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Old Comrades:  
The formation of veterans' notions of identity and  
community in Tyne and Wear since the Great War

Student Number 000049191

David Hiscocks

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## A Note on Terminology

Please note that the term ‘veteran’ is interchangeable with the following: ex-service personnel, or ex-military. All three terms will be used in this thesis for ease of writing.

### List of abbreviations and technical terminology used in this thesis

- AJEX - The Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women
- ATS – Auxiliary Territorial Service (1938-1949)
- CO – Commanding Officer
- DLI – Durham Light Infantry (Regiment)
- IWM – Imperial War Museum
- MoD – Ministry of Defence
- NCO – Non Commissioned Officer
- PRA – Parachute Regiment Association
- RA – Royal Artillery
- RAAF – Royal Auxiliary Air Force
- RAC – Royal Armoured Corps
- RAF – Royal Air Force
- RASC – Royal Army Service Corps
- RBL/ BL – (Royal) British Legion (Prefix ‘Royal’ granted by charter in 1971)
- RCT – Royal Corps of Transport
- REME – Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers
- RN – Royal Navy
- RTR – Royal Tank Regiment
- TWAM – Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums
- WAAC – Women’s Auxiliary Army Corps (1917-1921)
- WAAF – Women’s Auxiliary Air Force
- WRAC – Women’s Royal Army Corps (1949-1992)
- WRAF – Women’s Royal Air Force
- WRNS – Women’s Royal Navy Service

### Unit abbreviations and meanings

Btl. = Battalion. Between 450 and 1000 men (Consists of circa three companies, each of which consists of circa three platoons).

Coy. = Company. Circa 150 men

Plt. = Platoon. Circa 40 men

Section = Between 8 and 12 men, sometimes divided into sub units known as ‘bricks’

### Relevant Ranks for all three services<sup>1</sup>

Private/ Guardsmen/ Lance Corporal = Members of a section.

Corporal = Commander of a section

Sergeant = Second in command or commander of a platoon

\*<sup>2</sup>Lieutenant = Commander of a platoon. In the RN they may be a commander of a small vessel or serving on board a larger vessel.

\*Non-commissioned officers holding ranks from Sergeant Major to Warrant Officer would be serving in a variety of roles, but not usually in direct command of units.

\*Captain = Second in command of a company. In RN service they generally (but not always) command a vessel.

\*Commander = A RN rank, they generally (but not always) command a vessel.

Major = Company commander

Lieutenant Colonel = Battalion Commander or Regimental Commander

Colonel = Regimental or Brigade Commander<sup>3</sup>

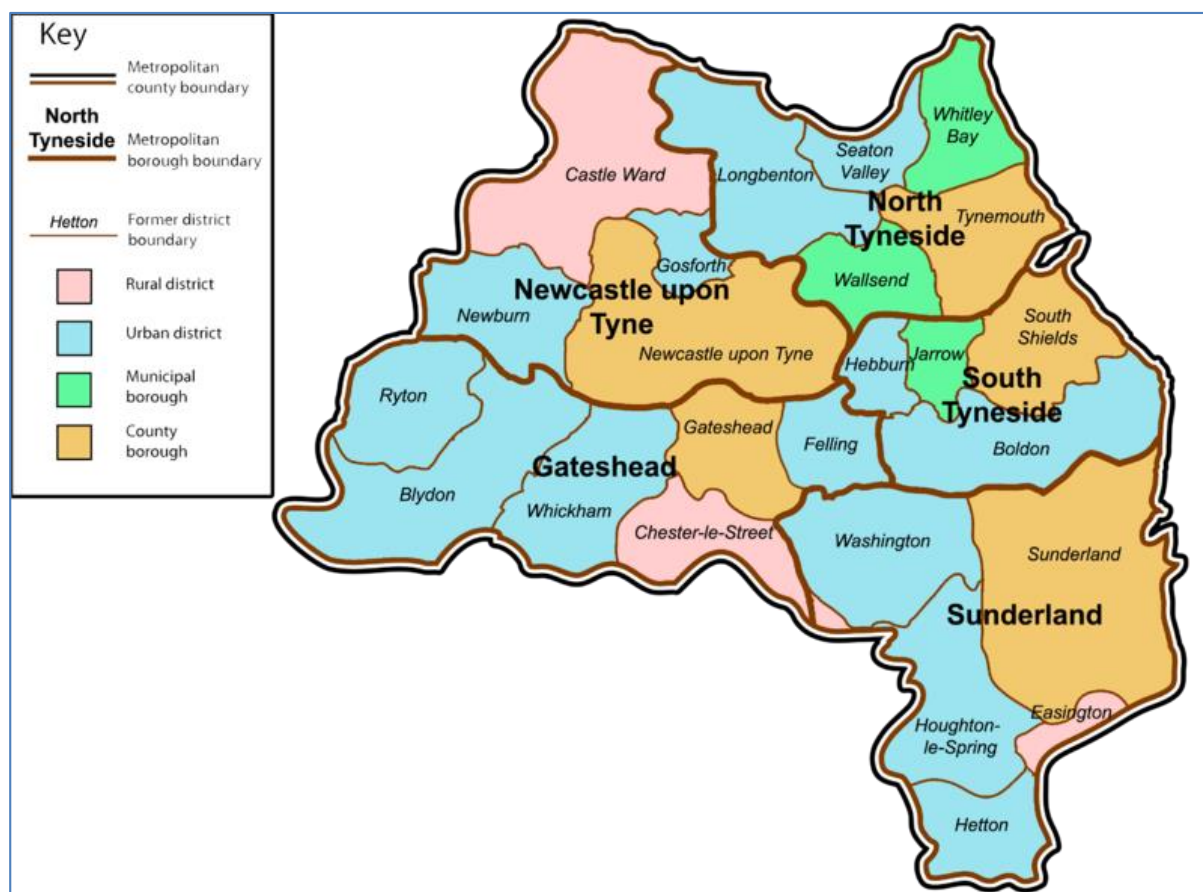
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<sup>1</sup> Rank responsibilities are subject to change when circumstances dictate. For details of rank responsibilities as of 2013 in ideal circumstances, please see British Army 'Ranks' <https://www.army.mod.uk/structure/32321.aspx> (Last visited 08/12/2013).

<sup>2</sup> Asterisks indicate ranks applicable to the RN.

<sup>3</sup> Brigades are made up of a number of units, of battalion or regimental size.

## Map: Tyne and Wear<sup>4</sup>



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<sup>4</sup> ‘Tyne and Wear County Map’

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyne\\_and\\_Wear#mediaviewer/File:Tyne\\_and\\_Wear\\_County.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyne_and_Wear#mediaviewer/File:Tyne_and_Wear_County.png) (Last visited 24/07/2014).

## Abstract

Although veterans are a permanent feature of British society, how ex-service men and women have come to understand their identities as individuals has not received the attention from historians this subject deserves and requires. Tyne and Wear, traditionally said to be a productive recruiting ground for the Armed Forces, is no exception to this lack of research. The examination of oral memory in this thesis demonstrates an approach to understanding veterans' identities in Tyne and Wear since 1914, analysing individuals' interpretations of their experiences, their identity, and their perceptions of participation in communities and wider society. Using a collection of newly created and re-evaluated oral histories, this thesis challenges established notions of a single 'veteran identity'. It argues that the relationship between the communities and identities formed by ex-service personnel since 1914 have been directly linked to the influence of military service in a more complex and heterogeneous manner than has been previously recognised by scholars.



## Introductory Chapter

This thesis examines established notions a single ‘veteran identity’, and through the use of oral history the extent to which ex-service personnel have held values of identity in common. This study was prompted by the recent publication of the reports of the North East Health Scrutiny Committee which examined the veteran in civilian society in North East England. In 2011 the twelve councils in the North East published joint reports on the mental, physical and socio-economic health of ex-service personnel in the region, discussing the impact of military service from enlistment to after their service had been completed.<sup>5</sup> The three reports were inspired by the establishment of the Military Covenant (2000), which declared the Government’s intent to, ‘redress the disadvantages that the armed forces community faces in comparison to other citizens and to recognise the sacrifices that they have made.’<sup>6</sup> The reports were also prompted by the growing numbers of mentally and physically injured ex-service personnel entering civilian society following the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. These reports sought to establish how the healthcare system and other social services needed to adapt in response to this changing situation and the cost of doing so. Throughout their reports, the Councils implicitly reflected on the nature of the ex-service community in the North East in a manner suggesting that they saw the veteran population as a relatively homogenous regional ‘ex-service community’. That this is more than simply a misuse of the word ‘community’ is seen when it suggests that the ‘ex-service community’ is unified to the extent that it could be influenced by broad, all-encompassing *regional* policies.<sup>7</sup> This conjecture is further indicated by a key recommendation of the report that, ‘local authorities and other key partner organisations across the region should consider identifying a

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<sup>5</sup>‘North-East Regional Joint Health Scrutiny Committee: Reports’, <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=396> (Last visited 20/07/2014).

<sup>6</sup> ‘The Armed Forces Covenant’ <https://www.gov.uk/the-armed-forces-covenant> (Last visited 01/10/2013).

<sup>7</sup> ‘North East Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Regional Review of the Health Needs of the Ex-Service Community: Socio-Economic Needs Workstream Final Report’, January 2011, pp. 6, 12, 23.

senior figure who can act as a champion for the ex-service community’, suggesting that all ex-service personnel in Tyne and Wear could identify themselves in relation with one figurehead.<sup>8</sup>

The major failing of these reports from the perspective of studying veterans’ identities is that they do not examine the basis of their supposition that veterans are unified in their region.<sup>9</sup> The reports analyse the composition of the veteran population in terms of age, sex, ethnicity, and health needs.<sup>10</sup> The reports also acknowledge that some may not seek or be reached by the social or medical services that they need.<sup>11</sup> Only at this point, in acknowledging the fact that not all veterans can be reached by certain policy decisions, as well as the fact that there is a difference in the experiences of long-term versus short-term service leavers that the reports initially imply an acceptance that not all veterans have had the same experiences and way of seeing themselves. However, the reports do not investigate the problem with in-depth historical analysis, nor do they study *why* some individuals are harder to reach with certain social policies than others. For example, ‘emotional needs’ such as how veterans came to understand their identities, and their relationship with former comrades, are not examined. Furthermore, the division of ex-service personnel into two broad, overlapping categories (short versus long-term) causes their identities to be generalised, down-playing the diversity of differences between ex-service personnel. This further emphasises their assumption of homogeneity of identity of veterans in the North East. An in-depth assessment of ex-service personnel’s self-perceptions, their relationship with one another and society as a whole, and how this has developed over time, is not undertaken. By assuming unity among

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>9</sup> ‘Minutes of the Health of the Ex-Service Community Scrutiny Project Group, Meeting 13<sup>th</sup> May 2010, Newcastle Civic Centre’.

<sup>10</sup> ‘North East Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Regional Review of the Health Needs of the Ex-Service Community: Physical Health Workstream Final Report’, January 2011, p. 10.; ‘North East Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Regional Review of the Health Needs of the Ex-Service Community: Mental Health Workstream Final Report’, January 2011.

<sup>11</sup> ‘Socio-Economic Needs Workstream Final Report’, pp. 6, 23.

veterans without understanding how ex-service personnel have come to see themselves as individuals and as communities the conclusions drawn about their needs are inevitably problematic and flawed.

Tyne and Wear has been focussed on in this thesis as this region is referenced to by North East Health Scrutiny Committee as being an unusually productive recruiting ground for the Armed Forces throughout the twentieth Century. As of 2011 for example, 10% of recruits are said to originate from the region while only 4% of the population of the UK reside there.<sup>12</sup> While the evidence for this assertion is questionable, nonetheless, the North East, Tyne and Wear being a significant component of this larger area, has been seen by the Ministry of Defence as a significant recruitment area throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.<sup>13</sup> The allegedly larger than average number of veterans in this region meant that understanding their needs became an urgent requirement for the local authorities in the area. The presence of networks of old comrades has a bearing upon the ability of veterans to recast

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<sup>12</sup> 'Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee of North East Local Authorities, Final Report January 2011: Regional Review of the Health Needs of the Ex-Service Community', January 2011, p14.

<sup>13</sup> A key part of the Health reports is the calculations they make concerning the number of veterans in the North East, a figure that local council researchers acknowledge will influence their findings and recommendations. In turn, these figures were recognised as directing future policy and funding decisions. To locate this evidence the RBL was called upon by these researchers to estimate the number of ex-servicemen in the North East. In answer to this query the charity estimated, on the foundation of MoD pension data, that there were between 500,000 to >1,000,000. Upon investigation, this student found that using *solely* the raw data provided by the RBL (quoted and utilised in the reports) that the resulting calculation indicates that the number of veterans in the North East as between <152,000 to 570,000 *as an absolute maximum*, as opposed to the report which uses the same data, but calculated by the RBL. This basic miscalculation has exaggerated these questionable figures (as how the raw data itself was created is subject to further unanswered questions) by up to 650%.

A critical question that was not considered in the report was the MoD's pension data quoted by the RBL submitted to the report committee. When a Freedom of Information request was submitted to the MoD asking for this raw data, the MoD replied by providing a link to the document entitled, 'WAR PENSION SCHEME ANNUAL STATISTICS, 1 APRIL 2009 - 31 MARCH 2014'. This document demonstrates that the available pension data only confirms that there were, as of 31.03.14, 9380 war pension recipients in the North East. The South West and South East had the highest number of recipients. 'WAR PENSION SCHEME ANNUAL STATISTICS, 1 APRIL 2009 - 31 MARCH 2014', Table 1.5, [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/402332/20141505-Revised\\_War\\_Pensions\\_March\\_2014-O.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/402332/20141505-Revised_War_Pensions_March_2014-O.pdf) (Last visited 02.03.2015).

This dichotomy raises the question of where the RBL sourced this evidence upon which their calculations were based (although with their extra resources the RBL may have had access to data unavailable to an individual). These concerns may have important ramifications for future decision making by local authorities and charities regionally and nationwide who use these reports. See, 'North East Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee of North East Local Authorities, Final Report January 2011', pp. 12-15.

their military communities in their civilian, post-service lives. The extent to which the presence or lack of these networks has influenced the form and meaning these ex-military communities have taken is of interest.

This thesis has chosen to test these council reports, particularly their assumption that there is and has been a unified community of veterans in Tyne and Wear. This simplification does a disservice to the diversity of veterans' identities, as well as communities of former comrades ex-service personnel could and desired to identify themselves with. Between 1914 and the present day the British Armed Forces have experienced two distinct periods of expansion and subsequent contraction as a result of world conflicts.<sup>14</sup> Millions of men and women enlisted voluntarily, or by coercion served, and the survivors returned to civilian society. Veterans' memories of notions of identity and community allegiance will be shown to have been subject to both continuity and change since the Great War, factors which have influenced their post-military identities and emotional needs.

## I

A number of methodological issues need to be addressed to enable analysis of military service's impact upon identity in later-life. Firstly, the value of using oral history and the use of memory needs to be examined. Using oral history, 'allows for the original multiplicity of standpoints to be recreated' through the study of recalled memory.<sup>15</sup> In particular, oral history enables detailed analysis of the impact of events on selected participants' notions of identity and self *at the time of interview* which is not possible with

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<sup>14</sup> 'Army cuts: how have UK armed forces personnel numbers changed over time?' ([Simon Rogers](#) and Ami Sedghi (Posted 05/07/2012)

<http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2011/sep/01/military-service-personnel-total> (Last visited 16/07/2014).

<sup>15</sup> Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 6.

other historical sources. This approach thus grants understanding of how some veterans came to appreciate their identities.

Sixty-eight oral sources were created or collected for this thesis, from veterans of all ages and both sexes who served since 1914.<sup>16</sup> The majority were interviewed in later-life, thereby offering a range of reflective perspectives on the long-term impact of their military experiences on their identities, which Paul Thompson considers valuable.<sup>17</sup> When interviewed, individuals are concerned with justifying their personal histories, creating an image of themselves with their recollections that they wish to project for their audience. This facet of oral history has been demonstrated, for example, by Pamela Wakewich and Helen Smith through their investigation of the memories of Canadian women's war work in relation to the post-war establishment of Canadian national myths.<sup>18</sup> Acknowledging this reflective aspect of oral histories offers a valuable insight into how interviewees saw themselves when interviewed, although not necessarily about the narrative of the historical events they are recalling.

In this thesis' source-base of oral accounts, men comprise the majority of accounts, women comprising of only 5.8% of the source-base, as would be expected given the male dominance of the Armed Forces.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, due to the greater numbers involved, there

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<sup>16</sup> For a more detailed breakdown of some key facts about this collection see, Appendix 1.

<sup>17</sup> Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, pp. 128-129.

<sup>18</sup> Pamela Wakewich, Helen Smith, 'The Politics of 'Selective' Memory: Re-Visioning Canadian Women's Wartime Work in the Public Record', *Oral History*, 34: 2, (Autumn, 2006), pp. 56-68.

<sup>19</sup> Appendix 1, Table 1.1.; Of particular import for this thesis is that there is comparative lack of interviewees with female members of the Forces post 1945. The IWM Sound Archive holds relatively few interviews with women from or relating to Tyne and Wear, certainly not a *representative proportion* in comparison to the number of men whose interviews are held there as shown in Table 1.1, Appendix 1. A conscious effort was made to recruit female interviewees from the post-World War period to rectify this. Official associations were the main pool from which interviewees were sourced from due to the availability of gatekeepers to introduce the interviewer to potential interviewees (Donald A. Ritchie, *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 88.) The lack of such associations for women and the greater difficulties inherent in locating individuals not members of such groups may explain the low number of interviews with women studied for this thesis. (For more on this subject of female interviewee recruitment for oral history projects see, Penny Summerfield, 'Research on Women in Britain in the Second World War: An Historiographical Essay', *Cahiers d'Histoire du Temps Present*, 4, p. 222.) Arguably, the lack of women's ex-

are a larger number of sources for the World Wars, the accumulated total being 54.4% of the whole sample.<sup>20</sup> However, the First World War is proportionately under-represented, arguably due to the fact that many veterans of this conflict died of old age before they could be interviewed, oral history only gaining acceptance as a valid method of researching the past from the late 1960s.<sup>21</sup> Memories of officers from the accounts of ‘other ranks’ are conspicuous by their absence, considering their leadership role. This is a phenomenon especially pertinent then to the study of veterans’ identity and community. As will be shown throughout this thesis, the majority of interviewees reflected on their immediate comrades as being personally close, yet officers were typically not remembered as such. This, it might be suggested, is as a result of the professional distance between officers and other ranks.

The purpose of building a collection of sources was not, however, to attempt to create a representative sample. It is too rarely considered that ultimately those who are interviewed have a choice as to whether they are interviewed or not.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, oral historians only ever interview people who want to reveal their life stories, making oral history projects inherently unrepresentative.<sup>23</sup> Conversely, Thompson has argued that oral history enables, ‘witnesses to be called from the under-classes, the unprivileged....a challenge to the established account’.<sup>24</sup> Yet the hope that this allows for the creation of representative collections of histories is naïve

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military associations in Tyne and Wear is as a consequence of the smaller number of women who have served, making the creation of an official community unsustainable. Previously there was a women’s branch of the RBL in Tyne and Wear, although when it was disbanded is unknown. (‘Legion Officials’, *Evening Chronicle*, 06/11/1945, page unknown due to damage.) Long-term trends, especially covering the latter part of the twentieth and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries when the number of women who enlisted began to increase due to social and organisational changes would warrant deeper investigation from historians both in theoretical and material terms, although to an extent this has already begun, (Joshua S. Goldstein, *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>20</sup> Appendix 2, Table 1.2.

<sup>21</sup> Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, pp. 72-73.

<sup>22</sup> Elizabeth Tonkin, ‘Narrating our past: the social construction of oral history’ (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 39.; Another example is, the theoretical commentary undertaken in, Sheen Ralph, Dorothy Atkinson, ‘Emotion in Narrating the History of Learning Disability’, *Oral History*, 38: 2 (Autumn, 2010), p. 55.

<sup>23</sup> Ingrid Winther Scobie, ‘Family and Community History through Oral History’, *The Public Historian*, 1: 4 (Summer, 1979), p. 37.

<sup>24</sup> Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, p. 7.

as it overlooks those who do not wish to have their memories recorded or do not see the need to do so, a concern reflected upon by Roger Kitchen as part of his community oral history project.<sup>25</sup>

The approach adopted is to concentrate on individuals and their experiences. Focus is placed on particular sources to enable the *individual* to be kept in view through thorough contextualisation of the circumstances in which they remember their identities were formed during their life cycle of experiences. This allows for the ambiguity of the source-base to be appropriately recognised, circumventing the possibility of creating artificial consensus where none exists.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, trends and tensions can be identified across the source-base for this thesis, which can be achieved only through the thorough investigation of individuals' memories. By necessity this requires the use of a select sample of case studies.

The oral history approach used in this thesis enables the impact of events on veterans' identities in their later lives to be analysed closely through the study of their memories. Historians using oral histories have continuously discussed the value of memories collected through interviews. Particular focus has been placed on discussing the idea that the content of memory changes over time as a result of subsequent experiences.<sup>27</sup> Currently the consensus in this ongoing debate is that while the narrative content of recalled memory is not stable, *why* it is important enough to be remembered by individuals remains relatively constant.<sup>28</sup> Paul Ricoeur argues that the importance of memory lies not in telling the historical narrative,

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<sup>25</sup> Roger Kitchen, 'Dig where you stand – using local lives to generate community in Milton Keynes', *Oral History*, (Autumn, 2012), p. 97.

<sup>26</sup> Sheena Rolph, Jan Walmsley, 'Oral History and New Orthodoxies: Narrative Accounts in the History of Learning Disability', *Oral History*, 34: 1 (Spring, 2006), pp. 81-91.

<sup>27</sup> Thomson, *The Voice of the Past*, pp. 128-129.; Susan A. Crane, 'Memory, Distortion, and History in Museums', *History and Theory*, 36: 4 (December, 1997), p. 49.

<sup>28</sup> Paul Thomson, 'Problems of Method in Oral History', *Oral History*, 4 (1972), pp. 14-17..; Valerie Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Practical Guide for Social Scientists* (London: SAGE Publications, 1994), p. 21.; Anna Green, 'Unpacking the Stories', in, Anna Green, Megan Hutching, (eds.), *Remembering: Writing Oral History* (Auckland: University of Auckland Press, 2004), p. 19.

as this may be altered by the passage of time.<sup>29</sup> Rather, he suggests that memories are significant because they are the traces of the impact of historical events on participants. Consequently, while memories may not accurately reflect the literal historical ‘truth’ of the past, the lived reality, these distortions reveal which aspects of their past individuals were especially influenced by.<sup>30</sup> These seminal moments can be identified by the historian using oral histories by the presence of emotional language such as special emphasis on certain words, or the reference to particular words and phrases with emotional connotations.

Memory is multi-faceted, yet through analysing its various manifestations in oral history it is possible to better understand how veterans’ perceive their identities at the time of recall. Collective, public, and individual forms of memory are acknowledged and used in this thesis. The categorisation of memory is not intended to simplify this complex subject or imply uniformity in scholarly debates within the topic of memory. Collective memory has implications for understanding the formation and maintenance of bonds between members of communities, as the fact of being conscious of a shared past can act as ‘cognitive glue’ which enables the establishment of a community bonded by this common history.<sup>31</sup> The cognisant re-affirmation of this shared past through remembrance activities helps to preserve group harmony by reminding members of the community what they hold in common, confirming the exclusivity of their group.<sup>32</sup> Public memory is influential as it develops popular, societal understanding of historical events, the people’s history.<sup>33</sup> This form of memory is consequential for this thesis’ study of the problem of veterans’ identities as it illuminates how

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<sup>29</sup> Paul Ricoeur, ‘Memory, Forgetfulness, and History’, *Iyyun: The Jerusalem Philosophical Quarterly*, 45 (July, 1996), p. 15.

<sup>30</sup> Alistair Thomson, ‘Making the Most of Memories: The Empirical and Subjective Value of Oral History’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 9 (1999), p. 292.; Rosemary Baird, ‘Constructing lives: a new approach to understanding migrant’s oral history narratives’, *Oral History*, 40: 1 (Spring, 2012), p. 59.

<sup>31</sup> Aleida Assman, ‘Transformations between history and memory’, *Social Research*, 75, 1 (Spring, 2008), p. 109.; Akira Iriye, ‘Introduction: Historical Scholarship and Public Memory’, *Journal of American-East Asian Relations*, 4, 2 (Summer, 1995), p. 89.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.; Graham Day, *Community and everyday life* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), p. 2.

<sup>33</sup> Barbara Franco, ‘Public History and Memory: A Museum Perspective’, *The Public Historian*, 19: 2 (Spring, 1997), pp. 65-66.



public memory of the past has influenced veterans to conform to public expectations of what qualities of identity or memories they should hold or face ostracisation for non-compliance.<sup>34</sup> This is demonstrated in recalled memory when an interviewee reflects on their place within society. Meanwhile, what the individual chooses to remember, while influenced by collective and public memory, has also been informed by private factors.<sup>35</sup>

There is little scholarly consensus as to the extent to which individual identities the product of wider external, social forces, or individual factors. The school of thought that mobilises the Halbwachs' model of collective memory reduces the agency of the individual in forming the content of recalled memory, arguing that individuals only remember through their community's collective memory.<sup>36</sup> What they remember is, according to this argument, given to them by the memories held in common by their group. Individual memory must therefore be studied through these collective memories.<sup>37</sup> Dissenting memories are consequently unlikely to be articulated unless one belongs to an appropriate social group holding similar memories. Thus, according to the Halbwachs model, the memories articulated by individuals are an expression of the collective memory of the group, or society, to which they belong (Halbwachs quoted by Alon Confino), 'every memory is carried by a specific social group limited in space and time'.<sup>38</sup>

In contrast, other scholars have argued that the content of individuals' memories are created by *both* individual factors which generate memory, and their communities' external,

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<sup>34</sup> Diane Britton, 'Public History and Public Memory', *The Public Historian*, 19, 3 (Summer, 1997), pp. 11-23.

<sup>35</sup> Wulf Kansteiner, 'Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory', *History and Theory*, 41: 2 (May, 2002), p. 185.

<sup>36</sup> Jean-Christophe Marcel, Laurent Mucchielli, 'Maurice Halbwach's *memoire collective*', in, Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nunning, *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook* (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), p. 141.; Green, 'Individual Remembering and "Collective Memory"', p. 37.; Maurice Halbwachs, *On collective memory* (USA: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

<sup>37</sup> Jeffrey K. Olick, Joyce Robbins, 'Social Memory Studies: From "Collective Memory" to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24 (1998), p. 334-335.; Kansteiner, 'Finding Meaning in Memory', p. 185.

<sup>38</sup> Alon Confino, 'Memory and the history of mentalities', in, Erll, Astrid; Nunning, Ansgar, *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook* (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), pp. 77-84.

collective memory of events. Nuala Johnson in reviewing the literature on memory for her study of Ireland in the Great War comments that individual memories are ‘regularly constrained by the discursive field in which they operate’, the community context in which the individual recollects being especially important.<sup>39</sup> Johnson argues that individual memory is only partially influenced by collective memory, as people live as individuals as well as in groups.<sup>40</sup> To argue that an individual’s memory is *wholly* an expression of the collective memory of their group’s past is too simplistic, failing to acknowledge the complexity of individual and collective contributions to the formation of individuals’ memories.<sup>41</sup> Rather, while collective memory itself influences individual recollections, ultimately collective memory is a ‘palpable, messy activity’, comprising of multiple *individual* memories, not all of which will entirely overlap.<sup>42</sup> The context of creation and meaning of individual memory cannot be understood without collective memory. This idea of individual memory as being social as well as individually generated is convincing as it demonstrates the importance of placing this thesis’ oral history sources in their social context in order to acknowledge the influence of collective memory on individual memory, whilst simultaneously recognising that people have a certain degree of personal agency over the memories they recollect.

As well as its value for reflection on the impact of experiences on identity, the use of oral history is also essential, as records for veteran associations are sparse and patchy at best. These would otherwise have been a significant source of documentary material on the subject of communities of ex-military personnel. The lack of records has been caused by a variety of factors. Many associations established in the aftermath of the World Wars, the great boom

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<sup>39</sup> Nuala C. Johnson, *Ireland, The Great War and The Geography of Remembrance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 6.

<sup>40</sup> Assman, ‘Transformations between history and memory’, p. 51.

<sup>41</sup> Jay Winter, Emmanuel Sivan, ‘Setting the Framework’, in Jay Winter, Emmanuel Sivan (eds.), *War and Remembrance in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 10.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.; Julie Stephens, ‘Our remembered selves: oral history and feminist memory’, *Oral History*, 38:1 (Spring, 2010), pp. 82, 84, 89.

periods for the formation of such groups, have now closed due to the increasingly elderly nature of their members, their documents subsequently being destroyed or missing.<sup>43</sup> Unfortunately, archiving records has not been a priority for the majority of these associations. The groups that do survive are often reluctant to share their private documents with outsiders. Discussing the RBL, for example, the *largest* of the ex-military associations, there are only two collections of evidence available for their activity in Tyne and Wear. Firstly, there are newspaper sources. These, while revealing public messages of the RBL, do not unequivocally reveal the veterans' perspective, rather that of the writer providing the article. The other collection comes from TWAM in relation to building work done at the Forest Hall branch of the RBL between the 1930s and late 1940s.<sup>44</sup> Evidence such as committee minutes for other RBL branches in Tyne and Wear is non-existent, as, according to one of the current committee members who was interviewed by the student for this thesis (who requested complete anonymity), the Newcastle and District RBL archive was lost or stolen after an internal financial scandal in 2003/4 involving an absconding member. Reticence from other committee members when asked about this story has made it impossible to independently verify this intriguing claim. Nonetheless, for the RBL as well as other official communities in Tyne and Wear, historical evidence other than from oral sources is sparse. By interviewing a selection of veterans, new evidence is created about their life histories, offering fresh insights on the subject of identity.

To broaden the source-base of interviews, previously conducted (reused) oral histories were also used in this thesis, located from the archives of the IWM and TWAM. Martyn Hammersley, however, argues that without *intimate* knowledge of the context of their

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<sup>43</sup> References to these lost associations can sometimes be found in local newspapers, but such information is sparse.

<sup>44</sup> British Legion, DF. WF/ 26. (Content relates to: Forest Hall British Legion Branch).

creation, which only their creator has, oral histories lose their value.<sup>45</sup> However, this thesis contends that, as with any other historical source, although previously recorded oral sources have divergent origins which need to be acknowledged as discussed by Libby Bishop and Niamh Moore, reused oral sources are not considered in this thesis to be fundamentally different types of oral or historical evidence.<sup>46</sup> The process of exploring the context of creation of a reused oral source is referred to as 'Recontextualisation', meaning the deliberate effort to understand, as far as possible, the circumstances under which a previously recorded oral history source was generated.<sup>47</sup> While the context of creation can never be fully recreated, this is not unique to the reuse of oral histories, as other non-oral historical sources present this fundamental problem. This thesis considers reused oral sources to be a valuable source of historical evidence when appropriately recontextualised, just as with any other form of historical source. This allows for the expansion of the base of sources available for examination, providing 'new knowledge', enhancing this thesis' analysis.<sup>48</sup>

An oral history project can never be said to be historically representative of the experiences of all as oral history is intrinsically unrepresentative. Rather, the value of oral

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<sup>45</sup> Martyn Hammersley, 'Can We Re-Use Qualitative Data Via Secondary Analysis? Notes on Some Terminological and Substantive Issues', *Social Research Online*, (February 2010) <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/15/1/5.html> (Last visited 07/10/2013).

<sup>46</sup> Libby Bishop, 'Ethical Sharing and Reuse of Qualitative Data', *The Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 44, 3, (2009) <http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/media/249157/ajsi44bishop.pdf> (Last visited 07/10/2013).; Niamh Moore, 'The Contexts of Context: Broadening Perspectives in the (Re)use of Qualitative Data', *Methodological Innovations Online*, 1, (2006) <http://www.pbs.plym.ac.uk/mi/pdf/Volume%201%20Issue%202/3.%20Moore-pp21-32.pdf> (Last visited 07/10/2013).; Bishop's work on reuse has also provided the start-point for the data tables on the oral histories utilised later in this thesis (Appendix 2-5), see, Libby Bishop, 'A reflexive account of reusing qualitative data: Beyond Primary/Secondary Dualism', *Sociological Research Online*, 12,3 (May 2007), <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/12/3/2.html> (Last visited 29/10/2013).

<sup>47</sup> Niamh Moore, 'The Contexts of Context: Broadening Perspectives in the (Re)use of Qualitative Data', *Methodological Innovations Online*, 1, (2006) <http://www.pbs.plym.ac.uk/mi/pdf/Volume%201%20Issue%202/3.%20Moore-pp21-32.pdf> (Last visited 07/10/2013), p. 28.

<sup>48</sup> Peter Jackson, Graham Smith, Sarah Olive, 'Families remembering food: reusing secondary data', [http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly\\_fs/1.145076!/file/FRF-reuse-paper-WP-.pdf](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.145076!/file/FRF-reuse-paper-WP-.pdf) (Last visited 07/10/2013), p. 2.; Joanna Bornat, 'Crossing Boundaries with Secondary Analysis: Implications for Archived Oral History Data', Paper given at the ESRC National Council for Research Methods Network for Methodological Innovation, 2008, Theory, Methods and Ethics across Disciplines, Seminar 2 'Ethics and Archives', 19 September 2008, University of Essex, [http://www.restore.ac.uk/archiving\\_qualitative\\_data/projects/archive\\_series/documents/ArchivedEthicsandArchivesEssex19-0-08JBornat\\_000.pdf](http://www.restore.ac.uk/archiving_qualitative_data/projects/archive_series/documents/ArchivedEthicsandArchivesEssex19-0-08JBornat_000.pdf) (Last visited 11/09/2014).

history lies in its ability to bring individuals' life stories into focus thereby demonstrating the diversity of the human experience and how events have affected veterans' understandings of their identities at the time of interview. Exploring this relationship underpins this thesis' argument that military service has had a varied impact upon individuals' self-perceptions. Thus, whilst there are limitations inherent in using oral history, there are also many unique benefits to its use in the context of this thesis' objectives.

## II

The problem of 'identity' will be discussed in regards to the various ways this protean concept has been understood by scholars. Broadly, identity matters since it defines the values held by an individual, these qualities consequently also influencing how they perceive others.<sup>49</sup> Personal identity is created by experiences (both private as well as external, contextual influences). In turn, identity affects an individual's interpretation of their experiences as it provides a reference point for understanding events.<sup>50</sup> Identity is therefore subject to ongoing development, whilst also maintaining its importance in everyday life.<sup>51</sup>

Understanding identity is central to studying communities. Interactions between individuals are negotiated through which values of identity are recognised by the participants as personally significant and relevant, leading to accord, conflict, or indifference.<sup>52</sup> These interactions can create, maintain or fragment the coherency of a community, as discussed by Bernadette Longo in her general review of using the idea of community when writing history, an idea which is then utilised by Longo to study community development within totalitarian

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<sup>49</sup> Ross Abbinnett, *Culture and Identity: Critical Theories* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 2003), p. 1.

<sup>50</sup> Graham Smith, Paula Nicolson, 'Despair? Older homeless men's accounts of their emotional trajectories', *Oral History*, 39:1 (Spring, 2011), p. 34.

<sup>51</sup> Stuart Hall, 'Cultural identity and Diaspora', in Ed. Jonathan Rutherford, *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (London: Lawrence and Wishart Limited., 1990), p. 222.

<sup>52</sup> Day, *Community and Everyday Life*, pp. 1-2.; Jeffrey Prager, 'Melancholic Identities: Post-traumatic Loss, Memory and Identity Formation', in eds. Anthony Elliott, Paul du Gay, *Identity in Question* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 2009), p. 141.

states.<sup>53</sup> Consequently, in this thesis, identity is an essential means by which to better comprehend the harmonics of military and ex-military communities. However, how identity is *formed* and why it *matters* are subject to ongoing scholarly debate. Scholars continue to dispute the precise nature and manifestation of identity, although all would agree it defines a means of perceiving self and character.<sup>54</sup>

Certain aspects of the extensive discussion on identity relevant to this thesis need to be addressed further due to the controversy that surrounds them. In particular, the scholarly debate over how identity can change needs to be examined in greater depth. Joanne Kaufman, Cathryn Johnson and Jennifer Todd suggest that identity means the *conscious* qualities comprising how one wants or expects to be seen by others. To some extent these qualities are thereby artificially or deliberately generated by the individual to suit the social context, enabling harmony within the group they wish to participate.<sup>55</sup> In contrast, Jeffrey Weeks argues that, while individuals have a desire to reveal their identities in public, these can come into conflict with other communities and also within ‘ourselves...this makes debates over values particularly fraught and delicate: they are not simply speculations about the world and our place in it; they touch upon fundamental, and deeply felt, issues about who we are and what we want to be and become.’<sup>56</sup> To Weeks, identity is largely inflexible, and so is subject to potential conflict between individuals as participants seek to have *their* identity accepted by others. While they disagree on *how* it is created, Todd, Johnson, Kaufman and Weeks see identity as a means to gain acceptance, as well a concept that excludes those who do not

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<sup>53</sup> Bernadette Longo, ‘Tensions in the community myth, strategy, totalitarianism, terror’, *JAC*, 23:2 (2003), p. 294.

<sup>54</sup> Johnathon Friedman, *Cultural identity and global process* (London: Sage Publications, 2000), p.117.

<sup>55</sup> (Bourke quoted in) Joanne Kaufman, Cathryn Johnson, ‘Stigmatized individuals and the process of identity’, *The Sociological Quarterly*, 45:4 (Autumn, 2004), p. 808.; Jennifer Todd, ‘Social transformation, collective categories, and identity change’, *Theory and Society*, 34:4 (August, 2005), p. 431.

<sup>56</sup> Jeffrey Weeks, ‘The Value of Difference’, in ed. Jonathan Rutherford, *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (London: Lawrence and Wishart Limited., 1990), p. 89.

comply with the identity norms of a community, an argument also posited by Jeffrey Prager.<sup>57</sup>

This thesis takes the more balanced perspective of Richard Jenkins who has argued that identity is negotiable, to a degree dependent on the individual and the community circumstance.<sup>58</sup> Thus, whilst identity is genuinely felt, it is not an absolute. To a limited extent, *certain* qualities of identity held by individuals can be modified or changed to produce harmony within the communities they wish to join.<sup>59</sup> Without a degree of negotiation, identity would be a rigid and constant area of conflict, making inter-personal relations fraught.<sup>60</sup> While aspects of all these aforementioned theoretical arguments have validity, it is reasonable to suggest a more-encompassing view, that identity is to varying extents a conscious idea which influences group interactions and can be negotiated between participants. This is compelling for this thesis as the oral evidence demonstrates that it is likely that veterans made an effort to show specific values of identity at various times to participate within communities. Yet this argument differs from Todd and Burke's insofar as these were genuinely felt qualities these individuals expressed, rather than artificially generated to suit the circumstance, being values of which the speakers' were, to different degrees, consciously aware.

### III

Studying emotion is also of particular importance for this thesis' use of oral histories as verbal dialogue is inextricably connected with emotion.<sup>61</sup> Emotion is 'implicated in all human action', underpinning values, meanings, and events deemed significant by

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<sup>57</sup> Jeffrey Prager, 'Melancholic Identities: Post-traumatic Loss, Memory and Identity Formation', in eds. Anthony Elliott, Paul du Gay, *Identity in Question* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 2009), p. 141.

