UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF MEDICINE, HEALTH, AND LIFE SCIENCES

School of Psychology

The Reconciliation of Traumatic War Memories throughout the Adult Lifespan: The Relationship between Narrative Coherence and Social Support

by

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ABSTRACT

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THE RECONCILIATION OF TRAUMATIC WAR MEMORIES
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NARRATIVE COHERENCE AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

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THESIS ABSTRACT

The research described in this thesis investigated the relationship between
perceptions of social support and the narrative coherence of traumatic war
memories. The aim was to understand the way in which social support impacts
on the process of reconciliation of war memories, with implications for provision
of therapy to currently and formerly serving veterans.

In order to provide a lifespan perspective, war veterans from the Second
World (WWII), Korean War, Falklands War, Gulf War and Britain's 'Small'
Wars participated in semi-structured one-to-one interviews based on perceptions
of social support (comradeship, family support, and societal support), media
representation of war, and commemoration. Analysis of narrative content was
based on the perceptions of social support, and the subsequent analysis of
narrative form explored the coherence of war memories as an indication of
reconciliation. Coherence was operationalised as the presence of orientation and
storied structure, consistency in affect, and uniting theme(s) running through the
narrative. Data from the Imperial War Museum was used to provide triangulation
of the social support themes, and was analysed using thematic analysis.

Archival data from the Mass Observation Archive was also consulted to
corroborate the findings from the interview data, providing a deeper
understanding of the role of societal support using thematic analysis. In addition,
a questionnaire study was conducted to probe perceptions of media
representation and perceptions towards veterans. Findings suggest that veterans
can reconcile their memories earlier in life, and that communicating with family
members within a supportive society may aid reconciliation. This has
implications for future interventions.

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PREFACE

I have always been aware of the impact war can have on individuals. My Grandfather died at a young age and consequently I never knew him. The family story was that he saw a lot of action during WWII, perhaps too much. He suffered two nervous breakdowns and, from what I have been told, his symptoms certainly implied a level of posttraumatic reaction.

During my third year at university I studied *Lifespan and Ageing* with Professor Peter Coleman. As part of this unit, we had a session on the impact of war throughout the lifespan. I have a number of friends who are currently and formerly serving and I used to discuss the findings of WWII research with them and asked them if any of it related to them as younger veterans of different wars.

It was these experiences that led me to wonder if early life reconciliation is possible - that veterans might be able to come to terms with experiences before later life – and, if so, how. I approached Peter to ask if he would like to supervise such a project. The programme of research that we discussed at that first meeting has developed over the last three years to accommodate new findings and to respond to the needs of the veterans themselves. This thesis is the culmination of that research.

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Thanks go first and foremost to the veterans who took part in the interviews and shared with me some of their most personal and intimate memories. Thanks extend to all the veterans I encountered along this journey even when they did not participate directly. They gave me encouragement and never let me forget that what I was hoping to achieve was necessary and timely, and who thanked me in turn for my interest. These statements of faith in my approach spurred me on.

The Royal British Legion, Laura Hart at Combat Stress, and a number of other veterans' associations also went beyond what might be reasonably expected of them to help me recruit participants – and I am immensely grateful to them.

I also thank the archivists at IWM and MOA for all their help, and the participants of the questionnaire study for their insight into societal opinion of war and conflict.

My supervisors Professor Peter Coleman and Dr Nigel Hunt deserve a huge thank you for believing in me enough to let me take a lead on the research, but who were also there to reel me in when I got either too fanciful or began to lack confidence in my work. They both pushed me to achieve the best I could achieve not only in terms of the thesis, but also in terms of all round personal development over the last four years.

My family have been fantastically supportive. My mother and sister accompanied me on numerous interview excursions around the country providing necessary light relief and great company. My father made the trip to the European Congress in St Petersburg not only possible, but hugely enjoyable and memorable. I must also thank Paul for unwavering support and listening to the many war stories I learnt along the way.

Finally, to Harriet and Sam who made the PhD experience just that.

CHAPTER ONE – LITERATURE REVIEW

The Impact of War throughout the Adult Lifespan, the Significance of the Life Story, and the Case for Early Life Reconciliation

1.1 Introduction

The impact of war has been under some form of formal investigation for as long as individuals have faced combat in modern society (Ben-Ezra, 2004; Shephard, 2002). In recent years, the psychological consequences of war have been the focus of much clinical and health research. Whilst the topic is wrought with political, ethical, and social implications, the impact of war at all stages of life is a fundamental research endeavour. Combat Stress, the ex-services welfare organisation, reports that psychiatric casualties of war, including suicides, far exceed those killed or physically disabled (Ex-Services Mental Health Society, 2001). The Royal British Legion's recent 2006 report on the needs of the ex-service community for the next 15 years indicates that one of the greatest concerns for ex-service personnel is the high rate of mental health difficulties (The Royal British Legion, 2006).

Why do some individuals react in this manner? How do individuals cope with experiences? What is the continuing impact of society's perceptions of war on veterans? If one investigates the experience of war as an event *within* the life of an individual, questions of individual reactions, coping with trauma, and societal perceptions throughout the life course come to the fore. It is suggested that life is constructed into a story to add purpose and meaning, and to maintain continuity and identity (McAdams, 1993). If life is a story, how does the potentially incongruous experience of war become integrated into the coherent narrative?

Within the research described in this thesis, social support (comradeship, family support, and societal support), and societal perceptions and narratives, were investigated in relation to their impact on the reconciliation of traumatic war memories throughout the adult lifespan. Reconciliation was taken to be the presence of a coherent personal narrative. Previous research reveals this process is both aided and hindered by social support for both younger and older veterans

alike. It was the aim of the research to determine how these factors affect a veteran's ability to cope with their traumatic war memories.

Literature is reviewed in the areas of the impact of war and the development of war trauma; the role of social support in reconciliation; the influence of social narratives on the development of veterans' personal narratives; the special nature of traumatic memory from the cognitive and neurobiological perspectives; the role of the personal narrative in reconciliation; and the additional impact of ageing and cohort on the presence of trauma in later life.

The relative lack of research conducted in the UK must be noted. The majority of research in this area is conducted in the USA, funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs. For this reason, it was necessary to draw upon research from a number of different countries, in order to gain as much insight into the role of social support in reconciliation. For the benefit of context, the nationality of studied veteran groups is highlighted where appropriate.

1.2 The Clinical Impact of War

War can have profound effects on those who experience it, and these effects have been described as shellshock, combat fatigue, and war neurosis (Shephard, 2002). These terms described the emotional and physical sequalae of trauma including flashbacks, nightmares, hypervigilence, numbing of feelings, depression, and anxiety. In 1980, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) first appeared in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) and is the most common diagnosis of war trauma, the most researched disorder in this area, and the best known from the lay perspective.

1.2.1 Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

PTSD is an anxiety disorder defined by the DSM (DSM-IV-TR) as the perpetual re-experiencing of memories, avoidance of trauma-related stimuli, and hypervigilance (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Re-experiencing traumatic events can take the form of involuntary flashbacks which are vivid and threatening experiences involving re-living the event, nightmares, and repetitive and intrusive imagery with somatosensory detail. In terms of avoidance, sufferers will actively avoid people, situations or circumstances that are associated with

the traumatic event so that they do not risk experiencing cues that may trigger memories. Whilst sufferers will avoid talking in detail about the traumatic event, they may ruminate on factors such as responsibility, blame, and *what ifs*, which prevent them fully accepting the experience (National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE), 2005). Finally, hyperarousal is defined as symptoms of hypervigilance for threat, arousal, numbing of responses, and diminished involvement with the outside world, which results in irritability, difficulty in concentrating or sleeping, and an exaggerated startle response.

Lifetime prevalence rates of PTSD have been estimated at 19% in a sample of UK WWII veterans (Hunt & Robbins, 2001a), 31% in US Vietnam veterans, (Kulka et al., 1990), 22% in a sample of Falklands veterans (O'Brien & Hughes, 1991), and 50% in a group of US Gulf War body handlers (Deahl, Gillham, Searle, & Srinivasan, 1994). Peacekeepers are also at risk of developing PTSD, despite exposure to different types of stressors compared to traditional combat (MacDonald, Chamberlain, Long, & Mirfin, 1999 on New Zealand peacekeepers). PTSD is often co-morbid with depression (Erickson, Wolfe, King, King, & Sharkansky, 2001), alcohol or substance use (Boudewyns, Woods, Hyer, & Albrecht, 1991), and linked to suicide (for example, Adams, Cole, Mitchell, Moore, & Einagel, 1998 on US Vietnam veterans; Gillan, 2001 on Falklands veterans).

In terms of the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, recent reports suggest that for US veterans, between September 2001 and September 2005, 56% of veterans being treated at the San Francisco Veterans Affairs Medical Centre were found to have comorbid disorders of PTSD, depression, and substance abuse, whilst 13% were diagnosed with PTSD alone (Seal, Bertenthal, Miner, Sen, & Marmar, 2007).

The onset of these symptoms usually occurs within the first month after the traumatic event (NICE, 2005), but response can also be delayed with symptoms occurring at least six months after the event. NICE estimates two thirds of PTSD sufferers will naturally recover without formal treatment within the initial months and years after the event. For the remaining third, symptoms remain prevalent for years, or re-emerge later in life.

The majority of studies use PTSD to measure war trauma, but there are problems associated with using PTSD criteria as the sole measure of

Posttraumatic Responses/reactions (PTRs). Such focus results in the medicalising of responses to war, and only extends understanding of the developmental pathways of PTSD at the expense of war trauma as a whole. Some veterans will present with PTSD symptoms, but this does not mean that veterans without PTSD do not suffer with traumatic memories. Arguably, PTSD is the clinical diagnosis on a continuum of reaction to trauma. It has been suggested that traumatic memory underlines PTSD, and so it is important to focus on individuals who may have traumatic memories whether these memories reach clinical levels of diagnosis or not[1].

Furthermore, PTSD is no longer perceived as the only PTR associated with war. Within military medicine, five traumatic stress disorders are recognised (Pearn, 1999). These include acute stress disorder, conversion reaction, counter-disaster syndrome, peacekeepers' acute stress syndrome, and Stockholm syndrome (Pearn, 2000). Of these PTRs, only acute stress disorder is recognised by the ICD (International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems) and DSM, which may explain why this are the focus of clinical literature.

In addition, war trauma relates not only to these PTRs, but to depression, anxiety, and substance use in the same way as PTSD. With this in mind, it is not helpful to classify and study veteran groups based on the presence of clinically diagnosable PTSD. The binary nature of this casts a shadow over veterans who do experience difficulties in reconciling war memories, but do not develop diagnosable PTSD or other PTRs. Despite this, most research has focused on the course predictors of PTSD, and this limitation must be considered when reviewing the following literature relating to course predictors of PTSD. With this in mind, the term PTR will be used in preference to PTSD where appropriate.

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[1] This argument reflects the current debate surrounding the DSM criteria of PTSD. For some researchers, PTSD is a timeless disorder whose reality has only just been accepted. For others, the concept of PTSD is an invention (Summerfield, 2001), which is culturally determined, and only reflects current thinking of trauma and memory (Jones & Wessely, 2003), and the endorsement of Western ontology (Bracken, Giller, & Summerfield, 1995). It is important to note that the perception of PTSD as an invention should not lead to the perception that symptoms of PTSD are an invention. The reality of debilitating reactions to trauma are not subject to debate, rather the helpfulness and suitability of a clinically diagnosable disorder is questioned (Summerfield, 2001).

1.2.2 Course Predictors of PTSD

Course predictors of PTSD are most commonly separated into exposure to and severity of trauma, personal resources as pretrauma factors, and environmental resources as posttrauma factors.

1.2.2.1 Exposure to and severity of trauma.

Initial investigation of PTRs, and specifically PTSD, focused on the concept of a dose-response relationship; that is the greater the traumatic exposure, the greater the posttraumatic response, and therefore the greater the likelihood of for example PTSD development in the aftermath. This simple relationship was not found to be universal. Some individuals experience severe trauma with no adverse effect, and others experience less severe trauma with adverse effects.

