he did, he must, I'm hoping this is what happened, anyway. He must have pulled too hard on the right side because the body, this poor fella, his arm swung up and slapped the gobby kid who was sat on the rail, and he, the kid. When I say, the kid, he looked about 12 but he turned completely white. He thought, I don't know what he thought, but mentality, but he must

have thought that the body had just. The guy had just slapped him and he jumped that much of fright that he fell 50 foot down the thing into the water and, um, I'm almost certain he had to have counselling because he thought he'd been slapped by a dead body. But I distinctly remember spending the rest of the six months that we were there, just absolutely taking the piss out of this kid, you know, and it was, part of it was funny. Part of it was disgusting and, you know, it was a mixture of so many different things, and all of it, in my opinion, belied the situation, you know.

It happened again. A similar thing happened with regards to a dead body another time, but what we didn't realise was, thankfully, the woman, the people that were there didn't speak the language, English, and didn't understand what we were saying but they could understand our general demeanour. We didn't realise but again, we were congregating around this thing, pulling this body up, um, talking away, laughing, joking, turned around when we got the body to the top and the family were stood there, waiting for him and it was, yeah, we got beasted for that one, after, I think, as soon as the family had gone off, yeah, we got absolute hell from that, which is rightly so, you know. That was completely disrespectful, so. But, anyway...

Appendix Q

Mike's extended narrative of being left in Afghanistan

Must have mentioned that I was gay. And the next thing I know, he goes all funny. So the next thing, he starts writing. Now he was best mates with my mate. Right? And the next thing, I looked over and he's there with his helmet. And on his helmet, he's written in big, big black letters, BNP. So I'm think. And he's a Yorkshire man. So I'm thinking, mmm, that's interesting. Bit controversial, like, you know. So, um, next thing, on the other side of his helmet, swastika. And it just. And then I started getting the verbal. Then I started getting the, you know, this, that and the other. And I thought to me self, oh for fuck's sake. Realisation hits. ... Must have mentioned that I was gay. And the next thing I know, he goes all funny. So the next thing, he starts writing. Now he was best mates with my mate. Right? And the next thing, I looked over and he's there with his helmet. And on his helmet, he's written in big, big black letters, BNP. So I'm think. And he's a Yorkshire man. So I'm thinking, mmm, that's interesting. Bit controversial, like, you know. So, um, next thing, on the other side of his helmet, swastika. And it just. And then I started getting the verbal. Then I started getting the, you know, this, that and the other. And I thought to me self, oh for fuck's sake. Realisation hits. ... he refused to give me fuel for a generator that provides power to my radios. At one point, I was actually providing communications, the *only* source of comms, for the whole medical group. Lives are in the balance .. the trunk commander then turned against me as well ... I was like, "mate, I'm not being funny. I just want fuel and that cunt isn't giving me it". ... In the end I got the fuel ... Things got shitty with Brownie

And, um, so I went right. I'm not being funny mate, but, you know, I'm a fucking soldier at the end of the day, you know. Say whatever you want, I'm not bothered. Just, you know, crack on, but we've got a job to do, kind of thing. So, um, he was a bit funny, bit standoffish. His co-driver..He was, he was managing the fuel at the time. Uh, his co-driver was a TA lad. And he was good lad. He was sound. So, um, everything was going alright. There was kind of a mediation. Cause he refused to give me fuel for me generator that provides power to me radios. At one point, I was actually providing communications, the only source of comms, for the whole medical group. Lives are in

the balance kind of thing. So I had to go to the troop commander, the, the, the trunk node commander for that. And the trunk node commander then turned against me as well in a, in a fashion, I should say. Not, not, not explicitly, but, you know, oh why am I fucking always dealing with your problems. You know, this, that. And I was like, "mate, I'm not being funny. I just want fuel and that cunt isn't giving me it. And that is a problem. Your problem." And I said to him, I went, "sir, I'm not being funny, but, you know, I'll quite happily shut my mouth and not give you a problem. But you come to my vehicle looking for comms and my gen's down and, and you're, you don't, don't have a generator because I've got no fuel. Yeah. I've spoken to him. I'm the same rank as him. I can't overrule him. I can't order him". I went, "so it's entirely up to yourself, sir". Like that. So in the, the end, um, got the fuel. So the next thing, um... Oh, sorry. Prior to that, quite a large event.

....