<sup>58</sup> Richard Jenkins, *Social Identity* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 4-5.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>61</sup> Green, 'Unpacking the Stories', p. 17.

individuals.<sup>62</sup> Recognising emotion in oral histories can inform the historian about the strength with which certain values are held in esteem, as some values will be more personally important to individuals than others.<sup>63</sup> Examination of such nuances of dialogue demonstrates how the speaker wants to be perceived by their audience when recalling their past and thus values they hold close; ‘they (the speaker) use(s) the past to define themselves’.<sup>64</sup>

Scholars have debated the extent to which emotion is an expression of personal needs as a natural, biological response to events, as opposed to it being socially conditioned by the reactions of others. In this biological model, emotion is understood as instinctive, held in common by all. Jenny Harding has appraised how, studies of the history of emotions have understood emotion as located solely, ‘within the minds and bodies of people’, a concept also referred to as emotional ‘imperialism’ by William Reddy.<sup>65</sup> Emotions, in this sense as discussed by Paul Ekman, are purely biological, having evolved to serve a functional role in enabling survival by expressing organic requirements to others, to receive assistance for example.<sup>66</sup> Lucien Febvre debated the idea that emotions are not influenced by social norms because they are instinctive. As they are unchanging, emotion norms are consequently not subject to external factors.<sup>67</sup> Therefore, all people across cultural and temporal barriers could express emotion in the same form.<sup>68</sup> However, using this biological model is to imply a

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<sup>62</sup> Jack Barbalet, ‘Emotion’, *Contexts*, 5:2 (Spring, 2006), p. 51.

<sup>63</sup> Nico H. Frijda, ‘Emotions are functional, most of the time’, in, Paul Ekman, Richard J. Davidson, (eds.) *The Nature of Emotion: Fundamental Questions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 113.; Jan E. Stets, ‘Examining Emotions in Identity Theory’, *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 68:1 (March, 2005), p. 43.

<sup>64</sup> Stanley B. Klein, Shawn Nichols, ‘Memory and the sense of personal identity’, *Mind*, 12:483 (July, 2012), pp. 687-702.; Rosemary Baird, ‘Constructing lives: a new approach to understanding migrant’s oral history narratives’, *Oral History*, 40:1 (Spring, 2012), p. 59.; Christopher Cherry, ‘What Matters about Memory’, *Philosophy*, 71:278 (October, 1996), p. 542.

<sup>65</sup> Jenny Harding, ‘Looking for trouble: exploring emotion, memory and public sociology, Inaugural lecture, 1<sup>st</sup> May 2014, London Metropolitan University’, *Oral History*, 42:2 (Autumn, 2014), p. 95.; Jan Plamper, ‘The History of Emotions: An Interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein, and Peter Stearns’, *History and Theory*, 49:2 (May, 2010), p. 241.

<sup>66</sup> Paul Ekman, ‘All emotions are basic’, in, Richard J. Davidson, Paul Ekman, (eds.), *The Nature of Emotions: Fundamental Questions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 15-19.

<sup>67</sup> Febvre cited in, Barbara Rosenwein, ‘Worrying about emotions in history’, *The American Historical Review*, 107:3 (June, 2002), p. 823.

<sup>68</sup> Paul Ekman, ‘All emotions are basic’, p. 15.



simplistic, homogenous model of emotion, which does not reflect the complexity of emotion revealed in dialogue.

In contrast to the idea of hegemonic, biological emotional norms, another perspective on emotion is that it is wholly socially conditioned. The ‘Annales’ school of thought, according to Barbara Rosenwein, claimed that the emotions of the masses have been determined by the frameworks of emotions created by the society in which they lived.<sup>69</sup> The form of emotion expressed is generated by the collective context in which the individual wishes to express emotion, rather than being a biological imperative. Whilst expectations for how emotions are expressed will vary between societies and within societies at any one point in time, this argument suggests that individuals’ emotions are subject to the same collective norms, formed by their society’s cultural development. Similarly, other scholars such as David Heise and Cassandra Calhan have also seen emotion as controlled through societal norms which people endeavour to follow and adhere to.<sup>70</sup> Complimenting their work, Teija Loytonen, Joanna Bourke and James Gross have independently argued that the, ‘local moral order’ influences and controls which emotions can be safely expressed in a social context.<sup>71</sup> However, while Heise and Calhan have contended that emotions are primarily created and regulated by social circumstances, they have also acknowledged that to some degree emotions are partly inspired by the needs of the individual.<sup>72</sup> Thus, as emotions are first and foremost shaped by the speaker’s collective context, yet are also created by individuals, unacceptable emotions may need to be suppressed. This latter requirement has been overlooked by Heise and Calhan, yet discussed by Gross, who suggests that long-term

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<sup>69</sup> Rosenwein, ‘Worrying about emotions in history’, p. 832.

<sup>70</sup> David R. Heise, Cassandra Calhan, ‘Emotion Norms in Interpersonal Events’, *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 54:4 (December, 1995), pp. 223-240.

<sup>71</sup> Teija Loytonen ‘Emotions in the Everyday Life of a Dance School: Articulating Unspoken Values’, *Dance research Journal*, 40:1 (Summer, 2008), p. 27.; Joanna Bourke, ‘Fear and Anxiety: Writing about Emotion in History’, *History Workshop Journal*, 55 (Spring, 2003), p. 113.; James J. Gross, ‘Emotion Regulation in Adulthood: Timing is Everything’, *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 10:6 (December, 2001), p. 214.

<sup>72</sup> Heise, Calhan, ‘Emotion Norms in Interpersonal Events’, p. 224, 223.

suppression may negatively influence that individual's psyche.<sup>73</sup> Tony Milligan has suggested the logical extension of the argument for socially conditioned emotional norms, positing that emotions will be consciously manufactured to suit the social context if the 'real thing' is not experienced, in order to avoid alienation from a community for not meeting expectations.<sup>74</sup>

Currently, there is widespread consensus that emotion is affected by both individual as well as collective factors, a concept this thesis draws upon. Anna Green, analysing trends in oral history, argues that emotions are influenced by the societal context in which an interviewee finds themselves (which would include belonging to a generational cohort for example), but are also influenced by internally generated factors which may not be shared in common, such as prior experiences.<sup>75</sup> In conjunction with this, Rosenwein has argued that even within any given community there is no universal emotional norm (either biological or social) which completely moulds emotion expression: 'not only does every society call forth, shape, constrain, and express emotions differently, but even *within the same society* contradictory values and models, not to mention deviant individuals, find their place'.<sup>76</sup> To argue that emotion is either fully biological or social is to ignore the complex interplay of various factors in producing emotion, the expression of which varies even between individuals.

While seeing emotion as being generated by both social and individual factors is a compelling argument for this thesis, it must be acknowledged that consequently what emotion an individual is expressing and how it came to be formed may not be clear-cut even

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<sup>73</sup> James J. Gross, 'Emotion Regulation in Adulthood: Timing is Everything', *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 10:6 (December, 2001), p. 215-218.

<sup>74</sup> Tony Milligan, 'False Emotions', *Philosophy*, 83:324 (April, 2008), p. 213.

<sup>75</sup> Sally Chandler, 'Oral History across Generations: Age, Generational Identity and Oral Testimony', *Oral History*, 33, 2 (Autumn, 2005), pp. 18-56.; Anna Green, 'Individual Remembering and "Collective Memory": Theoretical Presuppositions and Contemporary Debates', *Oral History*, 32:2 (Autumn, 2004), pp. 35-44.

<sup>76</sup> Rosenwein, 'Worrying about emotions in history', pp. 842-843.

to the speaker.<sup>77</sup> Hence, for the translator of emotion embedded in dialogue, the historian, the situation is even more ambiguous. To better understand the emotional content of dialogue, Harding has proposed that rather than conceptualising emotion from the level of the individual, it is more effective to perceive emotions from the perspective of ‘*between* the individual and the collective’, as emotion is neither wholly one nor the other.<sup>78</sup> Rosenwein has similarly suggested that it is valuable to study the emotions expressed by individuals within the context of social groups with which they identify particularly closely with, referred to as ‘emotional communities’. Analysis using this method reveals common expectations regulating emotional expression which the participant is aware of (consciously or sub-consciously), as well as individual deviancy within such communities.<sup>79</sup> This thesis has thereby endeavoured to place the emotional content of the collected oral histories within the context of the communities which the speaker identified themselves as belonging to, in order to appraise the nuances of the potential emotional meanings of the dialogue being studied.

#### IV

Throughout this thesis military service’s influence upon veterans’ understandings of identity and community formation between 1914 and the present is the focus. This thesis has approached the problem of identity among veterans from Tyne and Wear by studying select case-studies in detail, enabling the important nuances of the relationship between individuals’ experiences and values of identity they held in later life to be examined. Thus, this study enables a better understanding of how ex-service personnel can come to perceive their identities and community participation. Knowledge of how veterans’ came to see their identities after they came back to society from military service sheds light on their emotional

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<sup>77</sup> Piotr Winkielman, Kent C. Berridge, ‘Unconscious Emotion’, *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 13:3 (June, 2004), pp. 120-123.

<sup>78</sup> Jenny Harding, ‘Looking for trouble: exploring emotion, memory and public sociology, Inaugural lecture, 1<sup>st</sup> May 2014, London Metropolitan University’, *Oral History*, 42:2 (Autumn, 2014), p. 102.

<sup>79</sup> Rosenwein, ‘Worrying about emotions in history’, p. 842.; Plamper, ‘The History of Emotions’, p. 255.

needs, awareness of which is essential to fulfilling Britain's requirement to deliver effective services for the ex-military under its obligations enshrined in the Armed Forces Covenant. Each stage of the veterans' life histories will be studied in turn, as this enables commentary on the relationship between their experiences on notions of identity as well as community membership.

Chapter one will discuss ex-service personnel's memories of enlisting in the Forces, analysing their understanding of the military and their reason for joining. To achieve this, this chapter will study the varying impact on veterans' identities of their pre-military civilian background and other external societal influences. It will also seek to understand how the transformation from civilian to military life was perceived by the interview subjects through studying identity transition during basic training. Chapter two will focus on military experiences, how these are recollected, and the implications this upon identity formation. Particular focus will be placed on 'emotional community' construction, these groups being fundamental influences upon veterans' identities, shaping emotional reactions to experiences as well as being the basis of the communities they chose to join in later-life as civilians. Upon leaving the Forces, these group bonds, as well as values of identity, have needed to be renegotiated. Chapter three will therefore examine demobilisation from the perspective of it being a process which has forced the recasting of veterans' understanding of self and the communities they identified with. The success or failure of this recasting process has been central to how ex-service personnel have remembered leaving the military.

## Chapter One: Enlistment, and the Transformative Influence of Basic Training

Reflecting on experiences of joining the Armed Forces and basic training, veterans' memories show that a variety of factors during enlistment influenced their identities, including how they desired their military service experiences to be understood by their interview audience.<sup>80</sup> In recalling memories of enlistment, ex-service personnel demonstrate how they remembered their pre-military identities informed their understandings of this transition, as well as revealing how their identities were challenged while moving from civilian to military life. Furthermore, as new recruits are the lifeblood of any organisation, how they experienced the process of initiation shows the observer how their identity changed from being a civilian to being a member of the military as a consequence of the needs of the Armed Forces.<sup>81</sup> By taking a cross-period overview this chapter examines changes and continuities in how veterans' have desired to retrospectively portray their stories of enlistment and basic training in later life, exploring potential influences on this storytelling process. Influential trends acting on identity formation and self-perceptions are shown in this chapter to have included changing social expectations, economic, political, and vocational factors, as well as privately-felt stimuli.

Society's view of citizens' responsibility to serve their country in the Armed Forces has undergone development throughout the twentieth century due to a variety of changing external factors. One of the most significant has been the move from reliance on citizen soldiers (often conscripts, but also volunteers) who served their country temporarily, as it was an expectation that they would do so, to professional soldiers who chose the Forces as an occupational career. The changing nature of social expectations as to whether men should

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<sup>80</sup> Valerie Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Practical Guide for Social Scientists* (London: SAGE Publications, 1994), p. 16.

<sup>81</sup> Maurice A. Garnier, 'Some Implications of the British Experience with an All-Volunteer Army', *The Pacific Sociological Review*, 16:2 (April, 1973), pp. 177-191.

submit willingly to military service has influenced the identity of veterans, and new recruits' relationship with society. A number of historiographical studies which have covered a range of topics relating to basic training and enlistment have been drawn upon for contextual purposes throughout this chapter. Historians have largely focussed their research within three defined historical periods; the First World War, the Second World War, and the post-1945 era (with limited cross-period analysis).

Of overarching significance for this thesis' study of enlistment is Hew Strachan's work on the British Army, in which he notes that regimental loyalty is inextricably linked with regional identity, British regiments having long been an important part of the fabric of the locality from which they recruit.<sup>82</sup> By virtue of recruits being located from specific regions to which the regiment belongs, unlike their continental or American counterparts, British regiments have an emblematic presence in their recruiting regions, being immediately identifiable by the majority of the population. The importance of a regiment's history is also emphasised by virtue of the unbroken tradition British regiments benefit from; in contrast to continental armies, the British military as a whole has uniquely never suffered overwhelming defeat which has led to its dissolution in its period of existence. Consequently, Strachan argues that British regimental identity has encouraged people to join a particular regiment due to their strong local associations, and it is argued that the identity formed within the regiment is thereby stronger for it being based on geographical ties. However, it must also be recognised that it was equally common in times of crises such as during the World Wars, for men 'to be simply sent where needed', as noted by Bryn Hammon contextualising typical British Army recruiting practices for his Great War study.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, Philip Warner, referencing General Horrocks, has suggested that personal identification with a regiment

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<sup>82</sup> Hew Strachan, *The Politics of the British Army* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 227-228.

<sup>83</sup> Bryn Hammond, *Cambrai 1917: The Myth of the First Great Tank Battle* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2008), p. 24.

takes time, new recruits only gradually perceiving themselves as part of the extended regimental family during their service.<sup>84</sup> Thus, while a large proportion of interviews considered in this thesis show that the interviewees joined local regiments, the nature of how the interviewees related to these units' regional characteristics must be carefully deliberated.<sup>85</sup>

How the stereotype of the naïve and idealistic citizen soldier volunteer of the Great War influenced Great War veterans' conceptions of themselves is a subject reflected upon extensively in this chapter, it being the dominant narrative of enlistment in that conflict. P. Dewey, in his study of patterns of voluntary enlistment between 1914 and 1916, reviews the long-standing popular idea of the British Great War volunteer as being motivated solely by patriotism.<sup>86</sup> He found that volunteers were motivated by a range of possible factors acting on their identities, often centred upon regional socio-economic circumstances, in addition to feelings of civic duty. Dewey and Peter Simkins in his narrative of the 'New Armies', agree that figures for new recruits appear to correlate closely with economic fluctuations during the first two years of the Great War, these changes often being industry and region specific.<sup>87</sup> They conclude that while patriotism was still important, it was both more restrained than commonly understood, as well as not being the sole motive for volunteering. From the perspective of the impact on conscripts' identities Ilana Bet-El also reviews the prevailing idea that volunteers were solely motivated by patriotism and idealism. Bet-El suggests that the myth of the patriotic, naive volunteer, extant at the time and since, consequently caused

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<sup>84</sup> Philip Warner, *Horrocks: The General who led from the front* (London: Sphere Books, 1984), p. 9.

<sup>85</sup> Appendix 2: Seventeen interviewees mentioned they joined a local regiment (DLI, Fusiliers, Northumberland Hussars/ Light Dragoons), with a roughly equal number being vague on the regiment they initially chose to join, to the extent which unit they first joined is unknown (although the branch of the Forces will usually be known). The remainder largely joined corps units such as logistics, which commonly have had no specific regional affiliation/ recruiting area.

<sup>86</sup> P. E. Dewey, 'Military Recruiting and the British Labour Force during the First World War', *The Historical Journal*, 27:1 (March, 1984), pp. 199-223.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 206-207.; Peter Simkins, *Kitchener's Army: The Raising of the New Armies* (Pen & Sword: Barnsley, 1988), p. 108.

the portrayal of conscripts in a negative fashion in public memory by virtue of being negatively contrasted with volunteers.<sup>88</sup>

For the Second World War it proves necessary to disentangle this generation of veterans' identities from their civilian counterparts. As noted by Geoffrey Field in 2011, 'Seventy years on, it is remarkable how much our assumptions and stereotypes still owe to popular novels and films; indeed, in recent years arguably more scholarly attention has been devoted to the women's auxiliaries (some 500,000 strong) and even to the experiences of American GIs in Britain', than to the British serviceman.<sup>89</sup> For example, reviewing the literature on the Second World War, Sally Sakoloff has acknowledged that little historiographical work has been completed on the problem of the, 'homogenisation of a people's war experience' and the blurring of the roles played by military and civilian.<sup>90</sup> This aspect of this generations' experiences must be recognised as the distinction between roles was often unclear even from the perspective of the participants at the time or in hindsight.

To investigate how the identities of her cohort of Birmingham male veterans had become blurred with that of civilians, Sakoloff examined the memories of these ex-service personnel to dissect the diversity of *individual* citizen soldiers' experiences from the layers of *public* memories which overlaid the interviewees' dialogue at the time and later.<sup>91</sup> She demonstrated that this generation of ex-service personnel saw themselves in retrospect as participating in a nationally unified effort, while simultaneously their memories revealed a diversity of perceptions of their military role in the conflict. This is a useful example which

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<sup>88</sup> Ilana A. Bet-El, *Conscripts: Forgotten Men of the Great War* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Limited, 2003), p. 101.

<sup>89</sup> Geoffrey Field, "'Civilians in Uniform': Class and Politics in the British Armed Forces, 1939–1945", *International Labour and Working Class History*, 80, 1 (Fall 2011), p. 121.

<sup>90</sup> Sally Sakoloff, 'Soldiers or civilians? The impact of Army service in World War Two on Birmingham men', *Oral History*, 25:2 (Autumn, 1997), p. 59.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.



can be drawn upon to analyse the influence of public memory on identity seen in the sources for the Second World War, critical for this chapter's analysis of enlistment and identity.

Also valuable for this chapter is Michael Roper's study of understandings of 'fear' in relation to the Great War's legacy on Second World War British citizen soldiers' perceptions of their military service. How willing new recruits were to fight and risk their lives is central to their perception of enlistment. Roper reappraises interpretations of the Great War, suggesting that the conflict did not *destroy* apparently naive masculine ideals as popularly believed, but rather began to *develop* understandings of what it was to be brave in an industrial war.<sup>92</sup> Roper thus suggests that attitudes towards military service developed over a longer period of time than previously understood. During this time, pre-Great War attitudes towards ideas of duty and the nature of an individual's civic responsibility were slowly superseded throughout society by a population increasingly cynical about Edwardian values, due to the shared experience of the industrialised mass killing of the Great War. Consequently, while the Second World War generation still felt, to an extent, an affinity with chivalric ideals as a motive for enlistment, these ideals were in a state of flux.<sup>93</sup> By recognising the non-uniform nature of these changes, that they did not occur concurrently across the British population, Roper's argument that attitudes towards enlistment began to change during the first half of the twentieth century is all the more convincing.

Due to the proximity in time, there is a comparatively small body of literature available on enlistment's impact on identity for the post-war period to the present day. However, there is consensus that the decision to change to recruiting the British Armed Forces solely from volunteers after 1962 led to fundamental developments in the identity of recruits and their perception of their place in society, towards a more professional,

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<sup>92</sup> Michael Roper, 'Between Manliness and Masculinity: The "War Generation" and the Psychology of Fear in Britain, 1914-1950', *The Journal of British Studies*, 44:2 (April, 2005), pp. 343-362.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 357.

occupational identity. Jaques Van Doorn has noted that the changeover from conscription to volunteering in Western militaries has meant that these institutions have subsequently had to compete with their nation's labour market for new recruits.<sup>94</sup> Maurice Garnier, reviewing the British experience with voluntary recruitment post-1962 for implications relevant to the American military which was considering a similar change in the early 1970s, also posits this economic argument.<sup>95</sup> Furthermore, he suggests that recruits' perceptions of the career benefits of joining the military, the gaining of new skills and qualifications, should not be underestimated, patriotism becoming less relevant.<sup>96</sup> Motivating factors for volunteering have thus increasingly resembled those for entry into civilian jobs such as pay, promotion and work conditions (occupational factors). However, these studies have sacrificed detail on individuals' experiences to focus on higher-level developments.

This idea that recruits are motivated by career, or occupational, concerns, has typically been supported by much of the surviving *public* literature from the Armed Forces itself in the latter half of the twentieth and the early twenty-first centuries in the North East, such as seen in image 1 for example. However, the historiographical literature on this genre is limited, so examples have been located from the TWAM and IWM collections, as well as contemporary military literature made available in recruiting stations. As recruiting posters these would have been targeted at the hopes of the intended audience, and therefore they focus upon likely qualities of potential recruits. The lack of appeal to patriotism in image 1, only focussing on career concerns at a time when the British Armed Forces was especially concerned about recruiting volunteers for the new all-volunteer Force, is made all the more significant.<sup>97</sup> This focus on occupational themes can still be seen in Armed Forces recruiting

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<sup>94</sup> Jaques van Doorn, 'The Decline of the Mass Army in the West: General Reflections', in David R. Segal, James Burk (eds.), *Military Sociology: Vol. 2* (London: Sage Publications, 2012), p. 16.

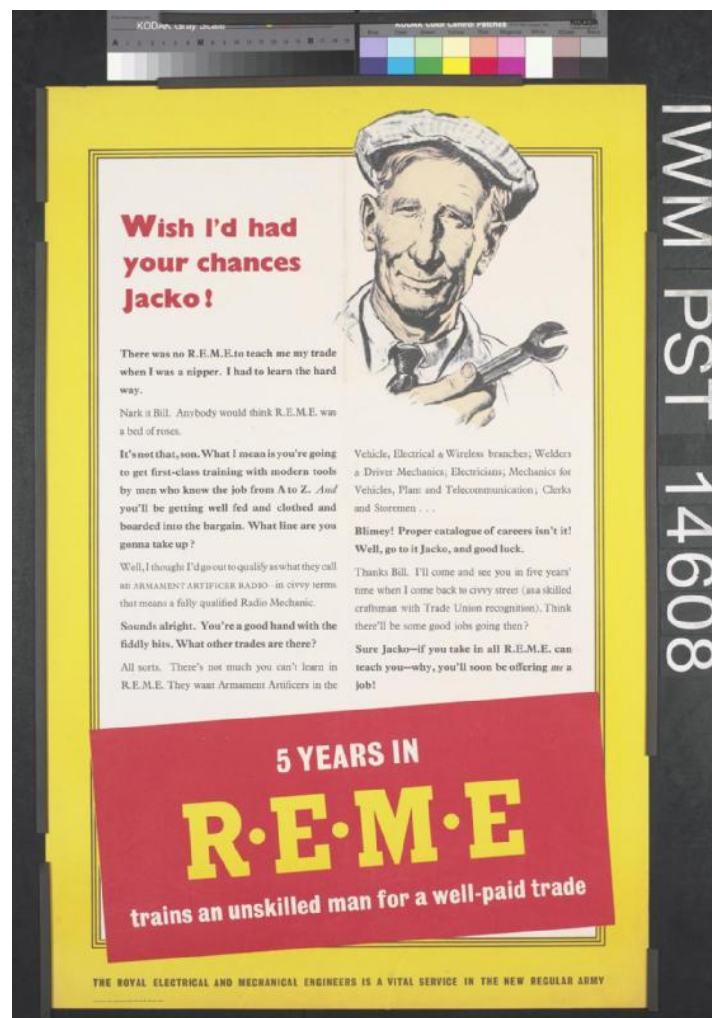
<sup>95</sup> Garnier, 'Some Implications of the British Experience with an All-Volunteer Army', p. 184.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 177-191.

literature fifty years later, in image 2. Other themes of a vocational nature, such as ‘adventure’ have appeared in recruitment literature focussed on potential volunteers in the post-Universal service era, as seen in image 3, yet occupational themes revolving around career advancement are paramount and numerous.<sup>98</sup>

Image 1: ‘Five Years in REME Trains an Unskilled Man for a Well-Paid Trade’<sup>99</sup>



<sup>98</sup> As yet there has been no comprehensive review of this literature however, much of which is produced at a local level such as the poster (Image 2) for 5<sup>th</sup> Company, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.

<sup>99</sup> ‘Five Years in R.E.M.E. Trains an Unskilled Man for a Well-Paid Trade’

<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/32168> (Last visited 13/08/2014).; An exact date is not given. Based on the text of the image, such as the reference to the ‘new regular Army’ (student’s emphasis) and the lack of reference to conscription, it is likely this was produced sometime immediately post-1962.

Image 2: 'Get a Piece of the Action', 2013 Recruiting Poster for TA 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal

Regiment of Fusiliers<sup>100</sup>

**GET A PIECE OF THE ACTION**

**JOIN THE NORTH EAST TA INFANTRY BATTALION**  
**5th BATTALION THE ROYAL REGIMENT OF FUSILIERS**

**TA SOLDIER**

**ARMY**  
**BE THE BEST**  
**REGULAR & TERRITORIAL**  
To make it easier for you to find out who does what in the Army, we've divided all the available roles into seven job groups.

- COMBAT
- ENGINEERING
- LOGISTICS & SUPPORT
- INTELLIGENCE, IT & COMMS
- HR & FINANCE
- MEDICAL
- MUSIC & CEREMONIAL

**INTERESTED?**  
**A MINIMUM OF 27 DAYS A YEAR PAID**  
**ANNUAL TAX-FREE BONUS OF UP TO £1500**

**LEARN NEW LIFE SKILLS**  
**AND MAKE NEW FRIENDS**

**AND YOU DON'T HAVE TO**  
**GIVE UP THE DAY JOB TO DO IT**

**CALL 0191 279 7291 OR 0191 279 7292**

The Army welcomes people from all backgrounds. Whatever your marital status, race, ethnic origin or religious belief, there is a role for you in our team. No account is taken of sexual orientation or social background; we have a strict code of conduct covering bullying, racial or sexual harassment.

recycle

<sup>100</sup> Copyright, MoD, photograph of poster, 'Get a Piece of the Action' taken by student in Spring 2013 at Sandyford Road TA Barracks, Newcastle upon Tyne.



Image 3: Recruiting leaflet for the 15/19 The King's Royal Hussars, circa 1970s<sup>101</sup>



<sup>101</sup> Photograph taken by the student in the 'A Soldier's Life' gallery, Discovery Museum, TWAM, 03/03/2013.

Although the predominant emphasis in the aforementioned military-origin literature examples, in the North East at least, has been on economic factors, there has been little examination of recruit's identities since 1962 from the perspective of the ex-military.<sup>102</sup> Rachel Woodward, for example, writing later in 2008, has suggested on the basis of a small and undefined collection of oral sources that military personnel have seen serving, 'a wider community beyond the military unit, (military service being) undertaken in exchange for the (variously defined) benefits of citizen-membership'.<sup>103</sup> Reviewing broad trends elicited from examination of the oral histories she conducted, Woodward's analysis demonstrates that these veterans' identified themselves *solely* in relation to occupational factors. However, in her analysis Woodward has not engaged with the qualitative evidence collected for her own work. Without detailed reflective analysis of examples of some of the sources used to form her arguments, such as the speakers' age when interviewed, past experiences, and the audiences they may have been conscious of when being interviewed, Woodward's arguments lack consideration of her sources' subtleties and individuality.

Scholars have studied basic training as an episode of identity transition for participants. John Hockey suggests that the British Army has been perceived as making, 'a man of you' through the instillation of aggressive masculine values of identity in basic training.<sup>104</sup> These values are imparted to make recruits ready for the responsibilities of undertaking military service, both to comrades and to their country. Basic training has also been described by Deborah Harrison as being viewed by participants as a rite of passage, turning boys into men by forcing them to show they are tough enough to take on the

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<sup>102</sup> Beevor claims to do so in *Inside the British Army* using oral evidence, but fails to offer any professional historical analysis of this evidence, an omission that undermines his claim and the findings of his book as a whole, Anthony Beevor, *Inside the British Army* (London: Chatto & Windus Ltd., 1990).

<sup>103</sup> Rachel Woodward, "'Not for Queen and Country or any of that shit...'" Reflections on Citizenship and Military Participation in Contemporary British Soldier Narratives', in Deborah Cohen, Emily Gilbert, (eds.), *War, Citizenship, Territory* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 365.

<sup>104</sup> John Hockey, 'No More Heroes: Masculinity in the Infantry', in Paul R. Higate (ed.), *Military Masculinities: Identity and the State* (USA: Praeger, 2003), p. 15.

responsibilities of military service: ‘male recruits are encouraged to become “real men” by proving they are not women.’<sup>105</sup> Thus, inevitably, masculinity has been integral to the military experience, an idea discussed later in the chapter in section II.

According to Helena Thomas and Neil Anderson, key to understanding the process by which identity change occurs in new recruits’ is to recognise that the development of identity arises from the interplay between a newcomer’s expectations from an organisation versus what the organisation expects them to do in return.<sup>106</sup> For this reason Arnold Van Gennep’s rite of passage theory, established in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is used in this thesis to interpret memories of the transformative influence on identity of basic training.<sup>107</sup> In the classic, *Rites of Passage*, Van Gennep laid the foundation for current historical and anthropological understandings of how identity can be changed at recognised moments in individual’s lives. Van Gennep proposed a three-stage model for identity transformation which can then be used as an interpretative tool for analysing the problem of transition of identity, even across cultural boundaries.<sup>108</sup> This three-stage model outlined the transition of identity as involving first the shedding of prior identity (pre-liminary), then the imbuing of new qualities (liminality), and finally the acceptance by others of this new identity (post-liminality). Using this methodology for this thesis enables memories of basic training to be systematically investigated for evidence of identity change, both *when* it occurs, as well as *why*.

This chapter will study the interaction between veterans’ experiences of becoming a member of the Armed Forces and the formation of their identities in two distinct sections.

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<sup>105</sup> Deborah Harrison, ‘Violence in the Military Community’, in Paul R. Higate (ed.), *Military Masculinities: Identity and the State* (USA: Praeger, 2003), p.75.

<sup>106</sup> Helena D. C. Thomas; Neil Anderson, ‘Changes in Newcomers’ Psychological Contracts during Organisational Socialization: A Study of Recruits Entering the British Army’, *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, 19 (1998), p. 747.

<sup>107</sup> Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1960).; John Hockey, ‘No More Heroes’, p. 15.

<sup>108</sup> Victor Turner, *The Ritual process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1969).

Firstly, the enlistment experience will be studied in chronological order so as to demonstrate the changing influence on identity of period-specific events and overarching political, economic and social trends, as well as the differences *between* and *within* generations. Following this, basic training and how this has affected the development of recruits' identities will be discussed. In comparison to enlistment, recollections of basic training as a transformative event since 1914 are much more constant with regards to how this event was perceived and its effect on identity. Ultimately, the needs of the military have not *fundamentally* changed, members still being required to work as a team to achieve their objectives; killing others as well as willingly laying down their lives for their comrades in the process. Consequently, basic training will be approached thematically.

## I

The first half of this chapter will examine memories of enlistment to understand the motives for military service as recalled in later-life. Studying enlistment across the thesis' timeframe reveals both external and individual influences on understandings of the enlistment process and the purpose of military service. Jan Stets has argued in her model for examining emotions that values of identity which an individual considers important inform their emotional reaction to events.<sup>109</sup> Therefore, these trends acting upon identity are interpreted through studying the emotional content of the recalled memories. Analysis of the sample of oral histories demonstrate that changes did not occur concurrently or universally to the same degree, but widely applicable developments can nonetheless be identified as informing identity change among this sample of veterans.

Enlistment's effect on identity and identity's influence on understanding of enlistment can be discussed if the topic is framed within three definable eras, each with different but

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<sup>109</sup> Jan E. Stets, 'Examining Emotions in Identity Theory', *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 68:1 (March, 2005), pp. 39-56.



overlapping narratives of enlistment: the First World War, the Second World War and National Service (also referred to here as the Universal Service period, 1939 to 1962), and Post-Universal Service (1963-2013). Between 1914 and the present, social, economic, and political changes at a local, national, and international level occurred which influenced how people understood the purpose of joining the Armed Forces. Furthermore, conscription was enacted for the first time in 1916, and this became the norm for enlistment between 1939 and 1962.<sup>110</sup> Following this there was a return to an all-volunteer military, staffed by professional soldiers rather than citizen soldiers.<sup>111</sup> The changing pattern of enlistment has had a direct influence on the construction of ex-service personnel's identities, defining how participants understood the purpose of their experiences.

This thesis' discussion of the interaction between enlistment experiences and ex-service personnel's identities from the First World War is restricted by limited source material; there are only six oral sources with ex-servicemen from Tyne and Wear from the IWM. Due to the limited sample, regional socio-economic influences, discussed by Dewey, are therefore not obvious, meaning that comments on observable factors specific to Tyne and Wear are by constrained.<sup>112</sup> The six Great War interviews were with veterans who volunteered between 1914 and 1916 before the enactment of conscription. However, the absence of conscripts' accounts is revelatory in itself when the origin of these sources' creation is analysed, as it indicates that being conscripted had a different influence upon identity formation than volunteering, the contrast being examined in detail later in this section. This section will discuss conscripts then volunteers, in order to elicit this comparison between the two groups of veterans within this cohort of citizen soldiers.

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<sup>110</sup> David Shearer, 'Outsourcing War', *Foreign Policy*, 112 (Autumn, 1998), p. 70.

<sup>111</sup> Garnier, 'Some Implications of the British Experience with an All-Volunteer Army', pp. 177-191.

<sup>112</sup> Dewey, 'Military Recruiting and the British Labour Force during the First World War', pp. 199-223.

Conscripts from the Great War arguably had their identities as conscripts negatively influenced at the time and in later life by public perceptions of the virtues of volunteering in comparison to conscription. Conscription was enacted due to declining volunteering figures, a problem perceived at the time to be largely a result of ‘shirking’, and this negative association with lack of willingness stigmatized conscripts at the time and since.<sup>113</sup> Analysis of the available sources suggest that when discussing what motivated them to enlist, veterans identities of the Great War from Tyne and Wear were influenced by the public memory of the ‘myth of participation’, the myth having been defined and discussed by Bet-El.<sup>114</sup> She argues that the community (the British nation as a whole in this instance) have during and since the Great War, ‘forgotten’ about the vital part played by conscripts due to their perceived lack of willingness to serve.<sup>115</sup> In contrast, the volunteer in public memory increasingly became sacrosanct as a consequence of their enthusiastic patriotism (manliness and societal responsibilities being intertwined with this idea) that is believed to have motivated them to serve, becoming idolised by the nation in both the metaphorical sense and the literal.<sup>116</sup> For example, the Unknown Soldier chosen for incarceration at Westminster was carefully selected to be that of a probable early-war volunteer, the Monument’s symbolism being reinforced by the public perception of the volunteer as being idealistic and naive of the ways

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<sup>113</sup> Tim Lynch, *They Did Not Grow Old: Teenage Conscripts on the Western Front, 1918* (Stroud: Spellmount, 2013), pp. 79-84.; Bet-El, *Conscripts*, pp. 3-4.; Elizabeth Greenhalgh, ‘David Lloyd George, Georges Clemenceau, and the 1918 Manpower Crisis’, *The Historical Journal*, 50:2 (June, 2007), p. 401.; John Grigg, *Lloyd George: War Leader, 1916-1918* (London: The Penguin press, 2002), p. 370.; For a deeper discussion into opposition to the war in Britain see, Brock Millman, ‘HMG and the war against dissent, 1914-18’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 40:3 (July, 2005), pp. 413-440.; Michael Roper, ‘Slipping out of View: Subjectivity and Emotion in Gender History’, *History Workshop Journal*, 59 (Spring, 2005), p. 58.

<sup>114</sup> Barbara Franco, ‘Public History and Memory: A Museum Perspective’, *The Public Historian*, 19:2 (Spring, 1997), pp. 65-67.; Bet-El, *Conscripts*, pp. 195-196.

<sup>115</sup> That conscripts have been viewed less favourably than volunteers in societal memory is demonstrated by their lack of public representation, such as in the BBC’s landmark ‘Great War’ television series. This programme asked only for contributions from veterans who joined the Forces between 1914 and 1915 (despite purporting to discuss the whole conflict). (Hank Johnstone, Bert Knlandermans, ‘The Cultural Analysis of Social Movements’, in Hank Johnstone, Bert Knlandermans (eds.), *Social Movements and Culture* (London: UCL Press Limited, 1995), p. 47.) The producer’s priorities were clearly influenced by their perceived audience expectations, although their exact reasons for their decision to exclude conscripts have never been determined.

<sup>116</sup> Bet-El, *Conscripts*, pp. 195-196.; Theoretical discussion of collective loss of memory see, Paul Ricoeur, ‘Memory, Forgetfulness, and History’, *Iyyun: The Jerusalem Philosophical Quarterly*, 45 (July, 1996), p. 22.

of war, ‘martyrs not less than soldiers’.<sup>117</sup> In this way this public myth has defined a generation of soldiers within the limited parameters of this particular identity. The very ideals that the public remembers motivated volunteers of this generation, their idolism, meant that conscripts were perceived negatively for not sharing these sentiments by their society.<sup>118</sup>

The detrimental consequence of public memory manifests itself in that conscripts were seemingly less willing to be interviewed than volunteers.<sup>119</sup> This interpretation is supported by the theory of memory used by Nuala Johnson through her case study of Ireland in the Great War, who argued that divergent memories not in harmony with community memory are less likely to be made public by the memory’s owner.<sup>120</sup> This trend relating to conscripts’ willingness to be interviewed can be demonstrated by research into the content and context of IWM archive, a process referred to as recontextualisation.<sup>121</sup> In locating oral sources on the Great War for this thesis, reliance was placed solely upon the collection of interviews conducted by the IWM as it holds the largest collection of interviews with Britons on the Great War anywhere in the world. Although able to provide oral sources for volunteers, it is revealing that the IWM does not hold any oral histories with conscripted ex-servicemen from Tyne and Wear for this conflict.

The exact circumstances of the formation of the IWM interviews is now lost, as according to Richard Hughes, IWM Oral History Curator: ‘...there is no hard and fast rule

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., p. 201.; Simkins, *Kitchener’s Army*, p. 186.; Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis* (London, 1965), p.750.; Laqueur suggests alternatively that a body of a man killed in 1914 was chosen to ensure it was entirely unidentifiable due to the greater passage of time, Thomas W. Laqueur, ‘Memory and Naming in the Great War’, in John R. Gillis, (ed.) *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 163.

<sup>118</sup> Lynch, *They Did Not Grow Old*, pp. 79-84.; For a discussion on how a generation cohort may have to conform to societal norms when recollecting see, Sally Chandler, ‘Oral History across Generations: Age, Generational Identity and Oral Testimony’, *Oral History*, 33:2 (Autumn, 2005), pp. 48-56.

<sup>119</sup> Lynch, *They Did Not Grow Old*, pp. 83-84.

<sup>120</sup> Nuala C. Johnson, *Ireland, The Great War and The Geography of Remembrance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 4-6.