Despite this, research is still influenced by the dose-response relationship as a necessary, but insufficient, cause of PTSD. One reason for this is that dissociation at the time of the traumatic event is a known predictor of PTSD development, and dissociation is related to trauma severity (Ozer, Best, Lipsey, & Weiss, 2003). As one might expect, this relationship is supported empirically with more severe trauma increasing the likelihood of PTSD development. For example, the prevalence of PTSD in Prisoner of War (POW) samples is higher when compared to samples of veterans who were not POWs (Friedman, Schnurr, & McDonagh-Coyle, 1994). Indeed, prevalence of PTSD in non-POW US veteran groups is estimated at 30% (Kulka et al., 1991), compared to 67% in POW US veteran groups (Kluznik, Speed, Van Valkenburg, & McGraw, 1986). It has been suggested that persistent, or chronic, PTSD may be the result of severe trauma (Gold, Engdahl, Eberly, Blake, Page, & Frueh, 2000).

The problem with the dose response relationship is that it objectively assumes that certain types of war experience are more traumatic than others. Traditionally, peacekeeping is perceived by society to be different to, and less traumatic than, traditional combat. However, research suggests that peacekeeping experience can result in Posttrauma Reactions (PTRs) due to risks such as witnessing atrocities and torture, retrieval and disposal of human remains, and

the inability to intervene due to the restrictive rules of engagement, which results in helplessness and a lack of autonomy (Hotopf et al., 2003).

Whilst the severity of combat exposure is associated with PTSD development, pre and post trauma factors must also be considered in order to provide an explanation as to why some people are affected by their experiences and others are not. Studies such as Fontana and Rosenheck (1993) have found that, when combat exposure specifically contributes to PTSD course and development, other factors such as postwar social support, levels of disclosure, and general coping strategies, are not included in analysis. When pretrauma and posttrauma factors are considered along with combat exposure in the same study, they are found to be better predictors of PTRs than combat exposure (MacDonald et al., 1999).

1.2.2.2 Pretrauma factors – personal resources.

A number of factors are associated with the development of PTRs at the pretrauma stage. These personal resources either predispose individuals and place them at risk, or protect them from developing PTRs in the aftermath of trauma.

For a number of years, demographic factors have been found to be associated with the development of PTSD. Being female and/or an ethnic minority has been associated with higher levels of PTSD in US Gulf war veterans (Wolfe, Erickson, Sharkansky, King, & King, 1999). More recent studies have disputed this finding. In a meta-analysis, Brewin, Andrews, and Valentine (2000) determined that, once combat severity had been controlled, the association between females and PTSD was not significant. Equally, Beals et al. (2002) questioned the link between ethnicity and PTSD. In a study of Native American Vietnam veterans, ethnicity was not related to PTSD development and maintenance when combat severity was controlled. The outcomes of both studies suggest that it is not gender or ethnicity *per se* that are risk factors for PTSD, but rather that they predispose the individual to experience more severe combat related experiences. Females may be subjected to increased levels of stress due to sexual harassment/discrimination. Similarly, Beals et al. (2002) argued that Native American forces were exposed to more violence and atrocities and a loss

of meaning and control because they reported being forced to take on more stressful roles by Caucasian officers.

Age and rank have also been associated with PTSD. Being younger and of lower rank increases the likelihood of PTSD development at least in the immediate aftermath of combat (Wolfe et al., 1999). It has been suggested that being younger and of lower rank are linked to being unprepared for combat. This is pertinent since this association disappears in follow up studies suggesting that these individuals may develop effective coping strategies in the long-term. Also, when younger, personality characteristics including views of self, others, and world may not be stable and consequently traumatic experience may have a more profound impact (Bramsen, van der Ploeg, van der Kamp, & Ader, 2002). Equally, officer status implies a higher level of cognitive ability, which is associated with processing traumatic events into a narrative and more effective coping (Kremen et al., 2007).

Another personality characteristic that is consistently found to protect against PTSD development is hardiness. Hardiness is defined as having commitment (sense of the meaning of life), control (belief in one's ability to influence the course of events), and challenge (the acceptance that life changes and can lead to development) (e.g. Benotsch, Brailey, Vasterling, Uddo, Constans, & Sutker, 2000; Sutker, Davis, Uddo, & Ditta, 1995). Hardiness allows an individual to derive meaning from events. Waysman, Schwarzwald, and Solomon (2001) found that hardiness protected against PTSD development by limiting negative outcomes and promoting positive outcomes in a group of Yom Kippur War veterans. Hardiness also had a moderating impact between exposure and outcomes, so that hardiness had a greater impact on the course of PTSD in a POW group compared to a non-POW group. When trauma is at its most severe, hardiness protects to a greater extent. Interestingly, neuroticism has also been found to predispose individuals to PTSD development. Unlike hardiness, those scoring highly on neuroticism scales were less able to derive meaning from events due to negative thought processes (Bramsen et al., 2002).

Personality characteristics such as hardiness and neuroticism can be influenced in turn by traumatic experiences. McKeever and Huff (2003) present a diathesis stress model which suggests that premorbid risk factors and situational stressors interact at the time of the traumatic event to either produce, or to protect

against, a stress response. If a stress response is not elicited, residual stress is created. Residual stress itself becomes a risk factor, which lowers *breaking point*, meaning that less severe stress may result in the development of PTRs.

This concept may also be linked with PTSD that develops without exposure to sudden or unexpected events (Herman, 1992). There are two types of PTSD (van der Kolk, 2001a); the first stems from single exposure to traumatic events (Type I), and the second from repeated exposure to traumatic events (Type II), which is known as Disorders of Extreme Stress Not Otherwise Specified (DESNOS; also referred to as Complex PTSD).

Therefore, the way a person copes in the aftermath of trauma is a fundamental aspect of course development. Ways of coping, such as emotion or problem focused coping, are among the most fundamental personal resources. Emotion focused coping is the reduction and management of the emotional distress that is associated with a particular situation or cue. The individual avoids situations that may elicit for example, flashbacks, and will avoid disclosing information about the event. Problem focused coping alters the source of stress. The individual will talk through events and process memories (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980). Benotsch et al. (2000) found that emotion-focused coping, along with wishful thinking, and avoidance were associated with the long-term PTSD in a group of US Gulf war veterans (see also Koenen, Stellman, Stellman, & Sommer Jr, 2003; Sutker et al., 1995).

Attachment style may also influence the way people cope with stress. Secure attachment provides inner resources that allow individuals to confront stress with a sense of purpose and mastery because of their good problem solving skills and optimism. Insecure attachments, both anxious and avoidant, result in less confidence to deal with stressors, and poorer problem solving skills, which makes the individual feel out of control. Attachment and scores on personality factors such as hardiness and neuroticism are interrelated (Dekel, Solomon, Ginzburg, & Neria, 2004).

Whilst amount of combat exposure and pretrauma factors contribute to the development of PTRs, the reality of military operations does not allow control over combat exposure. Consequently, these factors have become secondary in the study of PTSD course and development (Nemeroff, Bremner, Foa, Mayberg, North, & Stein, 2006). Posttrauma factors, such as social support,

have become more prevalent because they can be manipulated through education and intervention, which has implications for the prevention or treatment of PTRs.

1.2.2.3 Posttrauma factors – environmental resources.

Environmental resources refer to factors such as family cohesion and social support. Consistently throughout the literature, one of the most important coping strategies adopted is social support. Indeed, in a meta-analysis of risk factors for PTSD in adults exposed to trauma, posttrauma factors and specifically a lack of social support were stronger predictors of PTSD than pretrauma factors (Brewin et al., 2000). As a result, research is beginning to assess the unique contribution of social support as a main contributor to the development of PTRs (Fairbank, Hansen, & Fitterling, 1991). On a larger scale, societal support can also influence the reconciliatory process. In the best case scenario, a positive collective narrative provides a supportive environment for reconciliation to occur.

Postwar social support: It is generally accepted that stress is moderated by the presence of social support (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Research also suggests that social support either aids reconciliation of trauma or perpetuates posttraumatic symptoms depending on the type of social support provided to, or sought by, individuals depending on individual coping strategies (Joseph, Williams, & Yule, 1995). Fontana and Rosenheck (1994a) report that lack of social support from family and friends at homecoming was one of the highest contributors to PTSD development in a group of US Vietnam veterans.

Peacekeepers also benefit from perceived social support. In two groups of former Dutch peacekeepers deployed to Lebanon between 1979 and 1985, and after 1990, more negative social contacts, and fewer positive social contacts, were associated with higher levels of PTSD symptomatology for both groups. In turn, seeking social support was related to lower levels of symptoms (Dirkzwager, Bramsen, & van der Ploeg, 2003). More specifically, self-disclosure (communication) of deployment-related experiences was found to be significantly related to adjustment in US peacekeepers returning from Somalia, especially if this self-disclosure was supported by significant others (Bolton, Glenn, Orsillo, Roemer, & Litz, 2003).

The cyclical relationship between PTRs and family support might explain why social support can perpetuate posttraumatic symptoms in some situations. Veterans with greater posttraumatic symptomatology tend to belong to families with elevated levels of severe and diffuse problems in family adjustment, poor parenting skills, and violent behaviour. This was found in a sample of Vietnam US War veterans some twenty years after the war (Jordan et al., 1992; see also Fontana & Rosenheck, 1994), and was replicated in a sample of Australian Vietnam veterans (Westerlink & Giarratano, 1999). Posttrauma, the impact of a veteran's posttraumatic symptoms on the family environment can potentially exacerbate symptoms, which is the concept of secondary traumatisation /intergenerational transmission of trauma. Ancharoff, Munroe, and Fisher (1998) found that US Vietnam War veterans' traumatic memories affected family members through the mechanisms of silence and overdisclosure by the veteran, and identification and re-enactment with family members (see also Dirkzwager, Bramsen, Ader, & van der Ploeg, 2005). Traumatic symptoms were subsequently reported by these family members, and they were unable to aid the veteran in the reconciliation of personal traumatic memories.

These research results are of fundamental importance but, whilst the majority of quantitative research proves significant relationships and pinpoints important course predictors, it tells only part of the story. It is based on the assumption that low levels of social support are *bad* and high levels of social support are *good*. For example, a veteran who scores low on levels of social support may find this their optimum level of social support when dealing with experiences of war and traumatic memories. In a study conducted with an unspecified US veteran population, social support was found to mediate the link between non-military stressful events and PTSD, but not military stressful events (Ren, Skinner, Lee, & Kazis, 1999). It was concluded that, since the presence of social support did not mediate the link between military stressful events and PTSD, then combat exposure must have long-lasting effects on veterans. This may be true but, equally, there are problems with using measures of social support, which may disguise underlying processes. Trauma may not have lasting effects on veterans. Rather, the type of social support chosen by veterans may perpetuate posttraumatic symptomatology by allowing the avoidance of traumatic memories.

Sutker et al., (1995) conducted a study with US Gulf War returnees, and found that, whilst social support did not fully predict levels of PTSD, perceived family cohesion did. In this study, perceived cohesion was measured using the Family Index Scale (Holahan & Moos, 1991), which relates to cohesion, degree to which family members are helpful and supportive, and expressiveness. Consequently, it would appear that the opportunity to communicate in a supportive environment may be a more useful measure in the study of traumatic memories than actual received support.

Whilst a number of US studies have found that social support is not as strongly related to PTSD as coping strategies (Benotsch et al., 2000; Koenen et al., 2003; Sutker et al., 1995), they do find that avoidance of traumatic memories and difficulty in disclosing memories are related to PTSD development. This is likely to be a methodological artefact, since different types of social support are known to influence different types of coping strategies and vice versa.