Things got shitty with, uh, Brownie. Uh, now in addition to fuel, which he controlled. There was another requirement that I had, which was cryptographic material. Essentially crypto. Now, um, we've, we had these devices. I couldn't even remember the name of them now, it's that long ago. We had these, uh, in field devices. And essentially what happens is, at incremental periods. Each person that wants this cryptographic, uh, data, has to drive to, to battalion headquarters. Go to the crypto officer, to the traffic officer. And he will get your crypto fill gun filled up. Uh, you come away from that and you go to your machine. In it goes, hey-ho, presto, you've got secure VHF comms. These are quite... These, these cryptographic, uh, uh, equipment are quite sought after by, shall we say, enemy troops. It would be like a. It would be like listening to every phone call that everyone, everyone's making all at once. So they're quite treasured items kind of thing. And as such, I wasn't allowed, well no one is, allowed to go and get these crypto. Without having a form of escort. So the next thing, uh, as I say, Al Amarah wasn't secure. Not, uh, not by a long shot. Um, the only person, this lieutenant, uh ordered. Uh, Brownie and his co-driver to escort me. Wasn't happy about it, but what, what to do. Follow orders. So I did.

So anyway, goes to battalion headquarters, gets my crypto. Comes away. Now as we went out of the barracks, as we went out of the, uh, the base lines. He pulled out and

went down the road and stopped there. Which is standard procedure. He was waiting for me to come out so that I would, uh, we could drive in formation essentially. So, um, the next thing, uh, there was people all, all on the right side. I, I remember. It's quite a crowd of people, who were, sort of, walking towards the ad. And, um, I pulled my vehicle out and I had a co-driver as well, uh, a TA lad funnily enough. I pulled my vehicle out and the next thing, as I approached his vehicle, these people came in front of my vehicle. These, these walking people. Uh, and I saw. I, I watched him in his, in his mirror. He looked at me and, uh, gave me a filthy look and floored it. Literally floored it and drove away. Now we were just beyond the base lines. And my vehicle was completely surrounded by upward of 40 people, civilians.

Now, at that moment in time, I was a lone, non-armoured Land Rover. In Al Amarah. Unsecure, with crypto and essentially I couldn't move because these people were surrounding me. So next thing, I put my hand on my rifle. Told him, told my co-driver. Um, to do the same. And to make sure that he was ready. Um, I, I. And my other hand was on the erase button on the crypto-filled device. So that was my priority, the crypto. Uh, I know that sounds horrible, but what I had in my pocket, risked 60,000 lives. You know, there was only one life and my life in that, in that vehicle. So that would have been pressed first. Then I would have moved onto, you know. Trying to get out of there alive kind of thing. So as they were, sort of, getting more and more, you know, rumbustious kind of thing. Next thing, RNPs turned up. So probably about the only time I've ever been pleased to see the RNPs. Said, "what's going on?" I went, "I'm on a crypto run." They went, "you what? Why are you on a fucking crypto run. On your own?" And I went, "what, whoa, the fuck on. My escort's fucked off and left me". And I went nuts.

So, um, the next thing, uh, it just. Uh, they escorted me back. Now I jumped out. I went. I went nose to nose with this guy. And I went, "why the fuck did you just do that? You have just nearly got us killed. Do you understand the ramifications of what you have just done?" And he went, "yeah. That was the fucking idea, you queer cunt". Now to me I was, I was absolutely dumbfounded. To me, that was, that was unforgiveable. You know, I mean I'm not being funny, but that is something that. You don't do to your worst enemy. Never mind, never mind, you know, a colleague in a war, you know. So, with

that, I went over to the trunk node commander. Uh, I very loudly explained what had gone on. And he said, "oh don't overreact", like this. And I lost the plot.

I got straight onto the, uh, I demanded that Brownie was detained. His weapon removed. Uh, he said that. The trunk node commander said, refused. I advised him of exactly how it had gone on. The RNPs had advised him of what they'd witnessed. I explained to him that he had not only exposed me and my co-driver to mortal danger. But had basically compromised crypto You know, and he still refused to do anything. So, [coughs] I got on the secure phone and spoke to, uh, my squadron commander. Who was no fool at all. Uh, when I told him what had happened, uh, he told me to shut me mouth, don't say no more over the open lines. And sent a couple of units up, uh, to, sort of, effectively swap me out. But also take him back as well. Um, not really sure what happened to him after that, but I don't think he lasted very long. Um, that was.