<sup>121</sup> For an exemplar case study on how to conduct recontextualisation see, Peter Jackson, Graham Smith and Sarah Olive, ‘Families remembering food: reusing secondary data’, [http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly\\_fs/1.145076!/file/FRF-reuse-paper-WP-.pdf](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.145076!/file/FRF-reuse-paper-WP-.pdf) (Last visited 07/10/2013).

about the interviews. In the early days (the archive was started in 1972), it was very much project based, and people were specifically interviewed about a particular, often very narrow, area of their experiences, regardless of anything else they may have done.’<sup>122</sup> It is not possible to identify trends influencing the creation of this collection of sources from the small number of interviews available for veterans of the Great War from Tyne and Wear.

A larger, more representative sample can be created by searching the archive for recordings that are available for the entirety of the North East to include Northumberland and County Durham, rather than solely Tyne and Wear. This survey allows for more thorough recontextualisation of the IWM Sound Archive, enabling better understanding of influences acting upon the creation of the sources. Most of these records were created between the mid to late 1980s. The results of this survey shows that twenty eight sources were from volunteers, and only four from conscripts, indicating that efforts were made to interview veterans recruited throughout the conflict, both conscripts and volunteers.<sup>123</sup> If this was not the case, we would not expect to see *any* interviews with conscripts. This is supported by the comments of the IWM Oral History Curator who, when asked, did not mention any museum priorities or research objectives which might have negatively influenced the collection of conscript’s memories.<sup>124</sup>

It has been suggested by Bet-El that some of the IWM interviewees forming part of the Museum’s Archive were contacted for follow-up interviews after getting involved in the BBC 1964 *Great War* television programme, which had only asked for the memories of

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<sup>122</sup> Email conversation with Richard Hughes, IWM Curator of Oral History, 03/10/2013.

<sup>123</sup> Total results for audio recordings (where the speaker can be identified as coming from any of the searched regions) = 32. Search terms: Newcastle, Gateshead, Sunderland, Northumberland, Durham (in the WWI, audio category. Duplicated results were omitted). ‘IWM Sound Archive’ <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections-research/about/sound> (Last visited 10/01/2014).; If the results were reflective of the way people joined the Forces between 1914 and 1918, this ratio should be approximately 50:50.

<sup>124</sup> Email conversation with Richard Hughes, IWM Curator of Oral History, 03/10/2013.

volunteers.<sup>125</sup> A reliance upon these previously established contacts with veterans would explain the lack of interviews with conscripts in the Archive drawn upon by this thesis. However, it is highly unlikely on practical as well as on ethical grounds that personal records for interviewees were relied upon for research undertaken over twenty years after first contact. The interviews conducted for the *Great War* programme, and those conducted in the 1980s, must therefore be considered to have been created in separate contexts.

The Sound Archive of the IWM is consequently representative of the choices made by ex-servicemen as to whether they wished to be interviewed, rather than bias due to museum policy, research goals, or the legacy of the BBC *Great War* project of 1964. A number of oral historians have used diverse case studies from a range of contexts to demonstrate that interviewees self-select when approached in *any* oral history context.<sup>126</sup> In an oral history interview scenario, interviewees are conscious of telling their stories to a particular audience, either real or imagined.<sup>127</sup> Memories that are relayed by a speaker will be mediated to some degree by their concern to ensure that their recollections are compatible with the collective memories of the society they live in. This ‘self-selection’ aspect in creating oral history collections must be acknowledged to fully understand the formation of the IWM Sound Archive, revealing itself in the type of sources collected by researchers. The available Great War veteran’s memories (studied later) suggest that they remembered they felt to some extent compelled by society to voluntarily enlist in order to show that they held publically

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<sup>125</sup> Bet-EL, *Conscripts*, pp. 206-207.

<sup>126</sup> Kirsi-Maria Hytonen, ‘Hardworking women: nostalgia and women’s memories of paid work in Finland in the 1940s’, *Oral History*, 41:2 (Autumn, 2013), pp. 87-99.; Sheena Ralph, Dorothy Atkinson, ‘Emotion in narrating the history of learning disability’, *Oral History*, 38:2 (Autumn, 2010), pp. 54-55.; Margaret Taft, Kay Dreyfus, Marian Quartly, Denise Cuthbert, “I knew who I was not, but not who I was”. Public storytelling in the lives of Australian adoptees’, *Oral History*, 41:1 (Spring, 2013), p. 74.

<sup>127</sup> Yow, *Recording Oral History*, p. 16.

compatible patriotic qualities, thus upholding their responsibilities to society, thereby maintaining their status as citizens.<sup>128</sup>

The presence in these volunteers' memories of convergent responses, indicates similar qualities of identity being present and being formed as a result of having volunteered for military service, ostensibly for reasons of responsibility. However, divergent memories within these recollections indicate that factors other than being compelled by social expectation were also present in the formation of their identities and underpinned their motive(s) for joining the military. Upon the outbreak of the First World War, an extensive recruiting campaign was embarked upon, largely driven by Lord Kitchener with the aim of creating a civilian-backed volunteer Army.<sup>129</sup> Appeals were made to the patriotism of men through various avenues.<sup>130</sup> Consequently there was a huge influx of volunteers, such as 9752 into the Army in August 1914, 'I saw Kitchener's letter...."England needs you", the staring eye and the pointing figure.'<sup>131</sup> Especially noteworthy is the speaker's focus on the emotive words 'staring' and 'pointing'. He goes on to recall that there, 'were lots of his (Kitchener's) posters all over the place' and that these compelled him to enlist in the Army.<sup>132</sup> A further source of pressure was his father's expectation:

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<sup>128</sup> Roper, 'Between Manliness and Masculinity', pp. 343-362.; Expectations are linked to status in the internal self-conscious (identity), Alicia D. Cast, 'Well-Being and the transition to Parenthood: An Identity Theory Approach', *Sociological Perspectives*, 47:1 (Spring, 2004), p. 56.

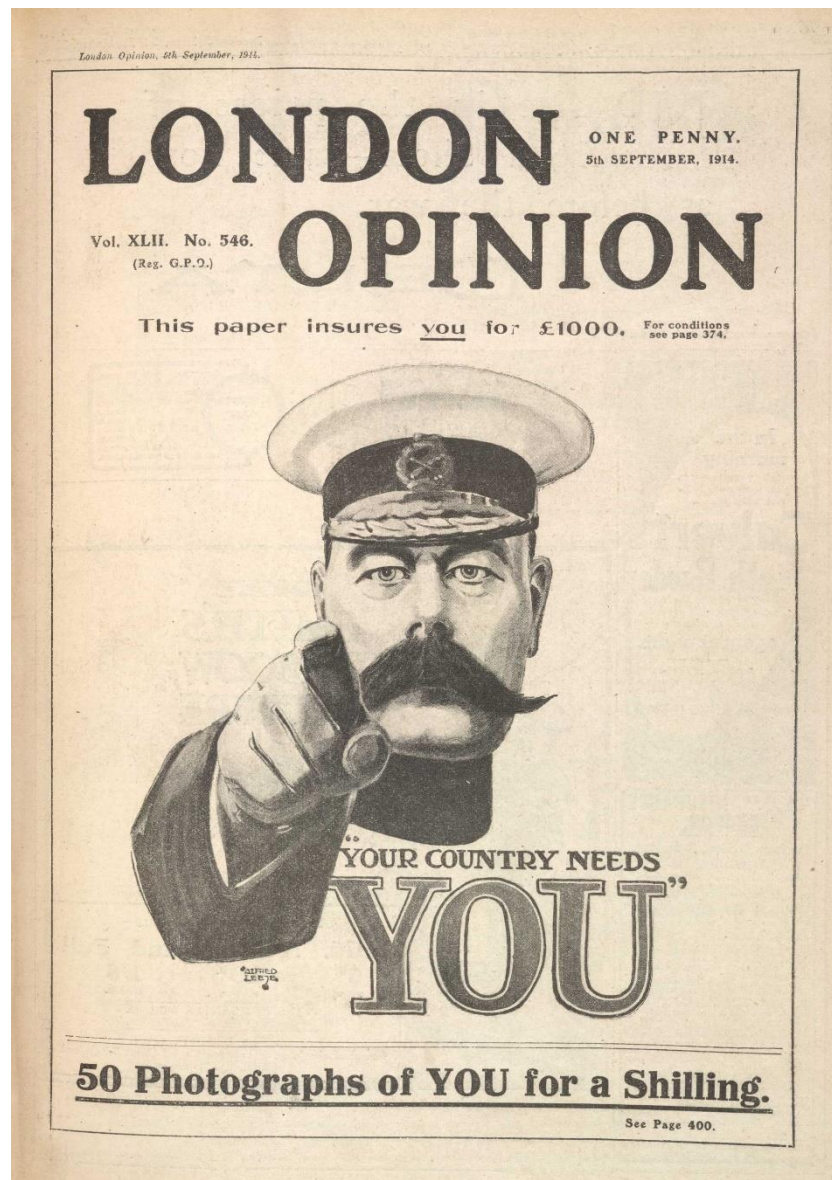
<sup>129</sup> Simkins, *Kitchener's Army*.

<sup>130</sup> Dewey, 'Military Recruiting and the British Labour Force during the First World War', pp. 199-200.; James Taylor, *"Your country needs you": The secret history of the propaganda poster* (Glasgow: Saraband, 2013).

<sup>131</sup> 'Interview 9752', (Reel 2, 17:00 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80009536> (Last visited 21/03/2014).

<sup>132</sup> 'Interview 9752', (Reel 2, 17:00 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80009536> (Last visited 21/03/2014).; Similar examples: 'Interview 11963', (Reel 1, 19:00 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80011703> (Last visited 21/03/2014).; 'Interview 11040', (Reel 1, 06:00 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80010816> (Last visited 21/03/2014).; 'Interview 9100', (Reel 1, 06:00 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80008891> (Last visited 27/12/2014).

Image 4: 'Your country needs you'<sup>133</sup>



Interviewer - Was it patriotism and duty that influenced you to join the Army, or was it more of an escape from a career that you weren't, apparently, enjoying too much?<sup>134</sup> Or was it a mixture of both, what was it?

<sup>133</sup> 'Your country needs you', advertisement in London Opinion, Vol. XLII, No. 546, 5<sup>th</sup> September 1914, <http://www.bl.uk/world-war-one/articles/voluntary-recruiting> (Last visited 27/06/2014).

<sup>134</sup> It is very unclear as to what impact the interviewee's career concerns had on his decision to enlist as this is the only explicit reference made to this idea in the source. That it might have been an additional motivation should not be discounted but there is not enough evidence to do anything more. If economic concerns were a factor this may be a reflection on the economic situation in Tyne and Wear in 1914. There is insufficient evidence for further comment however.



9752 – No, I think it was a matter of *duty*. I talked it over with my father and he said I should put my name down and go.<sup>135</sup>

Again, it is significant that he refers to his father saying that he ‘should’ enlist, another use of an emotive word, plausibly indicating some pressure being exerted. This demonstrates that arguably he felt pressurised by the expectations of others to serve in order to demonstrate his sense of civic duty and patriotism, qualities which, by volunteering, he claimed as a part of his identity. This is not to suggest that he felt entirely coerced, but the interpretation of his memories demonstrate the expectations of others were a significant factor acting on his decision to enlist, adding nuance to a source which would otherwise be the epitome of the volunteer embodied in the myth of participation. Furthermore, although this veteran, like the other five Great War sources, joined a local regiment, the 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers, he joined it because it was the local regiment, and he needed to serve in a military capacity.<sup>136</sup> His memory, lacking any overt reference to the importance of the unit’s regional identity being a motivating factor, suggests that he had no special urge to join that regiment in preference to any other.

However, the dominant influence of public memory and social expectation, as discussed by Bet-El, has hidden other motives for enlistment, a phenomenon affecting all of the Great War sources to some degree.<sup>137</sup> That volunteers such as 9752 were possibly not wholly influenced to enlist by the social pressure to show their patriotism can be suggested by the fact it is unlikely 9752 actually saw the poster he refers to at all given that it was not created until September 1914, after he says he enlisted.<sup>138</sup> Moreover, this poster was rarely seen outside of London even after this date due to its comparatively small print-run. James

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<sup>135</sup> ‘Interview 9752’, (Reel 2, 17:00 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80009536> (Last visited 21/03/2014).

<sup>136</sup> Appendix 2.

<sup>137</sup> Bet-El, *Conscripts*, pp. 195-196.; Appendix 2.

<sup>138</sup> ‘Voluntary recruiting in Britain, 1914-1915’, <http://www.bl.uk/world-war-one/articles/voluntary-recruiting> (Last visited 27/06/2014).



Taylor suggests that it has only been since the mid-1950s that Kitchener's image on this poster has gained widespread popularity, which has since influenced the memory of people like 9752 of its status and its meaning during the Great War.<sup>139</sup> This suggestion is not intended to argue that the speaker fabricated the memory that he felt pressurised to enlist, as the emotional *meaning* of events in memory has been shown by Paul Thompson to remain relatively stable.<sup>140</sup> Rather, the passage of time and the dominant influence of the myth of participation may have influenced the *narrative* of events the interviewee recalls, obscuring other motives which reveal more about the construction of his identity as a veteran.<sup>141</sup>

Furthermore, earlier in his interview, 9752 recalls that he followed his brothers into the Forces, although they were in the RNVR whilst he chose to enlist in the Army in the first few weeks of August 1914. While he does not go into any detail, it is perhaps significant that he felt obliged to mention the following as a result of his experience as a cadet in school, 'And I was an obvious starter for the Army... (so I) followed them (his brothers)'.<sup>142</sup> This apparently off the cuff remark can suggest that he was not motivated to enlist solely to demonstrate he was patriotic. A variety of factors seemingly influenced his perceptions of motivation for enlistment, such as brotherly loyalty, or, perhaps peer pressure. When studying voluntary enlistment in the Great War, many other men, including those whose interviews form part of this thesis' source-base, were motivated in a similar fashion to 9752 by the fact

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<sup>139</sup> Taylor, "*Your country needs you*".

<sup>140</sup> Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 128-132.

<sup>141</sup> For the relationship between the narrative of memory and its personal significance see, David Carr, 'Narrative and the Real World: An Argument for Continuity', in, Lewis P. Hindman, Sandra K. Hindman (eds.), *Memory, Identity, Community: The Idea of Narrative in the Human Sciences* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 2001), pp. 7-25.; For discussions on the potential influence of time and age on recollection in an oral history context see, Jay Winter, Emmanuel Sivan, 'Setting the Framework', in, Jay Winter, Emmanuel Sivan (eds.), *War and Remembrance in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 18.

<sup>142</sup> 'Interview 9752', (Reel 2, 17:00 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80009536> (Last visited 21/03/2014).

that people close to them were joining up, this phenomenon resulting in the formation of numerous ‘Pals Battalions’.<sup>143</sup>

9752’s memories suggest that while his notions of identity appear to have been shaped by the need to demonstrate himself to be a typical patriotic and keen volunteer when called upon to reminiscence, other factors also affected his identity during enlistment. Factors such as familial pressure, brotherly loyalty, as well as his desire to be seen to be doing his social duty have been identified. It has thus been shown that the relationship between the interviewee’s experiences of enlistment and how they later chose to recall this event was, unsurprisingly, more complex than simply being a patriotic volunteer. Disentangling the influence of public memory and expectations on how this speaker chose to express their sense of self when interviewed enables discussion of *how* this interviewee came to understand his identity. Multiple influences which 9752 may have been less conscious of, or less desirous of revealing, all need to be considered to fully appreciate the construction of his identity as a veteran. 9752 was not simply a ‘patriotic volunteer’, but had been influenced by factors which he chose not to place at the forefront of how he wished to be seen by his audience.

## II

Between 1939 and 1962 conscription was the most common method of entering the Armed Forces, this being referred to as the period of ‘Universal Service’. Conscription as a means of recruitment encompassed the entirety of the Second World War and remained the norm until the end of the National Service period that followed until 1962. Public memories coalesce around events which are especially landmarked in historical narrative, hence historians have naturally discussed enlistment in the Second World War and then National

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<sup>143</sup> Appendix 2.; Peter Simkin, *Kitchener’s Army: The Raising of the New Armies* (Pen & Sword: Barnsley, 1988).; Similar example: ‘Interview 11041’ (Reel 1, 12:00 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80010817> (Last visited 27/12/2014).

Service as separate phenomenon within these two narrow chronological boundaries.<sup>144</sup> While this approach has many virtues, principally that it allows for the investigation of what are said to be distinct generational cohorts, for the purpose of studying the development of veteran's identities this has meant that the literature on enlistment between 1939 and 1962 has artificially divided this era otherwise united by conscription. However, a notable exception is Roper's study of motivation for enlistment, in which he argues that there was a continuity of themes acting upon the identity of service personnel across the period, in particular the importance of the legacy of the Second World War as a factor motivating conscripts in the following National Service period.<sup>145</sup> While there are very real, demonstrable differences defining each of the two aforementioned periods which justify specific focus on them in certain contexts, by taking the longer timeframe into account while simultaneously investigating select exemplar accounts in detail for their individual nuances, this section will analyse broader trends and connections relevant to veteran's identity *throughout* the Universal Service period that have been overlooked.

67.6% of the oral sources collected and studied for this thesis were from the 1939 to 1962 era. Thirty four of the interviews for this thesis, 50% of the total, were from the Second World War, and these individuals served across all the theatres of war in this conflict. Given the numbers concerned, that there is much diversity in these veterans' memories is not surprising.<sup>146</sup> Using select case studies key trends can be examined, however. Due to the proportionately larger numbers who served in Army in comparison to the RAF and RN, two case studies have been examined relating to the former and one from the RAF.

This section will examine the impact of conscription between 1939 and 1962 on veterans' identities when interviewed. Analysis will reflect on identity formation

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<sup>144</sup> Kevin Birth, 'Past Times: Temporal Structuring of History and Memory', *Ethos*, 34:2 (June, 2006), p. 207.

<sup>145</sup> Roper, 'Between Manliness and Masculinity', pp. 343-362.;

<sup>146</sup> See Appendix 2-5 for summaries of their experiences.

chronologically in the manner of the literature in order to understand the influence of changing period-specific influences acting on ex-service personnel's perceptions of enlistment. However, to avoid the re-affirmation of old orthodoxies which have been used to justify the division of the 1939 to 1962 period when studying veterans' identities, this analysis will simultaneously be constructed to enable thematic comparisons to be drawn across sources from the war and post-war eras.

Many different versions of the process of being enlisted are revealed among the accounts from veterans of the Second World War and National Service. However, conscription was largely accepted by society until the mid-1950s as the norm due to international political events that were perceived to threaten Britain.<sup>147</sup> After the end of hostilities in 1945, conscripts continued to be called up under wartime regulations until National Service was, with difficulty, passed into law in 1947 (for men only) as a necessity due to Britain's post-war global commitments and continuing need for a large Army to police these commitments.<sup>148</sup> Post-War conscription (National Service) was initially seen as a natural extension, if not a welcome one, to conscription from the Second World War.<sup>149</sup> As shown in appendix 2, all the interviewees during the Second World War were happy to be conscripted, or at least understood and accepted the need for them to serve even if they would rather there had not been a need for them to do so, as did the early conscripts of the National Service era.<sup>150</sup>

With the Second World War prominent in public memory during and since the conflict as a good war, fighting against the unequivocal evil of Nazi Germany, followed by

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<sup>147</sup> Rena Feld, 'From the interviewer's perspective: interviewing women conscientious objectors', *Oral History*, 31:1 (Spring, 2003), p. 30. Tom Hickman, *The Call-Up: A History of National Service* (London: Headline Book Publishing, 2005), p. xvii.

<sup>148</sup> 'National Service' <http://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/private-lives/yourcountry/overview/nationalservice/> (Last visited, 01/07/2014).

<sup>149</sup> Colin Shindler, *National Service: From Aldershot to Aden: Tales from the Conscripts, 1946-62* (London: Sphere, 2012), pp. xv-xvi.

<sup>150</sup> Appendix 2.

the need for defence against communism and to establish peace in the British Empire in the late 1940s and early 1950s, this would arguably have made it difficult for nonconformist memories to be voiced.<sup>151</sup> To what extent this good war, or cause, narrative may have influenced the interviewee's recollections of enlistment during the war as well as post-war should be considered through examination of this process in exemplar case studies.

Coming of age during the war, 14620 worked as an apprentice marine engineer in Sunderland docks and became a junior draughtsman in a shipping firm. When he was informed he was to be called up to the Army, he remembers that he jokingly replied, 'Oh great!'<sup>152</sup> This grudging assent is not uncommon among the interviewees of the period.<sup>153</sup> Earlier in his interview, the speaker reminisces about his pre-military war service in the Sunderland Auxiliary Fire Service. During this part of the interview, 14620 is heard to reflect on his view of the war and why it needed to be fought:

Interviewer – Was there any hatred of the German pilots carrying out the bombing?

14620 – I don't know. Maybe. I never felt any hatred for them. (1 second pause). Not *personally* of course. You hated the Germans for destroying your, life, and your town, and your familiar surroundings. For the damage they did. (1 second pause). But it was impersonal. You couldn't sort of personalise it to a man in a plane.<sup>154</sup>

14620's sarcasm when asked about his feeling about enlistment should not, therefore, be interpreted by the reader as him perceiving enlistment as an event he wanted to avoid. While

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<sup>151</sup> John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2010), p. 308.; John Lukacs, 'The Coming of the Second World War', *Foreign Affairs*, 68:4 (Fall, 1989), p. 165.

<sup>152</sup> 'Interview 14620', (Reel 2, 16:00 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80014224> (Last visited 01/07/2014).

<sup>153</sup> Similar examples: Interview with 120813GHM, conducted by student.; 'Interview 16709' (Reel 1, 17:25 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80016173> (Last visited 28/12/2014).; 'Interview 12257' (Reel 1) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80011992> (Last visited 28/12/2014).; 'Interview 27080' (Reel 5, 11:00 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80024609> (Last visited 28/12/2014).; 'Interview 16714' (Reel 1, 29:00 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80016178> (Last visited 28/12/2014).

<sup>154</sup> 'Interview 14620', (Reel 2, 02:00 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80014224> (Last visited 01/07/2014).

he had no choice in the unit to which he was conscripted, this interpretation is supported by his memories of volunteering with the Senior Training Corps which was later transformed into a Home Guard unit while he was at Marine College. Recalling his experiences of this before and upon the outbreak of the war, he remembered that he found military training to be, ‘exciting’.<sup>155</sup> Analysis of 14620’s memories shows there to be a complex mix of emotions, and his enthusiasm for military service was equivocal. Nonetheless, it is clear, like the other veterans of this thesis’ source-base for the Second World War, that he saw it as a ‘good war’, one that needed to be fought.

19632 was conscripted in 1951 after graduating from University, being sent to join the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion DLI, and his account demonstrates the potential cross-period influence of the Second World War on the identity of later conscripts. When asked about how he felt about conscription, he instead reminisced that during the Second World War he was ‘fascinated’ by the conflict, collecting shrapnel, cap badges, as well as making model battleships.<sup>156</sup> By recalling *these* particular memories when asked how he felt about being called up later for military service, this association of memories suggests, according to the interviewing models posited by Helle Bjerg, Lisa Rasmussen, as well as Rosemary Baird, that his memories of the Second World War were personally significant (and thereby memorable) and added meaning to his memories of conscription.<sup>157</sup>

Furthermore, recollecting that he spent part of his compulsory military service fighting in the Korean War, he said that he was aware in advance upon being conscripted in 1951 that it was likely he would be called upon to fight there. This realisation shaped how he

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<sup>155</sup> ‘Interview 14620’, (Reel 2, 16:00 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80014224> (Last visited 01/07/2014).

<sup>156</sup> ‘Interview 19632’ (Reel 1, 16:15 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80024580> (Last visited 23/03/2014).

<sup>157</sup> Helle Bjerg; Lisa Rosen Rasmussen, ‘Prompting techniques: researching subjectivities in educational history’, *Oral History*, 40:1 (Spring 2012), p. 91.; Rosemary Baird, ‘Constructing lives: a new approach to understanding migrant’s oral history narratives’, *Oral History*, 40:1 (Spring, 2012, p. 66.; Nico H. Frijda, ‘Emotions are functional, most of the time’, in Paul Ekman, Richard J. Davidson (eds.), *The Nature of Emotion: Fundamental Questions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 113.

remembered his compulsory service. He remembered that the conflict was seen as important by those involved being perceived as a crusade for the rights of small nations in the same way that the Second World War had been: 'At the time we saw it as morally right. It was worthwhile'.<sup>158</sup> While the interviewer leaves unasked and unanswered questions relating to this suggestion, the use of the phrase, 'morally right' appears as an apparently deliberate reference to the language of the Second World War as being a good war. It may also be the case that since the events he may have changed his mind: 'at the time...' implies that it is no longer the case, or used here as a defensive mechanism, a means of justifying involvement.<sup>159</sup> In conjunction with the earlier associated memories, this study suggests that the speaker saw a continuity between his service and the Second World War, both being justified, in his view, by the same ideals.

However, men who were conscripted between 1945 and 1962 did not *inevitably* cast their military service in the context of the Second World War, or of it being expected of them as a civic duty. While some of the first national service conscripts, exemplified by the account of 19632, commonly felt their service had value in the same mould of the Second World War generation, from the mid-1950s historians have noted that individuals increasingly felt that their military service had little or no value.<sup>160</sup> According to studies of the period National Service's unpopularity was a result of the decline of empire, exhibited in particular by the failure of the Suez campaign, and to a lesser extent the Korean War, in conjunction with domestic political concerns as the impact of the Second World War receded and the threat to Britain was perceived to have lessened.<sup>161</sup> Together, these factors led to the

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<sup>158</sup> 'Interview 19632' (Reel 6, 08:00 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80024580> (Last visited 23/03/2014).

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Appendix 2.

<sup>161</sup> Frank Myers, 'British trade unions and the end of conscription: the tripartite committee of 1950-56', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 31:3 (July 1956), p. 511.; David Carlton, *Britain and the Suez Crisis* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1989), p. 97.; Martin S. Navias, 'Terminating Conscription? The British National Service Controversy, 1955-56', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 24:2 (April, 1989), pp. 195-208.

seeming decline in expectations by society that military duty was the norm linked to a desire to return to pre-Second World War, peacetime normality. The lack of oral sources for the latter period of National Service makes the observation of trends in the source-base for this thesis difficult however.

280612JDM, who was conscripted in the late 1950s, is an uncommon example of a veteran identifying themselves as a reluctant serviceman, no longer associating their identities in relation to the Second World War. While not a typical account from this thesis' source-base, this source indicates how the lack of motive for compulsory service and changing public attitudes *could* influence notions of identity in later-life. The ex-Newcastle University historian was conscripted to the RAF as a National Servicemen officer, commissioned possibly by virtue of his academic background given the higher standards expected of conscripts to the RAF. When asked for an interview he said, 'My national service was so uneventful that I fear it will add little of substance to your project'.<sup>162</sup> On this occasion I was in a position to persuade him that his memories were of interest to my research and an interview was conducted, but many others who felt similarly will undoubtedly not have come forth at all. This is supported by the relative lack of other accounts from this latter period in the source-base, a concern that will be reflected upon later.<sup>163</sup> Nevertheless, that 280612JDM felt able to make his memories public at all suggests that his memories were not considered *by him* to be dissonant, just that he did not consider them to personally important.<sup>164</sup> This is unlike the majority of other accounts from conscripts, plausibly explained by the fact that he served during a period when military service was unpopular.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Interview with 280612JDM, conducted by student.

<sup>163</sup> The following, for example, was conscripted in 1960, yet for him it was a welcome relief as the alternative was being a miner. Consequently, this source has more in common with the post-1962 interviewees than the National Service conscripts: Interview with 060213BWM, conducted by student.

<sup>164</sup> Anna Green, 'Unpacking the Stories', in, Green, Anna; Hutching, Megan, (eds.), *Remembering: Writing Oral History* (Auckland: University of Auckland Press, 2004), p. 15.

<sup>165</sup> Appendix 2.



280612JDM was asked to recollect how he felt about being conscription. The following recollection were merged by him into how he felt about service life itself, 'I wrote a speech for an Air Marshall...But otherwise (I) just spent two years in a camp somewhere in Britain.'<sup>166</sup> This apathy appears to be due to lack of *purpose* rather than reluctance in itself, in turn this may have been caused by a variety of political and social factors acting on society as a whole, but principally caused by the decline of Britain's Imperial commitments and the perceived state of national emergency. The perceived absence of motivation when recalling being conscripted is significant as it meant that in later life veterans such as 280612JDM did not identify themselves principally as ex-serviceman due to the lack of value they placed upon that identity.<sup>167</sup>

Lack of interest in their military identities which led to veterans to be unmoved to be interviewed about military experiences may also be observed at a wider level in this thesis' collection's relative absence of interviews with conscripts after the mid-1950s in comparison to those who were conscripted prior to this date. Of the twelve oral sources for the period 1946-1962, only three were from those conscripted after 1956.<sup>168</sup> The suggestion that this imbalance could be due to lack of interest is illustrated by 280612JDM's comment that he didn't see the purpose of being interviewed as his National Service was so 'uneventful', and so his veteran identity was seen by him as an unimportant aspect of how he viewed himself.<sup>169</sup> Conversely, it could be argued that imbalance of sources in the thesis' collection, half of which were created for the thesis and half of which came from the IWM, was due to the relative absence of major conflicts of interest to *researchers* between the end of 1956 and 1962, rather than potential *interviewee's* desire to be interviewed. Yet a review of the twelve available sources for Tyne and Wear for the post-war period demonstrates that only four of

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<sup>166</sup> Interview with 280612JDM, conducted by student.

<sup>167</sup> Hickman, *The Call-Up*, p. 306.

<sup>168</sup> Appendix 1, Table 1.2.

<sup>169</sup> Interview with 280612JDM, conducted by student.

the sources served in a wartime combat situation. While admittedly these are all IWM sources, the small number of combat-related accounts suggests that involvement in war was not a requirement for a veteran's memories to be seen as potentially of interest, either to a researcher or to a veteran.

Studying the account of 280612JDM it is ambiguous whether his recollections of enlistment were influenced by the societal-wide decline in the belief that military service was the norm, or personal indifference. This source is revealing for this study of enlistment's impact on identity *because* it is lacking in essential clarifying information which would otherwise illuminate more about the values comprising this interviewee's identity. This, it is suggested, is a result of the fact that he felt comfortable in publically identifying as a 'reluctant' conscript when interviewed, and he does not identify in the mould of the Second World War conscript, as does 19632. The lack of interest shown by the speaker in his military past is indicative of his view of himself. This is supported by wider narratives of the period. Plausibly, this case study illustrates the influence on individuals of the changing political circumstances within the declining British Empire, leading to a demonstrable movement away from military service being deemed by participants as a social expectation.<sup>170</sup> However, such a conclusion demonstrates the complexities inherent in studying individuals' life histories of this generation.

The Universal Service era was significant as a transition period for veterans' identities in relation to the meaning individuals imbued their military service with, seen in the changes to how interviewees chose to recall this life-event in later-life. The approach to these sources demonstrates how the changing context of enlistment could come to influence the identities of ex-service personnel from this generation. However, care should be taken not to assume typicality as observable trends among the handful of oral sources studied may not be

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<sup>170</sup> Hickman, *The Call-Up*, pp. x-xix.

demonstrative of a wider tendency. Yet nevertheless, this analysis suggests potential trends which shaped and formed how these interviewees chose to remember their past.

Key to studying these sources has been the placing of them in the wider context of the Universal Service period, which enabled continuities and changes on veterans' identities to be elicited between the selected accounts. Trends have been examined, in particular the shifting of attitudes away from military service being accepted as a social duty in the context of Britain's international decline, as well as fading memories of the Second World War. The example case studies demonstrate the import of acknowledging external factors on identity formation during enlistment, although the nature of the sources means recognising their ambiguities is essential.

### III

Since 1962, Britain has relied purely on volunteers to sustain its military forces, these consequently being 'professional soldiers' because they sought a career in the Armed Forces. The voluntary aspect of enlistment during this latter period has had a significant impact on perceptions of enlistment and the identity of the veterans, as it defined who joined the Forces, as well as what they saw the purpose of their joining. Unlike for the First World War and to an extent the Universal Service period, military service was no longer deemed to be every citizen's duty (which led to recruitment problems), and enlistment in this latter period has not generated shared collective memory or beliefs about why people chose to join the Forces or how they felt about doing so.<sup>171</sup> Simultaneously, the 'type' (identity) of recruit entering the British Armed Forces is argued by researchers to have changed in the latter twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.<sup>172</sup> Studies concerned with falling recruitment figures have

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<sup>171</sup> James Burk, 'Military Mobilization in Modern Western Societies', Giuseppe Caforio (ed.), *Handbook of the Sociology of the Military* (New York: Kluwer Academic/ Plenum Publishers, 2003), p. 117.

<sup>172</sup> Morris Janowitz, 'The Decline of the Mass Army', David R. Segal, James Burk (eds.), *Military Sociology: Vol. 2* (London: Sage Publications, 2012), p.5.

contended that it is increasingly likely that since 1962 new recruits have primarily seen their identities in relation to occupational, personal career apprehensions which were often related to regional developments, rather than vocational issues (such as patriotism or social expectation) as in prior periods.<sup>173</sup> These interpretations of recruits' identities in this latter period require challenging, however, due to their simplistic interpretation of enlistment motives.

Following the end of the Universal Service era the oral histories collected for this thesis demonstrate that career, or economic influences, develop as a major facet of how interviewees understood their status as ex-service personnel as these factors underpinned why they volunteered.<sup>174</sup> This is not unexpected as enlistment was a question of choice. Eight interviewees out of the sixteen collected for the period explicitly stated that they had endeavoured to embark on a career in the traditional Tyne and Wear local industries; shipyards, engineering, or mining.<sup>175</sup> However, they were unable or unwilling to do so due to the long-term decline of these industries.<sup>176</sup> 060513ADM is typical of these interviewees who

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<sup>173</sup> Anthony Beevor, 'The Army and Modern Society', in Hew Strachan (ed.), *The British Army: Manpower and Society into the Twenty-First Century* (Abingdon: Frank Cass Publishers, 2005), pp. 63-74.; Beevor, *Inside the British Army*.; van Doorn, 'The Decline of the Mass Army in the West', pp. 15-16.; Anthony Forster, 'Breaking the Covenant: Governance of the British Army in the Twenty-First Century', *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1911-)*, 82:6 (November, 2006), p. 1051.; Christopher Dandeker, Alan Strachan, 'Soldier recruitment to the British Army: A spatial and social methodology for analysis and monitoring', *Armed Forces & Society*, 19:2 (1993), pp. 279-290.

<sup>174</sup> Economic, regional concerns in relation to how veterans have identified themselves are not however purely a post-1962 phenomena as shown by the interview with 19631. This speaker recalled enlisting with the 5<sup>th</sup> DLI in 1935 during the economic depression due to the lack of work, although he also identifies with other factors as well. Nevertheless, 19631's experiences are an aberration from the norm when compared to the other interviewees who enlisted prior to the end of conscription. 'Interview 19631' (Reel 3, 00:00 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80024579> (Last visited 20/07/2014).

<sup>175</sup> For a summary of the oral sources referred to here see, Appendix 2: 160713WHM, 280513RWM, 30405, 010813KAM, 020813JEM, 250513CRM, 060513ADM, 0312RT.; Other sources in this appendix are more ambiguous.

<sup>176</sup> Mike Leddra, *Turn and Burn: The Development of Coal Mining and the Railways in the North East of England* (Houghton-Le-Spring: University of Sunderland Press, 2008), p. 75.; Huw Beynon, Ray Hudon, David Sadler, *A tale of two industries: The contraction of coal and steel in the North East of England* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991), p. Xi.; J.W. House, E.M. Knight, *Pit closure and the community: Report to the Ministry of Labour papers on migration and mobility in Northern England No.5* (Newcastle upon Tyne: University of Newcastle upon Tyne Department of Geography, December 1967).; Pat Hagan, Yvonne Ridley, 'Jobs surprise in dole towns', *The Journal*, 01/02/1983, in, *Industry, Newspaper Cuttings, 1982-2005, vol. 13* (L338), p.5.; 'Shipyards hit by lack of work', *The Journal*, 28/09/2004, *Industry, Newspaper Cuttings, 1982-2005, vol. 13* (L338), p. 249.

enlisted after the end of conscription in 1962 who enlistment as linked to regional economics: 'I applied to the shipyards (in the 1990s). Unfortunately, there was big news at the time, the contract wasn't won. Lots of people who were promised, promise isn't the right word. It's not very fair on the shipyards, but I think a lot of people were under the impression that they were going to have work, in the coming year.'<sup>177</sup> Researchers analysing traditional industries have noted that those who had already embarked on a career in a trade that had dominated the local employment landscape for generations were unlikely to leave despite economic problems.<sup>178</sup> This was because individuals who had worked in such a region-defining industry for a period of time were found to personally identify with the sector they worked in, hence their reluctance to leave. That military recruits, such as 060513ADM, had never embarked, or embarked only briefly, on a career in the traditional industries, such as existed in Tyne and Wear, helps to explain this interviewee's presence in the Armed Forces as they had not yet adopted an industry-related identity.<sup>179</sup> 060513ADM recalls that the decision not to become a part of the shipbuilding industry was difficult, it being a significant local identity he already felt a connection with, indicated by the emotive words used by him in his interview to construct a scene of personal agonising as to what he was to do:

060513ADM - There was a manpower office, and you'd sort of be asked, what jobs are still available, are you in a technical trade, it was electronics fitters mostly. So I thought I'd go down there, see what's happening. A lot of people were around obviously a bit confused, some were upset, things like that. But, erm, I kind of realised there wasn't going to be anything there for me.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Interview with 060513ADM conducted by student.; Appendix 2.

<sup>178</sup> John Sewel, *Social Science Monographs*, Number 1: *Colliery closure and Social Change, A study of a South Wales mining valley* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1975), pp. 9-19.

<sup>179</sup> Appendix 2: 160713WHM, 280513RWM, 30405, 010813KAM, 020813JEM, 250513CRM, 060513ADM, 0312RT.; Other sources in this appendix are more ambiguous.

<sup>180</sup> Interview with 060513ADM conducted by student.

While it was not an easy decision to abandon this traditional shipbuilding identity, it is can be suggested that he felt able to make the decision as it was as yet a *developing* identity, albeit he did so unwillingly. Explaining his realisation that it was unfeasible to expect to join the shipbuilding trade in the changed economic climate he went on to recall the following: ‘I could hear what other people were saying, so I walked back into town. And on the way back into town, to get the train back from the city centre to where we lived, erm, you had to walk by the Army careers office.’<sup>181</sup> It does not appear to be coincidence that he subsequently joined the REME, as this corps enabled him to make use of the skills he had already acquired. Thus, like the other interviewees who experienced similar difficulties after 1962, 060513ADM chose to remember that he made the transition from beginning to identify as a shipbuilder to becoming a member of the Armed Forces in order to find an occupation. Tyne and Wear is by no means unique in its employment difficulties but since 1962 it has been the scene of sustained unemployment problems, often more severe than the national average. Half of those interviews with men recruited post-1962 mentioned without prompting that they identified with economic or career concerns, rather than with the vocational motives of previous generations.