In their seminal paper, Cohen and Wills (1985) propose two social support hypotheses - main effect, and buffering. In terms of the reconciliation of traumatic memories, main-effect social support refers to the type of support that promotes reconciliation of traumatic memories. Social support is sought in order to talk about experiences and add meaning through processing, whilst also supporting the individual emotionally. Buffering social support refers to the type of social support that perpetuates posttraumatic symptoms either in the short or long term. Social support provides a safe haven protecting against the confrontation of traumatic memories; thus veterans are able to avoid their experiences. From this, the important difference between types and utilisation of social support networks can be appreciated.

Hunt and Robbins (2001b) interviewed UK WWII veterans to assess the different types and uses of social support from a qualitative perspective. Support was found for the main-effect and buffering hypotheses but with different networks playing different roles. Wives and families provided physical care, as well as practical and emotional support, but discussion of war time experiences was avoided in order to limit distress and to maintain a safe haven away from traumatic memories. Consistent with the buffering model, wives and families supported the avoidance of traumatic memories. Veterans' associations and comrades provided an opportunity to share memories through mutual

reminiscence aiding the reconciliation of traumatic memories through narrative. Consistent with the main-effect model, comrades supported the processing of traumatic memories.

Contrasting results were found with a group of Falklands War veterans who were more likely to use comrades to buffer against traumatic memories and family members to aid processing (Burnell, Coleman, & Hunt, 2006). It was suggested that these differences might be because the Falklands veterans were currently serving personnel, in which case comrades may be perceived as family and the military environment maintained as a safe haven. The differences could also be attributed to cohort differences, but this highlights the importance of in-depth qualitative analysis across the lifespan.

Dominant social narratives past and present: Social perception of a particular war or conflict is portrayed through the homecoming (celebrations or demonstrations), and the media representation of the war during and after (Halbwachs, 1992; Hunt & McHale, 2006). These media representations and the individual memories of members of society subsequently become part of public memory; they become the public narrative.

The importance of the homecoming experience is highlighted in a study that examined the contribution of factors to current PTSD symptomatology for US Vietnam veterans (Johnson, Lubin, Rosenheck, Fontana, Southwick, & Charney, 1997). The authors found that homecoming stress was a greater predictor of PTSD than combat exposure, childhood and civilian traumas, and stressful life events. Specifically, the greater negative interpersonal interaction, social withdrawal, and feelings of shame and resentment, the greater were the levels of PTSD (see also Fontana & Rosenheck, 1994b).

When one reflects on the controversial nature of the Vietnam War, the result of this study can be expected. It is well documented, both anecdotally and empirically, that the greater the feelings of gratitude and pride, the more able veterans are to come to terms with their participation in war, not only immediately after war (Burnell, Coleman, & Hunt, 2006), but also some 50 or more years after. For instance, Hautamäki and Coleman (2001) found that the unusually low levels of PTSD even among POWs (<10%), and high levels of general well-being in a group of Finnish WWII veterans, were in part attributable to the continued gratitude of society. The veterans' private narratives of

protecting Finland's independence were coherent with, and supported by, the public narrative. Thus, positive societal responses to war provide a positive public narrative that support the individual's experience, and justification of war (Clipp & Elder, 1996; Davies, 2001). Furthermore, the importance of national commemoration can be understood if one sees it as the formal demonstration of an appreciative public narrative. This provides a positive environment in which veterans are able to share (Tarlow, 1999).

Whilst literature regarding the importance of the dominant social narrative would imply a simple relationship, in that positive reception leads to low instances of PTRs, there is research to the contrary. In a group of Falklands veterans, those reporting PTSD symptoms were more likely to feel inappropriately treated as popular heroes (O'Brien & Hughes, 1991). The disparity between personal feelings in the aftermath of war (the personal narrative), and feelings of society (the public narrative), highlighted the differences in societal perceptions. This incongruence made relating and talking to those who had not been to war difficult and it was consequently avoided. The importance of congruent personal and public narratives appears vital if societal support is to aid the reconciliation of traumatic memories; to talk about their experiences, veterans need to feel realistically valued, and understood (Davies, 2001).

Halbwachs (1992) presents a concept of collective memory as the mechanism behind the public narrative. Arguing from a sociological perspective, collective memory is perceived as a language, which allows us to communicate and relate to one another. When individuals reflect upon their lives, they do so with both personal and collective memories. Since war occurs within the public domain, the private and public nature of war memories held by the veteran cannot be separated. To quote; "the individual remembers through the group, and the memory of the group manifests itself in the individual memory" (Halbwachs, 1992, pp. 31). It is a mistake to perceive people's memories as an independent phenomenon (Hunt & McHale, 2006). Individual memories are influenced when society changes its perception towards wars through media representations in books, newspapers, news reports, film, for instance. Social frameworks of memory are not the result of individual memory, nor do they pre-exist with memories inserted into them. Rather, the frameworks of collective memory are

the reconstructed summation of individual thought, which is in accordance with the dominant thought of society. We acquire memories with others, and we recall them in society. Societal opinion at the time of recall or narration influences how the memory is retold and, in turn, the opportunity for reconciliation.

If Halbwachs is correct in his assertion that individual memory is reliant on the frameworks of collective memory, then consideration must be given to the impact of public narratives on veterans years after the experience of war. Both the narrative held by the war generation, and the narrative held by subsequent generations, must be investigated. It has been suggested that public narratives derive social inclusiveness, and that the more coherent the narrative the more powerful the effects (Nelson, 2003). The problem arises when the coherent, powerful, public narrative is not informed by experience of veterans, but by discrepant information from media and academia. The result is that the personal narrative of the veteran, at best becomes segregated and may not be shared with other members of society or, at worst, it is perceived as incorrect or worthless, both of which have implications for the opportunity to process memories resulting in reconciliation.

1.3 The Special Nature of Traumatic Memory

Course predictors of PTRs, including social support, and how these lead to the presence of traumatic memory have been discussed. Attention is now turned to the nature of traumatic memory at the cognitive and neurobiological levels. Results from cognitive and neurobiological studies suggest that traumatic memory is unlike autobiographical memory and that these differences are both structural and functional. This research explains the symptoms of PTRs, and how integrating traumatic events into the autobiographical memory, and achieving reconciliation, whilst difficult, is possible.

1.3.1 The Nature of Traumatic Memory: Cognitive Perspective

When events of intense emotion are experienced, adrenaline and corticosterone are released, and together with activation of the amygadaloid complex, emotional events are preferentially retained (Brewin, 2001). This relationship is curvilinear; whilst emotion experienced during the event allows focus on central details, excessive emotion impacts adversely on ability to retain

central details. This results in the development of traumatic memory, which is characterised by two different types of memory. First, memory of the event is vivid, sensory, and detailed. Second, the narrative account of the event is fragmented, disorganised, and contains gaps (Foa, Molner, & Cashman, 1995).

Brewin, Dalgleish, and Joseph (1996) propose a model to explain the two types of memory associated with trauma, which are verbal and situational. The narrative aspect of the memory relates to the operation of the *verbally accessible memory* (VAM) system. Verbal memory for the trauma is partially integrated within autobiographical memory, and can be accessed deliberately when required. The re-experiencing of flashbacks relates to the operation of the *situationally accessible memory* (SAM) system. In this system, flashbacks are automatically and involuntarily triggered by situational reminders of the trauma (see Figure 1).
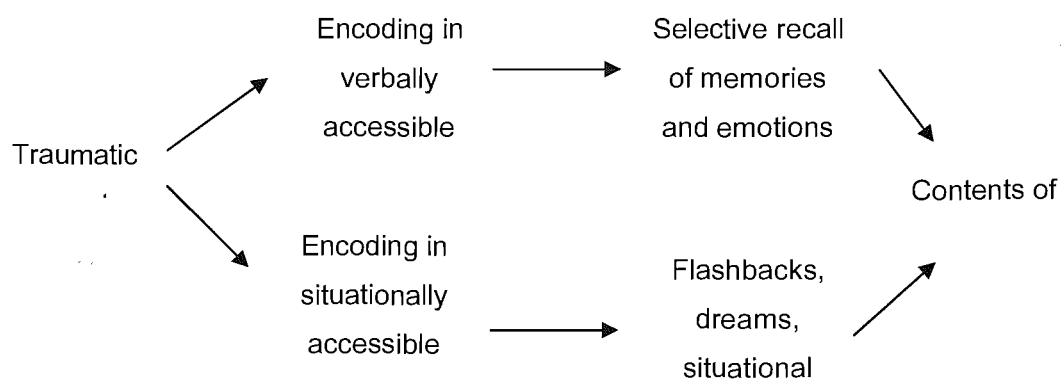
Figure 1. Pathways of verbally and situationally accessible levels of memory.
From Brewin et al (1996).

Halligan, Clark, and Ehlers (2002), provide an explanation for this duality. In an analogue study, they found that data-driven processing (concentrating on dissociated sounds and images) was more strongly associated with PTSD-like memory when compared to conceptual processing (concentrating on meaning and sequence).

The dual representation of VAM and SAM also relates to the concepts of implicit and explicit memory. Memories are traumatic due to the implicit nature of intrusive vivid details (Foa, Steketee, & Rothbaum, 1989). Due to their unconscious nature, cues associated with the original traumatic experience can trigger the intrusion of the implicit traumatic memory into consciousness, which

results in flashbacks. The explicit aspect of the traumatic memory is the fragmented narrative that can be deliberately and consciously recalled (Ehlers & Clark, 2000; Hunt & Robbins, 1998). However, because this is under deliberate control, confronting the emotional aspects of the memory can be avoided. It is these separate but co-existing types of memory that result in the threatening and uncontrollable nature of a traumatic memory. The two must be integrated for recovery.

The cognitive processing model of reactions to trauma (Creamer, Burgess, & Pattison, 1992) provides convergent evidence for the concept of processing and integration. This model is based on the idea that PTRs result from traumatic events because the individual enters the situation with pre-existing beliefs about the world, which are challenged by the experience (see also Janoff-Bullman, 1992). As Horowitz (1986) asserted, this new information must be integrated into existing beliefs for recovery to occur; the experience must be processed. For processing to occur, the individual must be exposed to traumatic cues which leads to intrusions, and a desire to avoid reminders of the event. Until the memory is processed, there remains a vicious cycle of intrusion and avoidance. This complements the earlier work of Lang (1985) and Foa et al. (1989), and the formation of the fear network in the aftermath of trauma, which prevents access to memories.

In terms of reconciliation, shorter durations of intrusion are related to PTSD symptoms and avoidance, whereas longer durations are associated with lower PTSD symptoms. It is suggested that longer duration allows for extinction of the fear network, and processing the event verbally (arguably through the creation of a narrative) with social support. Avoidance predicted the maintenance of PTSD symptoms. Understandably, cognitive processing theories have been found to be the best predictors of the maintenance of PTSD symptoms, and cognitive processing therapies have had much success in treating PTSD in war veterans (Monson, Schnurr, Resick, Friedman, Young-Xu, & Stevens, 2006).

1.3.2 The Nature of Traumatic Memory: Neurobiological Perspective

A number of brain structures and functions are affected by the experience of trauma, and/or the development of PTRs. Specifically, these are the

hippocampus and the amygdala (Bremner, Staib, Kaloupek, Southwick, Soufer, & Charney, 1999), and Broca's area (van der Kolk, 2001b).

Before the experience of trauma, or onset of PTRs, the hippocampus and the amygdala are implicated in the processing of emotionally charged events. The hippocampus plays a vital role in learning and memory. It assesses potential threat and assembles incoming stimuli with existing memory factors such a context, and temporal and spatial dimensions. Fundamentally, the hippocampus is involved in explicit/declarative memory. Pretrauma, the amygdala is implicated in the evaluation of the emotional meaning of incoming stimuli at both the cortical and subcortical levels (LeDoux, 1998). In addition, this area integrates internal representations of the external world as memory images with emotional experiences. The amygdala then guides emotional behavioural responses via projections to the hypothalamus and the hippocampus. In the presence of trauma, stress-induced increases in the levels of glucocorticoids decrease hippocampal activity, and prolonged stress eventually leads to the death of hippocampal cells. In addition, high levels of amygdalar stimulation interferes with the function of the hippocampus, which results in the subcortical memory of trauma existing outside of temporal, spatial or contextual association, and out of cortical control. Finally, Broca's area is involved in the application of semantic representations to personal experiences in order to allow communication of these events.