That, to me, was a very, very serious event. Major event. Um, and it just got, sort of. I wouldn't, you know. A lot of. Some people have said, "do you not think you overreacted there? You fucked him over big time". Um, I don't think I did. Now I know I was dealing with could I, should I, would ofs. I know I was dealing with potential threats. Potential problems. But there was nothing potential about the group that was refusing to let my vehicle move. The only way forward was, at that time, without the RNP present, was to drive over people effectively. Um, I couldn't tell if anyone in the crowd was armed. However, training teaches us that you have to presume that they are. So, you know, there's a little saying that is quite pertinent. And I just kept saying it over and over. I went, there's no friends in crypto. Give a fuck about me, he compromised crypto. That's his crime. And that saying gets everyone, you know. You can't. There's no way around it. There's no friends in crypto. Simple as that. So, um, that was a hard time for me. Um, when I say that I was completely stunned and shocked by what had happened, I was for a good, for a good few weeks. I took. I ended up going a little bit paranoid. I wasn't trusting people around me. I was sent back to where the rest of my squadron was. Um, and I just wasn't trusting people at all. You know, I, I kept thinking people had ulterior motives. And that's not healthy in that environment

Appendix R

Tom's extended narrative surrounding 'military bullshit'

What's worse, is what you come back to. Now, I don't know about other people, that maybe come back to a big fanfare and a brass band and all that kind of shit (HW: yeah) I've never come back to that. My experience of coming back to Britain. After a tour, have been mostly, *bad* experiences (HW: ok) When I came back from Iraq (long pause) bearing in mind I was the last member of my regiment to come back. I'd been out there for a few months longer than everyone else. Because I volunteered for an extra job. So I got picked up from the airport. Fair enough, all I had on me, I had so little kit, I had my bergen [army bag] with my combat kit in. And that was about it really I think. I don't even know if I had another bag or not. I was wearing smelly old green kit. That I'd been wearing probably for about a week. And a pair of dessy boots. Well that's a big no no, cos that's "mixed dress". You're either wearing deserts, or you're wearing temperate kit. You don't mix the two. Only:: out in Iraq, there was there *was* no spare kit. There was nothing.

So. I'd been given these dessy boots that were a bit more appropriate for a hot climate. Than *black* boots. So:: that's all I had with me. I didn't have any other boots. I literally had *one pair*- and they were literally falling apart. So. Got picked up. Went back to the regiment (pause) Forgot his name now, had gone into sign into the guard room. I stepped out of the Land Rover for a second. Just to chat to the guy on the gate. Provo. You know the provo sergeant. He's in charge of like, erm sec- security, guard shifts and all that sort of stuff. Usually a horrible angry person. Comes out of the fucking guard room. Sees me. Sees my boots. Starts screaming and shouting at me, [deep voice, shouting] "WHAT YOU FUCKING WEARING THEM BOOTS FOR, WHY'VE YOU GOT MIXED DRESS ON" all this kind of stuff. And I'm like [rolls his eyes and sounds exhausted] "brilliant. Welcome Home Tom". I went, er "sorry provo, I've *literally*. just got back from the airport from Iraq. this is the *only* kit I have with me. These are the *only boots* I have". [Imitates provo - deep voice, shouting] "I DON'T GIVE A FUCKING SHIT. YOU SHOULD HAVE GOT SOMEONE TO BRING SOME BOOTS TO THE AIRPORT" and, I'm just like [holds hand out and looks around] (long pause) wh- wh-

what can you do or say to that? Is that not just *unreasonable* bullshit? (HW: yeah) you know. And that was for me like, why do I even bother with this shit (HW: yeah)

2:00:30

When I came back from Afghanistan the first time, that wasn't too bad (HW: yeah) because, our regiment, although they'd forgotten about us as an attack group. And treated us like the ginger kids, while we were out there. When we came back, you know we got welcomed off the plane. Bused back to Lisburn. Because it was only our regiment dealing with it. (HW: ok) And we were the biggest entity there. And it was more or less, get there, get off the bus. And all the wives and everyone was there. Because they lived there with them. Marched through camp, to the pub. And then we're going to get shit faced. And that's what we all did. So (pause) that was alright. And of course, we all had brand new rooms to come back to. Because they'd allowed us to move into the new accommodation. The other stuff wasn't fit for human habitation (HW: right) to be honest. So that was great.