However, while occupational concerns were identified with by veterans as integral to how they saw themselves joining the military since the end of conscription, incentive to join the Armed Forces *in particular* as opposed to alternative employment was provided by vocational factors. The *vocational* aspect of professional soldiers’ decision to enlist has been overlooked, however, by historians such as Christopher Dandeker and Strachan in their study of recruitment patterns which focuses solely on economics.<sup>182</sup> The oral histories emotional content indicate that it is too simplistic to suggest that individuals, 060513ADM being typical, joining the Forces since 1962 did so because they *solely* identified with career

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<sup>181</sup> Interview with 060513ADM conducted by student.

<sup>182</sup> Dandeker, Strachan, ‘Soldier recruitment to the British Army’, pp. 279-290.

worries.<sup>183</sup> The transcripts of interviews with ex-service personnel recruited after 1962 reveal the widespread use of emotion ‘indicator’ words such as, ‘adventure’, ‘excitement’, and ‘getting away’.<sup>184</sup> Jenny Harding suggests this observation is important as some words are more emotionally potent than others.<sup>185</sup> The presence of such words suggests that a key motivation shared by the interviewees of this period was that the Armed Forces were perceived as glamorous in some way, although the sources are otherwise ambiguous about this when reflecting upon their understandings of enlistment.<sup>186</sup>

060513ADM remembered that as a young boy he walked past the Army career office on a regular basis, ‘when I was a teenager, in the cadets, I would sort of gaze in the window and think, when I’m old enough I’ll come back another time.’<sup>187</sup> His dialogue of this part of his life history was constructed in such a way as to explain his choice of volunteering for military service. This particular memory appears to be particularly emotive as he recalls it immediately following his memory of choosing not to pursue a shipbuilding career.<sup>188</sup> That the speaker had long-regarded a military career with favour due to the perceived glamour of it can also be seen elsewhere in his interview:

060513ADM – ...my grandfather had been in the Army as well...And my great-uncle as well, erm, and they always had a few tales you know, at Christmas and New Year, and Boxing Day they’d have a few whiskies, tell a few stories. And I’d be sat there listening intently, you know. There was always a sort of, there was always a sort of *mystique* about the

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<sup>183</sup> Appendix 2.

<sup>184</sup> Appendix 2: 160713WHM, 280513RWM, 30405, 010813KAM, 020813JEM, 250513CRM, 060513ADM, 0312RT.

<sup>185</sup> Jenny Harding, ‘Talk about care: emotions, culture and oral history’, *Oral History*, 38:2 (Autumn, 2010), p. 37.; These sentiments have been summarised in Appendix 2.

<sup>186</sup> Carol Burke, ‘From Recruit to Soldier: Military Discipline is Enforced with Marching Chants and Their Often Sexist, Racist, and Brutal Messages’, *The Women’s Review of Books*, 21:12 (September, 2004), pp. 6-7.; As previously noted, interviewee’s may take ideas for granted, Brian Harrison, ‘College servants in an Oxford college forty years ago’, *Oral History*, 40:2 (Autumn, 2012), p. 40-58.

<sup>187</sup> Interview with 060513ADM conducted by student.

<sup>188</sup> Birth, ‘Past Times’, p. 207.; Thomson also suggests that in oral histories, memories of particularly strong emotional strength have symbolic meaning relevant to the individual, Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, p. 160.

Army then. The Armed Forces. I always knew there was some sort of prestige, but I didn't really know why. Didn't know enough about it. It just had this aura, you know?<sup>189</sup>

Being told stories about the military experiences of his grandfather and great-uncle meant that from an early age he remembered being attracted to a career in the Army, as he could recognise it as something exciting he hoped to one day be involved with. Alternatively however, the choice to recall this story may have been retrospective justification, endeavouring to endorse his decision to enlist by claiming it had been a childhood desire. It is interesting, for example, that he decided not to follow directly in his family's footsteps, choosing to join the REME rather than a unit affiliated with his family. Nonetheless, it is perhaps notable that this memory, which might otherwise have lain dormant was combined with the shipyard closure, meaning he was diverted from becoming personally involved in the traditional regional shipbuilding industry. While the other sources of the post-1962 period do not share this experience exactly, in manifold ways their identities were comparable as they recalled, with the benefit of hindsight, being inspired by both vocational and occupational factors.

A predominant trend during this period which acted upon professional soldiers' recollections of enlistment has been shown to be the change from military service being perceived as a (man's) duty. In the case of the example account scrutinised in this section, identification occurred with both vocational factors such as the desire for adventure, as well as occupational concerns instigated by regional economic changes. This interviewee's reminiscence also reveals that he chose to remember he was motivated to enlist by the stories told by family members who served during the world wars, suggesting a possible cross-period sense of continuity. Consequently, a complex mixture of factors influenced how he later chose to portray himself when interviewed in relation to his decision to voluntarily

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<sup>189</sup> Interview with 060513ADM conducted by student.



enlist. 060513ADM was not a one-off case, similar accounts being present in the thesis' source-base.<sup>190</sup>

A trend prevalent throughout the case studies from the Great War to the present is the idea that interviewees commonly (but not always) sought to retrospectively justify their decision to enlist in relation to what they understood to be the social norm of the time. The need of interviewees to portray their motives for military service in an acceptable manner to their interview audience permeates the source material, being an integral facet of studying memories collated through this medium. This is especially important to acknowledge when studying enlistment however, as this event is central to determining how the interviewees chose to remember why they served in the Armed Forces.

A further theme which affects the context of the sources studied across the period from the Great War to the present has been over-arching change in methods of recruitment to the British Armed Forces. Following this extended period when conscription was generally the norm, military service became an occupation, rather than a citizen's duty or vocation. However, other nuances within these sweeping trends can also be recognised. While many of the interviewees recalled joining units local to Tyne and Wear, their memories commonly do not indicate this inevitably being the result of local pride. Rather, when interviewed at least, the majority of veterans studied for this thesis recalled that they had no choice in the unit they were first sent to. Others joined seemingly because it was conveniently local, or because they knew of it and not about others, rather than because they had a strong sense of connection with the regiment *prior* to enlisting. Why they subsequently imbued *some* of these groups with particular values of identity, establishing a strong esprit de corps, will be the focus of chapter two.

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<sup>190</sup> Appendix 2.

#### IV

Since 1914 recruits' identities have been changed during basic training, interviewee's memories indicating development from perceiving themselves as civilians to being members of the British Armed Forces with a 'martial identity'.<sup>191</sup> According to Joseph Soeters, Donna Winslow, and Alise Weibull most recruits do not identify automatically with the military organisation's core values, hence the need for basic training.<sup>192</sup> This is especially important to recognise when studying military culture and identity as military organisations are unique in asking their members to be willing to kill, as well as to risk their lives in pursuit of wider goals.<sup>193</sup> Studying memories of the identity transformation undertaken by recruits during basic training is important then as it is a significant life event for *all* veterans, defining when and to an extent how they remembered they started to identify themselves as military personnel.<sup>194</sup> Moreover, the qualities imposed on new recruits' identities are significant in that they reveal which values the organisation deems important, remembering that new recruits are vital to its future existence.<sup>195</sup> These martial qualities of identity influence their interpretations of events throughout their military career and after their return to civilian life, in the communities they formed, and the standards that they lived by.

The literature on the subject of basic training defines it as designed to distil controlled 'combativeness' through rigid, unquestioning obedience and loyalty to comrades, ideals referred to as martial values. Martial values 'must be deliberately induced or constructed',

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<sup>191</sup> Burke, 'From Recruit to Soldier', pp. 6-7.

<sup>192</sup> Joseph L. Soeters, Donna J. Winslow, Alise Weibull, 'Military Culture', in Giuseppe Caforio (ed.), *Handbook of the Sociology of the Military* (New York: Kluwer Academic/ Plenum Publishers, 2003), p. 250.

<sup>193</sup> Donna Winslow, 'Military organisation and culture from three perspectives: The case of the Army', in Giuseppe Caforio (ed.), *Social Sciences and the Military: An interdisciplinary overview* (London: Routledge, 2009), p.69.; Burke, 'From Recruit to Soldier', pp. 6-7.

<sup>194</sup> However, it must be recognised that to an extent the outcome of events influences how a memory is remembered, Charles T. Morrissey, 'Oral History, Memory, and the Hallways of Academe: Tenure Decision and Other Job Skirmishes', *The Oral History Review*, 27:1 (Winter-Spring, 2000), p. 103.;

<sup>195</sup> For a theoretical discussion of the inter-related nature of new initiates' identities and the organisation they join see, Donald A. Ritchie, 'Top down/ bottom up: using oral history to re-examine government institutions', *Oral History*, 42:1 (Spring, 2014), p. 50.

through a variety of techniques including persuasion, incentives, taunting and accusations, humiliation, flattery, exaltations and ideology, as men and women are not naturally combative. It has been argued that this therefore must involve identity change among new recruits.<sup>196</sup> However, few studies have studied this event using qualitative, oral history based evidence, a method that offers a more nuanced perspective on how this transition period of a veteran's life was experienced and the influence it had on perceptions of identity.

For discussing basic training's transformative impact upon identity, this section's examination has used Van Gennep's identity transformation framework for interpretive purposes. This model defines identity change as a ritual process with the following stages: preliminary (separation from community), liminality (transition outside the community), post-liminality (incorporation into the new community).<sup>197</sup> Utilising this method alongside the argument of Helen Lucey and Diane Reay, who use school as an example of the common phenomenon that 'transitions in individuals' lives have always demanded emotional reorganisation', indicates that stories of basic training show identity change.<sup>198</sup> Basic training is considered here to be a rite of passage, a landmark in ex-service personnel's identity development.

The initial moment of joining one of the three branches of the Armed Forces, leaving civilian society and arriving at the training camp, has been deliberately structured by the organisation to be stressful for initiates to make them more susceptible to the later imposition of new values of identity. This, the pre-liminal period, has historically been a relatively short period of time, when the trainees were 'isolated' from their civilian lives until their training

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid., p.6.; For a theoretical discussion on how this change may be generated and why see, Giuseppe Caforio, 'Rhetorical Persuasion Storytelling in the Military', David R. Segal, James Burk (eds.), *Military Sociology: Vol. 3* (London: Sage Publications, 2012), 479-489.

<sup>197</sup> Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, p. vii.

<sup>198</sup> Helen Lucey, Diane Reay, 'Identities in transition: Anxiety and excitement in the move to secondary school', *Oxford Review of Education*, 26:2 (June 2000), pp. 191-205.; Appendix 2.

was completed.<sup>199</sup> 31693 voluntarily enlisted as an eighteen year old in 1959 and recalls arriving at the DLI training depot at Brancepeth Castle. The first regular soldier he encountered, Lance Corporal Bob Scott, received them in a ‘very friendly’ fashion.<sup>200</sup> Yet this welcome reception was shattered immediately, ‘It was a blur after that. *Just* a blur. The first two or three days.’<sup>201</sup> Even within the space of only a few days or even hours, recruits, as shown in this exemplar case study, recalled experiencing culture shock, their vividly remembered memories indicating the emotional intensity of the experiences.<sup>202</sup> The emphasis placed by the speaker on his memories being ‘*just* a blur’ alongside repetition of the word ‘blur’, suggests, albeit equivocally, that this was not just a case of time passing quickly but that he remembered this period was one of turmoil. In this thesis’ source-base speakers placed focus on different events of this initial part of basic training (although few were asked to reflect deeply about this event), therefore their recalled narratives are structurally diverse. Yet at the core of their experiences it was common for veterans to recall that the beginning, liminal part of basic training was in some way (as in the case of 31693) disruptive from an identity standpoint, as they were abruptly thrust into military life from civilian life.<sup>203</sup>

The interviewee’s first exposure to the Armed Forces established the fact that their identity was in transition, feeling that he was being held in suspension while they were neither a civilian nor a recognised member of the Forces:

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<sup>199</sup> For relevant examples see, Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, pp. 67, 75, 74-75.; The isolation idea is also seen in an example of a supporting non-oral source, Trooper Blackie, from Gateshead, who describes to his family in a letter written at the time the process of being isolated at the start of basic training when he writes home on the 15<sup>th</sup> June 1944 to say, ‘My civvies (civilian clothes) will be sent home soon’, Trooper Blackie of Gateshead Letters, DF.BL/ 1181/1.

<sup>200</sup> ‘Interview 31693’ (Reel 2, 22:00 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80030798> (Last visited 17/03/2014).

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> For theoretical discussions on prominent memories and the link to its consequent significance to individuals’ perceptions of important events in their life histories, see, Sarah Lowry, Alison Duke, ‘Foundling Voices’, *Oral History*, 40:2 (Autumn, 2012), p. 108.; Yow, *Recording Oral History*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>203</sup> Similar example: ‘Interview 11963’ (Reel 1, 23:00) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80011703> (Last visited 28/12/2014).

31693 - I do remember that they didn't have any proper uniform for me, and I was given, would you believe, and this is in March, olive green, tropical, uniform.

Interviewer – Pretty thin.

31693 – Thin. And it was *absolutely* freezing! There was snow on the ground.<sup>204</sup>

With only the speaker's recollections of this event it is ambiguous as to whether the uniform he was given was a deliberate action by the Armed Forces to underscore his status as an initiate by its obvious unsuitability, or whether they simply had no uniforms of the correct pattern. However, what is significant about this memory is the *speaker's* interpretation of the event, suggested by his use of language and change of tone, and further indicated by the fact that specific, 'memories cluster...around events of historical significance' to the individual.<sup>205</sup> The particular recall of *this* memory, rather than another indicates its potential significance to him. He was not yet inducted into the military, and therefore he was unworthy of receiving the 'proper', more suitable uniform.<sup>206</sup> Arguably, although he did not articulate it as such, the interviewee saw the receipt of an unsuitable uniform as tangible evidence he was separated from the life he had come from and was beginning the process of identity suspension (liminality) prior to entering a new community, similar to the case studies used by Van Gennep.<sup>207</sup>

The pre-liminal phase of basic training, demonstrated using the case of 31693, was perceived to be a period of stress which weakened his pre-military identity, placing his sense of self in a state of transition as a novice recruit in preparation for new qualities to be imbued,

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<sup>204</sup> 'Interview 31693' (Reel 2, 22:00 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80030798> (Last visited 17/03/2014).

<sup>205</sup> Birth, 'Past Times', p. 207.

<sup>206</sup> 'Interview 31693' (Reel 2, 22:00 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80030798> (Last visited 17/03/2014).

<sup>207</sup> Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, p. 71.

a common military process outlined by Carol Burke.<sup>208</sup> Interpretation of this source using Van Gennep's model of identity transformation, alongside the detailed approach adopted to examining oral histories in this thesis, reveals that 31693 appears to have felt that the values he brought with him into the military were *deliberately* undermined, firstly by the abrupt transition to military life and then by being given a uniform whose inadequacy marked him as a novice.

The second stage of the rite of passage, the transition or liminal phase, encompasses the majority of the remainder of training (in times of national emergency this was shortened.) Individual's identities, having been placed in suspension during the pre-liminal phase, had imprinted upon them during this time core values of the Armed Forces, principally responsibility and service. 31693 remembered, 'we used to finish at 12 on a Saturday, *but* we worked hard, very, very hard.'<sup>209</sup> Analysis of the speaker's reflection about the liminality of his identity at this time reveals the qualities the Armed Forces believed were important that he adopt, seen in comments he makes about cleaning his equipment, 'You could clean it, but you couldn't shine it. It wasn't until you left training that you could buff it up and make it *shine*, in those days you weren't allowed.'<sup>210</sup> This reflection indicates that the speaker understood being able to shine one's webbing was a reward for passing training. In the speaker's storytelling, the recall of the symbolic act of not being allowed to shine one's equipment demonstrates the interviewee's understanding that he was an initiate, as social

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<sup>208</sup> Burke, 'From Recruit to Soldier', pp. 6-7.

<sup>209</sup> 'Interview 31693' (Reel 2, 25:00 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80030798> (Last visited 17/03/2014).

<sup>210</sup> 'Interview 31693' (Reel 3, 02:30 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80030798> (Last visited 17/03/2014).

status is also linked to personal identity, therefore he was not entitled to the respect due to an inducted member of the Armed Forces.<sup>211</sup>

That the transition period involved developing a new identity can be seen elsewhere in 31693's interview where he describes his boots being thrown out of the window, due to them not being properly polished when scrutinised during a morning inspection of the barracks, 'I think that happened for what, the first four weeks of training. It was character building!'<sup>212</sup> These training methods, similarities to which can be found throughout the veterans' accounts collected for this thesis, indicate the key qualities focussed on during training were that of exacting, unquestioning obedience, as it was their responsibility to follow any and all orders.<sup>213</sup> While other sources collected for this thesis reflected on similar themes, the actual content of the recalled memory varies.<sup>214</sup> The humorous reminiscences in this particular case study, which perhaps deliberately belied the difficulty of the identity transition undergone, show that 31693 believed that during through the main, liminal period of basic training, he developed new values comprising identity to better match the military ideal he was being asked to achieve by his trainers.<sup>215</sup>

As described by 31693, all the interviewees who chose to reflect on this phase of their lives found the liminal phase of basic training a period when their identities developed in preparation for incorporation as a member of the Armed Forces.<sup>216</sup> Yet the exact events they recollected may differ.<sup>217</sup> During transition recruits remembered being set apart from both

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<sup>211</sup> Alistair Thomson, 'Making the Most of Memories: The Empirical and Subjective Value of Oral History', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 9 (1999), p. 298; Jennifer Todd, 'Social transformation, collective categories, and identity change', *Theory and Society*, 34:4 (August, 2005), p. 433.

<sup>212</sup> 'Interview 31693' (Reel 3, 03:15 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80030798> (Last visited 17/03/2014).

<sup>213</sup> Similar example: Interview with 010813KAM, conducted by student.

<sup>214</sup> Appendix 2.

<sup>215</sup> Ned R. Norrick, 'Humour in Oral History Interviews', *Oral History*, 34, 2 (Autumn, 2006), pp. 85-94.

<sup>216</sup> Appendix 2.

<sup>217</sup> Identity theory has demonstrated that individuals may see the same event differently, thereby explaining diversity within the sources despite the homogeneity of basic training, see as an example case study researched

civilian *and* military society, holding neither a civilian nor a military identity, while being conscious of the key values of the organisation that they were expected to assume during training in order to be inducted into it. In particular, soldierly qualities of obedience were imparted to enable recruits such as 31693 to fulfil their responsibility to the Forces, and their service to wider society.

Following the liminal stage of identity development during a rite of passage, post-liminality is the landmark moment in individuals' life when the new identity they had been endeavouring to establish is ritually confirmed.<sup>218</sup> Traditionally, the 'passing out' parade has defined when a recruit can officially identify themselves as a soldier, airman, or sailor rather than as a trainee.<sup>219</sup> However, on the strength of the interview evidence it appears that instead *individuals'* determined when they believed they were incorporated into the Armed Forces proper, determined by virtue of particularly strong memories of certain personally important events, thereby delineating for themselves the establishment of their new identity as members of the military.<sup>220</sup> This dichotomy between the official narrative and individuals' narratives arises because a new identity has to be recognised by others for it to exist, and these 'others' have to be personally significant to the individual in question for their new identity to be confirmed.<sup>221</sup> Veterans are shown to have placed great importance on the recognition of identity from personally important individuals, and less significance on the official moment of passing out, although passing out is still integral to understanding the formation of their identities.<sup>222</sup>

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in order to demonstrate this, the findings of which are intended to be widely applicable, Lowry, Duke, 'Foundling Voices', p. 100.

<sup>218</sup> Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*. p. 33.; Landmarks can be identified in oral history narrative which determine moments of significance to individuals, Stanley B. Klein, Shawn Nichols, 'Memory and the Sense of Personal Identity', *Mind*, 121:483 (July, 2012), pp. 677-702.

<sup>219</sup> 'Passing Out Parade', <http://www.army.mod.uk/join/25732.aspx> (Last visited 12/07/2014).

<sup>220</sup> Similar example: Interview with 010613NDM, conducted by student.

<sup>221</sup> Stets, 'Examining Emotions in Identity Theory', p. 40. ; Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, p. 33.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., pp. 43, 39.; Rosenwein, 'Worrying about emotions in history', pp. 842-843.



To appreciate how veterans' identities changed during basic training it needs to be acknowledged that the interviewees themselves defined the landmarks personally significant to them. These landmarks are characterised by the acknowledgement of identity from significant others. It was this recognition which determined the moment of establishment of their new military identity, or post-liminality, and acknowledgement that these events were individually landmarked demonstrates that veterans did not passively accept the milestone of the passing out parade offered by the military.<sup>223</sup> 31693 was asked by Harry Moses, the IWM interviewer, about his memories of the passing out parade:

Interviewer – Had there been an end of course of parade?

31693 – Yes, we did a final parade, erm, both platoons, Sgt. Carr as I say was my platoon commander at that time. The other platoon, it was competition all the way through the training. And, we actually won the championship platoon. Our platoon commander, Sgt. Carr, an ex-wartime soldier, was *absolutely brilliant to us*.<sup>224</sup>

Even though he was asked directly about the passing out parade, 31693's lack of descriptive detail or use of emotive language in relation to the parade suggests that he did not find it particularly important as an identity-defining event. The experience of the parade itself, 'we did a final parade, erm, both platoons' seems to have been largely been forgotten, Thompson suggesting that this lack of interest indicates the experience was not very memorable or emotional<sup>225</sup>:

Interviewer – Who took the parade?

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<sup>223</sup> For a discussion on the significance of landmarks in an individual's life being identified by the participant in the strength and detail of their memories see, Birth, 'Past Times', p. 207.; Trooper Blackie for example wrote home during Christmas 1944 to his parents describing the possible personal significance of being identified by his training sergeant in the regiment as an excellent radio operator, Trooper Blackie of Gateshead Letters, DF.BL/ 1181/1-388 (letter not numbered in sequence, dated from content only).

<sup>224</sup> 'Interview 31693' (Reel 5, 07:00 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80030798> (Last visited 17/03/2014).

<sup>225</sup> Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, p. 132.

31693 – I can't remember, whether it was, I can't remember anybody coming in from outside. Obviously Sergeant Carr took the drill parade side of it. And we went through all the various drill movements. And then we had the passing out. But I can't remember if they had anyone come in like they do now. I think it was probably just the, err, the CO of the depot that took it.<sup>226</sup>

Having his new identity officially recognised by an officer whom he could not even remember the name of indicates that 31693 did not interpret this experience as the landmark denoting that he held a new martial identity. The interviewee's recollections suggest he did not passively accept the official landmark event of the passing out parade.

This extract does, however, reveal the importance of Sergeant Carr as a significant other, likely because of his wartime experience, 'we actually won the championship platoon. Our platoon commander, Sergeant Carr, an ex-wartime soldier, was *absolutely brilliant to us*.'<sup>227</sup> That 31693 felt Sergeant Carr's war experiences were important enough to 31693 to recollect natural as part of his life history without prompting suggests the respect that he felt at the time for this NCO.<sup>228</sup> With combat experience, argued by John Hockey to be the ultimate test of a soldier, Sergeant Carr appears to have been a figure to whom 31693 looked up to during basic training, perhaps as a model to emulate.<sup>229</sup> This is supported by the seemingly emotional response, '*absolutely brilliant*' when reminiscing about this man.<sup>230</sup>

The landmark that 31693 does connect the confirmation of his new identity with is the post-passing out parade drink which he recalls took place afterwards in a pub in Spennymoor:

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<sup>226</sup> 'Interview 31693' (Reel 5, 07:00 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80030798> (Last visited 17/03/2014).

<sup>227</sup> 'Interview 31693' (Reel 5, 07:00 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80030798> (Last visited 17/03/2014).

<sup>228</sup> April Gallwey, 'The rewards of using archived oral histories: the case of the Millennium Memory Bank', *Oral History*, 41:1 (Spring, 2013), p.47.; Alistair Thomson, 'Four Paradigm Transformations in Oral History', *The Oral History Review*, 34:1 (2006), p. 54.; Thomson, 'Making the Most of Memories', pp. 292, 297.

<sup>229</sup> Hockey, 'No More Heroes', p. 22.

<sup>230</sup> 'Interview 31693' (Reel 5, 07:00 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80030798> (Last visited 17/03/2014).

We went up to the first pub in Spennymoor, I can't remember the name of it. And that was where we had our passing out parade drink. And that was where we all jelled (sic) together as well. We had a brilliant night. With all the NCOs as well! We saw a different side to them from the previous three months! (Laughs)<sup>231</sup>

The positive and upbeat story he relates of this social event in contrast to his virtual absence of memories of passing out, indicates that he remembered the drinking session as the more noteworthy experience.<sup>232</sup> Arguably, the interviewee remembers much more about this event than the official commemorative activity designating the end of his training because it was during this social event that his new identity was recognised not only his fellow trainees but most importantly by the NCOs, such as Sergeant Carr, who had trained them. By treating the recruits as equals in an informal environment, the NCOs demonstrated that they accepted the new trainees into the community of the regular Army.<sup>233</sup> That respected figures, to whom the recruits had looked up during their training, accepted them as soldiers was a defining moment, their respect for their trainers making their acceptance meaningful for the newly inducted trainees.

31693's memories are representative of the oral history collection for this thesis not in the exact narrative he recollects but in the emotional content of identity transformation of what he remembers.<sup>234</sup> Appendix 2's summary of the sources' reminiscences of basic training illustrates that there is ambiguity about when veterans identify the post-liminal phase as occurring, supporting the argument that the emotional location in memory of post-liminality is individually determined, typically being based on when others whom the initiates

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<sup>231</sup> 'Interview 31693' (Reel 5, 07:00 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80030798> (Last visited 17/03/2014).

<sup>232</sup> Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, p. 132.; Rosemary Baird, 'Constructing lives: a new approach to understanding migrant's oral history narratives', *Oral History*, 40:1 (Spring, 2012), p.57.

<sup>233</sup> Graham Day, *Community and everyday life* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), p. 158.

<sup>234</sup> Appendix 2.

considered personally important accepted their new qualities.<sup>235</sup> This demonstrates the paramount importance of identifying personally significant events to understand when landmark life moments are perceived to occur, rather than relying on the ‘official’ narrative provided by the Forces. The approach adopted in this section demonstrates an example of how veterans’ recalled the process of being inducted into the Armed Forces, with the consequent imbuing new qualities of identity.

Memories of basic training among this thesis’ source-base indicate that it was a rite of passage, the process creating and developing new military qualities in recruits. By studying a typical source in detail and considering its content using Van Gennep’s rite of passage theory, this has demonstrated an example approach to studying the process of establishing military values from the *individual’s* perspective.<sup>236</sup> While the specific narrative of events related varies between sources, references have been made to other interviews which demonstrate veterans commonly focussed upon the importance of achieving recognition during training.<sup>237</sup> Basic training has been and is a constant factor which is intended to cause the development of identity, imbuing martial qualities in former civilians.

## V

The purpose of this chapter has to been to establish the relationship between memories of joining the British Armed Forces and these events’ impact on participants’ identities. Factors which have led to continuities and changes in values of identity held by veterans across the collection of oral sources at the time of their interview have been examined by approaching the topic through select case studies. An especially significant

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<sup>235</sup> Interview with 120813GHM, conducted by student.

<sup>236</sup> Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, pp. vi-vii.

<sup>237</sup> Rosemary Baird, ‘Constructing lives: a new approach to understanding migrant’s oral history narratives’, *Oral History*, 40:1 (Spring, 2012), p.57.; Lowry, Duke, ‘Foundling Voices’, pp. 99-108.; Appendix 2.

development since the Great War has been the decline in wider society's expectation that it was the norm for people, especially men, to serve in the military at some point in their lives. After the end of Universal Service in 1962, occupational factors such as the influence on individuals of regional socio-economics became a more significant influence acting on the development of veteran's identities, albeit in conjunction with certain vocational interests. Certain regional factors have also been important as well, in some cases affecting the decision whether to enlist and directing some to join certain units rather than others. However, in the majority of cases, recruits either did not have a choice as to which unit they were assigned to, or they simply joined a local unit because it was the only one they knew of not because of any particularly overt loyalty. Region should not, therefore, be exaggerated as a factor influencing experiences of enlistment, although it must be considered.

Basic training as a transition process has been designed by military organisations to instil combativeness in new recruits, a quality which has primarily revolved around ideals of responsibility and service ideals, created through discipline and obedience. By analysing one example account, this chapter has demonstrated how this transformation of identity can occur, and why it does so. In particular, the phenomenon of requiring a 'significant other' to accept one's identity before it is confirmed in the eyes of the new recruit has been analysed, demonstrating the circumstances in which a trainee may perceive themselves in hindsight as having made the transition from being a civilian to belonging to the Armed Forces.

While there has been a significant body of literature created around enlistment and to a lesser extent basic training during the World Wars, there is much research still to be completed for the period after 1945 to the present in order to provide a better appreciation of individual's experiences of this transition, as well as to examine long-term trends. This thesis has demonstrated through the use of selected oral histories, certain trends in enlistment and basic training, yet a wider assessment in conjunction with qualitative studies would

nevertheless be valuable to enable greater understanding of the influence that moving from civilian to military life had on the identities of veterans’.

## Chapter Two: Service Life and Communities in the Military

Since 1914, service in the British Armed Forces has encompassed a wide range of campaigns and situations which service personnel experienced through their membership of particular units. Veterans' military experiences must be understood through the prism of the units and groups they served with as for both citizen soldiers and professional soldiers military life has fundamentally been a communal experience.<sup>238</sup> Moreover, when being interviewed, it is apparent that veterans deemed some communities that they formerly belonged to whilst serving as more personally significant than others. Communities of especial significance to interviewees are referred to here as 'emotional communities', being formed through the sharing of important, often intense experiences. While regional links helped to define a unit's identity, particularly strong bonds were established between members whom had shared experiences, making such groups especially important for a member's identity as a veteran. Groups of personal significance are characterised by the fact that their members share, 'various values and ideas, practicing various forms of sociability, and privileging various emotions and styles of expression.'<sup>239</sup>

Analysing examples of the formation and maintenance of these groups suggests that these ex-service personnel did not identify with the institution of the Armed Forces, but rather with a range of smaller, grassroots groups based on communities of immediate comrades-in-arms. This has implications for the study of post-service ex-military community formation as the groups identified with after leaving the Forces can be, to a large extent, directly correlated with the emotional communities identified with while serving. The link between groups of comrades who served together in the military and the form of the communities that could consequently be formed in post-service life has previously gone

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<sup>238</sup> Joseph L. Soeters, Donna J. Winslow, Alise Weibull, 'Military Culture', Giuseppe Caforio (ed.), *Handbook of the Sociology of the Military* (New York: Kluwer Academic/ Plenum Publishers, 2003), p. 240.

<sup>239</sup> Barbara Rosenwein, 'Worrying about emotions in history', *The American Historical Review*, 107:3 (June, 2002), p. 845.

under-valued in, for example, the 2011 North-East Council reports.<sup>240</sup> In this report, there is assumption that veterans form a unified ‘ex-military community’, but does not examine how such a network would be established. Instead the networks of veterans from which ex-military groups were formed are predicated upon the spatial presence of particularly important comrades with whom a veteran had previously served with; ‘(the) geographical place of community accounts for the location, universality and persistence of community.’<sup>241</sup>

It is critical then that an understanding is gained of the circumstances in which strong group bonds could be formed during military life as a preliminary to a discussion of these groups’ survival or revival in a civilian context, a task undertaken in chapter three. Veterans’ memories of behavioural expectations within the groups they formed on military service reveal informal, yet widespread, norms by which relations between members of military communities were mediated. Whether or not individuals adhered to the unofficial rubrics of their community determined if other group members continued to accept them as a comrade during *and* after their military service.

There has been some debate, albeit limited, about the theoretical nature of community within generic Western military organisations in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In their article on the nature of generic military organisations, Joseph Soeters, Donna Winslow, and Alise Weibull considered whether military institutions consist of one all-encompassing culture, a series of sub-groups with their own cultures with an overarching inclusive culture, or whether there are simply multiple independent cultures very loosely connected.<sup>242</sup> They conclude by suggesting that there is broad agreement among current theorists that a Western military organisation will not be homogenous. Members will form communities within it

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<sup>240</sup> ‘North East Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Regional Review of the Health Needs of the Ex-Service Community: Socio-Economic Needs Workstream Final Report’, Published January 2011, p. 4.

<sup>241</sup> Fiona Cosson, ‘Voice of the community?: Reflections on accessing, working with and representing communities’, *Oral History*, 38:2, (Autumn, 2010), p.96.

<sup>242</sup> Soeters, Winslow, Weibull, ‘Military Culture’, p. 239.



based on their interests, objectives, and experiences, but will nevertheless associate themselves as part of a larger institution, although their first loyalty will be to their comrades.<sup>243</sup>

Researchers interested in understanding military organisations have focussed on the ‘building blocks’ of the military, the ‘primary group’ such as the platoon or other small administrative unit, due to their personal importance to members of the Armed Forces (all experiences occurring through such groups), as well as influencing the organisation’s efficiency in war.<sup>244</sup> Some units become especially close through sharing important experiences together, reinforcing intra-community bonds of loyalty.<sup>245</sup> These are referred to here as ‘emotional communities’ due to the vitality of their esprit de corps revealed in the memories of their members. Barbara Rosenwein argues that an ‘emotional community’ is one that shares values, including norms of expression of emotion.<sup>246</sup> While this is true of all social groups to an extent, some groups naturally have closer bonds than others and share closer ties in the values they hold (or purport to hold). In the context of the military especially strong bonds could be formed with ‘combat buddies’, primary groups fashioned in the context of battle, which have received the majority of scholarly attention since their importance was recognised during the Second World War.<sup>247</sup> Subsequently, from the 1940s, conscious efforts have been made in training and operational methods to maintain and improve unit efficiency

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<sup>243</sup> Donna Winslow, ‘Military organisation and culture from three perspectives: The case of the Army’, Giuseppe Caforio, *Social Sciences and the Military: An interdisciplinary overview* (London: Routledge, 2009), p. 73.

<sup>244</sup> Anthony Beevor, *Inside the British Army* (London: Chatto & Windus Ltd., 1990), p. 16.; Simon Wessely, ‘Twentieth-Century Theories on Combat Motivation and Breakdown’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 41:2 (April, 2006), pp. 268-286.

<sup>245</sup> Woodward suggests that such unit cohesion is artificial, being created deliberately through training. However, whilst this is true to an extent, this does not explain why some groups are more closely identified with than others, a concern that is the focus of this section, Rachel Woodward, “‘Not for Queen and Country or any of that shit...’” Reflections on Citizenship and Military Participation in Contemporary British Soldier Narratives’, in, Cohen, Deborah; Gilbert, Emily, (eds.), *War, Citizenship, Territory* (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 376-377.

<sup>246</sup> Rosenwein, ‘Worrying about emotions in history’, pp. 842-843.

<sup>247</sup> Roger W. Little, ‘Buddy Relations and Combat Performance’, David R. Segal, James Burk (eds.), *Military Sociology: Vol. 1* (London: Sage Publications, 2012), pp. 183-208.

by reinforcing group solidarity and mutual trust between comrades at the small unit level. Such bonds are established upon the shared willingness to endure danger and violence together, fighting together and feeling a sense of responsibility and loyalty to one another.<sup>248</sup> According to Little, to express such qualities is to show oneself to be a man, who can be trusted and relied upon.<sup>249</sup> The expectation that fellow group members would hold these manly values is a social norm defined here as ‘military discipline’ of the informal variety, examined in more detail later.

Masculinity is encountered in the majority of accounts of military service studied for this thesis, subtly permeating the source material, even though it is rarely explicitly reflected upon by interviewees as a quality that they held. This lack of reflection may be a result of speakers’ making an assumption that their audience will be aware of this aspect of their military experiences, a generic problem of oral history reflected on by Harrison through his case study of Oxford college servants.<sup>250</sup> ‘Manliness’ is integral to military culture to the point of it being stereotypical, and many of the interactions between members of the Armed Forces are couched in terms relating to the concept.<sup>251</sup> Given that the British Armed Forces have historically been comprised overwhelmingly by men, this gendered aspect of military life is not unexpected.<sup>252</sup>

The historiography relating to *informal* military discipline has described masculinity as a concept which defined veterans’ understanding of their obligations to their group of

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<sup>248</sup> Ibid., pp. 183-208.; Wessely, ‘Twentieth-Century Theories on Combat Motivation and Breakdown’, pp. 276, 283.; William Co. Cockerman, Lawrence E. Cohen, ‘Volunteering for Foreign Combat Missions: An Attitudinal Study of US Army Paratroopers’, *The Pacific Sociological Review*, 24:3 (July, 1981), p. 332.; Arie Shirom, ‘On some correlates of combat performance’, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 21:3 (September, 1976), pp. 419-432.; Howard Brotz, Everett Wilson, ‘Characteristics of Military Society’, *American Journal of Sociology*, 51:5 (March, 1946), p. 371.

<sup>249</sup> Little, ‘Buddy Relations and Combat Performance’, p. 192.

<sup>250</sup> Brian Harrison, ‘College servants in an Oxford college forty years ago’, *Oral History*, 40:2 (Autumn, 2012), p. 45.

<sup>251</sup> Carol Burke, ‘From Recruit to Soldier: Military Discipline is Enforced with Marching Chants and Their Often Sexist, Racist, and Brutal Messages’, *The Women’s Review of Books*, 21:12 (September, 2004), pp. 6-7.

<sup>252</sup> How women in a military context have experienced this masculine culture is a burgeoning field of research, but due to lack of oral evidence available this thesis will not engage with this topic.

comrades, expressed in terms of being a man. Awareness of these obligations ensure, according to Roger Little, that individuals do not abandon their responsibilities to the group unless certain criteria are met, the penalty being having one's manliness derided.<sup>253</sup> This suggestion is supported by Donald Ritchie in his discussion of general community theory, describing the individual's community as the construct that sets, 'rules for acceptable and unacceptable behaviour'.<sup>254</sup> A personally important community, such as a primary group in the instance of the military, 'exerts a powerful voice which is able to enforce certain kinds of behaviour and rule out others.'<sup>255</sup> Soeters, Winslow and Weibull have argued that a military community is traditionally dominated by expectations that group members share martial qualities of service and responsibility. These expectations, or 'indirect cues', establish the acceptability of revealing trauma, distress, fear and the reaction to the deaths of comrades, as well as occasions for shaming, thereby controlling the harmony of the group and so maintaining its existence.<sup>256</sup> To remain part of such a community one has to abide by and actively enforce these rubrics.<sup>257</sup>

Cohen Cockerman and Hew Strachan have both questioned the primary group idea, suggesting that under combat conditions, fighting effectiveness is not influenced by personal identification with such a group but as a result of political ideology and/or training.<sup>258</sup> In putting this argument forward they undermine the importance of service personnel identifying themselves primarily in relation to comrades, instead suggesting they were fighting for higher ideals, comradeship being fleeting. These critiques are returning to pre-

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<sup>253</sup> Little, 'Buddy Relations and Combat Performance', pp.183-208.

<sup>254</sup> Donald A. Ritchie, 'Top down/ bottom up: using oral history to re-examine government institutions', *Oral History*, 42:1 (Spring, 2014), p. 51.

<sup>255</sup> Graham Day, *Community and everyday life* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), p. 15.

<sup>256</sup> Soeters, Winslow, Weibull, 'Military Culture', p. 243.