Particular changes to these areas include; decreased hippocampal volume (Bremner, Krystal, Southwick, & Charney, 1995; Villarreal et al., 2002), which is unique to PTRs, rather than the experience of trauma per se (Lindauer et al., 2004), and particularly related to long-term chronic PTSD (Bonne et al., 2001). Competing hypotheses concerning the aetiology of these changes relate to whether differences are caused by the onset of PTSD, or a predisposition in pretrauma brain structure and function. Recently, evidence has been found for the predisposition hypothesis, which suggests that smaller than average hippocampal volume predisposes individuals to develop PTSD in the aftermath of traumatic exposure (Gilbertson et al., 2002).

Activation of the hippocampus and right amygdala during flashbacks represents functional change (Liberzon et al., 1999; Protopopescu et al., 2005; Rauch et al., 2000). Also, change has been found in the activation of right

sensory areas during flashbacks leading to decreased activation of Broca's area during traumatic exposure (van der Kolk, 2001b).

In conclusion, research regarding neuroanatomical changes in the aftermath of trauma, as well as symptoms relating to PTSD, supports the argument that traumatic memory is represented by a duality of memory. This links to the work of Brewin (2001), in that information in the SAM and VAM systems needs to be integrated in order to prevent involuntary triggering of detailed sensory information. With this change, the narrative produced by VAM will become more complete and coherent.

1.4 The Impact of Trauma on the Development of the Personal Narrative

Personal narratives are created in order to sustain a sense of purpose, meaning, and unity from diverse experiences occurring throughout life. The life story theory of narrative identity proposed by McAdams (1993) posits that the life review process is the pinnacle event of life, and life review reflects upon the personal narrative that has been created throughout the lifespan.

The concept of the life story and that of narrative intelligence (Randall, 1999) is based upon the principle that we are naturally predisposed to structure our lives into a story. From birth, we develop within a culture of storytelling, with main characters, plot lines, twists, and motivations. These aspects are brought to the fore during adolescence when we begin to structure our own lives as a story, because for the first time we have an understanding of our past, an awareness of the present, and we look forward to the future (McAdams, 1993). It is the motivational element of the life story that influences the integration of traumatic memories into the personal narrative (Woike & Matic, 2004).

Arguing from a social-cognitive perspective, Staudinger (2001) suggests that life reflection occurs throughout the adult lifespan, once concepts of coherence (Habermas & Bluck, 2000) and story factors (McAdams, 2001) have been learned. Whilst life reflection serves different functions at different life stages, at all ages it serves to provide self-insight and self-critique. Younger adults self-reflect in order to form identity, middle aged adults reflect in order to become generative, and older adults reflect in order to integrate the story and gain wisdom (Erikson, 1994). These concepts have been empirically supported by Webster and McCall (1999). Furthermore, younger and older adults reminisce

at the same frequency, and at a higher frequency than middle-aged adults (Staudinger, 2001).

In terms of war experience, it is its extraordinary nature that makes meaningful integration problematic within the personal narrative (D. P. McAdams, personal communication, July 18, 2004) and with other autobiographical memories (Bluck & Habermas, 2001). The coherence of narratives indicates the level of integration and, in turn the stability of identity over the life course (Habermas & Bluck, 2000). Trauma disrupts this process.

Janoff-Bulman's influential theory of *shattered assumptions* suggests that a traumatic event is difficult to integrate into autobiographical memory due to disparity between the traumatic event and other autobiographical memories (Janoff-Bullman, 1985; Janoff-Bullman, 1992). The narrative of the traumatic event is fragmented due to cognitive and neurobiological changes, and exists outside our integrative schemata as a decontextualised memory. When re-experienced, it feels as though it is happening in the present, as opposed to happening in the past, which adds to its threatening nature. Clinically, we understand this as a flashback. This echoes Pierre Janet's dissociation and breakdown in the adaptation to trauma. Janet distinguishes two different types of memory for traumatic events; traumatic and narrative. Traumatic memory repeats the past in the present, and narrative memory narrates the past as past (Janet, 1909).

Since the 1900s researchers have investigated the nature of the fragmented narrative and the simultaneous re-experiencing of traumatic memories, and why they are difficult to reconcile and integrate. Janet (1909) and Freud (1958) are two of the famous forefathers, but more recently Edna Foa and Bessel van der Kolk have been of great influence. In particular, these authors have independently focused on the influence of peritraumatic dissociation (dissociation at the time of the trauma), its role in affecting the encoding of the traumatic event in memory, fragmentation of the narrative, and subsequent importance of narrative integration and coherence. Research has been conducted with survivors of different traumatic events, such as war, natural disaster, rape, and road traffic accidents, and the majority of findings focus on the differences between the narratives of those with and without PTRs, and reduction of

symptoms with increasing integration into the narrative. With coherence comes reconciliation.

In a study conducted with female rape survivors, Zoellener, Alvarez-Conrad, and Foa (2002) found that trauma narratives of rape were harder to read when they were written by survivors with high PTSD symptoms. The narratives were more incoherent and fragmented in nature. Additionally, it has been found that traumatic memories are initially recalled as dissociated mental images of sensory and affective elements (Amir, Stafford, Freshman, & Foa, 1998). It is only over time that the trauma narrative emerges as an explicit and integrated personal narrative (van der Kolk & Fisler, 1995). These studies indicate that, in cases of severe peritraumatic dissociation, and therefore in the presence of a highly fragmented narrative, recovery from PTRs may be difficult to achieve. This might be because high levels of peritraumatic dissociation have been linked to avoiding confrontation of the traumatic memory, thus inhibiting the possibility of reconciliation. For cases with no dissociation, it is argued that by encouraging individuals to experience flashback memories of the traumatising event, the vivid details of the event can be integrated into the narrative, which increases coherence and meaning (cf. Creamer et al., 1992).

Tuval-Mashiach and colleagues (2004) investigated the interaction between narrative development and cognitive processing. The authors analysed the narratives of survivors of a violent attack over a four month period. The narratives at first were incoherent, unstructured, fragmented, and lacked meaning. Over the course of four months narrative construction was related to decrease in PTSD symptoms, and positive world and self views. It was concluded that creation of a coherent narrative encouraged cognitive processing of the event, which led to the recovery of symptoms and the rebuilding of shattered assumptions (Tuval-Mashiach, Freedman, Bargai, Boker, Hadar, & Shalev, 2004).

There are also neurobiological explanations for the fragmented nature of trauma narratives, and how trauma impacts on the personal narrative and subsequent integration. Attention within neurobiology has recently turned to the areas of the brain that are involved in narrative comprehension and production (Mar, 2004). The neuropsychology of narrative has revealed that a network of frontal, temporal, and cingulate areas are required for comprehension and

production, including theory of mind, and sequencing of events in a story-like manner. Lanius et al. (2004) compared a traumatised group with PTSD, and a group who had experienced trauma but with no symptoms of PTSD. Greater functional connectivity in the right hemisphere was found for the PTSD group, whereas greater functional connectivity in the left hemisphere was found for the non PTSD group. It would appear that trauma also affects areas required to reconcile through integration via the creation of a coherent narrative. In terms of dissociation, Ray et al. (2006) determined that slow abnormal brainwaves generated from the left ventrolateral frontal cortex were associated with the presence of dissociation.

Studies focusing on both the integration of flashback details into the trauma narrative and neurobiological change associated with therapy found that increased integration (measured as narrative coherence) correlated with changes in the structure and function of synapses and brain structures (Liggan & Kay, 1999). As Michelle Crossley (2000) asserts, whilst traumatic experiences produce a fragmented narrative, the ability to rebuild and reconstruct through narrative, or the life story schema (Bluck & Habermas, 2000), can aid the reconciliation of traumatic memories.

Westwood has found success in applying story telling principles as therapy to younger peacekeeping returnees (Westwood, Black, & Mclean, 2002). However, this is a new venture and it may not be appropriate to apply the same principles to older veterans without further investigation. Furthermore, the focus of this venture is to treat young veterans in order to return them to military service. It might be that younger veterans need help when returning to a civilian environment, which could require a different type of therapeutic intervention. Narrative Exposure Therapy (NET) has been found to be an effective intervention with child victims of war and refugee populations, and may be suitable intervention for war veterans (Neuner, Schauer, Klaschik, Karunakara, & Elbert, 2004). NET is based on the evolution of a coherent narrative over consecutive therapy sessions. As researchers, we need to further investigate the specific factors that may aid the reconciliation of traumatic war memories at each stage of a veteran's life in order to provide targeted therapy.

Despite convergent evidence supporting the special nature of traumatic memory, some researchers have found no difference in the coherence of trauma

narratives between those with and without PTRs, measured as PTSD (Gray & Lombardo, 2001). This research can be criticised. First, the finding that the coherence of trauma narratives does not differ between those with and without PTSD may return to the previous debate concerning the usefulness of the PTSD diagnosis criteria. The difference between trauma narratives of those with and without PTRs may be quantitative rather than qualitative, supporting the concept of a continuum. Second, participants were asked to write about a traumatic event, a positive life event, and a negative life event but there was no control to ensure that the traumatic event written about was the event leading to the PTSD symptoms. Recall could have been avoided and another event written about, meaning that PTSD symptoms would have been recorded but no fragmentation found in the written disclosure.

Rubin, Feldman, and Beckham (2004) studied specific traumatic memories in a group of veterans and found no evidence of fragmentation. Fragmentation in this study was defined at the local level, meaning that events of memories were complete in the retelling of the traumatic episode. However, this study fails to consider integration as an element of coherence. Although at the local level trauma may not have disrupted and fragmented the narrative, at the overall level of the personal narrative there may be a lack of meaning and integration, which is another form of fragmentation (Tuval-Mashiach et al., 2004).

It is important to note that, by making the traumatic event central to the life story, PTSD symptoms can be exacerbated (Rubin, 2005). In a study concerning the narratives of Gulf War Syndrome (GWS), Susie Kilshaw (2004) found that poor health was associated with narratives that revolved around the perpetuation and terminal nature of GWS. Similarly, Berntsen, Willert, and Rubin (2003) found that, whilst fragmentation was not associated with PTSD symptoms in a group of students, their traumatic identity was; it had become central to the life story.

Fragmentation in the narrow definition might not always be associated with PTSD, but previous research suggests that narrative is an important concept regarding integration. Coherence is vital, but not when it is defined in the context of a fragmented sentence of paragraph (i.e. Gray & Lombardo, 2001; Rubin, Feldman, & Beckham, 2004). Only when the memory can be recalled explicitly

as an important and emotional memory relating to other experiences does the memory lose its threatening and unconscious nature. Thus, fragmentation is not the defining feature of a traumatic memory.

The perception of trauma as a meaningful event also links to research concerning positive interpretation in the aftermath of trauma. Change of outlook in response to trauma is an informative line of investigation. Posttrauma symptomatology is lower for individuals who place meaning on the event in ways of positive outcomes, than for those who perceive the traumatic event as devastating and shattering (Elder & Clipp, 1989; Fontana & Rosenheck, 1998; Joseph, Williams, & Yule, 1993). If the traumatic event is perceived as part of the life story, and is linked to other elements of the life story, it need not be detrimental to integrate traumatic events; rather it may aid reconciliation.

1.5 Additional Impact of Ageing and Cohort on Trauma and Reconciliation

1.5.1 Additional Impact of Ageing and Long Term Effects of the Presence of Trauma

Whilst traumatic events may affect veterans in the immediate aftermath, they can also affect veterans in later life. There are two reasons for this. It may be that unreconciled trauma impacts in later life because it has remained prevalent throughout life. For instance, veterans report posttraumatic symptoms that have not diminished in over 40 years after WWII (Schreuder, Kleijn, & Rooijmans, 2000), and even 70 years after WWI (Hamilton & Workman, 1998).