But 2012 (pause) back on the mainland, with 19 regiment, who didn't really like us anyway. And we didn't like them (long pause) fucking it was horrendous. Come back. Pissy rainy day. There was no families- well some of the families had come to see the husbands and stuff (HW: yeah) but, they were all waiting round the side of our HQ and the bloody bus pulled round the back of our HQ onto one of the other car parks, and it was just a bunch of pissed off squaddies, getting off in the rain. You know, er "what's going on? what the fuck do we do?" Hardly anyone there to meet us. Fucking (pause) So obviously some of the wives came round to pick up their husbands. And they got to go home to their *houses*. Their married quarters. All the single soldiers were just stood on this car park- and we haven't got any rooms either, because we had to pack up our rooms before left (HW: right) and we were getting moved into new rooms. Because there wasn't enough accommodation, because 3-8 battery had come as an extra battery and stuff.

So we were all like [looks around] so:: you know (pause) and eventually like the quarter master staff came down. And we've got your keys here and stuff, and they were looking at a list. And, "here's your key". And it was just like, "well that's great. Where is this block? I don't even know this block, I don't even know this camp", you know what I

mean? Just, "I don't know where these blocks are". Tried to get into a block. Couldn't get into it (pause) turns out, it was the right block, but a different barracks (HW: laughs) but there's no wires between these barracks anymore cos it's a super garrison and it's just like, well I didn't fucking know. Eventually found the room. Got into the block. After much grumbling and swearing and all this, and it's pissing it down. And basically, come back from Afghan, and you've just been *dumped* (pause) "There you go, you've got to fucking sort yourselves out" (pause) so got into this block. Got into this room. I'm like oh this room's really great! Apart from that it *doesn't. Have. A. Bed.* (HW: oh god)

Now. The people that were back, at camp. What they call the rear party. They're not in Afghanistan, they're not having to do any of that. All they have to do is sort out all the admin, back on camp. All they had to do is to make sure our rooms were ready for us. That's a case of going in the room and going, "doesn't have a bed. Better get the accommodation to put a bed in it" (pause) I spent my first three nights back in England, sleeping on the floor. I mean, I'm a squaddie you know, I just put a doss bag down on a roll mat and, and got on with it. And you know, unpacked my stuff, and sorted my room out as much as I could. But the point is, I shouldn't have had to (long pause) Whatever job I got asked to do, and us lot over there fighting, we *did* to the best of our abilities. Some of it got some of us killed. You know what I mean, But we did it. *All* they had to do, was make sure there was a bed in that fucking room. And they couldn't even do that.

[2:04:11](#)

And this was one of my issues with the Army in general. It always seemed like, you know half the army were always carrying the other half (HW: mmm) well probably even less, put it at 30% of the Army, were carrying the other 70% of sick, lame, and lazy arseholes (HW: yeah) and:: that was like a, er another nail in the coffin for me (HW: yeah) you know, sleeping on the floor for three days. [deep, sarcastic voice] "oh 'cos it's the weekend, we couldn't possibly get anything done over the weekend", you know what I mean? It's like, *fucking hell.* Useless. So:: (pause) yeah so stuff like that. Coming back. Because you know the military bullshit's going to start again. Being on parade. Polished boots (HW: yeah) fucking, arseholes that just love being arseholes, because

they're in charge of people. And the rat race (long pause) and when stuff like that happens, well it just reinforces how shit it all is.

...

In Tidworth, after 40 had been disbanded. And we came back from the tour (pause) (HW: yep) the second tour of Afghanistan, that's when it all really started to fall apart. (HW: right) people started to think about leaving, and signing off and stuff. And erm (pause) and actually, it was one of those things that, once someone starts it, once you cut the vein, you just bleed out sort of thing (pause) and that's the way it goes with units like that. Especially if a couple of, guys that are seen to be the old boys, like the core, the guys that have binded together. Which I guess that at that point me and a couple of my mates were (pause) once we decided to go, it was ju- the flood gates opened and everyone was just like, "fuck this, I don't want to do it anymore" (HW: yeah) you know, because part of the reason why you like doing it, is because of the guys that you're with and stuff (HW: yep) erm, you know because don't do it for any of this- you don't as a British squaddie you don't do stuff like that for. I don't know they talk about Queen and Country and patriotism, that's American bullshit. We don't do it for that. We do it for each other. And because we like having a scrap (HW: yeah) and:: and once your mates start to leave, you start to think, "well why am I staying here doing it?"