<sup>257</sup> For a general discussion of theory of community harmony see, Bernadette Longo, 'Tensions in the Community Myth: Strategy, Totalitarianism, Terror', *JAC*, 23:2 (2003), p. 294.

<sup>258</sup> Cohen, Cockerman, 'Volunteering for Foreign Combat Missions', p. 351.; See the following author for advocating the centrality of training in motivating men to fight, Hew Strachan, 'Training, Morale and Modern War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 41:2 (April, 2006), pp. 211-227.

Second World War concepts of combat motivators, which includes ideas such as political ideology.<sup>259</sup> Cockerman and Strachan further support their argument by suggesting that loyalty to comrades cannot be the foremost idea service personnel identify with during their military service as it, ‘makes no allowance for high casualties, particularly over a short period of time’.<sup>260</sup> This problem of casualties has led Strachan in particular to suggest that men would deliberately avoid forming close networks of relationships under such circumstances for fear that casualties would destroy the relationships within the primary group, therefore making the community impossible to maintain through bonds of trust.

However, the evidence for this counter-argument is of questionable widespread applicability, being based on the evidence used by Simon Wessely in his study of the Wehrmacht on the Eastern Front during the Second World War.<sup>261</sup> This was a very specific set of circumstances, and as a limited data-set it cannot be used to deconstruct the importance to individuals of primary group identification in general. Furthermore, arguments against the primary group’s importance to their members on the basis of the negative impact of casualties underestimate the speed a community can be established in a combat context. The speed at which comradeship and an esprit de corps can be inculcated has been shown by Fred Allison in his widely applicable Vietnam firefight case study, as well as in the oral history case studies.<sup>262</sup> Finally, the oral histories studied for this thesis largely support the idea that veterans have identified themselves foremost with primary group networks of comrades across the period in question the primary group school of thought retaining its pre-eminence as a construct through which veterans experienced military life.

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<sup>259</sup> Wessely, ‘Twentieth-Century Theories on Combat Motivation and Breakdown’, p. 275.

<sup>260</sup> Strachan, ‘Training, Morale and Modern War’, pp. 212-213.

<sup>261</sup> Wessely, ‘Twentieth-Century Theories on Combat Motivation and Breakdown’, p. 276.

<sup>262</sup> Fred H. Allison, ‘Remembering a Vietnam War Firefight: Changing Perspectives Over Time’, *The Oral History Review*, 31:2 (Summer- Autumn, 2004), pp. 69-83.

To study veterans' identities in relation to military service, this chapter will discuss two key topics. Firstly, which community in the Armed Forces veterans relate to personally in their oral histories is important as these directly relate to the groups formed by these interviewees in their post-military lives. This reveals that interviewees do not identify themselves primarily with the over-arching military *organisation*. Instead, they recognise themselves in relation to the immediate group of individuals with whom they shared the strongest emotional experiences, identifying themselves in relation to the small clutch of personalities, their emotional community.

Secondly, having established where ex-service personnel's allegiances lie, how unit bonds are maintained through expectations of adherence to military discipline shall be examined, revealing significant qualities which comprise how veterans have seen themselves and interacted within groups.<sup>263</sup> Individuals' willingness to observe these informal rules determines whether they will be accepted by other community members. By demonstrating the importance of military discipline in maintaining bonds between close comrades, speakers' understanding of their responsibilities to their group and their willingness to adhere to the established norms will be examined. Veterans' sense of such informal (yet officially encouraged) military discipline is a distinctive military characteristic, such a value being shared by all of those with military experience to some extent.

This chapter is not intended to be an institutional survey of the Armed Forces as a community, 'from the top to bottom and bottom to top'.<sup>264</sup> Nor, importantly, is it meant to be a narrative of the interviewees' military experiences. Rather, it is solely intended to examine the initial period of creation and maintenance of significant communities in Tyne and Wear since 1914.

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<sup>263</sup> Jan Plamper, 'The History of Emotions: An Interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein, and Peter Stearns', *History and Theory*, 49:2 (May, 2010), pp. 237-265.

<sup>264</sup> Ritchie, 'Top down/ bottom up'. 57.

A defining aspect of a veteran's military experiences that they recalled when interviewed is the community they identified with as important, this being established through the sharing of noteworthy experiences (especially combat).<sup>265</sup> Personnel may be moved, voluntarily or by compulsion, between multiple units during their service career, yet when interviewed only some will be remembered as important. Thus, some communities were recalled as having stronger bonds between their participants than others; the extent to which a community (military or otherwise) is perceived as especially important is determined by the individual.<sup>266</sup> Between 1914 and the present the British Armed Forces have been involved in extensive campaigning around the world. The majority of the interviewees, forty five out of the sixty eight, recalled experiences of combat, hence this chapter's focus on the combat buddy phenomenon.<sup>267</sup> While the case studies used are not directly comparable due to being situated in differing historical contexts, they are nevertheless illustrative of the wider significance of community formation in the military and their later influence on the formation of communities by veterans in civilian society.<sup>268</sup> Most significantly, this section analyses the process by which veterans came to establish stronger bonds within certain communities, or a more intense esprit de corps, than with others.

Regional identity may also, depending on the unit in question, carried into battle. This is especially so in the case of regiments which usually recruit from a particular geographic

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<sup>265</sup> Leonie Huddy, 'From social to political identity: a critical examination of social identity theory', *Political Psychology*, 22:1 (March, 2001), p. 141. ; Nico H. Frijda, 'Emotions are functional, most of the time', in Paul Ekman, Richard J. Davidson (eds.), *The Nature of Emotion: Fundamental Questions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 113.; A unit (such as a regiment) 'becomes' important through experience with that group, see, Woodward, "'Not for Queen and Country or any of that shit...'", p. 375.

<sup>266</sup> Stuart Hall, 'Cultural identity and Diaspora', in Ed. Jonathan Rutherford, *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (London: Lawrence and Wishart Limited., 1990), pp. 222-237.; Wessely, 'Twentieth-Century Theories on Combat Motivation and Breakdown', p. 275.

<sup>267</sup> Shirom, 'On some correlates of combat performance', pp. 419-432.; forty five out sixty eight interviewees recalled experiences of combat, the majority subsequently identifying the group they shared this experience with as their primary group, see Appendix 1, Table 1.2.; Appendix 3.

<sup>268</sup> The influence on identity and language of changing generational norms has been acknowledged using current theory, Tracy Craggs, Emma King, 'Sharing European memories in school: exploring historical memory in the classroom', *Oral History*, 41:19, Spring, 2013), p. 109.

region and have particularly strong identities as units.<sup>269</sup> However, Philip Warner argues in a general commentary on the British Armed Forces as of the mid-1980s that regimental loyalty has historically been imbued gradually into new entrants, so its importance to individuals upon joining should not be exaggerated.<sup>270</sup> In the case of Tyne and Wear regiments associated with the area include: The Coldstream Guards, DLI, Fusiliers, and the 15/19<sup>th</sup> Hussars (Light Dragoons).<sup>271</sup> Others such as the Tyneside Irish, and the Tyneside Scottish, were only recruited during one or both of the World Wars, but nevertheless should be counted alongside the other regiments listed who have traditionally recruited in Tyne and Wear.<sup>272</sup> A large number of the interviewees studied for this thesis recall belonging to one of these regiments, yet their memories indicate that regimental-regional loyalty was a negligible factor in forming community bonds at the time and in later life.<sup>273</sup>

The initial case study focuses on 280513RWM from Walker, who volunteered for military service in 1966 at the age of seventeen. He recalled belonging to a group during the early part of his military career, bonded by having survived combat together. As this was after the end of conscription, it was his choice to enlist, allowing him to choose the unit he joined (unlike many of the other sources), choosing to do so for economic reasons. However, he selected the Fusiliers to serve with in particular simply because he knew of them from prior experience, as he explains:<sup>274</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> Hew Strachan, *The Politics of the British Army* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 227-228.

<sup>270</sup> Philip Warner, *Horrocks: The General who led from the front* (London: Sphere Books, 1984), p. 9.

<sup>271</sup> 'DLI Museum & Art Gallery' <http://www.dliidurham.org.uk/Pages/WelcomePage.aspx> (Last visited 04/08/2014).; 'Coldstream Guards' <http://www.army.mod.uk/infantry/regiments/23988.aspx> (Last visited 04/08/2014).; 'Royal Regiment of Fusiliers' <http://www.army.mod.uk/infantry/regiments/30250.aspx> (Last visited 04/08/2014).; '15/19 The King's Royal Hussars' <http://www.nam.ac.uk/research/famous-units/15th-19th-kings-royal-hussars> (Last visited 04/08/2014).

<sup>272</sup> John Sheen, *Tyneside Irish* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2010).; John Sheen, Graham Stewart, *Tyneside Scottish* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 1998).

<sup>273</sup> Appendix 2.

<sup>274</sup> Interview with 280513RWM, conducted by student.; Appendix 2.

280513RWM - (I) walked into the recruiting office, and the recruiting sergeant was behind the desk, there were like three sergeants behind the desk, and it was a nice atmosphere. And the first thing he said was, "What do you want to do?" Obviously, they were finding out whether you wanted to go into a corps, for a trade, or, or infantry or tanks, or whatever. And if you had any family connection with any of them, is that the reason why you wanted to go into those. I didn't have any family connection. So I said the fusiliers, purely because, with the cadets it was the Northumberland Fusiliers, and with the TA it was the Northumberland Fusiliers. So it was the Northumberland Fusiliers.<sup>275</sup>

This was a typical response to the question put to the interviewed ex-servicemen as to their choice of regiment; regional identity should be considered, but not exaggerated. It was due to forming especially close personal ties with this group of individuals from this regiment during his service career 280513RWM later joined the regimental association when he left the Forces, their geographical closeness allowing this to occur.<sup>276</sup>

How 280513RWM came to perceive the Fusiliers, his local regiment, in *particular* as an emotional community is described during his interview when he recalls his first experience of being under fire; 'A crack close to your head, and then a thump from wherever the rifle was fired. So that's your first experience, this crack going across your head. Erm, and the first time you hear it you think, "What's that?" But you soon find out what it is.'<sup>277</sup> This baptism of fire occurred during the first few months of his initial posting, which was to the Lancashire Fusiliers as a young soldier in 1967.<sup>278</sup> After arriving in the Regiment the unit was sent to British Guyana on a six month peacekeeping tour. Following their first exposure

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<sup>275</sup> Interview with 280513RWM conducted by student.

<sup>276</sup> Day, *Community and everyday life*, p. 17.

<sup>277</sup> Interview with 280513RWM conducted by student.

<sup>278</sup> In the interim, 280513RWM had been transferred for administrative reasons to the Lancashire Fusilier Regiment.



to battle, the interviewee, without prompting, recollects the ensuing anecdote of when his platoon was sent on a period of rest:

280513RWM –We went up to a place called Kaitsu Falls. And it really was an R&R trip, a Bedford full of guys and off we went up the Kaitsu Falls. It was a bit of the Army Cape Exercise, keeping the Army in the public eye as well, so the locals could see you in the place, right up country, that never got visited very often and all the rest of it. So we went up there. And we were swimming in the river and what have you. And the guys were fishing.<sup>279</sup>

This extract, as the rest of the account reinforces, shows that the choice of recalling this event immediately after his brief recollection of combat makes it likely this was a story told deliberately to explain how close the interviewee felt towards his comrades in arms with whom he had just experienced combat with for the first time. His clarity of expression suggests that it was a favoured reminiscence topic, its polish coming from multiple retellings of an anecdote he found emotionally fulfilling to recall.<sup>280</sup> While it may have been refined over time, this does not lessen its emotional significance as even inaccurate or half-forgotten memories can shed light upon, ‘the mental or ideological life of a community or individual’<sup>281</sup>:

280513RWM - And you know those big copper diving helmets with the hose leading off them?

Interviewer - Yeah.

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<sup>279</sup> Interview with 280513RWM, conducted by the student.

<sup>280</sup> Patrick Hagopian, ‘Voices from Vietnam: Veteran’s Oral Histories in the Classroom’, *The Journal of American History*, 87:2 (September, 2000), p. 597.; There is no convincing evidence, despite assumptions to the contrary, that such a polished account as referenced here has any less value for the study of emotions and identity than one that is rarely told and thus less polished, see, Roger Horowitz, ‘Oral History and the Story of America and World War II’, *The Journal of American History*, 82:2 (September, 1995), p. 621.

<sup>281</sup> Farhat Manzoor, Greta Jones and James McKenna, ‘How Could These People Do This Sort of Stuff and Then We Have to Look after Them?’ Ethical Dilemmas of Nursing in the Northern Ireland Conflict’, *Oral History*, 35:2, (Autumn, 2007), p.36.

280513RWM – So they (a group of locals) had this, and they had set a bellows on the bank, and they were going into the water, just with this helmet on, no rubber suits, just with a helmet, and they were scrabbling around in the bottom for gold.

Interviewer – Oh right, ok.

280513RWM – So we decided we'd have a try of that as well, so we borrowed the helmet off the guy, you know, they were quite happy for us. And a guy called Billy Mort put the helmet on, and Billy went down under water, and we got fed up of pumping, so we stopped pumping.

280513RWM / Interviewer – (Laughs)

280513RWM – He shot up very quick! But that was the fun bit, yeah.<sup>282</sup>

The narrator's word choice and the fact he clearly finds his story funny connects this memory with the feeling of comradeship he had with the members of the platoon.<sup>283</sup> Furthermore, this memory is all the more significant for being about a group he had only been a member of for a few months. The interviewee does not dwell on the experience of combat, but finds satisfaction in the memory of relaxing together as a group of survivors, 'that was the fun bit'.<sup>284</sup> Humour is perhaps used here to disguise his feelings about surviving his first experience of combat.<sup>285</sup> At the heart of the bonds that formed his memory of the Fusiliers as being an emotional community lay the narrative of shared survival, rather than any local dimension, and the interconnected sense that his new identity as a soldier had been confirmed

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<sup>282</sup> Interview with 280513RWM, conducted by the student.

<sup>283</sup> Humour is used differently by individuals depending on context and personal predilection, nevertheless, 280513RWM arguably uses it in a positive, affirmatory manner. For discussion on humour in oral history see, Ned R. Norrick, 'Humour in Oral History Interviews', *Oral History*, 34:2 (Autumn, 2006), pp. 85-94.

<sup>284</sup> Horowitz, 'Oral History and the Story of America and World War II', p. 621.; Interview with 280513RWM, conducted by the student.

<sup>285</sup> Interview with 280513RWM, conducted by the student.

in the eyes of his older comrades as a consequence of overcoming the challenge of battle.<sup>286</sup> In other cases where interviewees joined units not affiliated to Tyne and Wear, *equally* strong bonds could be established during battle.<sup>287</sup> In the context of the other interviews studied for this thesis, these are common responses to having shared the experience of combat.<sup>288</sup> By recalling how emotionally close he was to this community and the presence of shared qualities of identity formed through battle, 280513RWM, a typical study, reveals his understanding of the group's importance to his personal identity when being interviewed.

A further exemplar account from a different generation, this time from the Second World War, indicates that the expression of close identification with a community, established through combat, can take manifold forms dependent on context (such as generational norms) and the individual.<sup>289</sup> In part, this is due to generational and age differences, although Dan Phillips argues that storytelling differences between individuals of different ages can also be linked to the sanitisation of individual memory over time.<sup>290</sup> Different cohorts have had diverse ways of expressing values, depending on what they considered to be acceptable norms as discussed by Sally Chandler in her review of oral history as a method for revealing generational trends in expression.<sup>291</sup> These influences affect the manner in which bonds with comrades are recollected in an interview. The example chosen was the interview with 040413WNM, a Second World War paratrooper, who later

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<sup>286</sup> Christopher Coker, *The Warrior Ethos: military Culture and the War on Terror* (Routledge: Abingdon, 2007).

<sup>287</sup> Appendix 3, 4 & 5.

<sup>288</sup> Appendix 3. Similar example: 'Interview 22603' (Reel 12, 00:00 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80024568> (Last visited 28/12/2014).

<sup>289</sup> Sally Chandler, 'Oral History across Generations: Age, Generational Identity and Oral Testimony', *Oral History*, 33:2 (Autumn, 2005), pp. 48-56.; Michael Roper, 'Between Manliness and Masculinity: The "War Generation" and the Psychology of Fear in Britain, 1914-1950', *The Journal of British Studies*, 44:2 (April, 2005), pp. 343-362.; James Holland, *Heroes: The Greatest Generation and the Second World War* (London: Harper Collins, 2007).

<sup>290</sup> Dan Phillips, 'What Lies Beneath The History Of Conflict?: Using Personal Testimony For Learning' Source: *Oral History*, 38:1, (Spring: 2010), p. 118.

<sup>291</sup> Chandler, 'Oral History across Generations', pp. 18-56.

became heavily involved in the RBL and Parachute Regiment as the face of local campaigning from the 1970s.

In comparison to the preceding case study a different style of storytelling is used. Nevertheless, it is similar to the previous account in regards to the intensity of the speaker's identification with this group of combat buddies, indicating that these comrades should likewise be understood as an emotional community.<sup>292</sup> In this part of the interview 040413WNM recalls his first battle, an event that occurred just following D-Day. His unit had been formed between 1942 and 1943 just after he had been conscripted at the age of eighteen, less than two years prior to the events described in this extract. As a conscript he had little choice as to which unit he was sent to, yet this randomly assigned unit became deeply important to him. He chose to remember these events by reading from a chapter of a book on the subject, and his tone of voice when reading verbatim lacks emotion and thus personal connection with the events he relates:

040413WNM – Breville had been taken, part of the Yorkshire regiment had a company of the 12<sup>th</sup> Devonshires attached. Breville had been taken at very heavy cost. Nine officers and one hundred and fifty-three men had been lost of the 12<sup>th</sup> Yorkshire Parachute battalion, and D Company of the Devonshire regiment were killed in that battle.<sup>293</sup>

040413WNM's storytelling technique of deliberate distancing himself emotionally from the memories being recalled has been recognised as a recurring theme when interviewing veterans of this conflict, being a symptom of the sanitisation of their memories over time.<sup>294</sup> It has been suggested this is a sign of repressed trauma common to combat veterans of this generation who felt it was unacceptable for them to discuss mental illness due to mental

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<sup>292</sup> Rosenwein, 'Worrying about emotions in history', pp. 821-845.

<sup>293</sup> Interview with 040413WNM, conducted by student.

<sup>294</sup> Alison Parr, 'Breaking the Silence: Traumatized war veterans and oral history', *Oral History*, 35:1 (2007), pp. 61-70. Referenced in, Sean Field, 'Shooting at Shadows: Private John Field, war stories and why he would not be interviewed', *Oral History*, 41:2 (Autumn, 2013), p. 85.

health problems being publically derided among their generation. However, there has been limited research completed on the influence of this on oral history testimony and memory.<sup>295</sup>

After reading from the book however this apparent emotionless façade falls as he remembers the following:

040413WNM - I can give you one little thing. (Voice gets thick and emotional) When I go back there, and go along the graves, and there are quite a few of them, I don't see old men like me. I still see them as I've seen them, as they would be now had they lived. It's... I'm sorry, I'm getting myself a bit, err..... (2 second pause) I still see young Tony, he used to sing the same song over and over again. (Interviewee sighs).<sup>296</sup>

Interviewer – I'm sorry (Interrupted by 040413WNM).

040413WNM – Its ok, I'm just remembering again. (2 second pause, and voice returns to normal when he continues).

The speaker immediately changed the topic after this brief pause. The importance of this upsetting memory lies in what it tells the listener about the significant relationships he had established with comrades who were killed in action on the interviewee's notion of community. At this time 040413WNM was a Lance Corporal in a squad of roughly eight to twelve men, depending on casualties, and it is with this handful of comrades that he melancholically identifies with. While the speaker neither denies nor confirms any form of psychological trauma, this part of the recording shows some of the classic trauma indicators indicated by scholars; avoidance of the memory (by reading from a book instead of recalling his own memories), and then an emotional outburst, 'When you hear things (voice gets very emotional) like that (his comrades getting killed), and read them in print (sic) (pause for three

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<sup>295</sup> Ibid.

<sup>296</sup> Interview with 040413WNM, conducted by student.

seconds). It doesn't tell you half of what was done'.<sup>297</sup> These trauma indicators, especially the very specific and upsetting memory he has of one of his friends singing, suggests that he continued in his old age to identify himself strongly in relation to this squad of 'combat buddies' as fellow soldiers and friends. If this was not the case, one would not expect such strong emotional memories to have been recalled.<sup>298</sup>

Strachan has suggested that any close bonds established between men in battle conditions are at best tangential due to being prone to destruction, and their ephemeral nature undermines their importance as a locus of loyalty and identification to participants.<sup>299</sup> However, this extract of 040413WNM's interview can be seen to challenge this.<sup>300</sup> 040413WNM's intense and distressed emotional recollection of the group he fought with indicates his friends' continuing personal importance to him despite their lack of presence. Thus, it would be too simplistic to suggest that the death of a large number of friends in battle inevitably destroyed the ties of this speaker's unit *as perceived by the interviewee*.<sup>301</sup> Rather, the intense circumstances of the group's experience in combat actually served to establish especially strong bonds even though many of his comrades fell in battle.

These case studies have demonstrated that the creation of an emotional community occurs when there is a memorable and personally significant event which is shared by group members, as suggested by Leonie Huddy.<sup>302</sup> In a military context such an event is likely to be

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<sup>297</sup> Charles Kaiman, 'PTSD in the World War II Combat Veteran', *The American Journal of Nursing*, 103:11 (November, 2003), pp. 32-42.; Amy C. Iverson, Lauren van Staden, Jamie Hacker Hughes, Tess Browne, Lisa Hull, John Hall, Neil Greenberg, Roberto J. Rona, Matthew Hotopf, Simon Wessely, Nicola T. Fear, 'The prevalence of common mental disorders and PTSD in the UK military: using data from a clinical interview-based study', *BMC Psychiatry*, 9:68 (2009), <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-244X/9/68> (Last visited 04/08/2014).; Interview with 040413WNM, conducted by student.

<sup>298</sup> Joanna Bornat, 'Remembering and reworking emotions: the reanalysis of emotion in an interview', *Oral History*, 38:2, (Autumn, 2010), pp. 43-52.

<sup>299</sup> Strachan, 'Training, Morale and Modern War', pp. 212-213.

<sup>300</sup> In a like fashion 010813KAM recalls having his community reduced physically through the death of a close comrade in Iraq, yet he nevertheless identified closely with this group of colleagues as an emotional community when interviewed, see, Interview with 010813KAM conducted by student.

<sup>301</sup> Strachan, 'Training, Morale and Modern War', pp. 212-213.

<sup>302</sup> Huddy, 'From social to political identity', p. 144.

violent. The approach taken to these accounts reveals *how* close bonds formed in battle were remembered, the sources chosen being representative of the thesis' collection to a great extent because they likewise recall the importance of combat as a means to establish especially close bonds between soldiers.<sup>303</sup> The oral extracts' close identification with a small number of comrades to the exclusion of remembering other community identities reveals a demonstrable lack of overt identification with the Armed Forces as a whole. Loyalty was to comrades first, these bonds being reinforced through sharing especially intense experiences of combat. This supports the notion that the institution of the British Armed Forces is formed of collections of multiple small community cultures (primary groups).<sup>304</sup> Moreover, this analysis demonstrates that other values of identity, such as regional identity, have arguably been of lesser importance in defining and creating an especially strong esprit de corps. The longer-term significance of veterans' recalling the establishment of emotional communities during their military career shall be reflected upon later in chapter three in relation to the influence these group bonds had on the formation of their ex-military communities in civilian life.

## II

The maintenance of the 'building block' of the Armed Forces, the aforementioned primary group, must now be considered. Individuals' adherence to informal military discipline is significant for this thesis as it dictated whether or not they could remain as part of a group during their military career (such as an emotional community) as well as in their post-service lives.<sup>305</sup> Military discipline is a term that has dual meaning. Firstly, it can simply refer to the set of regulations by which the Armed Forces are governed, more commonly referred to as martial law. This is a modern concept based on historical precedent, which has been outlined by Donagan who reviews the historical progression of military law in order to

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<sup>303</sup> Appendix 3.

<sup>304</sup> Winslow, 'Military organisation and culture from three perspectives', p. 73.

<sup>305</sup> Soeters, Winslow, Weibull, 'Military Culture', p. 243.

contextualise her discussion of martial law during the English Civil War.<sup>306</sup> Martial law is discipline imposed 'from above'. Secondly, and of concern to this section, it can refer to the unwritten yet widely accepted rubrics, unofficial customary norms, which determine the obligations fellow group members believed they had for one another. These social expectations are created by concepts of responsibility which permeate military communities, it being essential to be seen to be loyal to comrades to avoid ostracisation for being perceived as 'unmanly', 'You don't want them to think you're afraid'.<sup>307</sup> This is discipline 'from below', the focus of this section. In stressful situations such as battle it is essential that *all* group members share the same degree of responsibility to one another to preserve the viability of these bonds.<sup>308</sup> Ultimately, these bonds are based on reciprocated mutual trust, and only through the preservation of these bonds can combat buddy relationships be created and maintained. Where ex-service personnel have been shown to have established emotional communities on the basis of shared experiences, these bonds were maintained through informal understandings of their obligations to comrades through military discipline.

Military discipline's importance for veterans' identities will be discussed thematically in stages; firstly, how awareness of military discipline is expressed, and its pivotal role in maintaining group bonds during military service will be examined; secondly, the circumstances when it was deemed socially acceptable to voluntarily abandon one's obligations to the primary group; and finally, how communities have punished those who transgressed by breaking with their group in an unacceptable manner. Two different yet nonetheless typical extracts from this thesis' source-base (in relation to the expectations of others that they expressed) have been used to demonstrate the import of informal military

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<sup>306</sup> Barbara Donagan, 'Codes and Conduct in the English Civil War', *Past & Present*, 118 (February, 1988), p. 82.

<sup>307</sup> Burke, 'From Recruit to Soldier', pp. 6-7.; 'Interview 11211' (Reel 4: 29:00 Onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80010967> (Last visited 31/08/2014).

<sup>308</sup> Little, 'Buddy Relations and Combat Performance', p. 192.



discipline on preserving individuals' notions of group bonds during military service, typicality demonstrating these examples were not one-off cases.<sup>309</sup>

The initial case study discusses a manifestation of qualities of military discipline as a norm influencing the survival of the community. Like the majority of sources in which the speaker recalls memories of group interaction while in the military since 1914, this source is heavily overlaid with awareness of the expectations of others which are seen to influence his own as well as group behaviour.<sup>310</sup> This interviewee made use of black humour to relate a memory to the student of an incident he himself witnessed on a tour of duty in Northern Ireland in the mid to late 1970s. Enlisting at nineteen years of age with the Fusiliers, 160713WHM had been serving for nearly a decade at the time of the event he recounts, with previous experience of combat and injury. In this part of the interview he recalls being on observation post duty with a couple of his squad mates, a common task undertaken by British servicemen in Northern Ireland during Operation Banner.<sup>311</sup> Their task was to identify IRA suspects and apprehend them. Duty in such posts was undertaken by small units of British troops, often squad sized as in this case.

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<sup>309</sup> See Appendix 3, 4, and 5 for brief comments on individual's perceptions of military discipline in the context of their comrades.

<sup>310</sup> Similar examples: (1914-18) 'Interview 11041' (Reel 3, 20:50) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80010817> (Last visited 28/12/2014).; (WWII) Interview 120813GHM, conducted by student.; (1946-62) 'Interview 19632' (Reel 9, 12:00 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80024580> (Last visited 28/12/2014).; (1946-Present) 'Interview 12246' (Reel 12, 01:50) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80011981> (Last visited 28/12/2014).; (1962-Present) Interview 020813JEM, conducted by student.

<sup>311</sup> Operation Banner being the code name for the British Troop's presence between 1969 and 2007.

Image 1: ‘Golf 40’, A typical British Army observation post in Northern Ireland<sup>312</sup>



160713WHM recalled watching a man cross the nearby bridge with a suitcase after midnight and laughing at the incongruous sight, before remembering:

160713WHM – Then it went off! (Laughs) And it demolished one side of the bridge, and I thought somebody had blown the bridge up, and they had caught this guy with the suitcase. But it wasn't. It was a guy called Jimmy McGinn, who was IRA, and he was bringing the bomb across, and there were sixty pound of explosive in the suitcase (1 second pause). And when it went off, and we just got on the radio and give the incident report, down come the RUC<sup>313</sup>, then down come the Garda<sup>314</sup>, 'cos (sic) we were trying to work out which side of the border he was on and whose incident it was.<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>312</sup> 'Donovan Wylie: Vision as Power, Northern Ireland, 2006, South East view of Golf 40, British Army surveillance post in South Armagh' <http://we-make-money-not-art.com/archives/2013/11/donovan-wylie-vision-as-power.php> (Last visited 01/08/2014).

<sup>313</sup> Royal Ulster Constabulary

<sup>314</sup> Southern Irish Police Force

<sup>315</sup> Interview with 160713WHM, conducted by student.

After the explosion, their concern was to determine which police force would be required to resolve the incident, which the speaker remembers in somewhat gruesome detail:

160713WHM – So they went looking, and one side of the bridge had been demolished, and the other side you'd think somebody had got a bucket of red paint and went ssssswww (interviewee does sound affect) down the wall. And, err, there were bits of cloth in it. So the Garda started looking, and right in the middle of the bridge, there was a crow's foot which donates (sic) the middle. That side Southern Ireland, this side Northern Ireland. And the sergeant in the RUC and the sergeant in the Garda, because this bridge had been blown out and they didn't want the incident because they would have to write it up and do the coroner's inquest and all this. So they had this tape measure out, couldn't care less about this guy who'd just (sic). So this young constable come up from our side and he had a poncho, and he had a head in it. (1 second pause) And the RUC sergeant looked at it, 'Oooh' he says, 'Jimmy McGinn' (Laughs). I said I couldn't recognise him from that distance, and the Garda sergeant said, 'Is his eyes watering?' (Laughs) And we found a finger, erm, in amongst the splash. And, err, and the RUC lost the argument I think by about three inches when they got the tape measure out to the centre of the 'V' on this hold. And the Garda just jumped in their Land Rovers and left the RUC to sort out the mess and the cleaning up.<sup>316</sup>

The black humour that is so prominent in this extract is revealing, as according to Alistair Thomson, it is a commonly used device to hide or dispel stress.<sup>317</sup> As the interviewee recalled later, 'If you didn't see the lighter side, erm. You would worry yourself to death.'<sup>318</sup> Comedy

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<sup>316</sup> Interview with 160713WHM, conducted by student.

<sup>317</sup> Alistair Thomson, *ANZAC Memories: Living with the Legend* (Oxford: Oxford University Press Australia, 1995), p. 10.

<sup>318</sup> Interview with 160713WHM, conducted by student.

appears to have been used by him at the time and in hindsight to psychologically come to terms with this event, disguising, perhaps, his real feelings.<sup>319</sup>

However, the use of comedy was arguably more than just a personal coping mechanism to hide trauma: it was also a way of demonstrating he did not abandon his responsibility as a team member. Despite it being an horrific scene, that 160713WHM, his comrades, and the police forces, all took an almost perverse pleasure in the macabre, trying to 'one-up' each other's comments. The listener gets the impression that there was a measure of pride in being able to 'see the lighter side' after such an intense experience, and that this was more significant than a simple expression of stereotypical military masculinity, military units, 'maybe being the most prototypically masculine of all social institutions'.<sup>320</sup> This specific style of humour indicates that the speaker showed genuine satisfaction at his psychological resilience in his ability to be professional and thus able carry on with his responsibilities as a soldier and as a comrade *because* he did not appear to his mates as unmanned by the event.<sup>321</sup> Humour enabled him to convey to his comrades that he was not debilitated by the gruesome sight (which would be an unmanly reaction) thereby meeting their expectations. To be badly affected by such a scene would have reduced his value as a team player, potentially risking the lives of his comrades.

Contrasting this source with a Great War era extract demonstrates significant similarities in the values expressed, although not in storytelling style. According to Chandler this is because the two sources are situated in diverse contexts and time periods, consequently expressing themselves differently, yet similarly sharing similar qualities of loyalty and associated expectations of responsibility to comrades.<sup>322</sup> 9752 enlisted as a volunteer and was

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<sup>319</sup> Norrick, 'Humour in Oral History Interviews', pp. 85-94.

<sup>320</sup> Burke, 'From Recruit to Soldier', pp. 6-7.; Segal, 'Women's Military Roles Cross-Nationally', pp. 758.

<sup>321</sup> Field, 'Shooting at Shadows', p. 83.

<sup>322</sup> Chandler, 'Oral History across Generations', pp. 48-56.

commissioned as an officer at the age of nineteen. In this extract he recalled being ordered by a superior to detail his platoon to bury British dead after the Battle of Loos, 1915. At the time of this memory these were some of the first war dead he had seen, as he was only just being exposed to the brutal reality of warfare:

9752 - We had to bury them, and it wasn't very easy because the Germans were shelling them at the time (1 second pause). Not a very pleasant job, there were hundreds and hundreds of them as far as the eye could see.

Interviewer – Did it upset you, this job?

9752 – No. At that time, your emotions were bottled up in a can (1 second pause). You recognised it was just war and dead people were just part of it. It never impinged on me in that sort of way I'm glad to say.<sup>323</sup>

The value of intonation and language has been discussed by Rena Field, Valerie Yow, and Michael Roper through case studies intended to be widely applicable to the study of oral histories.<sup>324</sup> 9752's memory appears to the listener to be an emotionally difficult one to speak about by virtue of the pauses, possibly an indicator of trauma.<sup>325</sup> If so, as the source is equivocal on this point, this demonstrates the high level of pressure the interviewee was under at the time. In this extract the interviewee is speaking of himself in an impersonal style, as though he saw his experience as typical among the men he led. This implies he thought of himself as not the only one whose 'emotions were bottled up in a can'.<sup>326</sup> Arguably, he saw it

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<sup>323</sup> 'Interview 9752' (Reel 5, 11:30 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80009536> (Last visited 01/04/2014).

<sup>324</sup> Rena Feld, 'From the Interviewer's Perspective: Interviewing Women Conscientious Objectors', *Oral History*, 31:1, (Spring, 2003), pp. 29-37.; Valerie Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Practical Guide for Social Scientists* (London: SAGE Publications, 1994), pp. 1-2.; Michael Roper, 'Analysing the Analysed: Transference and Counter-Transference in the Oral History Encounter', *Oral History*, 31:2 (Autumn, 2003), pp. 20-32.

<sup>325</sup> Kaiman, 'PTSD in the World War II Combat Veteran', pp. 32-42.; Iverson, van Staden, Hughes, Browne, Hull, Hall, Greenberg, Rona, Hotopf, Wessely, Fear, 'The prevalence of common mental disorders and PTSD in the UK military'.

<sup>326</sup> 'Interview 9752' (Reel 5, 11:30 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80009536>

as expected of him that he not be seen to be adversely affected by such a distressing scene by the men he led, especially as the majority were likely to be his age or older. Continuing with the job, so demonstrating he was strong enough to hold a position of responsibility to his men (by virtue of being an officer) was paramount to maintaining the cohesion of the unit he commanded.<sup>327</sup> Failure to do so would have destroyed the bonds of loyalty to him from group members.<sup>328</sup> The expression this took varied, yet both extracts similar qualities being valued even across different generations.

In summary, military discipline helped maintain groups when under pressure by defining individuals' duties to fellow group members. Being seen by fellow soldiers to be a man, with the qualities of bravery and loyalty that idea embodied, was central to whether or not they were perceived to be adhering to a group's concept of military discipline and thus determined their continued acceptance by others as a member of the community. This informal but significant rubric ensured comrades would feel an obligation to uphold their responsibilities to their unit. The theme of informal obligations to comrades is seen throughout the oral history accounts of comradeship in battle studied for this thesis, the sharing of qualities of duty to one another being critical to the survival of the bonds of trust.

Individuals' understanding of military discipline since 1914 while serving in the Forces need to be understood as flexible within a prescribed framework of exceptions. These exceptional circumstances are vital to the continuing existence of units as this enabled deviancy without the deviant losing the respect of comrades which would otherwise undermine their manliness, so weakening or breaking the bonds of the group which were

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(Last visited 01/04/2014).

<sup>327</sup> Noted in the following study of Australian Great War veterans, but is widely applicable, Kristy Muir, "‘That bastard’s following me!’ Mentally ill Australian Veterans Struggling to Maintain Control", in, Turner, David M.; Stagg, Kevin, (eds.), *Social Histories of Disability and Deformity* (Oxon: Routledge, 2006), p. 162.

<sup>328</sup> Little, 'Buddy Relations and Combat Performance', pp. 183-208.

based on concepts of mutual trust.<sup>329</sup> Primarily, exceptions are seen to occur when a comrade is killed and an individual mourns, and thus is unable to participate in routine activities.<sup>330</sup> For example, a small number of interviewees acknowledge that they were permitted by the group to abandon their responsibilities to their group when under *extreme* and *unusual* pressure.<sup>331</sup> Nevertheless, it is also seen to be unacceptable for any individual to be permanently incapacitated as such a response would be considered ‘unmanly’, this negative quality indicating the abandonment of responsibilities to comrades.<sup>332</sup>

010813KAM, a company sergeant major with the Coldstream Guards, remembered a six month tour in Iraq during which one of the men in his company, a platoon sergeant, was killed by an IED whilst on patrol. This was a man with whom he had served with since the beginning of his military career, and whom he counted as a friend (image 1). Being present at the scene of his death, the manner of how his friend was killed evidently deeply shocked him, rendering him insensate for a time:

010813KAM - He wasn’t dead when we got called out, but he was in a bad way. We got called out for extra support for his team.

Interviewer – Ok.

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<sup>329</sup> Joshua S. Goldstein, *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 265.

<sup>330</sup> Arnold M. Rose, ‘The Social Psychology of Desertion from Combat’, *American Sociological Review*, 16, 5 (October, 1951), p. 617.

<sup>331</sup> Similar examples: ‘Interview 16709’ (Reels 7 to 13 inclusive) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80016173> (Last visited 28/12/2014).; ‘Interview 17630’ (Reels 5 and 6 inclusive) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80016743> (Last visited 28/12/2014).

<sup>332</sup> Nissan Rubin, ‘Unofficial Memorial Rites in an Army Unit’, *Social Forces*, 63, 3 (March, 1985), pp. 795-809.; John Hockey, ‘No More Heroes: Masculinity in the Infantry’, in Paul R. Higate (ed.), *Military Masculinities: Identity and the State* (USA: Praeger Publishers, 2003), p. 23-24.; Rose, ‘The Social Psychology of Desertion from Combat’, p. 617.

Image 1: Group photo during 6-month tour in Iraq<sup>333</sup>



010813KAM – When we went out, we knew what happened, we knew we had a casualty, but we didn't know to what degree. We basically just got put out as security. So perimeter security if you want.

Interviewer – Right, ok.