Alternatively, posttrauma symptoms may present in later life after being absent for many years, or for the first time in the lifespan. In a longitudinal study carried out with older POWs, evidence was found for the posttrauma symptom pattern of immediate onset, gradual decline, and increasing symptoms in later life (Lindman Port, Engdahl, & Frazier, 2001). Whilst it has been suggested that younger, middle-aged, and older adults do not differ in the extent to which posttrauma symptoms are presented or the types of coping strategies employed, there are factors associated with normal ageing that influence the effectiveness of these coping strategies.

First, damage to physical health may remind the individual of helplessness, isolation, and fear associated with a wound incurred during combat

(Ong & Carter, 2001). Second, loss of status and distraction of work upon retirement may also heighten the impact of trauma, as free time allows for frequent rumination (Busuttil, 2004). Third, the issue of social support must also be revisited. Through the life course, veterans may lose comrades who have helped them to avoid their memories and those who could aid reconciliation (Hunt & Robbins, 2001b). It is also important to note that, as individuals age, for some there is a natural desire to reduce the size of social networks, according to the socioemotional selectivity theory (Carstensen, 1993). Fourth, the natural effects of cognitive ageing result in re-experiencing memories in later life that have been successfully repressed for decades (Floyd, Rice, & Black, 2002). Finally, it is important to review research focusing on the important developmental task of the search for meaning in later life. Research has shown that searching for meaning can be difficult in the presence of trauma, and the natural desire to perform life review in later life can bring back memories of long forgotten trauma. As argued by Baltes and Lang (1997), how well individuals cope with change is in part due to available resources. For this reason, the issues of cognitive ageing, social support, and search for meaning/life review are discussed in more detail in order to highlight the importance of facilitating reconciliation with younger veterans and to provide context for the experiences of older veterans.

1.5.1.1 Cognitive ageing.

Natural changes in cognitive ability may lead to the emergence of posttraumatic symptoms in later life. Floyd et al. (2002) postulate that age-related decrease in attention increases the likelihood of experiencing intrusive flashbacks. These flashbacks may heighten distress associated with traumatic memories.

The loss of attention associated with cognitive ageing can be explained by the two part process of facilitation (selection of information) and inhibition (repression of information), which becomes less effective with age. Research focusing on changes in attention have determined that older adults are distracted from goals more often, or react to irrelevant information (Hasher & Zacks, 1988). Older adults with posttrauma symptoms may find that, after years of inhibiting and switching their attention from ruminations, this is no longer

possible. Posttrauma symptoms may worsen with age due to the inability to avoid confronting traumatic memories.

Changes in long term memory can be divided into changes within explicit (episodic) memory and implicit (semantic) memory. Implicit memory relates to subconscious imagery and due to its subconscious nature shows very little decline. Explicit memory relates to information regarding specific events, and the narrative surrounding them and can significantly decline (Smith & Earles, 1996). If ability to access explicit memories decreases with age, reconciliation in later life could be further hampered because the information needed to achieve coherence may be inaccessible. Furthermore, the stability of semantic memory and the decline of episodic memory may limit the efficacy of reconciliatory treatment in later life (Busuttil, 2004). Whilst controversial and not applicable to all ageing veterans, the impact of cognitive ageing highlights additional problems associated with the task of reconciliation in later life, and the importance of achieving reconciliation earlier in life.

1.5.1.2 Social support.

Just as social support has been found to be fundamental for younger veterans it is equally important for older veterans, but social support networks are also affected by the ageing process. For instance, loss of support through illness or death of comrades or family results in reduced social support networks as we age (Hunt & Robbins, 2001b). Another reason is the deliberate reduction of social support networks, which is specific to later life. Laura Carstensen (1992) and colleagues (Isaacowitz, Smith, & Carstensen, 2003) argue that this natural decrease in social activity is an adaptive mechanism of successful ageing because the older adult can devote more emotional resources to fewer relationships. This has been supported across older cohorts (Lansford, Sherman, & Antonucci, 1998).

As long ago as the 1960s, Cumming and Henry (1967) documented this downward trend in social activity, but interpreted it as isolation and disengagement from society. Carstensen casts a positive light on this decrease, suggesting that social activity does not indicate social support. As one ages, the resources available to invest in networks decrease, and so older adults maintain the most important and fruitful contacts, these being close friends and family. In

terms of the presence of trauma in later life, selecting a highly supportive network may be seen as an adaptive strategy for reconciling traumatic memories.

Two factors might complicate this relationship. First, as previously stated, researchers have demonstrated that family members may aid the avoidance of memories rather than reconciliation (Hunt & Robbins, 2001b). Second, the friends invested in are emotionally significant individuals with whom the older adult feels most close. For war veterans, it is feasible to suggest that these individuals may be comrades. Whilst this may be positive in some cases, a problem shared is not necessarily a problem halved. In a study conducted with Holocaust survivors, Isaacowitz et al. (2003) found these individuals experienced more negative emotional experiences within their social networks because they were composed of fellow Holocaust survivors. Furthermore, communication could not be facilitated because these relationships were marked by some degree of trauma-related negative affect, and may have served as reminders of the past. It may be a great oversimplification to suggest social support networks, which encourage reconciliation through supportive reminiscence, are the key to dealing with trauma in later life. Indeed, negative social interactions may impact to a greater extent on individuals than general support received (Krause, 1995). Once again, the type of social support is fundamental.

1.5.1.3 Search for meaning and life review.

Remembering traumatic events may be too painful, but to try to forget events may diminish the importance of these memories and experiences, and result in loss of identity. In addition, as highlighted by the cognitive ageing literature, avoidance may no longer be possible.

As well as difficulty inhibiting memories, another age associated change is the life review process. The life review process occurs in later life and involves reflection upon a life story (Butler, 1963), through reminiscence (Wong & Watt, 1991). Coleman (1974) argues that this serves to maintain identity and self-esteem, and is supported by more recent research (Mills & Coleman, 2002). This process is evaluative and integrative and aids the construction of a coherent and meaningful life story (Haight, Coleman, & Lord, 1995).

Bruner (1999) argues that we live life forwards, but we can only understand it backwards by imposing structure and meaning. Accordingly, the

concept of the search for meaning builds into the life review process. To reconcile, coherence is vital (Coleman, 1999). Furthermore, coherence of narrative relates to well-being. As with the fragmented trauma narrative of earlier life, an incoherent and fragmented trauma narrative in later life is indicative of poor well-being (Sherman, 1994). It is not the content, but the coherence or integration of the narrative form that is vital for reconciliation.

When veterans reflect on the personal narrative, the presence of traumatic war memories can affect the process of life review. Those with difficulties reminiscing about the past are most likely to be those who have incurred trauma in earlier life (Coleman, 1999). Bender (1997) asserts that the presence of traumatic memories makes the process of life review challenging due to an understandable unwillingness to reflect on past traumatic events. In particular, Holocaust memories have received much attention and have been found to impact on the life review process (Hassan, 1997), and it is accepted that war and combat experience produce similar problems.

Reker (1997) defines meaning in life as having a sense of direction, a sense of order, a reason for existence, and a clear sense of personal identity. It is argued that older adults who have experienced trauma have a greater difficulty in finding meaning than those who have not (Krause, 2005). Fundamentally, Krause also determined that trauma incurred between the ages of 18-30 is particularly associated with finding meaning in life. In support of this, Conway and Holmes (2004) postulated that the reminiscence bump associated with later life focuses on incidences that occur at the age of 18-30. For the majority of veterans, war is experienced between these ages. Since meaning is gained from these experiences in later life, and individuals are more likely to reminisce about them, one can see the potential impact of unresolved war trauma in later life.

Whilst the life review process may resurrect traumatic symptoms, the process of life review and the search for meaning can subsequently aid the reconciliation of these traumatic memories (Frankl, 2004), but it may be harder than in earlier life due to loss of social support and cognitive ageing (Busuttil, 2004). In a venture carried out in conjunction with Veterans' Affairs Canada and the Royal Canadian Legion, Shaw and Westwood (2002) found that the concepts of restorying (Kenyon & Randall, 1999) and guided autobiography conducted with groups of WWII veterans could aid the reconciliation of traumatic

memories through the provision of social support. A number of other therapeutic life review techniques have also been documented by Fielden (1990) and Haight (1991) in the 1990s and more recently by Maercker (2002).

1.5.2 Cohort Differences and the Impact of Different Wars

When studying veterans of different ages, we are studying veterans of different wars, and these cohort differences must be considered. Each group of veterans represents individuals who have experienced different reasons for participation, different societal reactions in terms of justness of war and homecoming reactions (public narratives), different circumstances after service, and different attitudes to the stigma of mental illness (Fontana & Rosenheck, 1994b). All these factors influence the reconciliation process.

Glen Elder (1986) argues that war represents a turning point in the life of a young person. WWII presented opportunities to men and women that they may not have had otherwise; such as travel, training, responsibility at an earlier stage of life and, for US veterans, education after service through the GI Bill (Elder, Gimbel, & Ivie, 1991). In terms of age differences, Elder also found the older the service personnel at the time, the larger the impact of war, because the service interrupted an already established life. Indeed, Elder, Shanahan, and Clipp (1994) found that as age of mobilisation increased, financial and employment opportunities after service decreased. These personal positive or negative perceptions of war experience may aid understanding as to why some individuals reconcile their war experiences successfully and others do not. Whether they are cohort specific requires further investigation.

Another cohort difference is societal involvement in the conflict and subsequent reaction to veterans. US research investigating direct comparisons between the homecoming of WWII and Korean War veterans suggests that, due to stressful homecoming experiences, Korean War veterans experienced more negative outcomes associated with their service. They returned to a society that was not directly involved in the conflict, and was perceived to be unsupportive of the war effort and losses incurred by these veterans (McCranie & Hyer, 2000).

The Vietnam War is most famous for public controversy concerning the legality and morality of mobilising to war, and the negative social interactions experienced by veterans on return (Fleming, 1985). However, McCranie & Hyer

(2000) found that US Korean War veterans experienced more psychological maladjustment and higher suicide rates than both US WWII and the US Vietnam War veterans. The explanation was that, although the Vietnam War has remained controversial in public opinion, at least there is public opinion – there is a public narrative. Many Korean War veterans feel they have been forgotten by society. To add complexity to the debate a sample of Falklands veterans felt that they were treated too heroically by society (O'Brien & Hughes, 1991). As discussed earlier, the answer might lie in the disparity/congruence between the personal and public narratives of war (Davies, 2001).

Research has not looked at cohort differences in detail, but they represent important caveats. Cohort differences also apply to veterans of the same war, but different nationalities (i.e. Hautamäki & Coleman, 2001). As researchers, we need to focus on the treatment of veterans of different ages, in different countries, and of different wars if we are to gain a deeper understanding of the reconciliation of war trauma through narrative.

The ways in which narratives of war are transmitted across generations is a facet to this research that requires attention. If there is no common language, how can older veterans talk to younger members of society? The only avenue for these veterans is to talk to fellow veterans in order to reconcile their memories or to avoid confronting their memories. One factor that aids or hinders the reconciliation of traumatic war memories may therefore be a public narrative that has truth, meaning, and is supportive and demonstrative, irrespective of whether the war in question brought national pride and/or victory to the country.

1.6 Early Life Reconciliation: Narrative Coherence and Social Support

1.6.1 Conclusion and Research Aims

Research relating to the development of PTRs as exemplified by PTSD, the nature of traumatic memory, and the impact of society and social support, suggests many factors that may aid or hinder the reconciliation of traumatic war memories. However, the impact of these different factors throughout the lifespan can only be inferred from divergent research results. Trauma impacts on the ability to create a coherent life story due to the catastrophic nature of the experience, which results in a fragmented and disorganised narrative. Research

regarding narrative therapies argues that to reconcile these memories, coherence must develop from fragmentation. When memories are coherent, they are understood within the larger context of the life story. They can be explained and articulated, and contradictions between past and present attitudes can be recognised and evaluated. The aim of this research was to discover factors that aid and hinder the reconciliation of traumatic war memories throughout the lifespan methodically within one research project.

To achieve this, veterans of different wars were interviewed concerning their experiences of social support and societal support. By analysing narrative content, questions regarding the role of social support were addressed. It may be that a particular type of social support plays different roles depending on the context of the war and societal reaction to the veteran. Alternatively, the type of social support sought by and/or provided to the veteran might differ due to age. Narrative form analysed coherence as an indication of reconciliation, based on clinical literature. Comparisons were made between the experiences of social support for veterans who had coherent narratives, reconciled narratives, and incoherent narratives. This allowed conclusions to be drawn regarding the experience of social support, and the subsequent impact on the reconciliatory process within a diverse group of veterans.

These statements do not represent hypotheses to be tested; rather they represent the types of questions that were explored in collaboration with veterans in order to gain unique insight into the process of reconciliation throughout the life span.

CHAPTER TWO – METHODOLOGY

Narrative Psychology and the Study of War Experience: Narrative Coherence and Reconciliation

2.1 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is grounded in a constructivist concept of truth, and provides an opportunity to investigate issues from the perspective of individual experience, and particularly how we make sense of our lives and construct truth and reality (Camic, Rhodes, & Yardley, 2003; Eisner, 2003). In terms of the current research, there was a need to work at the level of the individual in order to understand how veterans perceive their experiences of social support and how this may relate to reconciliation. Since the concept of life story, narrative, and coherence is the focus of the thesis, narrative analysis was chosen as the most appropriate qualitative methodology. This chapter presents the principles of narrative psychology, and the development of a unique approach to narrative analysis developed specifically for this research.

2.2 Principles of Narrative Psychology

Narrative psychology is based on the assumption that we order our lives into a story to make meaning of our experiences. Whilst narrative analysis is an amalgamation of old and new approaches, common to all is the central importance of the *way* the story is structured above the contents of the story (Riessman, 1993). As highlighted in Chapter One, clinical work with trauma survivors indicates that trauma narratives are disorganised, fragmented and incoherent; they lack narrative characteristics. In terms of the purpose of the narrative, Susan Chase (2005) further argues that narratives are the product of retrospective *meaning making*, with the narrative being the end product of this process. The aim of the research was to understand how traumatic memories are reconciled, and analysis of the personal narratives provide insight into how traumatic memories are processed into a coherent story.

Over the years, a number of philosophers, anthropologists, sociologists, and psychologists have written extensively on the concept of narrative. From a theoretical perspective, the work of Sarbin, Polkinghorne, Ricoeur, and Bruner,

lie at the heart of narrative psychology, fuelling the *narrative turn* towards an acknowledgement that narrative is ever present in our communications.

Theodore Sarbin, argues that narrative is a root metaphor in psychology; it is a framework that guides subsequent investigation. Accordingly, narrative is an organising principle seen as the "symbolized account of actions of human beings that has a temporal dimension" (Sarbin, 1986, p 3). Furthermore, Gergen and Gergen (1986) suggest that it is through organisation that the narrative derives its power to add meaning to experiences. The narrative principle not only allows us to make sense of experiences, but also of our own narrative identity.

Speaking of both experience and identity, the philosopher Paul Ricoeur emphasises that time is fundamental in organising events through narrative, which is termed *emplotment*. Emplotment is a means of locating ourselves in the disordered events that occur *pre-narratively* (Ricoeur, 1988). The idea of plotting oneself in the narrative is echoed by Donald Polkinghorne (1988), who argues that a narrative plot creates coherence within the story by weaving narrative elements together. Polkinghorne also makes explicit what is implicit in the previous literature; making meaning through narrative is a cognitive process. Narrative analysis explicitly investigates the personal operations that create narrative meaning.

On this theme, the cognitive psychologist Jerome Bruner (1986; 1990; 1991) highlighted two ways of knowing about the world; the paradigmatic and the narrative. Paradigmatic is based on classification and categorization of information, and is consequently the approach used in the natural sciences. Narrative suggests that events are interpreted and connected by the individual to make meaning. This process stems from the cultural necessity to communicate our experiences to others in an organised, sequential story. Bruner emphasises that this is not a new way of thinking; even in the late 1800s understood that a cultural or *Volks* psychology was needed to complement experimental psychology.

Narrative allows us to study human experience from outside the conventional experimental perspective. In order to truly understand the human mind, and in the current study, the reconciliation of trauma we have to understand how individuals construct reality. This is based on how people

interpret life events based in the cultural influences of that society. This is the essence of the narrative approach to analysis.

Narrative psychology provides conceptual principles, but what makes the story *good*? Many researchers have highlighted the significance of coherence as a vital characteristic of a good story, both theoretically and empirically. Linde (1993) defines coherence as a property of the text, which represents the relationship between parts of the text and, consequently, the overall text. Coleman (1999) suggests that coherence comprises subjective truths, interpretations, emotions, unity/integration, purpose, and meaning as characteristics. Coherence is a "social obligation that must be fulfilled in order for the participants to appear as competent members of their culture" (Linde, 1993, p. 16). The necessity for an audience to understand the story has implications for identity, problem solving and sharing (McAdams, 2006). In the case of war trauma, veterans must have either an explicit audience (friends and comrades) to provide support for processing by listening, or an implicit audience (themselves or an autobiography/diary) to provide a means by which processing can be achieved by thinking through memories in a structured fashion.

For these reasons, coupled with clinical work regarding trauma narratives, coherence and the role of social support in achieving coherence was the focus of analysis in the current study.

When researching the experience of war there a number of challenges to be aware of particularly when asking veterans to recall their stories. A number of veterans have memory lapses – they cannot recall their memories. In other words, they are lacking autobiographical memories. However, this is a genuine, and important, symptom of trauma and the use of narrative methodology addresses this issue. A more pervasive challenge is that of false memories. In the most benign cases, these are genuinely believed by the veteran, and may affect them in a similar way to *factual* memories. But, there are instances of false memories, in particular when claiming compensation (Lynne & Belza, 1984). It may be argued that once again a narrative approach assesses coherence in emotional and autobiographical story content but this is something that must be considered.

2.3 Method of Analysis

Despite past research on narrative coherence, coherence has not been operationalised making the use of narrative coherence methodology problematic (Mishler, 1995). Fortunately there is no prescribed form of narrative analysis, and so a framework methodology was developed dependent on the interests and preferences of the research question (Yardley & Murray, 2004). Analysis was consequently based on narrative form and narrative content; where form refers to the way in which the narrative is structured and expressed (the coherence of the narrative), and content refers to what veterans talk about (social support). By linking coherence with analysis of social support in a two level approach, conclusions may be drawn regarding the role of social support in the reconciliation of traumatic war memories.

2.3.1. Narrative Coherence (Form)

The narrative coherence model presented in this paper is a synthesis of previous research including Baerger and McAdams (1999), Habermas and Bluck (2000), and Androutsopoulou, Thanopoulou, Economou, and Bafiti (2004) (see Burnell, Hunt, & Coleman, 2006). Baerger and McAdams (1999) present a model of life story coherence, which is the only full coding criteria for coherence and provided evidence that narrative coherence was significantly related to psychological well-being. (See Table 1). Within the criteria, Stein and Glenn's (1979) episodic analysis system, and Labov and Waletzky's (1997) high point analysis system were used as building blocks.

The Orientation and Structure Indices are based on the work of Stein and Glenn, who argue that narratives are packed with specific story-telling characteristics. These include orientation to main characters and temporal information, and presence of an event, an internal response, a reaction, a consequence, and resolution. This problematic event causes the protagonist (maybe the narrator) to respond and form a goal. Attempts to achieve this goal may lead to consequences, which may be positive or negative. Furthermore, as more of these episodes are narrated, the structure of the life story starts to take shape, and fundamentally, these episodes should relate to one another logically and causally. In the case of the trauma narrative, it is the existence of temporally

unrelated events within memory, which are both a cause of the continued trauma and sign of unreconciled trauma.

A sequential story is not enough to render it coherent. The story must have a point, an emotional evaluation and a moral lesson (Singer & Rexhaj, 2006). Interestingly, the Affect Index posits that narratives exist to convey emotionally significant information. Thus, stories will be organised around a high point when the action or emotion (either positive or negative) will be at its highest. After relating this high point, the emotional content is either resolved or diffused by the narrator (see Labov & Waletzky, 1997). When one associates this perspective with trauma narrative literature, the importance of emotional coherence as a criterion is highlighted. If stories are intended to communicate emotional experiences in order to find meaning, they have to be meaningful to the individual and their audience. The emotional content must also be organised and evaluated for the audience.

Finally, the Integration Index refers to the integration of experiences into the overall life story, and is seen as an important element of coherence. Many psychologists have written on the importance of integration in later life (Coleman, 1999; Erikson, 1994), which includes a uniting theme and absence of contradiction. There can be many explanations within a story as long as they do not contradict one another (Linde, 1993).

Evaluation of the operationalisation of narrative coherence draws parallels with other concepts of narrative coherence. Habermas and Bluck (2000) highlight the emergence of coherence as a developmental task, and emphasise the importance of global (overall) coherence within the personal narrative (see Table 2).

TABLE 1. *Life Story Coherence Coding Criteria.*

Type of Coherence	Definition
Orientation Index	The narrative introduces the main characters and locates the story in a specific temporal, social, and personal context. The narrative describes the habitual circumstances which serve as the parameters for the action of the story.
Structure Index	The narrative displays the structural elements of an episode system. Thus, the narrative has at least one of the following: an initiating event; an internal response to this event (e.g., a goal, a plan, thought, feeling); an attempt (e.g., to reach a goal, carry out a plan, remedy a crisis, resolve a state of emotional disequilibrium); and a consequence. These elements are presented in a causally and temporally logical way (eg., the initiating event precedes the response, which in turn precedes the attempt).
Affect Index	The narrative reveals something about the narrator, or about what the events described therein mean to the narrator; the narrative makes an evaluative point. The narrative uses emotion in order to make this evaluative point, employing explicit statements of feeling in order to create an affective tone or signify emotional meaning. Thus, the narrative uses tension, drama, humour, or pathos to communicate and emphasise the evaluative point.
Integration Index	The narrative communicates information in an integrated manner, expressing the meaning of the experiences described within the context of the larger story. Discrepancies, contradictions, and inconsistencies are eventually resolved, and the various narrative elements are synthesized into a unified life story. Although complexity, ambiguity, and differentiation may be used to indicate suspense, conflict, or growth, the narrative ultimately reconciles these disparate story elements with one another.

Note. Adapted from Baerger and McAdams (1999).

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TABLE 2. *Levels of Coherence within the Life Story.*

Type of Coherence	Definition
Temporal Coherence	Remembered events are temporally related to one another in a coherent narrative. In Western cultures, life narratives usually follow a linear chronological order.
Cultural Concept of Biographical Coherence	The inclusion of certain facts and events into the life story in accordance with cultural norms. Whilst these norms will differ with age, gender, and cultures, these norms help to structure the life story by constraining the narrator to include and discuss specific events and to explain deviations from the normal life pattern.
Causal Coherence	Also known as explanatory coherence, this is central to the structure of the life story, for without it there would be no story, only a series of events. Causal coherence links together events, explains contradictions, and explains discontinuity in the narrator's values or personality. Causal coherence can be achieved through either internal or external explanations. When these links are lacking or absent, the narrative is said to be incoherent.
Thematic Coherence	Created by establishing thematic similarity between various elements of life. Thematic coherence can be implicit, for instance the overall theme of the narrative may point to 'life as loving' or 'life as struggling'. Explicit thematic coherence may be exemplified by the presence of introductory of concluding statements that evaluate the narrative. Alternatively, comparisons may be drawn between several episodes. Finally, explicit thematic coherence may be exemplified by the presence of evaluative trajectories.

Note. Adapted from Habermas and Bluck (2000).