010813KAM – And err, while we were doing our checks, whenever you go out on, onto the streets, if you're going to stop, you do what is called five and twenty metre checks. Check around to look for anything that shouldn't be there. Wires, stuff like that. But it was while we were doing the five and twenty metre checks, that, I came across what I thought was, was just a boot. (1 second pause) It turned out there was a boot and both of the lower part of his legs were quite close by. So I stumbled across them, so I had to get on the radio to the company

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<sup>333</sup> Photo provided by 010813KAM from their private collection.



sergeant major, and, (1 second pause) he then got somebody else to come out, and basically they were put in plastic bags. (1 second pause) It knocks you.<sup>334</sup>

While it is ambiguous, the speaker appears to acknowledge that he had been unable to continue in his role during this incident, his commander having to send out another man to take over his position. Yet he does not recollect any criticism from his comrades for his response to this traumatic event. This indicates, although not unequivocally so, that in certain contexts the expectations of the primary group could be relaxed for members.

However, he was expected to continue with his duties in the aftermath of this event, remaining on active duty in Iraq until the end of his unit's tour, no further allowances being made, although he does not phrase it in that fashion.<sup>335</sup> As he goes on to recollect, even being a witness to such a disturbing and deeply personal event would not be considered a sufficient reason for complete and permanent abandonment of his community. This is despite, in the case of this interview, of knowledge of the effects of PTSD (which he appears to have suffered from some form of, based on the symptoms he displayed and recalled when interviewed) being increasingly widespread within and outside the Armed Forces from the 1990s.<sup>336</sup> After this tour of duty in Iraq, 010813KAM recalls that he decided to leave the Armed Forces, citing this experience in particular as the trigger:

010813KAM – It was roughly, four or five months afterwards when I put them in (his request to be demobilised – student's note). I finally plucked up the courage and thought I'm doing it, I am leaving. I'd spoke about it quite a lot. When you first say you want to terminate, there's a whole thing that you've got to go through. You've got to fill out paperwork, and give three

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<sup>334</sup> Interview with 010813KAM, conducted by student.

<sup>335</sup> Mark D. Steinberg, 'Melancholy and Modernity: Emotions and Social Life in Russia between the Revolutions', *Journal of Social History*, 41:4 (Summer, 2008), p. 815.

<sup>336</sup> Karen J. Burnell, Niall Boyce, Nigel Hunt, 'A Good War? Exploring British Veterans' Moral Evaluation of Deployment', *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, 25 (2011), p. 38.

reasons why you want to terminate. And if the reasons are not good enough for them, they'll reject it. But they can only reject it three times. The third time they *have* to accept it.

Interviewer – Ok.

010813KAM - Strange, strange Army rules.

Interviewer – So what three reasons did you put down may I ask?

010813KAM – Err, one of the reasons I can remember was, I felt in myself that I'd served my time. I'd served enough time. The other reason, I think I'd like to go home back to my family. Which, they tend to laugh at. I can't remember what the third reason was.

Interviewer – You didn't put down the reason that you had a gut feeling that you wouldn't be coming back?

010813KAM – They would just laugh it off. They wouldn't have took me seriously.

Interviewer – Ok. But to you that was the main reason?

010813KAM – That was the main reason.<sup>337</sup>

Ultimately, the interviewee perceived that the reaction of his fellow military comrades to his leaving was intertwined with how they understood his responsibility to them as their comrade. It would have been deemed 'unmanly' of him to have left out of fear, a betrayal of the group as it would have broken the bonds of trust in one another that they shared. This is seen in his comment, for example, that 'The other reason, I think I'd like to go home back to my family. Which, they tend to laugh at.'<sup>338</sup> Instead, the main reason he chose to recollect and place emphasis on was, that 'I felt in myself that I'd served my time.'<sup>339</sup> This

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<sup>337</sup> Interview with 010813KAM, conducted by student.

<sup>338</sup> Interview with 010813KAM, conducted by student.

<sup>339</sup> Interview with 010813KAM, conducted by student.

demonstrates that he remembered that his leaving would be accepted by others if he could justifiably say he had done his duty; that he had done enough for his military community. This is a strong, ‘masculine’ reason, explicitly connected as it is with the idea that he had already completed his responsibilities. This interpretation is reinforced by his comment that it took him some time before he, ‘plucked up the courage’ to tell them he was leaving.<sup>340</sup> This decision to leave, like his reaction to finding his friend’s legs on the road which incapacitated him temporarily, had to be justified and accepted by his community, their reaction being mediated through their shared understanding of military discipline. The interviewee clearly demonstrated concern for this not being accepted by his colleagues and the organisation, which would have demeaned his identity, hence him saying, ‘They wouldn’t have took me seriously.’<sup>341</sup>

This case study supports the assertion that an individual’s responsibility to their primary group can be broken in an acceptable manner without chastisement, but only under certain circumstances. In so doing, this allows for the preservation of group cohesion, and the avoidance of alienation for the individual concerned. This consequently reinforces the argument that obligations to comrades while serving are framed in a framework of informal rules, couched in masculine terms, all interaction with group members being within this context. The nature of identification with fellow group members as part of the community of the primary group is such that obligation to comrades is paramount. Failure to maintain military discipline, and thus these responsibilities, is to risk being ostracised *except* in certain contexts.

Those who breached their obligations to group members in an unacceptable manner risked being ostracised by their community, which could be especially disastrous for them

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<sup>340</sup> Interview with 010813KAM, conducted by student.

<sup>341</sup> Interview with 010813KAM, conducted by student.

personally under combat conditions, for example, as their comrades may no longer actively protect them.<sup>342</sup> While military discipline provides positive support for the community when under pressure through bonds of trust, as noted previously, the individual's comrades also inflict penalties on rule-breakers. The threat of being penalised has been seen by the interviewees as a further means of preserving group bonds, ensuring harmony under pressure.<sup>343</sup> In the context of studying military discipline's interactions with veterans' identity, this section focuses upon those who ignored or flouted their responsibilities to their primary group for reasons not understood and/or accepted by the rest. The infliction of such punishment impacted on punished individuals' ability to identify as veterans in civilian life and their ability to join ex-military communities, a causal link that has previously gone unremarked. Therefore, the aim of presenting the following case study is to illustrate how the contravention of military discipline, as seen by community members, led to punishment as a means of reinforcing group loyalty.

However, initially, the significance of the fact that only one of the oral sources studied for this thesis, the interview with 11208, discussed the controversial topic of group members abandoning their obligations to their unit should be considered.<sup>344</sup> It is likely that only those not *directly* involved would reminisce on such a difficult topic. According to Thompson recollections will, 'lie somewhere between the actual social behaviour and the social

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<sup>342</sup> Rose, 'The Social Psychology of Desertion from Combat', p. 617.

<sup>343</sup> Longo, 'Tensions in the community myth, strategy, totalitarianism, terror', p. 300.; Joanne Kaufman, Cathryn Johnson, 'Stigmatized individuals and the process of identity', *The Sociological Quarterly*, 45:4 (Autumn, 2004), p. 808.; Rose, 'The Social Psychology of Desertion from Combat', pp. 614-629.; Official punishment may follow rule-breaking, depending on the context, but this is not the focus. Additionally, in referencing the breaching of obligations this does not refer to service personnel who leave their group due to physical injuries, promotion, or transfer, as these events are outside their control. Moreover, it must be remembered there are acceptable exceptions. 16709's interview alludes to the possibility that the speaker felt some form of alienation after being removed from front line combat duty due to injury. However, the source is ambiguous on these experiences to the extent that such an interpretation of the source would be unsustainable when subjected to incursive analysis. 'Interview 16709' (Reel 13)

<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80016173> (Last visited 03/08/2014).

<sup>344</sup> Appendix 3.

expectations or norms of the time.<sup>345</sup> Moreover, Kelly and Merchant have shown in their respective studies of oral history method that few who consider their lives a failure will choose to discuss this publically.<sup>346</sup> Arguably then, the admission of abandonment would suggest to comrades in the interviewee's ex-military communities (one potential audience for their interview) that these individuals lacked the qualities of military discipline and manliness required by their group to remain as members.<sup>347</sup> That abandonment of comrades was a reflection on the individual's manhood is discussed by Goldstein in his review of the rubrics controlling the actions of members of military communities.<sup>348</sup> Revealing such negative values in later-life would go against the acceptable norm of a community, as if they were revealed they could cause conflict and lead to ostracisation.<sup>349</sup> As a consequence deviant individuals may not have joined ex-military communities, or, alternatively, reminiscence about this aspect of their life experiences when interviewed, explaining the absence of such accounts in this thesis' source-base. Nonetheless, such incidents plausibly occurred throughout the period studied, and the lack of qualitative evidence means that historian faces problems when investigating how common it was for individuals to break with their group in an unacceptable manner.

However, 11208 unusually among the source-base of this thesis chose to recollect that two senior officers of his battalion 'took ill' and left the unit in which he was also an officer during the Second World War after the unit saw some heavy fighting and took many casualties.<sup>350</sup> The events he recalls took place after D-Day, the battalion having been on

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<sup>345</sup> Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 128-129.

<sup>346</sup> Susan Kelly, 'Stigma and silence: oral histories of tuberculosis', *Oral History*, 39:1, (Spring, 2011), p. 67.; Paul Merchant, 'Scientists' childhoods', *Oral History*, 41:1 (Spring, 2013), pp. 63-72

<sup>347</sup> Mary Stewart, 'Exploring family reactions to life story recordings', *Oral History*, 41, 1 (Spring, 2013), pp. 51-62.; Anna Green, 'Unpacking the Stories', in, Anna Green, Megan Hutching, (eds.), *Remembering: Writing Oral History* (Auckland: University of Auckland Press 2004), p. 11.

<sup>348</sup> Goldstein, *War and Gender*, pp. 252-253, 265.

<sup>349</sup> Cosson, 'Voice of the community?', p. 96.

<sup>350</sup> 'Interview 11208' (Reel 10, 13:50 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80010965> (Last visited 01/04/2014).

active service since 1940 in the North African campaign. He goes on to say that he thought their undisclosed illness was actually a euphemism for incapacitating combat stress which he diplomatically calls ‘nerves’. This may be out of politeness, or a lack of understanding as to underlying medical trauma:

11208 – I don’t know, I think personally (it was) nerves!

Interviewer – You think that about both of them?

11208 – Aye.....

Interviewer – Was anything said when people went, basically, which you regard, with nerves?

11208 – Well (2 second pause) it was never discussed. People might have had their own thoughts, they, err, the troops themselves may have discussed it between themselves, but in regards the officers they never discussed it. They just took it as (3 second pause).

Interviewer – Did you see it as legitimate, nerves going, particularly after such a long service?

11208 – Errr.

Interviewer – Or was it regarded as not quite on?

11208 – Well, I don’t know. I wouldn’t like to comment on that.<sup>351</sup>

11208’s response reveals how he viewed the role of officers doing their duty and leading their men, especially as one was the battalion’s second-in-command. This is supported by his reticence on the question of whether it was justified to lose ones ‘nerve’, principally his

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<sup>351</sup> ‘Interview 11208’ (Reel 10, 13:50 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80010965> (Last visited 01/04/2014).

refusal to say it was an acceptable reaction, which suggests he felt that these two other officers were acting inappropriately. The interviewee was uncomfortable about relating his memories of these events, finally asking to stop talking on that topic. Yet, that he chose to mention this without encouragement in the first instance suggests that he felt strongly enough about it to overcome his reluctance to discuss it, at first at least, a phenomenon of dialogue shown by Patrick Hagopian in his widely applicable Vietnam case study.<sup>352</sup> Secondly, although never explicitly stated, his emotions may also have been affected by his own experiences as an officer who had experienced combat since the beginning of the war, had seen at least as much combat as the two senior officers, but had not been incapacitated. Consequently, as he continued doing his duty, the two officers who went 'ill' failed in their responsibility by abandoning their men. Thus, they did not adhere to the standard expected by the interviewee and his unit to adhere to the norms of military discipline and were ostracised by the interviewee for their failing.<sup>353</sup>

This interpretation of the interviewee's reaction to the officers' failing in the extract above is supported by a further comment he makes during this conversation, when the interviewer asks 11208 if being invalided out of the unit was a widespread response to overlong combat exposure:

Interviewer – Was that quite common in the battalion at the time?

11208 – Well no, not really!<sup>354</sup>

His response when asked if 'nerves' were 'common' in his unit indicates to the listener indignation. Although he felt awkward about condemning the two officers who went ill, his disinclination to defend them either, his earlier verbal ostracisation of them, and his vigorous

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<sup>352</sup> Hagopian, 'Voices from Vietnam', p. 597.

<sup>353</sup> Goldstein, *War and Gender*, p. 265.

<sup>354</sup> 'Interview 11208' (Reel 10, 13:50 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80010965> (Last visited 01/04/2014).

rejection of the suggestion it was a common reaction supports this interpretation of his recollections. 11208's memories suggest that allowing combat stress to abandon one's obligations to comrades was to his mind indefensible and not customary, and thus would be punished by alienation and shaming.<sup>355</sup>

Throughout the period under study, individuals' sense of military discipline, expressed through loyalty to comrades and a sense of responsibility to members of the unit (framed through being seen as a man in this military context) maintained the cohesion of the unit when it was put under pressure. Studying reminiscence dialogue, ex-service personnel are shown to have been conscious of the obligations of group members to them, and vice versa, and this shared respect for military discipline bound their military unit. Should the group consider a member's actions reprehensible, that member would be ostracised, as deviants damage the group's unity and bonds of trust.<sup>356</sup> Failing to adhere to the expectations of the group, without just reason, leads to that individual being alienated from that community during, and arguably also after their military service. While, unsurprisingly, none of the interviewees recall themselves being demeaned in this fashion, it has been demonstrated to occur through a source that reflects on the consequences to a third party who failed in this manner. Ultimately, military units have been maintained through members' understanding of military discipline, and their willingness to promote and enforce this informal norm within their group. This phenomenon determined which communities in the Forces survived to be recast into civilian society during demobilisation, as well as moulding the values veterans chose to recall they held when interviewed.

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<sup>355</sup> Little, 'Buddy Relations and Combat Performance', pp. 183-208.; Goldstein, *War and Gender*, p. 265.

<sup>356</sup> James J. Gross, 'Emotion Regulation in Adulthood: Timing is Everything', *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 10:6 (December, 2001), p. 214.; Climo Cattell, 'Introduction: Meaning in Social Memory and History', p. 5.



### III

Demonstrably, the majority of the interviewed ex-service personnel did not primarily identify themselves in relation to the institution as a whole. Rather, they primarily identified with certain small groups of immediate comrades with whom, commonly, they had fought with and relied upon in battle. In the context of the military, with battle being their primary *raison d'être* and commonly considered the ultimate test for service personnel, this is not unexpected.<sup>357</sup> Significantly however, these networks will be shown in chapter three to have influenced the reformation of community bonds during and after demobilisation, the diversity and fragmentation of these networks of small yet tight-knit groups of comrades ensuring a homogenous 'ex-military community' could not exist.

This chapter has therefore challenged claims made by the North East council reports in 2011 that there could exist a *single* community of veterans in civilian society. The primary importance of these groups to veterans when interviewed lay not in whatever regional identity their unit held, but rather in the sharing of experiences deemed personally important, especially surviving combat. This is not to say that a unit's regional identity had no importance in defining the identity of its members, but rather to suggest that in the case of this chapter's exemplar accounts that a group gained *particular* importance to its members when they shared events together, creating a greater sense of *esprit de corps* in the process. Regional factors have, however, influenced the extent to which veterans were able to, and desired to translate their military communities into their post-military civilian lives, which will be reflected upon in the following chapter.

Within the units veterans served with, concepts of military discipline have been shown to underscore how relationships with comrades were negotiated. The case studies have

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<sup>357</sup> Hockey, 'No More Heroes', p. 22.

demonstrated an approach to examining the link between interviewees' understanding of military discipline of the informal variety and the preservation of community bonds of trust. The demonstration of loyalty and their bravery to comrades, revealing their desire to be seen as men by their group, were qualities upon which close bonds of trust were established. When individuals did not conform to the expectations of their comrades this led to their ostracisation for deviating from the norm. Ostracisation was a punishment, their qualities as a 'man' having been undermined in the eyes of their comrades. How women interacted with this military norm requires further research, questions of gender thus remain outstanding due to the male predominance of the sources. Consequently, it has been argued that those who failed to adhere to military discipline were no longer accepted as participants of their group by their former comrades after they left the Forces, if this fact was known about them. However, the evidence for this latter finding is understandably equivocal, as few would admit to abandoning their comrades when interviewed due to the potential detriment that would ensue as a result of admitting to this publically.

### Chapter Three: Demobilisation

Demobilisation forces veterans to reconsider their identities, as well as having the potential to break bonds with emotional communities they formed whilst serving. This transition is a consequence of the change in milieu involved in demobilisation, a process in which ex-service personnel left the Armed forces to re-join civilian society, whether by choice or by compulsion. Significantly, other contexts involving movement between two very differently perceived environments have been noted to lead to identity change. Lucey and Reay, examining the phenomenon of the impact on identity of emotionally important transition events through their widely applicable case study of children moving into secondary school from primary school, have suggested that identity development occurs as a result of changing one's social environment.<sup>358</sup> Moreover, the changing of social environment will have an influence upon the social relationships that can or will be established and maintained, as the re-establishment of community bonds is dependent upon the presence of former comrades.<sup>359</sup>

Four case studies have been developed that demonstrate continuities and changes in how demobilisation has been understood since the Great War. Whilst these are not isolated examples, the approach used to interpret these memories of demobilisation enables trends to be identified while ensuring the nuances of individual experiences are not lost from sight. Various influences have affected perceptions of demobilisation experiences since 1914, the most significant of which has been the differing contexts between returning citizen soldiers after the World Wars and professionals attempting to reintegrate into civilian society after the

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<sup>358</sup> Helen Lucey, Diane Reay, 'Identities in Transition: Anxiety and Excitement in the Move to Secondary School', *Oxford Review of Education*, 26:2 (June, 2000), p. 192.

<sup>359</sup> Kevin Birth, 'Past Times: Temporal Structuring of History and Memory', *Ethos*, 34:2 (June, 2006), p. 208.

end of conscription.<sup>360</sup> Within these two broad cohorts of ex-service personnel, other influences on individuals' demobilisation experiences can be identified across the period from the Great War. In particular, a factor which affected which former military communities veterans participated in following their transition from the military was the spatial availability of comrades. The strength of the bonds formed with military communities has also had an influence on which communities are maintained following demobilisation. Finally, whether personal identity was threatened by the transition was also a consideration affecting how an individual perceived leaving the Forces and their relationship with other ex-service personnel. This chapter will consider the significance and meaning of memories of demobilisation through analysing the importance of this event in developing veterans' identities and community bonds with former comrades.

The historiography used to study demobilisation experiences during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is wide and varied. Existing literature clusters around two key issues: influences on how group members remembered the transition process of being removed from the environment in which their community existed during demobilisation; and how former members seek to re-establish communities must be examined. Those studies that have reflected on community and identity negotiation and recasting, key features of demobilisation, are particularly noteworthy.

Of overarching value for the study of demobilisation since 1914 is Reese's *Home-Coming Heroes*. This book studied demobilisation over a four hundred year period from the seventeenth century to the 1980s.<sup>361</sup> In comparison to other demobilisation studies, this work enables examination of long-term trends in British civilian attitudes to the military. Reese

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<sup>360</sup> With thanks to Dr James Koranyi and Dr Matthew Johnson for their input on this idea.; Marina Nuciari, 'Models and Explanations for Military Organisation: An Updated Reconsideration', in Giuseppe Caforio (ed.), *Handbook of the Sociology of the Military* (New York: Kluwer Academic/ Plenum Publishers, 2003), p. 83.

<sup>361</sup> Peter Reese, *Home-Coming Heroes: An Account of the Re-assimilation of British Military Personnel into Civilian Life* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Ltd., 1992).

identifies the existence of mutual suspicion and tension between civilians and ex-service personnel recently returned from military service in the aftermath of conflicts throughout British history as a key trend, as civilians' stereotypical perceptions of the violent tendencies apparently imbued in military personnel during training and in wartime have historically served to alienate veterans from civilians.<sup>362</sup> In turn, veterans have felt a sense of entitlement to reward or recognition for their service (in which they were expected to risk their lives and to kill) from wider society, which has often not been satisfied. Civilian suspicion of the veteran has historically led to (and been caused by) a dearth of communication between the two of veterans' needs, this lack of synergy between the public and the ex-military frequently causing there to be inadequate provision (such as housing, training, health schemes and emotional needs) for those reintegrating into civilian life. The concern that civilians did not understand the needs of ex-service personnel was the major factor motivating the publication of the Armed Forces Covenant, as well as associated reports such as the 2011 North East Council Review.<sup>363</sup>

Of particular value as a model for investigating the re-negotiation of qualities of identity during demobilisation from 1914 to the present is De Bere's discussion of the impact on veterans' identities of being demobilised.<sup>364</sup> However, De Bere does not discuss the demographics of her sample of 60 interviews, yet nonetheless asserts that her findings are representative of ex-military leavers from the British Armed Forces in the twentieth century. Consequently her study lacks essential qualitative detail which would otherwise add depth to her argument. Moreover, she does not analyse the impact of demobilisation from the

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<sup>362</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-10.

<sup>363</sup> 'The Armed Forces Covenant' <http://www.aff.org.uk/armedforcescovenant/whatistheafc.htm> (Last visited 16/08/2014).; 'North East Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee of North East Local Authorities, Final Report January 2011: Regional Review of the Health Needs of the Ex-Service Community', Published January 2011.

<sup>364</sup> Samantha Regan de Bere, 'Masculinity in Work and Family Lives: Implications for Military Service and Resttlement', in Paul R. Higate (ed.), *Military Masculinities: Identity and the State* (USA: Praeger Publishes, 2003), pp. 91-109.

perspective of it being a transition which forces the recasting of bonds between comrades. This chapter shows the ongoing importance to veterans of bonds of comradeship, the renegotiation of which is a central aspect to how demobilisation has been perceived by participants.

De Bere's work nevertheless has a particular use, since she analyses how ex-service men leaving the Forces have negotiated their desire to maintain their martial identity (deliberately imbued into its predominately male membership) with the change of context they experienced upon leaving the military.<sup>365</sup> De Bere suggests that a key quality comprising the identity of members of the Armed Forces is their responsibility to others, sometimes couched in masculine terms, as explained in chapters one and two. She argues that not all service personnel will accept their martial values of responsibility to others to the same extent, as this can depend on other mutually exclusive responsibilities that they may hold, such as being a father or a husband. The extent to which individuals found a particular aspect of identity personally important can make demobilisation a more or less traumatic process for that individual, as it influences the degree of negotiation of identity that will be needed to take place upon demobilisation.<sup>366</sup> Studying a quantitative data sample of information gathered from interviews with ex-servicemen, De Bere concludes that the majority found jobs in positions which served the general public, such as the emergency services, coastguard, or the NHS.<sup>367</sup> This, she argues, is a result of these veterans' attempt to maintain their martial identities by holding a position of social responsibility, a core value which these sectors are traditionally based on, rather than profit, in contrast to jobs in the individualistic, 'rat-race' private-sector. Similarly, in their examination of human nature and identity Kaufman and Johnson have argued that individuals will seek to match their social role with the values of

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<sup>365</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>366</sup> Ibid., p. 100.

<sup>367</sup> Ibid., p. 102.

identity that they hold, thereby achieving personal harmony.<sup>368</sup> Conflict between individuals' social role and their perceptions of their own identity, such as might be experienced during demobilisation, can cause personal dissatisfaction, leading to a desire to find a position in society which coincides with personal identity.

There has been little historical research on how veterans experienced community transformation during demobilisation from the Armed Forces following the end of conscription in 1962, arguably due to the relative proximity to the period in question. However, when examining memories of demobilisation after 1962, as with sources prior to this date, various historical models have been used to support analysis. Longo, for example, in her study of communities in totalitarian states, looks back at community meaning throughout history to better understand the human, 'urge to form communities' and why community formation is 'so inherent in the nature of human beings as to go without question'.<sup>369</sup> Her answer to this is to suggest, unsurprisingly, that human nature is generally social, the need to form communities being biological. Cosson supports this, suggesting that whether a community be 'geographical, on-line or other forms of categorisational (sic) organisation' that communities are viewed 'as a basic social unit of social interaction within which people identify and gain a sense of identity and security.'<sup>370</sup> When a member loses a community (in demobilisation, for example), members will instinctively seek some measure of security of identity in a new community of people holding similar qualities or attempt to re-create their old community.

Weber, whose arguments have been mobilised by Day, has argued that relationships which were long lasting, going *beyond* initial goals, are more likely to create feelings of

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<sup>368</sup> Joanne Kaufman, Cathryn Johnson, 'Stigmatized individuals and the process of identity', *The Sociological Quarterly*, 45:4 (Autumn, 2004), p. 808.

<sup>369</sup> Bernadette Longo, 'Tensions in the community myth, strategy, totalitarianism, terror', *JAC*, 23:2 (2003), pp. 291-317.

<sup>370</sup> Fiona Cosson, 'Voice of the community?: Reflections on accessing, working with and representing communities', *Oral History*, 38:2 (Autumn, 2010), p. 96.

belonging, ‘group-ness’.<sup>371</sup> Although military units are not Day’s focus, he uses them as an example to show that deeper meaning is established with certain groups as a result of sharing of particularly important, emotionally significant experiences (such as combat), as discussed in the previous chapter. Groups formed in the military have especially strong bonds due to the greater demands placed on individuals in military culture, as described by Soeters, Winslow, Weibull, and Segal. Members of military communities are typically expected to be prepared to kill and be killed, to sacrifice themselves for the good of the unit. Consequently, the Armed Forces demand a greater commitment from an individual than other careers, making the significance of communities established within the Armed Forces to their members more pronounced.<sup>372</sup> On the basis of these studies it can be suggested that, considering the need to form communities is a basic human impulse and that military life encourages close-knit communities, it is natural that some veterans will find it especially personally important to recreate military groups in civilian life.

Recognising that spatial factors have an influence on the form community creation takes is essential when discussing the recasting of military groups during demobilisation. Day argues that communities do not have to be spatial in the context of the modern age of immediate communication technology.<sup>373</sup> However, Taft, Dreyfus, Quartly, and Cuthbert, have argued that prior to the widespread use of the internet, groups have needed to be geographically close, existing in greatest strength when their members are in physical communication, meeting face-to-face.<sup>374</sup> Consequently, the presence of fellow ex-military

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<sup>371</sup> Graham Day, *Community and everyday life* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), p. 4.

<sup>372</sup> Joseph L. Soeters, Donna J. Winslow, Alise Weibull, ‘Military Culture’, in Giuseppe Caforio (ed.), *Handbook of the Sociology of the Military* (New York: Kluwer Academic/ Plenum Publishers, 2003), p. 237.; Mady Wechsler Segal, ‘The Military and the Family as greedy Institutions’, in David R. Segal, James Burk (eds.), *Military Sociology: Vol. 3* (London: Sage Publications, 2012), p. 59.

<sup>373</sup> Day, *Community and everyday life*, p. 17.

<sup>374</sup> Margaret Taft, Kay Dreyfus, Marian Quartly, Denise Cuthbert, “‘I knew who I was not, but not who I was’”. Public storytelling in the lives of Australian adoptees’, *Oral History*, 41:1 (Spring, 2013), pp. 75, 79.; Some museum researchers have also begun to explore the potential vitality and significance of online communities in



comrades in the geographic area that veterans return to after demobilisation, such as Tyne and Wear, will arguably have a bearing on the strength and type of communities they could preserve and re-form from those community bonds broken or threatened during demobilisation.

In contrast to the historiographical position for the post-1962 period, there is a corpus of research which has been conducted on demobilisation in the context of the aftermath of the World Wars. Of particular interest for this chapter is the idea that the roles of civilians and veterans were blurred in popular memory. Sakoloff, for example, has argued that when interviewed in later life conscripted men of the Second World War chose to describe themselves, in the public context of the interview, as part of civilian society rather than as ex-soldiers.<sup>375</sup> In this study her focus was on the veteran and the impact of public history on the content their memories and identity. Upon demobilisation, many citizen soldiers found themselves estranged from society due to general war weariness leading to a lack of interest in their battlefield exploits. This was exacerbated by the civilian perception that their experiences were ubiquitous, given the large numbers who had served, as well as the fact military service was seen as no more dangerous than what they had faced during the blitz, ideas posited also by Allport.<sup>376</sup> Subsequently, after 1945 the war effort was popularly deemed to have been shared equally between civilians and the fighting men, this popular version of history suggesting to veterans that their experiences were not unique or especially noteworthy. This resulted in this generation of soldiers commonly claiming that, upon demobilisation, they put the Army ‘firmly behind them’, desiring to be seen to apparently

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a museum context, Fiona Bryne, ‘Community Forums: A Wealth of Social History at our Fingertips’, *Social History Curators Group*, 69 (June: 2012), pp. 12-13.

<sup>375</sup> Sally Sakoloff, ‘Soldiers or civilians? The impact of Army service in World War Two on Birmingham men’, *Oral History*, 25:2 (Autumn, 1997), p. 60.

<sup>376</sup> Alan Allport, *Demobbed: Coming Home After the Second World War* (London & New York: Yale University Press, 2010), pp. 50-62.

seamlessly return to their interrupted civilian lives.<sup>377</sup> Both Allport and Sakoloff focus on the individual, yet their primary focus is upon the affect of popular memory on individuals' notions of identity, and they consider only in passing individuals' relationships with comrades during demobilisation after this conflict.

*ANZACS*, by Thomson, is an especially important study, as it reflects on the recasting of military communities and identity amongst Australian Great War veterans in Melbourne after their demobilisation.<sup>378</sup> Its significance for this chapter lies in the oral histories created by Thomson, the content of which demonstrate that these citizen soldiers, who had volunteered solely for the duration of the Empire's crisis, experienced the dislocation of their military communities in the years following the conflict and their demobilisation. However, subsequently they reformed and preserved these groups. Frequently they were motivated to do so by their desire to reminisce with comrades who would understand the nature of the events they experienced which civilians might not, such as the death of comrades and their shared sacrifice. Many of the ex-service personnel interviewed by Thomson felt that their stories of their military experiences might otherwise be lost, overwhelmed by less desirable stories held in popular memory in civilian society.<sup>379</sup> This concern is widely applicable to the study of veterans' memories of demobilisation and why they subsequently choose to recast their military communities in their new civilian context.

When interviewed, both citizen and professional soldiers' recollected that they had their identities developed by the process of leaving the Armed Forces in the twentieth and twenty-first Centuries, and certain themes can be established within these groupings. Principally, the experience of transition back into civilian society can be shown to have been

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<sup>377</sup> Sakoloff, 'Soldiers or civilians?', p. 65.

<sup>378</sup> Alistair Thomson, *ANZAC Memories: Living with the Legend* (Oxford: Oxford University Press Australia, 1995).

<sup>379</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-8.

influenced by the significance they placed in their bonds with military comrades, as well as in their ability to retain this comradeship post-service. In conjunction with this, individuals' instinctive need to be a participant of a community with whom experiences were shared with and held values in common with was also a factor motivating veterans to recast their military communities in their civilian lives following demobilisation. How the transformation process of moving from military to civilian life was experienced, and the meaning of this transition to those affected, is the focus of this chapter.

## I

The aftermath of both World Wars of the twentieth century resulted in millions of citizen soldiers being released almost simultaneously from their temporary military service.<sup>380</sup> Moreover, in the years following until the end of conscription in 1962, a significant number of men continued to be conscripted to fulfil the needs of Britain's imperial responsibilities. This resulted in an ongoing mass exodus of young men back into civilian society once their time in the Forces had ended. Thus, citizen soldiers who were conscripted or volunteered experienced the process of leaving the Armed Forces within the context of military service being considered as their duty to society. Nonetheless, as recognised by Harris, 'the sheer diversity of wartime experience of different individuals' must be acknowledged.<sup>381</sup> Thus, the significance of these mass releases lies in why some perceived and understood the reshaping of their identities and communities in a dissimilar manner from others. In particular, why many veterans remembered that they found it to be a difficult transitional life event in their life histories needs to be explored.

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<sup>380</sup> Geoffrey Field, "'Citizens in Uniform'": Class and Politics in the British Armed Forces, 1939-1945', *International Labour and Working Class History*, 80:1 (Fall, 2011), pp. 121-147.

<sup>381</sup> Jose Harris, 'War and Social History: Britain and the Home Front during the Second World War', *Contemporary European History*, 1:1 (March, 1992), p. 33.

For some citizen soldiers, demobilisation caused them to fear the loss of their martial identity upon their return to civilian society. In the majority of cases these individuals had experienced battle, during which they formed especially strong bonds with comrades (see chapter two) which subsequently required negotiation during demobilisation. 11963, an officer with the Cameroons in the Great War who served in the trenches on the Western Front, was typical of the interviewed citizen soldiers who held their martial identities, established and proven in combat, as deeply personally significant but felt they were threatened during demobilisation.<sup>382</sup> Evidence of this source's typicality among the accounts of both First and Second World War citizen soldiers can be found in appendix 5, of whom a substantial number recalled similar narratives in regards to how they felt their identities as well as community bonds with comrades were threatened by demobilisation.<sup>383</sup> In the exemplar case study, the interviewee felt spurned when interviewed as an elderly man after he was not allowed to stay in the Army while keeping the rank of captain granted for his wartime achievements, memories of demobilisation thus raising the issue of 'reward' and its relationship with his notions of identity when interviewed.<sup>384</sup>

Initially joining the Northumberland Fusiliers as a private soldier in 1914 upon the outbreak of war, 11963 served on the Western Front between 1915 and 1918. He saw extensive combat in all the major British offensives, service for which he was rewarded with promotion to Captain in the Cameroon Highlanders by 1917/18. Such quick promotion through the ranks especially in gaining a commission, while not rare given the extraordinary casualty rates of officers in the trenches, was not common either, indicating the significance of his actions in the eyes of his superiors at the time.<sup>385</sup> Although 11963 recalled that he did

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<sup>382</sup> 'Interview 11963', <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80011703> (Last visited 02/06/2014).

<sup>383</sup> Appendix 5.

<sup>384</sup> Similar examples include: 11041, 22613, 17630, 27080, 22603, 22603/BB, 16714. (See Appendices 4 & 5).

<sup>385</sup> Field, "Civilians in Uniform", p. 127.; John Lewis Stempel, *Six Weeks: The Short and Gallant Life of the British Officer in the First World War: The Life and Death of the British Officer in the First World War*

not want a commission, preferring to stay with his friends in the Fusiliers, he remembered that it was seen by others as a reward ('he's been here, he's been out with the lads'), and he was not derided by his comrades for being an officer candidate or for being seen as deserving of a commission.<sup>386</sup> The Cameroon Regiment appears to have become an especially important community for this speaker as he chose to join this Regiment's ex-military association rather than any other following demobilisation. Unfortunately, the interviewee is confused about the narrative of events, and the interviewer's questioning to clarify dates of events interrupts 11963's reflection about the deeper meaning of being commissioned and serving with the Cameroons in comparison with the Fusiliers.<sup>387</sup> Bjerg and Rasmussen have both focused upon the issue of interviewers interrupting the flow of the interviewee's recall, suggesting that when an interviewer does interrupt to ask follow-up questions (especially to clarify chronological issues) as occurs in this source, then this can distract the interviewee and cause them to overlook otherwise important memories.<sup>388</sup>

In 1919 upon the official end of hostilities, 11963 was informed he could only stay in the post-war Army if he took a demotion to the rank of corporal. When asked by the interviewer about his decision to accept demobilisation instead of staying in the Army with a reduced rank, he related that, 'I simply went home'.<sup>389</sup> Other than this brief remark 11963 chose not to go into detail about demobilisation. Consequently, to successfully interpret this source it is important to recognise that the speaker's silence on this transition event is as

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(London: Orion, 2011).; Some of Stempel's assessments in regards to casualty rates and the problems of evidence are critiqued in the following, as this discussion is outwith the scope of this thesis: 'Conundrum of the casualties', <http://www.westernfrontassociation.com/great-war-on-land/casualties-medcal/146-con-casualties.html> (Last visited 24/08/2014).

<sup>386</sup> 'Interview 11963', (Reel 7, 01:00 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80011703> (Last visited 02/06/2014).

<sup>387</sup> 'Interview 11963', (Reel 8) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80011703> (Last visited 02/06/2014).

<sup>388</sup> Helle Bjerg; Lisa Rosen Rasmussen, 'Prompting techniques: researching subjectivities in educational history', *Oral History*, 40:1 (Spring 2012), p. 91.

<sup>389</sup> 'Interview 11963', (Reel 9, 07:40 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80011703> (Last visited 02/06/2014).

significant as what he does choose to recall, as it is arguably indicative of the repression of difficult memories caused by the treatment he received by the authorities. It has been shown by historians that a quality which is at the core of martial identity is a willingness to accept the responsibility to one's comrades to kill and potentially be killed. When recognised in an individual, this is commonly rewarded with promotion, as in the case of 11963's war service.<sup>390</sup> It is understandable then that this interviewee subsequently remembered feeling that the treatment he experienced at the hands of the authorities demonstrated a lack of appreciation, the brevity of his response and the tone of voice reflecting the bitterness he felt.<sup>391</sup>

Despite the Army being only a temporary vocation, demobilisation was, based on 11963's choice to avoid the topic, a bitter experience. The events surrounding demobilisation undermined the pride 11963 felt in his abilities as a soldier, which had been heightened by being promoted and forming close bonds with comrades in battle. His interpretation of demobilisation in this way may have been coloured by retrospective analysis of his lifetime achievements in his old age, a common part of the aging process.<sup>392</sup> In particular, the aging process has been noted by Wakewich and Smith to lead to the elderly seeking to come to terms with their personal history, which may involve reinterpretation of their perspective on past events. Furthermore, focussing analysis upon the varying quality and detail of reflective

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<sup>390</sup> Paul R. Higate (ed.), *Military Masculinities: Identity and the State* (USA: Praeger Publishes, 2003), p. xi.

<sup>391</sup> This demotion was arguably not for reasons of class exclusivity, ideas which were ingrained into the British military at the time, as the interviewee relates his father was well off, being a local magistrate, 'We were a niche above ordinary people'. ('Interview 11963', (Reel 1, 08:45 onwards)

<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80011703> (Last visited 02/06/2014).; Moreover, the interviewee does not reference class divisions as a problem for him being an officer.; The following discusses class and how attitudes in the Armed Forces towards social class changed during and after the Great War: Field, "'Citizens in Uniform'", p. 125.; Reggie von Zugbach de Sugg, Mohammed Ishaq, 'Officer Recruitment: The Decline in Social Elitenes in the Senior Ranks of the British Army', in Hew Strachan (ed.), *The British Army: Manpower and Society into the Twenty-First Century* (Abingdon: Frank Cass Publishers, 2005), pp.75-85.; Jeremy A. Cragg, 'The British Army as a Social Institution 1939-45', in Hew Strachan (ed.), *The British Army: Manpower and Society into the Twenty-First Century* (Abingdon: Frank Cass Publishers, 2005), pp.16-35.; Peter Simkins, *Kitchener's Army: The Raising of the New Armies* (Pen & Sword: Barnsley, 1988), p. 221.

<sup>392</sup> Pamela Wakewich and Helen Smith, 'The Politics of 'Selective' Memory: Re-Visioning Canadian Women's Wartime Work in the Public Record', *Oral History*, 34:2, (Autumn, 2006), pp. 57-58.

remembrance and other nuances of verbal sources shows the researcher those aspects of that speaker's life they were subsequently remembering as personally significant.<sup>393</sup> 11963's dialogue, especially in what the interviewee *does not say* about demobilisation, suggests that the threatened loss of his rank was still a memory he wanted to repress sixty years later when interviewed. In conjunction, however, it can also be argued that his repression was a part of his desire to construct a coherent life history.