Global coherence is split into categories of temporal, biographical, causal, and thematic coherence. Temporal, biographical, and causal coherence complement the concept of structure as an element of coherence. Causal coherence also extends to coherence of e.g. personality traits and attitudes to provide an explanation for contradictions within the narrative. Thematic coherence echoes the concept of integration because coherence must be based on a credible theme which unites various experiences throughout life into one life story. The concept of linked events and chronological order is of importance in assessing coherence because it is seen to enable communication of our

experiences to others. Whilst global coherence is identified as being important within the personal narrative, these types of coherence are also applicable to the local coherence (within sections) of the narrative.

Habermas and Bluck (2000) do not refer explicitly to emotional coherence but, as previously discussed, consistent affect is an important element of the narrative. A paper written by Androutsopoulou et al. (2004), supports the work of Baerger and McAdams (1999) (see Table 3). In an empirical study, the authors assessed the types of coherence seen during consecutive sessions of narrative therapy. Although only focusing on local coherence, of significance to the current research is the importance placed on comprehensibility and evoking empathy at both the manifest and latent levels of the narrative. In their criteria, comprehensibility included the relatedness of events and explanation of contradictions, which echo the elements of integration and thematic coherence cited above. Evoking empathy referred to acknowledging and responding to the needs of the audience and being in touch with emotions, which was defined as not venting or ignoring emotions but acknowledging and processing them as part of the overall narrative. This component is therefore in line with the affective element of criteria proposed by Baerger and McAdams (1999).

TABLE 3. *Assessing Coherence in the Life Story.*

Type of Coherence	Definition
Comprehensibility	Criterion 1: Acknowledging/explaining contradictions. Criterion 2: Thinking in a relational manner.
Evoking Empathy	Criterion 3: Acknowledging/responding to the needs to the audience. Criterion 4: Being in touch with emotions.

Note. Take from Androutsopoulou et al. (2004).

Due to the specificity of the narrative material in the current research, criteria from previous studies were used as a basis from which to develop a more specific set of criteria. For instance, Habermas and Bluck (2000) do not provide in-depth analysis of narrative coherence and, in the same vein, the criteria of Androutsopoulou et al. (2004) are also criticised. The criteria proposed by Baerger and McAdams (1999) form the basis of the model, but do not focus on

reconciliation. These criteria were supplemented by research within the trauma and reconciliation literature.

The model was first applied and adapted to narratives of 10 WWII veterans. After applying the model to these narratives, all criteria within the model were successfully applied to the remaining veterans' narratives without needing to be adapted or supplemented with additional criteria. This demonstrates the model's transferability and effectiveness in assessing narrative coherence across age and cohort. Quotes from the interviews are presented as examples of each criterion. Table 4 contains the coding criteria.

2.3.1.1 Orientation and structure.

The orientation and structure criteria (O1/O2, S3a) relate to local coherence and were taken from the work of Baerger and McAdams (1999) in order to recognise basic story telling principles within the narrative. Consistency of tense use was added based on the work of O'Kearney and Perott (2006), in that using present tense during narration of war memories symbolises the past being lived as the present (cf. Janet, 1909). Emphasis on specific types of coherence (temporal and causal) was influenced by Habermas and Bluck (2000), which added depth and detail to the analysis. Criterion S3b was an inductive addition to the analysis due to the WWII veterans' explicit awareness of temporal coherence, such as 'it broke part of the hinge of the ramp [2] ah [4] but I've jumped a gun' [JI L260:261].

TABLE 4. *Coding Criteria for Coherence (Narrative Form).*

Type of Coherence		Coding Criteria
Basic Storytelling Principles	Orientation and Structure	• **O1** Introduction of main characters (scene setting). • **O2** Temporal, social, historical and personal context. • **S3a** Structural elements of an episodic system presented with causal and temporal coherence (analysis does not include contradictions). Structural elements include an initiating event, an internal response, an attempt, and a consequence. Tense use is consistent (no switching from past to present tense during episodes). • **S3b** Explicit recognition of temporal coherence ie 'I've jumped the gun/where was I?' Explicit recognition of storytelling.
Emotional and thematic evaluation of lived experience	Affect Integration	• **A4** Past or present emotional evaluation of what described events mean to the narrator communicated through explicit statements of emotion. • **A5** Consistency of verbal and non-verbal within a meaning unit. (Unless otherwise stated affect is consistent). • **I6** Meaning of events/experiences is expressed within the context of the larger story. This includes a coherent theme linking all the events (theme may be explicit and/or implicit). • **I7** Contradictions between events or the narrator's personality traits or values, emotional evaluation, or changes in attitudes are acknowledged and explained in a causally coherent manner. • **I8** Presence of fragmentation of the narrative defined as long pauses and broken speech, and unfinished sentences. Also, defined as incongruent information within the context of the larger narrative. (Unless otherwise stated the narrative is fluid).

It is important to identify these story-telling principles because without them the audience cannot be captured or entertained (Mandler, 1984; McAdams, 2006). This is vital if veterans are to have a supportive environment in which to process their memories. Whilst the content of the story may differ, the basic elements that constitute *a story* should not. For instance, the following quote from an Iraq veteran contains this story structure; it has an event, an internal response, an action, a consequence, and resolution.

> so...shortly after that...the pressures that caused me to get divorced...[KB: right]...and then...having to start life again with er...basically a pack back...like being in the jungle as I call it...and trying to get onto the ladder again...which was very difficult...and then...I got myself together and...I went to work as a civilian on the Army camps...[]...and I was attached to the Army air corps...for two years...up in *[town]*...and being an ex-regular...and no...chefs up there...I used to go on helicopters...down training in down in...*[town]*...with all the Paras...I even had my own uniform...enjoyed the drops...really...well...and I lasted over two years...and erm...thought...one of the guys says why don't you get back to uniform...so I thought...don't want to go back into regular...so...join the TA...so I went through all the fitness again...passed it...at the age of...thirty odd...[QI L23:34]

2.3.1.2 Affect.

Affect and integration are vital aspects of narrative coherence because they highlight complexities of the narrative. If stories are perceived as being too simple they cannot realistically reflect lived experience (Rosenwald, 1992). Furthermore, emotional evaluation reflects the ability to express congruent emotion of traumatic events, which is especially indicative of reconciliation.

The affect criterion (A4) was influenced by Baerger and McAdams (1999), and captures the emotional evaluation contained within the narrative. A4 is only applied to explicit statements of emotion. A5 represents unreconciled emotion displayed either verbally or non-verbally, in accordance with the criteria of Androutsopoulou et al. (2004). From initial application of these criteria to the interviews, a number of emotional inconsistencies within the narratives were found and inclusion of criterion A5 was necessary. Both affect criteria are applied at the local level. Taken together, these two affect criteria allow for a holistic evaluation of the emotional content of the narrative.

An example of consistent affect and emotional evaluation comes from a World War II veteran. In this quotation, he talks about taking the salute from currently serving troops on a recent Remembrance Day parade in Canada. The

meaning of the event is evaluated and communicated, and verbal and non-verbal affect (laughing/crying) is consistent:

> ...the Burma Veterans [1] those who could were asked to join in the erm...[]...the march so we marched around the...and yeah you felt good there...and the Governor General took [1] the salute and you could even straighten your shoulders and *[puffs out chest] [laughs]* and it felt [2] it felt good [1] but then...er [1] after we'd done that...er...which wasn't a very long march thank goodness...but erm...they put us all on the side of the road...and then they had all the Canadian *[tearful]* present day troops *[tearful]* march past and salute us [4] that made you feel good too [5] [ET L589:598]

2.3.1.3 Integration.

Integration represents the last element of narrative coherence, and is split into three types: the presence of a uniting theme (I6), explanation or absence of contradictions (I7), and presence/absence of fragmentation and disorganisation (I8).

Criterion I6 is a necessary criterion as it relates to the presence of a theme within the narrative that brings experiences together in a meaningful way, and/or advances lived experience in a way that could provide a meaningful message for future generations (McAdams, 2006). From the perspective of reconciling war trauma, a theme is necessary because it gives meaning to events that challenge the coherence of the life story. I6 represents global coherence, and provides a means of determining the extent to which war experiences have been integrated into the life story.

This criterion was present across age groups and cohorts as demonstrated by one Falklands War veteran. Forty at the time of the study, this veteran explained how his experience in the Falklands had a positive impact on the way he felt about everyday life and in this sense, the experience is integrated as a beneficial experience. There is emotional evaluation in this excerpt, but it falls into the I6 category rather than the A4 category because he indicates how his Falklands War experience has affected subsequent perceptions of life:

> ...I often say [2] [] I say to people that know...and who would have some kind of understanding having been in the...in similar circumstances [2] that it was the best and the worst time of my life [5] erm and I say that because [3] the worst time because of [3] people getting killed erm [2] erm...things that you see [1] but the best of times because erm...life is so much simpler [5] it really doesn't matter whether you [1] whether you're all overdrawn thousands of pounds...what kind of car you drive [2] erm [2] whether you're married...that's different...no [1] but material things and the [1] minutiae of sort of daily life...it doesn't...it doesn't even come into it [1] it's life or death...and that makes life very simple...it's very pure [3] and each day is [1] fantastic...you know...you can wake up and it can be absolutely chucking it down [1] and er [3] you know you feel it may be cold [1] but...you

> think...well...you know...it's another day...everyone is around me...and [3] and you have that comradeship [3] but ah [1] it made [3] life that much sweeter...[EX L76:93]

When analysing the data, it became apparent that some veterans integrate their narrative with a theme that is negative and maladaptive in nature. For instance, for one Iraq veteran, who was receiving therapy for PTSD at the time of the study, the overall theme was "but...every day is a battle..." [QI L957]. Susie Kilshaw (2004) studied Gulf War Syndrome (GWS) narratives, and found that poor health was associated with narratives that revolved around the perpetuation and terminal nature of GWS. Consequently, for the current criteria, the integrating theme was required to be positive in nature. Reconciliation is not achieved by making a negative narrative central to the life story, but rather integrating it as one coherent chapter of the life story. This way, and in accordance with Brewin's (2001) theory of VAM/SAM, the memory loses its threatening and unconscious nature, can be recalled explicitly as an important and perhaps emotional memory, but also relates to other experiences that have occurred in one's life.

Analysis of contradictions within the narrative (I7), at both the global (Baerger & McAdams, 1999) and local levels (Adroutsopoulou et al., 2004) was included in order to assess the consistency of integration within the narrative. If there is contradiction within the narrative, traumatic war memories have not been fully integrated and therefore remain unreconciled. Causal coherence was assessed to indicate the completeness of the story including logical and functional contradictions that may make the narrative incoherent (McAdams, 2006). The following example demonstrates contradiction between the personal beliefs of a WWII veteran at two points within his narrative. The reason for and feelings towards serving in the RAF are incongruous, but this is not explained or recognised by the veteran in the narrative resulting in contradictory personal beliefs:

> .yeah...I enjoyed flying...it never bothered me...it's a job...just a job...work which I was being paid for...ah...it wasn't my main love...my main love was football...ah [2] but the RAF hadn't paid me to play football [1] *[laughs]* [1] [XT L368:370]

> ...I joined up to fly for here...from Britain...to defend my Mum...and Dad...that's...the reason behind my joining up [1] I thought if people's going to drop bombs on Mum...I'm going to...do my damnedest for them...and that's my simple thinking in 1940... [XT L505:508]

Finally, criterion I8 identifies fragmentation and disorganisation within the narrative, and was included in order to combine findings from clinical trauma narrative studies within the narrative analysis. I8 represents symptoms of unreconciled trauma. At the local level, veterans were perceived as having a fragmented narrative if there was broken speech, unfinished sentences and long pauses, or contained incongruent, but not contradictory, material. At the global level, I8 was also defined as incongruent information (but not contradictory information) within the context of the larger narrative. The following quote represents an example of fragmentation at the local level:

> ...and we went down...Sunday Bloody Sunday for it like you know...and [1] I was erm [1] went to that like you know...and erm [3] I never...when we came back you know...there's was dead silence all round...and...it was an horrendous day really...[DX L182:185]

In order to be considered a *coherent narrative*, all criteria were required within the narrative; no criterion was perceived as being more important than another. Without narrative orientation and structure, the veteran cannot capture a supportive audience to aid reconciliation, and without this audience, consistent emotional evaluation and integration is more difficult to achieve. If a criterion was absent, the narrative was rendered incoherent.