Considering this interview from the point-of-view of being primarily an account intended to retrospectively justify and explain his personal history rather than as first and foremost as a narrative of past events consequently demonstrates that this story about demobilisation was one that 11963 has told many times, or had at least reflected on a great deal to construct a coherent, 'life-path'. This is a concept whereby interviewees' re-interpret their personal histories with the benefit of hindsight to demonstrate their lives progressed naturally towards a particular conclusion, discussed by Merchant in his article on the topic using case studies with scientists in later-life.<sup>394</sup> In conjunction, Allison, in his study of the evolving memories of a Vietnam War firefight has shown through the analysis of repeated interviews over a long time-period that as individuals get older, memories that they tell and reflect upon more than others begins to gain coherency and a sense of being inevitable which is often lacking in reality.<sup>395</sup> Using these models, it plausible that when interviewed, 11963 chose to deliberately contrast the seemingly difficult story of being threatened with demotion with the fact that in later-life he joined the Cameroon Regimental Association 'The Cameronians looked after me since then, still do! Offering me all sorts of things. Me and my

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<sup>393</sup> Valerie Vow, *Recording Oral History: A Practical Guide for Social Scientists* (London: Sage Publications, 1994), p. 20.; Rosemary Baird, 'Constructing lives: a new approach to understanding migrant's oral history narratives', *Oral History*, 40:1 (Spring, 2012), p. 59.

<sup>394</sup> Paul Merchant, 'Scientists' childhoods', *Oral History*, 41:1 (Spring, 2013), p. 64.; Anna Green, 'Unpacking the Stories', in, Green, Anna; Hutching, Megan, (eds.), *Remembering: Writing Oral History* (Auckland: University of Auckland Press, 2004), p. 15.

<sup>395</sup> Fred H. Allison, 'Remembering a Vietnam War Firefight: Changing Perspectives Over Time', *The Oral History Review*, 31:2 (Summer- Autumn, 2004), pp. 69-83.

wife have for years gone down to London for reunions...We've enjoyed quite a lot of outings.'<sup>396</sup> In joining this group of former comrades, he recast the bonds of this emotional community, formerly of the military, in the civilian context. By utilising dramatic contrast when reminiscing about leaving the Forces and becoming a member of this ex-military community, the interviewee intended to show that this community provided him with satisfaction through the verification of his prior military identity, which would have otherwise been undermined by the authorities.

Understanding the nuances and purpose behind this source's construction reveals that 11963 remembered demobilisation as a transformational period which forced him to recast his military community as well as reflect upon his own values of identity. Whilst he felt that the authorities abandoned him, his old comrades with whom he gained his commission did not, instead supporting him into his old age by virtue of their shared qualities and experiences.<sup>397</sup> Through drawing attention to the contrast between how he was treated by his comrades and the authorities, this demonstrates a belief that only those with whom he served fully appreciated his war experiences, emphasising that he belonged to an inward-looking, exclusive group of personal significance with whom he felt comfortable.<sup>398</sup> To what extent the geographical distance affected the form and meaning of the interviewee's relationship with the Cameroon Regimental Association based in London whilst he lived in the North-East is not discussed in the source material.<sup>399</sup> Nor is it known if he established other ex-military communities in his local area. Whether or not spatial distance influenced how he connected with the Cameroon Regimental Association is questionable. However, the fact that he nonetheless recast this bond with them despite the distance indicates that spatial proximity

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<sup>396</sup> 'Interview 11963', (Reel 9, 09:15 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80011703> (Last visited 02/06/2014).; The question of spousal involvement in ex-military communities and the significance of their participation on the content of an interviewee's memories is an intriguing question not considered in this thesis, which may merit further research.

<sup>397</sup> Day, *Community and everyday life*, p. 158.

<sup>398</sup> Cosson, 'Voice of the community?' p. 96.

<sup>399</sup> Ibid., p. 17.



was only *one* factor taken into consideration during the process by which former military communities were recast in civilian life. It is striking that despite being a citizen soldier with no deep-rooted ambition to pursue a military career, 11963 felt it was so personally important to maintain his community bonds post-service, as his comrades' respect and care preserved his sense of identity threatened by the actions of the authorities.

Similarly, veterans of the Second World War who were interviewed for this thesis, the majority of whom were conscripted, remembered the process of being demobilised between 1945 and 1947 as a transition which forced them to recast community bonds they had formed while on their temporary military service. In contrast to those of the Great War, this generation of interviewees was characterised by being less overtly enthusiastic about military service, being keen to return to their interrupted civilian lives. While not unwilling to serve, the narratives recalled about military service between 1939 and 1945 in this thesis typically demonstrate a keenness to put military life behind them.<sup>400</sup> To what extent this is a reflection of how these interviewees felt at the time or the stimulus of post-war public memory of the Second World War is unclear. While glad to have finished their service, simultaneously many also recalled finding it difficult to abandon the comradeship they had established while on military service, often in combat, leading them to renegotiate these bonds following demobilisation.<sup>401</sup> This desire to recast their military communities was also motivated by the personal need to maintain their own ex-military identities through participation in an identity-compatible group.

Between 1945 and 1947, a large proportion of the 4.9 million service personnel who had served during the Second World War were released from their compulsory military service. In contrast to the First World War, demobilisation was planned more systematically,

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<sup>400</sup> Appendix 4.

<sup>401</sup> Appendix 4 & 5.

concerns about its efficiency and fairness being paramount.<sup>402</sup> While the rapidity of the ending of the war in 1945, which had not been foreseen, caused some dislocation of the process and subsequent discontent among a minority of units, the demobilisation of such a large number of men and women back into civilian society, many after years abroad on active service, has generally been deemed by historians to have been a relative success.<sup>403</sup> This chapter's historiographical review suggests that research of this event has commonly overlooked how the inevitable recasting of *military communities* was perceived by those being demobilised between 1945 and 1947.

22603 is a representative account of this thesis' source-base in relation to what he recalled about demobilisation's impact on his group bonds, and why he sought to re-establish these bonds after he returned to civilian society as well as on his notion of identity.<sup>404</sup> Typicality can be shown as a majority of the interviewees comprising this section of the source-base remember sharing the experience of battle, following which they recollect having had these bonds broken or threatened when they were finally demobilised en-masse between 1945 and 1947. Interviewed at the age of 82, 22603 remembered being demobilised in 1946

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<sup>402</sup> Stephen Richards Graubard, 'Military Demobilisation in Great Britain Following the First World War', *The Journal of Modern History*, 19:4 (December, 1947), pp. 297-311.; Rory McLeod, 'The Promise of full employment', in Harold L. Smith (ed.), *War and Social Change: British Society in the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), pp. 78-100.

<sup>403</sup> Ibid.

<sup>404</sup> Appendix 5, Sources: 9100, 040413WNM, 21296, 120813GHM, 11208, 10415 (in this case the ex-military community being in the form of a reserve unit where he was a part-time soldier), 22603, 23813, 040912NMM, 060213BWM, 280513KWM, 19632, 16656, 21644.; It is important to note the likely presence of 22603's wife while he was being interviewed as this may have affected how and what he chose to recall about his military service and post-service life. While her presence is not recorded in the IWM interview summary, she is present during the recording of reels 13 and 14, and her presence is potentially indicated on the audio of the recordings during the earlier part of the interview as well (through coughing and other background noises), although never acknowledged. However, as a result of her presence not being acknowledged, it is equivocal whether she was present *throughout* or whether she was only present when she spoke in reels 13 and 14. This is significant as according to Stewart, Green, and Yow in their respective oral history studies, an interviewee's audience influences their dialogue. (Mary Stewart, 'Exploring family reactions to life story recordings', *Oral History*, 41:1 (Spring, 2013), pp. 51-62.; Anna Green, 'Unpacking the Stories', in, Anna Green, Megan Hutching, (eds.), *Remembering: Writing Oral History* (Auckland: University of Auckland Press 2004), p. 11.; Yow, *Recording Oral History*, p. 16.) Consequently, while the influence of 22603's wife's on the content of his dialogue is ambiguous, it must nonetheless be considered. See, 'Interview 22603' (Reel 13 and 14) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80024568> (Last visited 13/01/2015).

from the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion, DLI, (his local regiment) with which he had served since 1942.<sup>405</sup> During his service with this Regiment, he had shared extensive experience of combat across multiple campaigns with his DLI comrades, illustrated by the IWM's object summary of this recording:

British civilian evacuee in GB, 1939-1940; private served in Royal Sussex Regt in GB, 1942; private and NCO served with 14th Bn Durham Light Infantry in GB, 1942-1943; private served with 16th Bn Durham Light Infantry in Italy, North Africa, Middle East and Greece, 1943-1946; NCO served with 1st Bn Durham Light Infantry in Greece and GB, 1946-1947.<sup>406</sup>

Upon reaching the end of his military service in his dialogue, 22603 reminisced about demobilisation. This was a gradual transition, as in 1946 he was transferred from the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion DLI, with whom he had fought during the War, to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, from where he would finally be demobilised nearly a year later:

Interviewer – Can you remember anything about your last day with the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion?

22603 – No, no I can't. Somehow it just seemed to disappear into thin air. No, I don't remember anything!

Interviewer – So there was no kind of night out or anything?

22603 – Well, there probably was, but I don't remember anything. It's blurred from memory I'm afraid.

Interviewer – Some of the other veterans have shown us a leaving certificate from the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion, quite an ornate document. Did you get one of those?

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<sup>405</sup> 'Interview 22603' (Reel 1) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80024568> (Last visited 13/01/2015).

<sup>406</sup> 'Interview 22603': Object Summary, <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80024568> (Last visited 13/01/2015).

22603 – Yes.

Interviewer – Do you remember *how* that was presented?

22603 – No, I don't.<sup>407</sup>

...

Interviewer – So was there any kind of formal goodbye? (From the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion – student's note)

22603 – No.

Interviewer – So the process of being demobbed, was kind of like a machine-like process, posted in at one end and come out the other?

22603 – It was just the same as when you join (sic). You line up and get all your kilt.

Interviewer – Now this was April '47, according to the form you filled in?

22603 – Yes.

Interviewer – Now this was nearly two years after the war. Had it been a long wait?

22603 – Yes, it had been a long wait to get out. It seemed like a long time in Greece before I got out, and erm, and I was just at that time, at last! It's here, hooray!

Interviewer – So you walk out of this centre, were you in your demob suit?

22603 – Can't remember.<sup>408</sup>

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<sup>407</sup> 'Interview 22603' (Reel 12, 00:00 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80024568> (Last visited 13/01/2015).

<sup>408</sup> 'Interview 22603' (Reel 13, 00:00 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80024568> (Last visited 13/01/2015).

This extract from 22603's account of the process by which he left his combat buddies in the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion, briefly joining the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, and then finally being demobilised in 1947, reveals the interviewee's sense of euphoria about being able to leave the Forces nearly seven years after being called upon for military service 'at last! It's here, hooray!'<sup>409</sup> However, it is also apparent from comments that he made throughout the interview that he had established a strong esprit de corps with his 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion comrades with whom he had served over a four year period through campaigns in North Africa, Italy, the Middle East, and Greece. The vivid memory he had of his last day with his 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion comrades being a blur, for example, suggests how he reacted to the experience of having his bonds with these *combat buddies* cut, the emotional intensity of the event causing details of the experience to be overlooked or repressed. Based on the relative absence of memories, the same could not be said of his connection with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, DLI, with whom he had served for much less time in a less intense post-conflict environment.

The fact he had formed combat buddy relationships in the 16<sup>th</sup> DLI, based on a shared ethos of kill or be killed (chapter two), helps to explain why for this veteran, like others, demobilisation was such a pronounced experience, and why it was to be expected he would seek to recast these bonds post-service:

22603 – After the war, you were so pleased to have a reunion. You have a sort of togetherness. As Charlie<sup>410</sup> says, nowadays you can't talk to people about it, in the main they don't want to know and *you* don't want to become a bore, so it's only with people who've been through it and know what it's all about that you can talk to about it...

Interviewer – So in a sense that is one part of army life that you would miss? Comradeship.

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<sup>409</sup> 'Interview 22603' (Reel 13, 00:00 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80024568> (Last visited 13/01/2015).

<sup>410</sup> 'Charlie' being a close friend he recalls earlier in the interview.

22603 – Oh yes.

Interviewer – Nothing in civilian life approached that?

22603 – No.<sup>411</sup>

In common with the majority of other citizen soldier veterans of the conflict whose interviews were studied for this thesis, 22603 felt ambivalent about being called upon for military service, being glad to have completed his duty as a citizen (chapter one).<sup>412</sup> Yet, having formed strong bonds with his 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion, DLI comrades through sharing (and surviving) the experience of battle together, it is evident that 22603 felt continued solidarity with them, motivating him to re-establish their community in his post-service life.

Arguably, this desire to recast his 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion community in his post-service civilian life was supported by his feeling that his experiences were not of interest to non-veterans, ‘you can’t talk to people about it...’ while simultaneously desiring to discuss these memories with like-minded people, ‘only with people who’ve been through it...’<sup>413</sup> 22603 was part of a mass of veterans who had returned from the war, and like others it appears that he viewed his experiences as being perceived by civilians as ubiquitous, to the extent they could not be discussed with them.<sup>414</sup> Consequently, it was primarily in the company of former comrades that he felt comfortable and secure, because they shared a military past meaning that they could relate to one another’s experiences and identities.<sup>415</sup>

The interviewee does not reflect on spatial proximity as an issue affecting his ability to maintain these bonds with old comrades, and so it is reasonable to assert that many of his

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<sup>411</sup> ‘Interview 22603’ (Reel 13, 07:20 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80024568> (Last visited 13/01/2015).

<sup>412</sup> Appendix 2, 4 & 5.

<sup>413</sup> ‘Interview 22603’ (Reel 13, 07:20 onwards) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80024568> (Last visited 13/01/2015).

<sup>414</sup> Sakoloff, ‘Soldiers or civilians?’, p. 60.; Allport, *Demobbed*, pp. 50-62.

<sup>415</sup> Cosson, ‘Voice of the community?’, p. 96.

former DLI comrades were local to him in the North East upon their demobilisation. However, their proximity to him in civilian society cannot be considered to be inevitable, as conscripts were sent where they were needed, which may not have been their local regiment.<sup>416</sup> This is evident from 22603's interview, as he was initially assigned to the Royal Sussex Regiment in 1940, before being transferred in 1942, apparently without benefit of intervention from himself, to the DLI.<sup>417</sup>

Interpretation of this example demonstrates that 22603 perceived demobilisation as a process which forced him to act to recast his former military community bonds and personal identity in a civilian context, despite also being relieved to leave the Forces. It is perhaps significant that 22603 established an emotional community within his local regiment, the DLI, meaning that it was more likely, but not inevitable, that old comrades would be located spatially close to him when he returned to Tyne and Wear as a civilian. 22603 does not reminisce on their spatiality, but the lack of comment can arguably be interpreted as that he took their presence for granted, this aspect of oral history dialogue being discussed by Harrison through his Oxford College case study.<sup>418</sup>

11963 volunteered and 22603 was a conscript, yet both saw their service in the context of being a citizen soldier, as it was a temporary service only. Both experienced service in one of the World Wars, forming emotional communities based on the shared ethos of sacrifice and responsibility to comrades, and neither remembered that they intended to make the Armed Forces a career. Despite the temporary nature of their military service, both of the exemplar case studies nonetheless recalled establishing a strong esprit de corps with a primary group, in these examples based on group combat experience. Their experiences of

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<sup>416</sup> Bryn Hammond, *Cambrai 1917: The Myth of the First Great Tank Battle* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2008), p. 24.

<sup>417</sup> 'Interview 22603': Object Summary, <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80024568> (Last visited 13/01/2015).

<sup>418</sup> Brian Harrison, 'College servants in an Oxford college forty years ago', *Oral History*, 40:2 (Autumn, 2012), p. 40-58.

demobilisation demonstrate they perceived it as a transitional event compelling them to rebuild bonds with these *particular* groups of former comrades upon their return to civilian life. The strength of these community bonds provides an explanation for why these ex-service men found demobilisation such a pronounced transition in their life histories when interviewed, and why they sought to preserve these communities as civilians. A further factor to consider is that, because they shared values with old comrades but not so much with civilians with no military experience, they felt compelled to renegotiate these bonds in civilian life in order to participate in identity-compatible communities. In these specific respects, the chosen case studies were typical of many other former citizen soldiers of their respective generations whose interviews were analysed in this thesis, indicative that these examples were not one-off examples.<sup>419</sup> In contrast, the issue of reward for being willing to sacrifice oneself was reflected upon differently in these two examples, with it being a pivotal concern for 11963, critically affecting how he viewed demobilisation and his attitude to old comrades, yet going without (explicit) mention in the account of 22603. This difference perhaps indicates that not all citizen soldiers found the question of reward paramount to how they interpreted demobilisation and its influence on their notions of identity and community.

## II

While citizen soldiers joined the Forces as a result of social expectation or compulsion in times of national need, professional servicemen chose to make the Armed Forces a career, an occupational choice. According to De Bere, in so doing they chose to be separated from civilian life.<sup>420</sup> Whereas citizen soldiers to a great extent saw themselves as a part of wider society working towards a common goal, such as national survival or similar, the achievement of which would then result in their discharge, professional soldiers have

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<sup>419</sup> Appendix 1, Table 1.3.; Appendix 4; Appendix 5.

<sup>420</sup> De Bere, 'Masculinity in Work and Family Lives', p. 100.



deliberately set themselves, and been set, apart from civilians as military service was *not* considered to be their duty.<sup>421</sup> It is also noteworthy that professional soldiers have commonly been at liberty to choose their own time of demobilisation rather than being part of a mass of veterans leaving together having shared experiences in the same conflict. Thus, in comparison to citizen soldiers, professional soldiers served in a dissimilar context which has led to them experiencing the reformation and transformation of their identities and communities during demobilisation differently, although continuities with prior periods can also be established.

The ongoing difficulties experienced by professional soldiers of negotiating their military identity upon their return to civilian society in the face of civilian incomprehension was been a factor leading to the publication of the Military Covenant in 2000, which outlined the social contract between British society and its Armed Forces:<sup>422</sup>

Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.<sup>423</sup>

How professional soldiers since 1962 have understood the meaning of demobilisation, its impact on their self-perceptions, as well as how this transformative event impacted upon their community membership, is the focus of this section.

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<sup>421</sup> Anthony Beevor, 'The Army and Modern Society', in Hew Strachan (ed.), *The British Army: Manpower and Society into the Twenty-First Century* (Abingdon: Frank Cass Publishers, 2005), pp.63-74.

<sup>422</sup> Anthony Forster, 'Breaking the Covenant: Governance of the British Army in the Twenty-First Century', *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), 82:6 (November, 2006), pp. 1043-1057.; 'The Armed Forces Covenant' [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/49469/the\\_armed\\_forces\\_covenant.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/49469/the_armed_forces_covenant.pdf) (Last visited 08/06/2014).

<sup>423</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

Like citizen soldiers, professional soldiers remembered demobilisation in the context of how the transition from military to civilian life affected the negotiation of their ideas of martial qualities and emotional communities. Having set themselves apart from civilian life as a career-choice, how this division between themselves, the comrades they were leaving behind, and civilian life was negotiated is central to understanding the meaning of demobilisation to professional soldiers. After the end of Universal Service, Reese suggests that the practical need to retain servicemen (this being cheaper and more effective than training new soldiers) meant that those leaving before the end of their maximum engagement were seen as disloyal, and thus open to ostracisation.<sup>424</sup> Garnier disagrees, however, arguing that the careerism nature of the military post-1962 meant that it became more common to treat the Army just as another career.<sup>425</sup> However, his analysis is questionable as he does not reflect on the differences of military life in comparison to a civilian career, such as the more intense requirements of military service such as being willing to kill and be killed.<sup>426</sup> Further study may, however, indicate an observable correlation between professional soldiers' careers and the more demanding civilian roles such as the police. As professional soldiers chose to join the Armed Forces, the unique occupational nature of their military service *and* the subsequent deeper instilment of martial military qualities of sacrifice and longer-term formation of communities should be considered when analysing how they recast their identities and community bonds during demobilisation.

Joining up from school, 020813JEM saw extensive active service with the Fusiliers as an infantryman over two decades, being involved in multiple tours of Northern Ireland and

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<sup>424</sup> Reese, *Home-Coming Heroes*, p. 225.

<sup>425</sup> Maurice A. Garnier, 'Some Implications of the British Experience with an All-Volunteer Army', *The Pacific Sociological Review*, 16:2 (April, 1973), p. 185.

<sup>426</sup> Joseph L. Soeters, Donna J. Winslow, Alise Weibull, 'Military Culture', in Giuseppe Caforio (ed.), *Handbook of the Sociology of the Military* (New York: Kluwer Academic/ Plenum Publishers, 2003), p. 237.; Segal, 'The Military and the Family as greedy Institutions', p. 59.

Cyprus, losing many friends in combat as well as in accidents.<sup>427</sup> Finally, in 1996 after a particularly rough tour in Northern Ireland when another of his friends was killed by a sniper and a comrade committed suicide on their unit's return to England, 020813JEM decided to leave the Forces. When contrasted with other accounts from professional soldiers, his experience of demobilisation was considerably more negative than the majority, it being remembered with a strong overlay of anger and bitterness.<sup>428</sup> However, when the source is examined in-depth and contrasted with other interviews, many of the themes reflected upon by this interviewee demonstrate continuity with veterans of earlier periods as well as of his own generation.

Analysis of the interview with 020813JEM suggests that the key factor which may have influenced his recall is PTSD.<sup>429</sup> When interviewed he related how he had been through three divorces which he attributed to the negative impact of military service, as well as having a problem with alcoholism before recognising the symptoms of trauma, 'I needed help'.<sup>430</sup> Kaiman, in his study of traumatised Second World War veterans, intended to be a case study of wider application for research into the affects of combat-induced PTSD, demonstrated that trauma victims present psychological symptoms including problems of recall.<sup>431</sup> These include the repression of difficult memories, as well as finding the act of recall to be mentally distressing. Similarly, Bower has studied the phenomenon of changes to the content and form of what combat veterans recall in the years following their experience(s)

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<sup>427</sup> Interview with 020813JEM, conducted by student.

<sup>428</sup> Appendix 4, 1963 to 2013.

<sup>429</sup> This is not a generational phenomenon, as it is an illness alluded to (rarely explicitly, although symptoms are recalled allowing the presence of trauma to be suggested) by Appendix 3: 17630, 10403, 10165, 27180, 21644, 070513KBM, 010813KAM. Appendix 5: 10913, 11041, 16709, 11208, 14620, 10403, 10165, 16714, 11211, 23813, 27180, 20799, 16656, 140612TCM, 010813KAM, 010613NDM. The typical lack of detailed comment on PTSD by interviewees or IWM interviewers means that the instance of trauma in this thesis' collection of sources cannot be accurately ascertained. It is therefore notable that the interview with 020813JEM reflected on the phenomenon of PTSD in particular.

<sup>430</sup> Appendix 5.; Interview with 020813JEM, conducted by student.

<sup>431</sup> Charles Kaiman, 'PTSD in the World War II Combat Veteran', *The American Journal of Nursing*, 103:11 (November, 2003), p. 33.

of battle.<sup>432</sup> In this work, he argued that as combat veterans come to terms with their difficult past memories, what they chose to remember changed with memories being repressed and sanitised in an attempt to achieve personal harmony with their past history. It should therefore be considered then, in cases such as 020813JEM's, that the subsequent health concerns he recalls may have influenced both how he chose to remember the experience of identity transition during demobilisation and the content of what he recalled.

The significance of recognition, and reward for military service when leaving the Forces is shown in the response received when asked the following:

Interviewer – Can you tell me about the termination process?

020813JEM – Well, I got a six months termination, because that was it at the time. I could have gone in for redundancy while I was in Ireland, but the six months, yeah, they give you, that's it. Of course, you've got your leave on top of that. And this that and the other. And they offer you courses and that, basically, you're just tossed to one side and forgot about. That's the way I was treated, and that's how other people were treated.

Interviewer – So what made you think you were tossed to one side?

020813JEM – Well, just, they weren't bothered about you basically. I mean, one of my mates who come back with us, he got, a good report. But wasn't better than mine. And he went and got promotion. And they were just treating us badly. They totally ignored us, the company commander, the company sergeant major.<sup>433</sup>

Uniquely, military service requires more from participants than any other profession or career. A significant question to consider then is the relationship between experiences of

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<sup>432</sup> B. Bower, 'Combat Vets Show Shifting Trauma Memories', *Science News*, 151, 7 (February 15<sup>th</sup>, 1997), p. 102.

<sup>433</sup> Interview with 020813JEM, conducted by student.

demobilisation and reward for professional soldiers. The absence of recompense ('you're just tossed to one side') is seen in this source to have embittered the interviewee.<sup>434</sup> Why this was the case is perhaps revealed in 020813JEM's comment that his friend's report which led to promotion, 'wasn't better than mine.'<sup>435</sup> In conjunction with this, it is significant that authority figures, his own commanders being highlighted in particular, treated him with a lack of respect. The implication from these observations is that the interviewee felt his martial qualities as a successful soldier were being called into question because he had made the decision to leave before it mandatory to do so. This story is remarkably similar in relation to the previously studied Great War case study (11963), suggesting that some aspects of military such as promotion's link to reward and status transcend the civilian-professional soldier divide.

Little has commented that those who voluntarily leave their primary group in the military can be seen as forfeiting their right to comradeship in the eyes of their comrades, as in this source: 'They totally ignored us, the company commander, the company sergeant major.'<sup>436</sup> Furthermore, a recent pre-Iraq War (2003) health survey based on a large sample of Army personnel in circa 2000 has shown that trauma in the Armed Forces was still not fully understood or accepted as a valid health issue due to the masculine culture of military forces that derides mental weakness, and in recent decades 'trauma' has been in use as a derogative term of reference.<sup>437</sup> It is thus plausible that 020813JEM, by recalling that he was overlooked, believed that others in the military establishment saw his decision to leave the Army due to his friends being killed as a breach of military etiquette, abandoning his

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<sup>434</sup> Interview with 020813JEM, conducted by student.

<sup>435</sup> Interview with 020813JEM, conducted by student.

<sup>436</sup> Interview with 020813JEM, conducted by student.; Roger W. Little, 'Buddy Relations and Combat Performance', in Segal, Burk (eds.), *Military Sociology: Vol. 1*, pp. 183-208.

<sup>437</sup> R. J. Rona, R. Hooper, N. Greenberg, M. Jones, S. Wessely, 'Medical downgrading, self-perception of health, and psychological symptoms in the British Armed Forces', *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 63:4 (April, 2006), pp. 252-253.; Kristy Muir, "'That bastard's following me!' Mentally ill Australian Veterans Struggling to Maintain Control', in, David M. Turner, Kevin Stagg, (eds.), *Social Histories of Disability and Deformity* (Oxon: Routledge, 2006), p. 162.

emotional community for what was seen in military culture as an ‘unmanly’ reason.<sup>438</sup> The consequence of this perception that others derided him was to shame him, making it difficult to maintain and negotiate his martial identity whilst leaving the Forces:

Interviewer – ... Ok. So what courses were you offered?

020813JEM – Well (laughs), nothing really. Basically, I didn’t want to go on them, I just wanted to get out, get out the way. I just had enough by then, just had enough. Just wanted to do my six months then get out. Put my head down and get out. I didn’t want to do any courses or anything like that.

Interviewer – Did you have a plan for what you would do after you left?

020813JEM – No. Nothing whatsoever. I just wanted to get out, as I was going on the slippery slope.<sup>439</sup>

His desire to leave quickly supports the interpretation of the source that shows that he felt shame that he was leaving because he could no longer mentally cope with the continued loss of comrades. Practical provision was provided, but of greater importance to 020813JEM was the lack of *emotional* provision. Although this is left unspoken, that he remembered that he felt a loss of acceptance from some comrades in the Forces, from his commanders especially, may indicate this absence of emotional support and understanding exacerbated his ongoing psychological health concerns. The chronological narrative elicited in his interview suggests that it was not until his mental health started to improve through therapy almost a decade later

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<sup>438</sup> John Hockey, ‘No More Heroes: Masculinity in the Infantry’, in Paul R. Higate (ed.), *Military Masculinities: Identity and the State* (USA: Praeger Publishes, 2003), pp. 15-25.

<sup>439</sup> Interview with 020813JEM, conducted by student.

that he felt confident in his own identity and able to join formal and informal communities of ex-military servicemen with whom he had served.<sup>440</sup>

Interviewer –You said you talked, and do talk, to old comrades. Can you tell me what associations you’ve joined, and when you joined them?

020813JEM – I joined the Sunderland Association, I think it was a couple, two year ago now. Yeah, two year ago. The Sunderland branch Association (of the Coldstream Guards – student note). They have reunions once a year down Doncaster for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion.

Interviewer – Do you see any old friends from the Army days on a regular basis?

020813JEM – Now and again, now and again. But as I say, everyone’s on Facebook now.<sup>441</sup>

The question of acceptance of his identity by other ex-military personnel is not one he chose to *explicitly* reflect on in his interview. He does not make a connection between re-establishing community bonds and the improvement in his health, so this remains a possibility only rather than a definite causal link. It is significant, however, that this interviewee found a particularly significant community to be a diasporic online community, ‘everyone’s on Facebook now’, perhaps indicating that he perceived the physical distance between himself and other group members may make acceptance into the group easier to acquire.<sup>442</sup> Whether or not an online community is more or less inclusive is ambiguous as it could be suggested that it was simply easier for him to maintain contact online; however, he also recalls attending the local branch of the Coldstream Guards in Sunderland, demonstrating that his choice to become involved in online communities was not necessitated by spatial distance.

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<sup>440</sup> Interview with 020813JEM, conducted by student.

<sup>441</sup> Interview with 020813JEM, conducted by student.

<sup>442</sup> Interview with 020813JEM, conducted by student.

Facebook and other virtual social media platforms are of increasing importance to the study of identity and community. Online communities have been described as ‘diasporic’ communities as they are not *inherently* spatial like traditional communities, yet still have direct personal importance to their members.<sup>443</sup> Multiple ex-military groups have been created on social media, one of which was the 15/19 Kings Royal Hussars Regiment. Ostensibly, this group is, ‘for all people who served or are related to those who served in the Regiment.’<sup>444</sup> Examining social media websites such as Facebook demonstrates that these groups are now widespread, the majority of regiments and corps in the British Armed Forces having some form of official and unofficial ‘group’ or ‘page’ presence.

The content of what is posted or communicated on these groups, such as the 15/19 Kings Royal Hussars Regiment for example, appears to be much less restrained than in the real-world equivalent of the group, indicated by image 1. It can be tentatively suggested that community norms are different online in comparison to those of old comrade associations, being less constrained, perhaps, by the social expectations of wider society. The ‘private’ and virtual nature of these groups arguably allow participants greater freedom of expression due to the lack of physical proximity. In the case of ex-military communities of old comrades, such observations are, however, based on empirical observational evidence and requires further in-depth research to examine and contrast physical communities with their online counterparts.

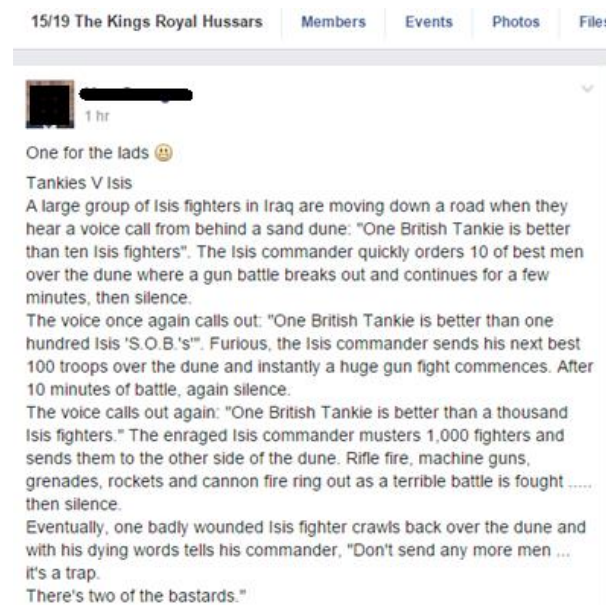
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<sup>443</sup> Margaret Taft, Kay Dreyfus, Marian Quartly, Denise Cuthbert, “‘I knew who I was not, but not who I was’”. Public storytelling in the lives of Australian adoptees’, *Oral History*, 41:1 (Spring, 2013), pp. 73-83.

<sup>444</sup> Print-screen taken by student on 26.02.15. Originating website: Facebook. Group, ‘15/19 Kings Royal Hussars’.



Image 1: Print-screen taken of a post made on the 26.02.2015 from the Facebook group for the 15/19 Kings Royal Hussars Regiment.<sup>445</sup>



The risk of alienating members by making their 'private' group communications public in a research context as well as the technical difficulties of access makes studying these online communities problematic. Negotiating the researcher-subject relationship through this medium without face-to-face contact is challenging, being heavily reliant on a previously established relationship with a suitable gatekeeper.<sup>446</sup> Furthermore, the majority of these groups are 'closed' including the 15/19 Kings Royal Hussars Regiment group, meaning they are inaccessible unless one requests to join and is accepted. From the perspective of future research, the digital nature of these groups means that this evidence is ephemeral, subject to change and development, meaning that evidence gathering must be conducted proactively by those interested in the prospect of future research. Despite these concerns, understanding *why* individuals are ever more likely to join these virtual groups, and their understanding of their relationship with these online communities, is of growing

<sup>445</sup> Facebook Group, '15/19 Kings Royal Hussars' as of 26.02.2015.

<sup>446</sup> Martin Atherton, Dave Russell and Graham Turner, 'Looking to the Past: The Role of Oral History Research in Recording the Visual History of Britain's Deaf Community', *Oral History*, 29:2 (Autumn, 2001), p.41.

importance to the study of community, belonging and identity, and is a potentially valuable avenue of research. For individuals such as 020813JEM, such diasporic groups may have taken on significantly greater everyday importance than their spatial equivalent.

In contrast to the interview with 020813JEM, those professional soldiers who left the Forces for ‘acceptable’ reasons, such as 280513RWM, found identity negotiation and community recasting significantly easier during demobilisation. 280513RWM was demobilised in the late 1980s after twenty-three years of service, having been promoted to sergeant. Moreover, this was the compulsory period of time after which he had to leave, so demobilisation was not an unexpected event.<sup>447</sup> Recent research drawn on by the North East 2011 council reports on the health of veterans suggests that shorter-term professional soldiers have experienced more integration problems than long-service professionals.<sup>448</sup> This, the reports suggested, was due to the fact that short-term service personnel were typically not expecting to be leaving their chosen career early and so had not made plans for their civilian life. This is seen in the case of 020813JEM who left suddenly before his maximum time in the Forces expired due to the trauma he felt after his friends’ deaths. In contrast, 280513RWM found demobilisation less difficult partly as a result of the fact that the cut-off date by which he *had* to leave meant he was aware of the event well in advance, allowing time for reflection on the transition process, thereby making negotiation back into civilian life less stressful:

280513RWM – I was going to run a pub. Me last six month there (in the Army – student’s note) or so, I’d run the officers mess at Colchester, at Catterick. Erm. (3 second pause) And we used Cameron Breweries for the whole of the camp, the NAAFI and the sergeant’s mess

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<sup>447</sup> Interview with 280513RWM, conducted by student.

<sup>448</sup> ‘North East Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee of North East Local Authorities, Final Report January 2011: Regional Review of the Health Needs of the Ex-Service Community’, Published January 2011, p. 27.

and the officer's mess. And I was talking to their area rep, and I said, 'I fancy running a pub.' He said, 'We've got one, in the Lancashire area.' And I thought, well, that's great, I don't mind Lancashire, you know what I mean. It was just outside Bury. So I was going to run a pub for Cameron's Breweries.

That he had to leave possibly explains the lack of reflection on his comrades' attitude to him leaving, it being inevitable and outside his control, so their acceptance was never questioned. What is also notable about this anecdote is that at the time he saw himself as being able to successfully integrate into society and that there was a place for him within it, despite having been separated from civilian life for over two decades. Using De Bere's model, it is plausible to suggest that the desire to run his own pub was directly linked to a personal desire to carry on doing in civilian life something he had enjoyed in the military.<sup>449</sup> This made the transition of identity less extreme, and negotiation less stressful.

Both sources are representative of the source-base for professional soldiers.<sup>450</sup> Analysis of these two reflective accounts from professional soldiers who served since the end of Universal Service shows that the main factor that influenced memories of how these veterans negotiated their identity and community relationships during demobilisation was their recollection of the expectations of the members of the emotional communities they formed on military service. These examples were from veterans who served for a long period of time before leaving, consequently having martial values of responsibility and service to their units deeply instilled in them, and forming long-term relationships with comrades. Moreover, both saw combat with their units within which they established a strong esprit de corps. Consequently, to an extent, while it was not the only influential factor acting on their memories of demobilisation, professional soldiers had to negotiate whether or not it was

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<sup>449</sup> De Bere, 'Masculinity in Work and Family Lives', p. 102.

<sup>450</sup> Appendix 4.

deemed acceptable for them to leave by their comrades. This consideration affected both how difficult it was for them to leave the Forces and their success in recasting bonds with former comrades in their post-military civilian lives, but also their ability to maintain a positive sense of their self-worth.

### III

Recalling demobilisation, citizen and professional soldiers remembered that they experienced the process of identity negotiation and the recasting of their communities formed whilst on military service in diverse ways. Demobilisation has been shown to be a transitional phase when a veteran is conscious of moving from one social environment to another, the movement itself being a landmark event due to the emotions identity transformation can elicit when identity is challenged and community bonds broken.<sup>451</sup> Both how veterans recollected this event affected their ability to renegotiate bonds of comradeship as well as its impact on their understandings of personal identities have been examined.

The recasting of military communities of like-minded comrades during and after demobilisation has been shown to have commonly been motivated, at least in part, by the desire to re-establish groups with individuals who share similar values of identity, so as to achieve personal harmony in civilian life. The strength of personal attachment to particular emotional communities formed within the military was the most significant influence upon whether the interviewed veteran decided to recall they preserved or re-established these communities upon entering civilian life. However, a major change occurred in this regard post-1962, as with the advent of a professional, volunteer force, service personnel could choose when they left. In leaving they risked permanently breaking their bonds with comrades with whom they relied upon, unless their reason for leaving could be justified. This

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<sup>451</sup> Lucey, Reay, 'Identities in transition', p. 192.

was in contrast to citizen soldiers who left together en-masse, but who subsequently had to face other problems such as lack of civilian interest in their experiences in the short-term (although long-term there has been revived historical interest).

Whether or not former emotional communities could be preserved and reformed after potentially being destroyed upon leaving the Forces has had a significant bearing on the form of a veteran's remembrance of demobilisation. Yet for both citizen and professionals, the form these re-established communities took were affected only in part by spatial factors, specifically the geographical proximity of former comrades, although as suggested by Day, geographical closeness is not a requirement in the modern age of electronic communication.<sup>452</sup> The implication of this is that ex-military communities will increasingly be re-established online, potentially making possible the successful renegotiation of former networks of comrades regardless of spatial proximity.

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<sup>452</sup> Graham Day, *Community and everyday life* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), p. 17.

### Conclusion: Summary of Findings and the Future

The key purpose of this thesis has been to demonstrate an approach to studying the relationship between veterans' memories of their military experiences and later-life notions of identity and community. At each stage of the veterans' life-cycle from enlistment to demobilisation, cross-period continuities, changes and tensions have been examined and explored. This step-by-step analysis has demonstrated how memories of military service have come to shape participants' notions of identity and community, revealing possible emotional needs. The idea, posited by the 2011 North East council reports, that there is a unified, homogenous ex-military community based on the confines of Tyne and Wear has been deconstructed and found wanting.<sup>453</sup> The use of oral accounts has demonstrated that the sample veterans' identities and communities have not been *primarily* regional in origin, but were established on shared experiences between disparate groups of comrades. Influential trends acting on identity have been examined in the thesis' source-base, made possible only by the close engagement with individuals' life stories, a method which by necessity limits the sample size.

The divide between citizen and professional soldiers who served since 1914 has been analysed. Accordingly, it has been shown that these two broad cohorts' experiences overlapped. How these service personnel came to establish relationships in the Armed Forces, and how they came to recast these communities and identities upon demobilisation, demonstrate continuities. While the presence of former comrades in the local area following demobilisation undoubtedly made the preservation of these bonds easier to maintain, their spatial closeness was not the only factor considered in their long-term survival. Instead, among the interviews, ex-service personnel remembered the importance of combat, in

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<sup>453</sup> 'North East Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Regional Review of the Health Needs of the Ex-Service Community: Socio-Economic Needs Workstream Final Report', January 2011, pp. 6, 12, 23.

particular, in building emotional communities among *certain* primary groups based on ideals of mutual trust over and above regional factors. The dangers inherent in combat, the need to risk death and rely on team members reciprocating this loyalty was the location for the establishment of lasting bonds. These emotional communities were then placed under pressure as members were forced apart during demobilisation, yet they survived in civilian society because of their significance to participants, based on shared memories. Critically, these networks of ex-military personnel were not, therefore, predicated *solely* on whether former comrades were geographical close. Networks of veterans did not have to be regionally organised, but could be national or even international in nature.

Comparing the accounts of citizens and professionals, there is no clear tension (as remembered by the interviewees) between the ease of maintaining communities when comrades were spatially close and when they were not. From the oral evidence it is unclear how the closeness of comrades may have influenced the survival of certain networks of comrades rather than others, yet this would arguably have been a consideration for those concerned. A case study of a veteran who had left the Forces relatively recently suggests that diasporic electronic communities based on social media websites, increasingly accessible to all, may influence the ex-military networks that can survive in the future, making spatiality increasingly less critical to the preservation of communities. The form these virtual networks will take, and their meanings to members, may also evolve in-line with technological change. Whether they are more or less inclusive is ambiguous.

How citizen and professional soldiers chose to remember the manner in which they came to join the military show fewer similarities than in how they come to form bonds with fellow soldiers. The former were most likely to associate themselves with widely-held beliefs that it was their civic duty to some degree, although the form this took was neither static nor universal. The latter cohort of professionals, however, evidenced greater association with

occupational and career concerns, inevitable perhaps in an organisation competing with other civilian occupations for recruits. Nonetheless, while it would be an exaggeration to suggest there was *not* a dramatic change when military service ceased to be expected of male citizens in 1962, the accounts of professional soldiers suggest that they held values of identity in common with preceding generations. The legacy of the World Wars in the reminiscences of some professionals suggest it is not the case that all professional soldiers inevitably became wholly disconnected from the values and ideals of preceding generations of citizen soldiers. The retelling of family histories, as well as less tangible ideals of military service being exciting, have retained their importance to varying degrees among a collection of the accounts from the Great War onwards. This is not unexpected, yet it must be iterated to remind policy researchers today that many of the experiences of the current generation of professional service personnel who have recently left the Forces were faced by past generations of citizen soldiers.

Reviewing the life-cycle of veterans' military experiences as outlined in the case studies indicates that, while many progressed smoothly through the various stages of military service, their perceptions of their identities and communities developing during this process, this was not inevitable or straight-forward. This can present itself in ambiguities in the source material, where certain topics are avoided. Primarily, such tensions reveal themselves when veterans' *personal* memories are perceived by the interviewee to come into conflict with their audiences' perception of their past. Controversial or dissonant memories are unlikely to be recalled, especially as oral histories are self-selective. Consequently, aspects of certain individual speakers' emotional needs may remain hidden. Notably, across the entirety of the period studied, serving personnel have viewed trauma sufferers as unmanly (as they were perceived to have abandoned their responsibilities to their comrades), the mental health aspect of this phenomenon making this particularly important to reflect upon further.



Surprisingly, this deep-rooted historical military culture that viewed mental illnesses as diminishing victims' masculinity was not investigated or commented upon in the 2011 North East council report on mental health and the ex-military.<sup>454</sup> Yet it is as a result of this popular perception of their illness that veterans suffering from trauma have been unlikely to *consciously* publically articulate aspects of their life histories related to such difficult experiences, although allusions to this have been identified in the oral histories. Humour, for example, is a commonly used device to obscure or convey such difficult memories. Conversely, in the case of the generation of Second World War veterans, trauma exhibited itself differently, being repressed, or expressed in the more obvious form of emotional outbursts. Although popular attitudes have recently begun to change, the older generations are nonetheless reluctant to reveal this distressing facet of their life histories.

Taking into consideration the nuances of veterans' perceptions of their past through specific case studies ensures that the *individual* is not lost from history. However, the refutation of there being a wholly coherent and homogenous veteran community and identity held in common, as suggested in the North East Councils 'Health Scrutiny' reports, does not mean that such a model is not worthwhile. If order is to be established from the contradictory and often limited evidence available for ex-military personnel's identities then such efforts are critical. But any methodology *must* acknowledge individual circumstances, distinctions and long-term trends which have acted on identity construction, as well as particular conditions within which they have perceived their own experiences, rather than these being created from stereotypes and assumptions. This is an endeavour with direct contemporary relevance as local charities such as 'Veterans at Ease', set up in 2010 with veteran's mental health as its focus, have used the aforementioned local council reports on veteran's health as

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<sup>454</sup> 'North East Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Regional Review of the Health Needs of the Ex-Service Community: Mental Health Workstream Final Report', Published January 2011, p. 13.

a foundation of their understanding of the ex-military population in the region.<sup>455</sup> Achieving a better understanding of how veterans have come to comprehend their identities is an essential aspect of Britain's current and future responsibilities to those who serve in the Armed Forces outlined in the Armed Forces Covenant.<sup>456</sup>

The research and analysis conducted for this thesis reveals that further work is needed to develop knowledge of the impact and relationship between military service and notions of identity held by ex-service men and women. This is required in order to continue to disabuse the idea promulgated by the North East council reports that there is and has been a generic 'veteran identity', or a definable 'community of the ex-military'. The use of detailed case studies focussed on individuals' memories centred within a specific geographical area, while insightful for the purposes of examining regional factors and the usefulness of this focussed step-by-step method for better understanding veterans' perceptions of their identities, allows only a glimpse of the scope of the topic at the wider national level.<sup>457</sup>

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<sup>455</sup> 'Interview with Gareth Murrell' conducted by student, (24/05/2013).

<sup>456</sup> 'The Armed Forces Covenant'

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/49469/the\\_armed\\_forces\\_covenant.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/49469/the_armed_forces_covenant.pdf) (Last visited 08/06/2014).

<sup>457</sup> Research is currently being conducted by the Centre for Social Justice on veterans, yet this has largely focussed upon mental health issues, rather than the relationship between experiences and identity or community formation. See, 'Centre for Social Justice' <http://centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/> (Last visited 07/07/2014).; 'Public Policy Unit Report: Armed Forces and Veterans Mental Health' <http://www.armedforceshealthpartnership.org.uk/media/29753/MentalHealthReport-CSJEvidenceHearing.pdf> (Last visited 09/08/2014).

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<sup>458</sup> More detailed summaries of the oral histories collected for this thesis, which includes a list of all the interviewees, can be found in Appendices 1-5.

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### Appendix 1: Summary of interview data

Including both interview data collected for this paper and reused interviews from other sources.

Percentages may not equal 100% due to the need to round to the nearest decimal place.

Table 1.0 Branch of Armed Forces

Branch title	Total Interviewed	
	Percentage %	Number
Infantry	45.6	31
Artillery	1.5	1
Armour	4.4	6
Intelligence/ Photography	8.8	3
Service Corps <sup>459</sup>	10.3	7
Navy	11.7	8
RAF	7.4	5
Moved between branches	8.8	3
Women's Service	5.8	4
TOTAL		68

Table 1.1 Male/ Female ratio

	Percentage %	Number
Female	5.8	4
Male	94.2	64

Table 1.2 Period enlisted in

	Percentage %	Number	Saw Combat?	
			Percentage %	Number
1914-1919	4.4	6	4.4	6
1928-1945	50	34	36.7	25
1946-1956	13.2	9	5.8	4
1966-1962	4.4	3	0	0
1963-2013	23.5	16	14.7	10

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<sup>459</sup> 'Service Corps' includes: RE, REME, RASC, RAOC, RCT, RAMC, and any other affiliated unit.

Table 1.3 Ex-service personnel association membership

Number of associations involved with	Percentage %	Number
0 <sup>460</sup>	61.7	42
1	29.3	20
2	2.9	2
3 or more	5.8	4

Table 1.4 Officer or Other Rank?

	Percentage %	Number
Officer	22.1	15
Other Rank <sup>461</sup>	77.9	53

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<sup>460</sup> Includes interviewees who do not refer to association membership.

<sup>461</sup> 'Other Rank' refers to any member of the Armed Forces who has not been commissioned. In practice this means any rank from Private to Warrant Officer.

## Appendix 2: Enlistment

### Key

? = Information Unknown.

Why people enlisted, and/or what they knew before they entered the Forces			
ID	Why?	Unit chosen and why	Did they say they wanted to join?/ Were they happy to enlist?
<b>First World War</b>			
10913	Volunteered, Brother/ music	7 <sup>th</sup> Durhams/ brother	Y
11963	Volunteered, Patriotism/ Friend joining	N.Hussars/ friends	Y
11040	Volunteered, Patriotism	N. Hussars/ Interested in horses	Y
11041	Volunteered, Always keen on military	Navy/ friend	Y
9752	Volunteered, patriotism,	N. Fusiliers, Kitchener's Poster	Y
9100	Volunteered, duty	Not discussed	Y
<b>Second World War (including 1930s)</b>			
040413WNM	Conscripted, volunteered for commandoes	Army Commandoes/ adventure, doing his bit	Y
12DL	Conscripted, patriotic duty	Wanted WRNs as glamorous, got ATS as WRNs over-subscribed	Y
120813GHM	Volunteered, knew he had to go, and didn't fancy the Army	Navy as didn't want RAF or Army	Y
21296	Volunteered, to avoid conscription to mines	Marines, looked exciting	Y/N
19631	Volunteered for TA then regular service, family's military background	DLI, ?	Y
16709	Volunteered as felt it was his duty	Army, didn't like the idea of being at sea or in the air	Y
12257	Volunteered, patriotic duty, and saw war as inevitable	Army, RA as no DLI units in Sunderland other than searchlights (wanted combat)	Y/N
11208	Volunteered	Army, ?	Y
17630	Volunteered, knew friends who were being killed	Army, but wanted Navy, but didn't pass tests	Y
12381	Volunteered in 1929, due to being in a dead-end job	Army, RASC, found it easy with his background	Y
14620	Conscripted, had no choice	Army, RE, wanted REME to continue apprenticeship and originally to go to RAF	Y
13109	Volunteered 1935, due to lack of employment	Army, infantry, to make use of himself	Y
10601	Volunteered, to get away from mining which was 'slavery'	Army, local regiment	Y
12824	Volunteered for TA, rejected, later conscripted, asked for Navy, placed in Army	Army, recce, no choice	Y
10415	Volunteered in 1938, had friends in the battalion	Army, DLI, friends	Y
10403	Volunteered for TA, duty	Army, DLI, local (?)	Y
27080	Waited to be conscripted, munitions work didn't appeal	Army, AWS	N/Y
17567	Volunteered for the TA pre	Army, seconded to RAF as a pilot	Y

	WWII, then joined the RAF after seeing fighter planes during army training		
12247	Volunteered for TA in 1938, due to situation in Europe	Army, 9 <sup>th</sup> DLI due to uncle's service	Y
9185	Volunteered for TA then regulars as a Lt. in 1939 due to war	Army, local regt.	Y
21025	Conscripted, excited (by what is not stated)	Army, RASC - RTR	Y
22603	Conscripted	Army, DLI	Y
22603/BB	Conscripted	Army, ATS	?
20935	Conscripted (1943)	Army	?
22613	Volunteered (?) ,WRNS, for admin experience, also patriotic	Navy, WRNS	Y
10165	Volunteered, TA, enjoyed Army life and poor economic background	Army, DLI, uncle's service	Y
16714	Volunteered 1939 for TA as an officer to get experience as saw war as inevitable	Army, local pride in DLI (?)	Y
11211	Conscripted	Army, father	?
24698	Volunteer, didn't want munitions	Navy, to avoid munitions, got WRAF	Y
3954	Conscripted, no other factors given	Army, no choice	?/Y
23813	Volunteered, was in a reserved occupation but wanted to do his bit	Navy, no reason given	Y
27180	Volunteered, to do his bit	Army, no reason given but perhaps father?	Y
130706M(J)	Conscripted	Air Force/ No reason given	Y
050413MDM	Not covered in interview		
1946 to 1962			
300513WBM	Conscripted	Wanted Navy, got Army/ NAT	N
280612JDM	Conscripted	RAF, no choice	N
230812RSM	Conscripted	RAF, appeared less strict	Y
040912NMM	Conscripted	RAF, no reason given	Y
060213BWM	Conscripted	Army, no choice	Y
070513ECM	Volunteered, knew he would have to go anyway as a conscript	Army, RAOC	Y
280513KWM	Conscripted	Army, local regt.?	Y/N
20799	Volunteered, to escape mines	Army, got choice of regiment	Y
19632	Conscripted	Army, no choice	Y
16656	Volunteered	Navy, marines	Y
31693	Volunteered	Army, choice	Y
21644	Volunteered, to avoid mines	Navy, choice, submarines by accident	Y
1963 to 2013			
0312RT	Volunteered, left school at 15 y.o. started work as an apprentice but wages too low, then mining bad said it was a 'bad idea'	Navy, schoolboy ambition	Y
140612TCM	Volunteered, as saw Army recruiting team with armoured car	Boy service (Army), recruiting team	Y
040913DNM	Volunteered, Army cadets	Intel. Corps/ None given	Y
230513J*M	Volunteered, Army sounded glamorous	Wanted Infantry, but persuaded by recruiting officer to be a tech as too	Y

		intelligent for infantry	
070513KBM	Volunteered for adventure	Light Dragoons/ regional connection	Y
060513ADM	Volunteered, economic reasons and to improve himself	Army, REME, engineering background	Y
250513CRM	Volunteered, keen to work with vehicles and be in military, but also needed a job	Army, enjoyed working with vehicles	Y
020813JEM	Volunteered, couldn't get a job anywhere else	Army, infantry only option	Y
010813KAM	Volunteered, saw how much money his brother earned, seemed like a good career and not much work available	Army, brother	Y
010613NDM	Volunteered, wanted to see the world and local jobs scarce, military seen as best option	Army, family	Y
280513RWM	Volunteered, recruited while in TA, didn't fancy Tyneside traditional industries	Army, Fusiliers (local)	Y
160713WHM	Volunteered, to avoid shipyards	Army, Junior Leaders then Fusiliers	Y
22604	?		
30405	Volunteered, interest in aircraft due to work with Royal Observer Corps, saw no future as civilian mechanic	ROC	Y
28803	Volunteered, family sea connections and his own enjoyment of boats	Navy, family	Y
12246	Volunteered, patriotic, keen on military, anti-pacifist	Newspapers, Home Guard service	Y

### Appendix 3: Opinions of military service

#### Key

? = Information Unknown.

+/- column is their overall opinion, positive or negative, of their military service.

<b>Reasons given for attitude towards military service</b>			
<b>ID</b>	<b>+/-</b>	<b>Experiences while serving, inc. combat</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
<b>First World War</b>			
10913	+	'Nerves', combat	Modest about combat experiences on Western Front
11963	-/+	Mixed, combat	Volunteer, commissioned as officer from the ranks
11040	-	Combat	Wife cheated on him while he was at war, comrades and combat important – wounded
11041	-	Combat	Relieved to get a 'blighty wound'
9752	+	Combat, tanks	Volunteered for tanks after seeing them in action for the first time, as well as to get away from a new and unpleasant CO. Loyalty to the men he commanded important, wounded twice/ three times, remained in Army post-war as a regular, happy to lose captaincy to be an Lt. As thought it was only fair
9100	-	Combat, gassed, captured	Comments on poor planning in Gallipoli campaign
<b>Second World War (including 1930s)</b>			
040413WNM	+	Extensive combat and comradeship	Extensive combat in Northern Europe 1944-45
12DL	+	Special ops in signal unit	Discipline seen as valuable, proud to be doing what she thought was an important job and 'doing her bit', comradeship valued
120813GHM	+	Extensive combat on landing craft	Brother killed on active service, wanted to be a gunner because he was young and excited by such things, saw his as a valuable role, but never planned to stay
21296	+	Combat in NW Europe	Enjoyed time in military but never saw it as a permanent career
19631	+	Combat in a variety of theatres	'Would do it all over again', comments he only recalls the positive aspects
16709	+	Injured in Italy	Worked in intelligence, blown up by landmine, he was grateful to the council for paying him throughout the war even though they didn't have to
12257	+	Combat, badly wounded	Little reflection
11208	++/-	Combat, staff work, got commissioned	Bitter at lack of recognition from Commander, ambitious and wanted promotion, served 6 ½ years
17630	-	Combat, trauma	Traumatized by service, exacerbated by death of mother while he was on active duty which he blames for shellshock, caught crabs 'from a blanket', embarrassed in case his daughters found out he went into a brothel
12381	+	Extensive	Saw extensive combat, which he recalls without going into too much

		combat post D-Day, volunteered for parachutists	detail, recalls seeing the dead, hated the SS
14620	+	Combat, but unlike pre-war aux fire work, war didn't give you time to think, injured in Korea	Enthusiastic about his role, decided to extend period in Army, commissioned (emergency then short-term), injured by American error in Korea, wanted to advance his career in the Forces
13109	+	Served in India pre-war in infantry and dragoon regiments, then saw combat in WWII	Wounded, recalls disturbing incidents, recollects D-Day and Normandy which is the focal point of the interview
10601	+	Served in Far East, married during war	Didn't see son for three years due to war, wanted to stay in Army, ambitious for promotion
12824	+/-	Combat, injured, made lance corporal in 1945 after 3 years of service	Not interested in Army career, just wanted to do his part then leave
10415	+	Combat, friendship, later joined TA	Comments that most of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> DLI were pitmen who had never left the county
10403	+	Combat, made a POW, trauma	Joined TA first, commissioned and in Officer's Training Coy., captured in WWII, didn't receive adequate leave after returning as a POW and family had no idea where he'd been, continued in Army post war as wanted to do as well as possible due to family background and boyhood ambition
27080	+	Felt was doing useful work	Only one occasion someone disparaged the value of women's military service while she was on leave, she was glad to put him in his place, father was shocked to see her in khaki
17567	+	Air combat, worked in Palestine post-war	Keen on military, continued in military matters after leaving by working in Saudi Arabia with their Air Force, interviewer skips over much of his non WWII service
12247	Interview recording incomplete		
9185	+	Training instructor, Entertainment officer in Far East	Enjoyed meeting other cultures
21025	+/-	Combat, comradeship	Saw a lot of combat and at times his voice in the interview sounds fearful, took seeing his first German corpse to make him realise the seriousness of his situation
22603	+	Combat	Comradeship important, proud of unit
22603/BB	Wife of 22603, briefly interviewed at end of 22603 recording, ?		
20935	+	Combat, finished war	Comradeship important, found actions of Zionist terrorists horrifying



		in Palestine	
22613	+	Admin, little comment	Explicitly does not recall any sexism
10165	-/+	Combat, Dunkirk, Far East, trauma	Found the loss of his comrades traumatic, rejected commission as he didn't see himself as being of the right class, carried on in Army post war, regrets not taking up commission but would have meant leaving DLI, sometimes clashed with officers, comradeship important
16714	-/+	Combat, made a POW	Proud of unit and work, found POW life difficult, but account is largely positive, dismissive of trauma and those who suffered with it
11211	-	Combat, vivid memories	Uses humour to dispel tension of memories of combat
24698	-	Dealt with the most severely injured patients	Found burn wounds hard to deal with psychologically
3954	++/-	Combat, but never fired a weapon in anger	Thought his job was as useful and important as a combat soldier's
23813	+	Combat, extensive	Experienced extensive combat, witness to many disturbing incidents, varied military career
27180	+/-	Combat, recalls disturbing incidents	Comradeship important, as was doing his duty, encouraged by father to take the place of married men, recalls deaths of men crushed by tanks, some memory loss due to trauma
130706M(J)	+	Got leave for religious events	Judaism a key factor he refers to. He identified as a Jew first, veteran second
050413MDM	+	?	Although his war service is not discussed at any length, he enjoyed learning about German culture while in the Army of Occupation
<b>1946 to 1962</b>			
300513WBM	+	Good comradeship so later joined TA	Discipline is important to him
280612JDM	+	Boring, but helped write Air Marshall's speech	Military matured him, but felt he largely wasted his two years
230812RSM	+	Went to Middle East, found travel exciting	Discipline useful, but mainly enjoyed going abroad
040912NMM	+	Found responsibility of fighter control exhilarating	Volunteered to continue in reserves due to interest and pay, found military service gave him responsibility, and pay was useful as an academic, as was discipline
060213BWM	+	Enjoyed going abroad	Didn't want to make the military a career
070513ECM	+	Enjoyed travel and leading	Enjoyed all the aspects of military life, but angry at being lied to about Easter Island nuclear testing, met wife in Hong Kong which was very unusual for the time, comradeship
280513KWM	+	Enjoyed being abroad and in Berlin	Lacked confidence that they could have stopped the Russians, but enjoyed it so remained in TA after compulsory period, proud of unit, proud of equality re: ethnic minorities, received commendation for performance
20799	+	Combat in Korea,	'Getting a bit fed up of the Army' but still wanted to stay in but was wounded, Army changed his view of the world

		patriotic	
19632	+	Combat in Korea, morally right	Believes his service was worthwhile, and appreciated the family atmosphere, proud of regiment
16656	+	Combat in Korea, morally right	Proud to have served in Korea 'the first place we stopped Communism'
31693	++/-	Combat, NI	Proud to have served, met wife while on Berlin tour
21644	+/-	Submarines, survivor guilt	Trauma over loss of friends, but positive life experience generally
<b>1963 to 2013</b>			
0312RT	+	Recalls several funny anecdotes	Spent 37 years in RN, had to be forced out, very proud of role and clearly enthusiastic about all things RN
140612TCM	+/-	Volunteered for parachute training	Wishes in retrospect he had given the military more time and effort, found comradeship important, proud of being a boy soldier then para
040913DNM	+	Good job	Found military work interesting
230513J*M	+/-	+/-, gained specialist skills, combat	Promoted from private to WO1., Bitter at treatment in military before leaving
070513KBM	++/-	Combat in Iraq, gained 'Best trooper, '09', trauma	Job found post military on basis of military skills, enjoyed time, wishes he had found a military role which gave him more transferable skills, trauma
060513ADM	+	Iraq, active service	Saw role as useful, and providing him with useful skills for the future, enjoyed comradeship, saw Iraq war as a duty, frustrated that some newspapers didn't support the soldiers more
250513CRM	+	Fairly uneventful	Not too sure of what he wanted from Army, mainly needed the pay cheque but enjoyed the life
020813JEM	+/-	Combat in NI, tours abroad, trauma	Was bullied to extremes, extensive combat but enjoyed active service, trauma ignored and alcohol used by officers to calm their men, marriage broken by service, authorities denied the promotion he had earned
010813KAM	+/-	Combat in NI and Iraq, ceremonial duties, trauma	Notes that mentality changed throughout service, disliked some attitudes in the Forces, injured but not permanently, moved to stores to get more relevant skills, unconvinced of purpose in Iraq
010613NDM	+	Extensive combat in NI	Intended to make Army a career, proud of regiment, disappointed civilians didn't know more about Army's role in NI, Shows sympathy for trauma victims
280513RWM		Served on staff of general	Became ambitious while in Forces, enjoyed the sport and travel, very proud of British Army and his unit, family very important to him
160713WHM	+	Combat in Aden and NI	Enjoyed military life and active service, married life was strained, was asked to extend service twice, divorced mid-service, remarried later
22604	++/-	Enjoyed OTC work, combat NI	Military life was interestin
30405	+	Aden, murder scene	Positive about married quarters, implies he stayed about a decade, generally positive and makes comparisons with what his civilian life would have been like
28803	+	Enjoyable, but not very well provided for by authorities	Little reflection
12246	+	Combat in Far East in WWII, broke off	Served in a variety of theatres, very proud of military service, serving almost obsessively and a keen volunteer for hazardous duties, after leaving Forces went and helped set up cadet units, angry that military

		engagement as fiancée didn't like the Army	did not get better recognition from civilians
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## Appendix 4: Experiences of leaving the Armed Forces

### Key

? = Information Unknown.

+/- column is their experience, positive or negative, of the leaving process, transferring from military to civilian life.

<b>Experiences of leaving the Armed Forces</b>					
<b>ID</b>	<b>+/-</b>	<b>Expectations of civilian life/ Aspirations</b>	<b>Training/ Provision made for civilian life?</b>	<b>Wanted to leave?</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
10913	+	Aspired to be a musician	N	N	Military trained him as musician.
11963	-	Return to Railway	?	N	Commissioned, upset could not stay on as officer
11040	-	Returning to (mining, wanted to be a farmer but discouraged by mother	N	Y	Lost old job and couldn't find another in mines as they were waiting for other servicemen to return
11041	-	Return to pattern making	N	Y	Injured, reluctant to discuss this period of his life
9752	?				
9100	-	To return to work in his previous job in pharmacy	N	Y	?
<b>Second World War (including 1930s)</b>					
040413WNM	-	Return to Co Op, implicitly expected responsibility	N	Mixed	Looked forward to leaving at the time. Regretted it in hindsight
12DL	?	Married	?		?
120813GHM	+	Co Op	N	Y	Small delay in demob due to China crisis
21296	+	Wanted to go to university to become an architect	?	Y	Demobilisation does not seem to be seen as a major event as he doesn't dwell on it
19631	+	Return to ICI	?	Y (presumably)	Says he had no difficulty returning to civilian life
16709	?	Return to Newcastle as teacher as felt he had debt to council for paying him during the war	N	Y	Says he wanted to leave as enjoyed wartime service, but would not enjoy peacetime
12257	+	Return to pre-war clerk position held for him	?	Y	Grateful he got leave owed to him which he missed out on during the war
11208	+	Return to pre-war	?	N	Army had become his

		job			life so did not want to leave
17630	-	Had no plans	N	Y	Remembers that on demob all he got were a few items such as a suit
12381	?				
14620	?				
13109	?				
10601	-	Hoped to get civil service job, but happy with mines	N		Left due to wife's prompting
12824	?	Got married 4 months before demobilisation		?	?
10415	+	Lloyd's Bank	?	?	?
10403	?				
27080	-	Civil service	N	Y	Was a little bit 'bolshie' during demob due to length of time it was taking and lack of provision for women
17567	+	Saudi Arabian Air Force as trainer	Y	N	Skills acquired enabled him to continue working in military environment after demob
12247	?				
9185	?				
21025	?				
22603	-	Return to work in library, refused to work in shipyards	N	Y	Remember losing touch with Army life almost instantly, and that the demob suit did not fit
22603/BB	-	Intended to return to library, CO had to help, had got married	?	Y	Remembers that women would have hated to get a demob suit as they would not have wanted to all look the same
20935	-	?			Demobbed in Palestine, found leaving hard due to leaving all his friends
22613	-	Returning to MGN	Y	?	Disappointed at lack of recognition, either practical or other
10165	-	?	N	N	'I entered civvy street the same way I joined the Army. Lost'. 'I had no ambition'
16714	+	?	N	Y	Impressed with equality of treatment
11211	+	Police	?	Y	Demobbed early due to police job
24698	?	Wanted to return to work as a nanny	N	Y	No new expectations, only trained as a nanny
3954	?	Found job while in Army, returning as a photographer	Y	Y	Military service 'kept his hand in' re: photography
23813	+/-	Returning to family business	Y	Y	After end of hostilities found he was just killing time
27180	+	?	Y	Y	Killing time after 1945

					before demob in 1947, no complaints
130706M(J)	?				
050413MDM	?				
<b>1946 to 1962</b>					
300513WBM	+	Had to join TA, but had good experience.	Y	Y	Had to join TA after NAT, but later did it voluntarily.
280612JDM	?				
230812RSM	?				
040912NMM	NA	Academia, RAF reserves	Y	N	Learned to fly which was useful, discipline, gradually phased out of RAF
060213BWM	?, but no complaints made				
070513ECM	He left gradually, due to joining the TA, no specific training for civilian life, but useful skills acquired				Continued in TA
280513KWM	+/-	Had to join TA, returned to engineering apprenticeship	N	Y	No comments on leaving
20799	-	None mentioned	None mentioned	N	Wounded, had to leave
19632	-	Had to join TA, notes lack of resources but proud of regimental title	N	Y/N	Didn't want to leave comrades in Korea, but had done his bit. Treatment by military on leaving was poor
16656	?	None mentioned	N	N	Wounded, had to leave
31693	?				
21644	?				
<b>1963 to 2013</b>					
0312RT	-	?	Y	N	Didn't want to leave, was forced to after 37 years
140612TCM	?				
040913DNM	+	Police	Y	Y	Enjoyed time, left voluntarily
230513J*M	-/+	Had plan to set up security company using his military skills	Y/N	Y	Bitter about treatment and gov't decisions, left after 2 <sup>nd</sup> Iraq War.
070513KBM	+	Positive, had partner & kid, house and job lined up which paid more	Y	Y	Took advantage of courses on offer, survivor guilt, left due to family commitments
060513ADM	+	Leaving to look after father	Y	N	Had no choice but to leave to spend time with father, but got plenty of support and training for civilian life
250513CRM	?	Get a better paid job	Y	N	Left regulars to help mother more, carried on in TA
020813JEM	-	Just wanted to leave, no plans	N	Y	Very badly treated during leaving process as no longer of use
010813KAM	-	Wanted to leave,	N/Y	Y	Decided to leave as

		knew he had to find a job, but nothing definite			didn't want to push his luck when deployed to Afghanistan, did receive limited training
010613NDM	-	Unsure	Y	N	Partner asked him to leave to find a 'proper job' which he regretted
280513RWM	+	Running a pub	Y	N/Y	Left after 22 years served, no mention of help but no complaints
160713WHM		Unsure	Y	Y	Left after 24 years, realised he was past prime, received extensive help
22604	+/-	?	Y	Y/N	Leaving was anti-climatic, received limited training
30405	-	Not very positive, wanted to leave	Y	Y	Found job while serving due to the RAF connection with a veteran
28803	-	Aspired to train as a navigator	?	Y	Wanted to leave, but enjoyed service
12246	?	At time of interview still in service with cadet units	Y	N	Did not want to leave service, even at the end of regular service (pre-cadets) he volunteered for the Falkland's task force

## Appendix 5: Life post service

### Key

? = Information Unknown.

+/- column = Experience, positive or negative of employment and activities post-service.

Overall Military exp. +/- = Opinion of their military service and treatment by authorities/society during demobilisation.

Under Jobs held a dash indicates when they left a job to go to the next on the list. Jobs held may be listed by industry or specific company depending on information given.

Job +/- = Whether the interviewee found their post-military employment a positive or negative experience.

Experience of post-service civilian life						
ID	+/-	Jobs held	Job +/-	Joined Association?	Overall Military exp. +/-	Remarks
<b>First World War</b>						
10913	+	Joiner musician	-	N	++/-	Focus on music not military, possible trauma
11963	-/+	Railway clerk	+	Y (Cameroons AS.)	+/-	Not treated well by authorities
11040	++/-	Railway (manual)	+	?	+/-	Physical injury
11041	-	Pattern maker	+	N	-	Mentions trauma and disability, poor treatment by soc. and military
9752	?				+	No info on post-service life, but remained in Army to avoid mines
9100	-	?, unemployed until 1920	?	Y (Gallipoli)	-	Physical injury, very bitter about impact on service on career
<b>Second World War (including 1930s)</b>						
040413WNM	-	Co Op Parsons	-	Y (British Legion)	+	Transition to civilian difficult, war pension concern
12DL	+	Married	NA	N	+	Primarily proud of being a wife and mother
120813GHM	+	Co Op then Fenwicks	+	Y (British Legion)	+	Asked about military skills being useful but they were not, Fenwicks and Co Op a big part of his life
21296	+	Architect business with ex-marine	+	Y (after the 50 <sup>th</sup> D-Day Anniversary)	+	Discloses he had nightmares about combat after 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary events



19631	+	ICI	?	N	+	No apparent trauma despite involvement in extensive violence
16709	+	Teacher	?	?	+	Trauma possible as disturbed by friends' deaths
12257	+	Returned to job held open, Went back to work before leave ended	?	Y, (RA AS.)	+	Injury stopped him playing rugby - the only negative consequence he recalls of his service
11208	?	Returned to job held open, Went back to work before leave ended	?	Y, (DLI AS.)	++/-	Possible trauma, still keeps in touch with friend – influence on recall of events
17630	-	? (As post service jobs not discussed)	?	?	-	Treated for shellshock during service, cannot remember treatment due to drugs used, after service had difficulties
12381	?					
14620	?					Trauma from pre-military service auxiliary fire service work
13109	?					
10601	+/-	Mines	+/-	?	+	The interview does not cover much about his post service life
12824	+	Builder	?	None mentioned	+/-	Not bitter about experiences, just accepted it as a duty, suffered from physical injuries
10415	+	Lloyd's Bank, TA	?	Y (DLI AS.)	+	After regular service joined TA (for comradeship) only left when civilian job moved meant he had to leave
10403	-	?			+/-	Bitter about failure to do bring prosecution to war criminals, also possible trauma
27080	-	Return to civil service	?	?	+	No discussion of post-war life
17567	+	Saudi Arabian Air Force academy commander	+	?	+	Although he says he found working in Saudi Arabia difficult culturally, he clearly enjoyed it too,
12247	?					
9185	?					
21025	?					Possible trauma

22603	+	Library	+	Y (DLI AS., until 1950s)	+	Likes meeting up with comrades as only they understand what they went through
22603/BB	?	Library	Wife of 22603, briefly interviewed at end of 22603 recording ?			
20935	? Recollects that he was very proud to have served with the Scottish Borderers – seems nostalgic					
22613	-/+	MGN	?	N (But kept in touch with friends)	+	Upset as brother threw away medals
10165	-/+	Security - Post Office	-/+	Y (set up DLI AS. and Tyneside remembrance festival)	+/-	Trauma
16714	+	?	?	?	+/-	Trauma, found transition to civilian life difficult
11211		Police	+	?	?	Trauma, but improved over time
24698	? Interviewee disappointed more people don't know about the Air Ambulance					Distress of seeing burn wounds
3954	+	Photography manager	+	N	+	Military had little influence
23813	++/-	Left family business to go to sea	+	Y (multiple)	++/-	Trauma as dreamt of the dead floating, relationship breakdown with father, denies military influenced him
27180	+	Railways	+	N	++/-	Trauma and physical injury
130706M(J)	+	?	NA	Y (AJAX, vice president)	+	Proud of role of Jews in WWII
050413MDM	+	Self-Employed Pork Butcher	+	?	+	Military experience gave him the money to set himself up in business
1946 to 1962						
300513WBM	+	Post Office – Civil Service (managerial)	+	Y (Fusiliers)	+	Unexpectedly enjoyed Army
280612JDM	+	Academic	+	N	+/-	Found it boring, kept in touch with only one man, who died in 2010, values service for discipline
230812RSM	+	?	?	N	++/-	Didn't join association due to laziness
040912NMM	+	Academic	+	Y (RAF AS.)	+	Carried on in reserves until they were disbanded, only did it part-time, in AS. for socialising, flew as part of his academic work
060213BWM	+	?	?	Y (x2, inc.	+	Active in

				Fusiliers)		remembrance activities
070513ECM	+	TA - civilian supply	+	Y (>3 inc. British Legion)	+	Returned to NE for house prices, enjoyed TA
280513KWM	+	TA - Engineering	+	Y (Fusiliers AS.)	+	Enjoyed TA for comradeship and lifestyle, money was useful
20799	++/-	?	NA	?	++/-	Pension problems and trauma, but changed his view of the world
19632	+	?	NA	Y (Korean Veterans AS.)	+	Comradeship, disappointed TA not taken seriously
16656	+	?	NA	Suggested Y	++/-	Description of friend being killed disturbed him, maintained contact with comrades
31693	?					Suggestion that may have suffered from trauma from NI
21644	+	?	NA	Y, (Submariners AS.)	++/-	Loss of friends made him feel guilty, but comradeship of survivors enjoyable
<b>1963 to 2013</b>						
0312RT	+	Trials engineer for Vickers, similar to RN role	+	?	+	Was not in civilian employment long as retired quickly
140612TCM	+	Driver	+/-	Y (Para AS. Legion, Royal Signals AS., Ex-Denbury Boys AS.)	++/-	Possible trauma due to plane accident aftermath picking up body parts, very keen on reunions for social aspect and goes with wife most of the time
040913DNM	+	Honk Kong Police	+	N	+	Served in Hong Kong during military career
230513JM	+	Mercenary	+	N	--/+	Bitter, civilian employment good
070513KBM	+	Mercenary	+	N	++/-	Slightly bitter about military
060513ADM	+	Engineer	+	N (But still sees friends from Army)	+	Sad to have left military
250513CRM	+	TA - ?	+	Y (Fusilier AS.)	+	War pension concern, enjoys socialising with comrades, enjoyed TA career
020813JEM	-	Post Office	-	N (talks to comrades)	-	Authorities ignored trauma, after effects inc. Drinking and three divorces
010813KAM	+	Manual - looking after	+	N (talks to comrades, but	+/-	Seeing aftermath of IED made him leave

		autistic adults		otherwise tries to forget)		the Forces – possible trauma
010613NDM	+	Police	+	Y (Fusiliers AS.)	++/-	Trauma - afraid of being without a gun, which took years to overcome
280513RWM	+	Salesman	+	Y (Fusiliers AS.)	+	Military gave him confidence, joined AS. for socialising
160713WHM	+	Self-employed	+	Y (Fusiliers AS.)	+	Critical that most trauma sufferers are lying, rank inspired self-employment
22604	+/-	Civil Servant	?	N	+/-	Completely severed ties with military, but not bitter, proud of skills taught to him
30405	-- /+	Supervisor - self-employed	+/-	N	+	Military experience valuable, bitter about quality of civilian life
28803	?					
12246	Not left Forces at time of interview					