The model differentiated coherent, reconciled, and incoherent narratives. This differentiation linked to the thematic analysis of narrative content concerning the presence or absence of traumatic memories. The overall pattern in the data indicated that narrative content of coherent narratives explicitly stated no traumatic memories, reconciled narratives concerned previous trauma but subsequent reconciliation, and incoherent symptoms concerned current traumatic symptoms and/or treatment for PTSD.

2.3.2 Social Support (Content)

Analysis of the narrative content of interviews concerned the types of social support sought by, and provided to, veterans during and after service. After the interviews were transcribed, a variation of thematic analysis was applied through immersion in the transcripts, re-reading to gain familiarity, and highlighting themes. Despite the emphasis placed on determining themes within narrative content, this type of analysis remains in the genre of narrative analysis.

Michael Murray (2003) argues that the difference between thematic and narrative analysis is that thematic analysis takes themes out of the personal narrative context and decontextualises these patterns to find trends across individuals. Conversely, narrative analysis searches for common themes across narratives, whilst maintaining the context of the personal narrative by linking themes together within each narrative.

During analysis, themes were defined as specific patterns of interest (Joffe & Yardley, 2004), and were applied to units of meaning, being either whole sentences and/or paragraphs. In terms of the current study, larger passages of text were more likely to be defined as units of meaning due to the necessity to contextualise the theme. Both the manifest (directly observable material) and latent (material requiring interpretation) themes were included in analysis. Initial themes were deductively applied to WWII narratives from previous research (Burnell, Coleman, & Hunt, 2006). Inductive themes were also highlighted. After this, one interview was revisited and coded into exclusive 'in vivo' categories; meaning only one code was applied to one unit of meaning, and wording used by the veteran was used to label the initial categories. These in vivo categories were then applied to the remaining interviews. Throughout the course of analysis, the original in vivo categories became conceptual and abstract, but not decontextualised, and certain themes were spliced and others were linked. The researcher's supervisors were independently consulted to assess the credibility of the themes. Once agreed, finalised themes were then applied to each interview transcript. The resulting coding scheme provided a meaningful way of understanding the experiences of one individual, and assessing similarities and differences across individuals (see Appendix A).

The combination of these two levels of analysis allowed the investigation of potential relationships between the types of social support that are associated with narrative coherence. At this stage it is important to note that causality cannot be inferred using this particular methodology. It is this potential causality that has interesting therapeutic implications and requires in-depth investigation. In the following section, thematic analysis of social support is outlined.

2.4 Method: Interviews and Transcription

2.4.1 Interviews

Almost all passages of qualitative data are referred to as narratives (Chase, 2005). For the purpose of analysis, a narrative can be defined as short passages of specific stories, longer stories about a part of one's life labelled as a personal narrative, or a life history that charts life from beginning to present. There is further complication; life histories are a type of life story, as are stories told about certain aspects or parts of one's life and thus are interchangeable with personal narrative. For the purpose of this thesis, the overall interview is referred to as the personal narrative, whereas short passages within the personal narrative are referred to as narrative passages. Murray (2003) asserts that, because the narration of our lives is implicit in everyday communication, narrative analysis can be carried out on any interview prose.

2.4.1.1 Materials and procedure.

Specific information about the recruitment of the veteran population is given in detail in respective chapters. This section focuses on general materials and interview procedures.

Immediately prior to the interview, the participant was informed of the nature of the study, and completed a consent form (see Appendix B), and an Armed Forces Questionnaire (AFQ) to provide biographical details (see Appendix C). Once completed, the tape recorder was tested for sound quality, and the interview began.

The semi-structured interview schedule was created for use in a previous study with Falklands War veterans (Burnell, Coleman, & Hunt, 2006), and adapted for use with veterans of various ages and wars (see Appendix D). First, all participants were asked to talk about their experiences of war to encourage them to narrate their experiences.

Questions concerning social support were formulated from questions and themes emerging from previous research (Hautamäki & Coleman, 2001; Hunt & Robbins, 2001b; O'Brien & Hughes, 1991). These questions were used as a point of departure to encourage veterans to discuss issues that were salient to them. If topics were spontaneously brought up by the participant, they were discussed

accordingly, and so the participant played a role in the direction of the interview (Smith, 1995). The interviewer also used follow-up questions and probes to clarify the participants' responses (Warren, 2001). All questions were asked neutrally, and without judgement (Britten, 1995).

Once a natural conclusion was reached, the researcher asked if the participant would like to add anything else. If so, these topics were discussed. At the end of the interview, the tape recorder was switched off, and the participant was thanked and debriefed (see Appendix E).

2.4.1.2 Transcription.

Interviews were transcribed by the researcher verbatim, other than personal and identifying details. All grammatical nuances, colloquialisms, and figures of speech were kept in the transcript in order to create data that were as close to the recorded voice as possible. This was important because analysis was based on the veterans' personal narratives of war and subsequent experience, and not the researcher's readable interpretation (O'Connell & Kowal, 1995). Similarly, pauses in speech were also kept in the transcript in order to replicate the pauses and fragmentation of the narrative, to allow analysis of narrative coherence. For this reason, natural pauses in speech were represented as an ellipsis (...), whilst longer pauses, such as a pause of four seconds were represented as follows [4]. Emotions displayed such as laughter and tears were represented using square brackets e.g. [laughs]. Non-verbal actions carried out by the participant during the duration of the interview were also enclosed in square brackets (see Appendix F for analysis protocol).

2.4.1.3 Reflexivity.

The nature of qualitative interviewing raises concern because the interview is a dialogue and, to an extent, the researcher helps to construct reality (Koch & Harrington, 1998). Consequently, more researchers are locating themselves within, and assessing their influence on, the research process through reflexive thought (Finlay, 2002). By making the role of the researcher explicit, the ability to transfer the findings from a particular problem in a particular group to other members of that group is enhanced (Buston, Parry-Jones, Livingston,

Bogan, & Wood, 1998; Marecek, 2003). Reflexivity was present throughout the analysis and is discussed in Chapter Seven.

2.5. Archival Research

In addition to the interview and written data collected from veterans, the Imperial War Museum (IWM) was consulted for the purpose of triangulation. Triangulation is an important aspect of qualitative research. By using multiple methods or sources of information to answer the research question, the findings and conclusions drawn are argued to be stronger and more transferable (Smith, 1996). The ability to transfer is vital if we are to progress in the area of war trauma intervention.

2.5.1 Background

The IWM houses one of the largest collections of war artefacts in the world, and in the three years after the First World War, the importance of documenting this era was seen as paramount by historians. It was not until the 1960s that the oral histories of veterans' experiences were taken and by 1972, the IWM had established The Department of Sound Records (Kavanagh, 2000). There is also a Department of Documents, which includes written documents, such as diaries and letters, as well as photographs, paintings, and books. Combining these two resources, the IWM holds information relating to the experiences of veterans for almost every conflict since the First World War.

2.5.1.1 Process and analysis.

Tables 5 to 7 outline the documents and files that were requested from the IWM. The IWM Departments of Documents and Sound were visited on the 11th May 2006, 29th May 2007 and the 14th June 2007. Prior to visiting the IWM online collection was consulted in order to request the most relevant documents. These were selected on the basis of key words included in the description such as social support, society, comradeship, for instance. Documents were mainly letters from soldiers, and diaries written at the time, on return, or a number of years later. In terms of the sound archives, information was available regarding the content of the oral history interviews. Indices were provided for each digital interview, which indicated themes such as *adjustment to civilian life*, and the

respective occurrence in the interview so that the information could be accessed with ease.

Using as large a database as the IWM raises specific challenge such as selecting materials, and the time pressures involved in analysis. Once selected, the documents were analysed using deductive thematic analysis based on the coding manual developed from the interviews. The danger with such methodology is transparency and context. For this reason, page numbers and the IWM document number is included for the written documents, whilst sound materials are presented with their IWM document number, and quotes can be found using the relevant themes highlighted on the document index.

TABLE 5. *IWM Documents and Sound Archives for the 1930s-1940s cohort.*

Name	Description from IWM Online Collection
Barringer, E E 732 (written)	Photocopy of account written in 1989, of No 835 Naval Air Squadron, flying Swordfish, Hurricanes and Wildcats, January 1942 - April 1945, by the first member and later commander of the Squadron.
Flatlow, A F 8091 (written)	Account with diagrams and transcription describing his service as a squadron commander in the 45th Battalion Royal Tank Regiment (Leeds Rifles) (24th Armoured Brigade, 10th Armoured Division) in Egypt and North Africa, July 1942 - March 1943.
Haworth, M G 3320 (written)	Memoir written in 1995, recording his service as a Lieutenant RN attached to the Fleet Air Arm as an observer, 1939 - 1942, and covering in particular his appointments in the aircraft carrier HMS GLORIOUS.
Watson, P 6033 (written)	An account of his pilgrimage, June 1990, to St Valery-en-Caux, fifty years after the 51st (Highland) Division was forced to surrender there.
Franses, M 17353 (audio)	British officer served with 2nd Bn Royal Norfolk Regt in GB, India and Burma, 1942-1945. Present at Battle of Kohima, 4/1944-5/1944.

TABLE 6. *IWM Documents and Sound Archives for the 1950s-1970s cohort.*

Name	Description from IWM Online Collection
Potter, J J 6882 (written)	46 well-written letters to his family, October 1950 - August 1951, covering his experiences as a National Service subaltern in the Royal Artillery and his attitude towards Army life as a National Serviceman and his opinions about the progress of the fighting in Korea.
Stacpoole, A J, 12498 (audio)	British officer served with Support Coy, 1st Bn Duke of Wellington's Regt in Korea, 1952-1953; served with 2nd Bn Parachute Regt in Canal Zone, Egypt, 1954, Cyprus, 1956-1957 and Suez, Egypt, 1956; served as ADC to general commanding troops in West Africa, 1957-1959. Entered Ampleforth Abbey as monk, 9/1960.
Ashton, A R 675 (written)	Microfilm copy of a very well-written and informative memoir of his National Service as a Royal Marine Commando, 1956 - 1957, covering his training at Lympstone, Exeter, and Bickleigh, Plymouth, tour of duty on Cyprus and training on Malta, including tank and helicopter assault exercises immediately prior to the Suez operations in October 1956.
Pettit, P A W 17644 (audio)	British civilian schoolchild living in Biggleswade, 1939-1945; private served with 1st Bn Suffolk Regt in Malaya, 1951-1952.
Ives, L S 8179 (written)	Memoir of his National Service during 1949 - 1951, giving interesting details of his training at Strensall Camp, York, and subsequent service with the 1st Battalion The Green Howards in Malaya.

TABLE 7. *IWM Documents and Sound Archives for the 1980s-2000s cohort.*

Name	Description from IWM Online Collection
Ward, N D 14257 (audio)	British officer commanded 801 Sqdn, Fleet Air Arm during Falklands War, 1982.
Canham, G 2690 (written)	A collection of 17 letters and one telegram sent by a radio operator in the frigate HMS ARROW to his parents, and his sister and her husband, during the Falklands War, April - June 1982.
Smith, P G 1165 (written)	20 letters written to Mr Smith during November 1990 - March 1991 by four soldiers serving with the 1st Battalion Staffordshire Regiment (7th Armoured Brigade, 1st Armoured Division) and the 2nd Field Regiment RA (4th Armoured Brigade, 1st Armoured Division) on Operation 'Granby', the British contribution to the Allied forces sent to counter the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait.
Colbeck, G 1182 (written)	Photocopy of an excellent illustrated memoir (written ca 1990), including extracts from his diary, of his service as a sergeant with the 3rd Battalion Parachute Regiment en route, in HMT CANBERRA (April - May 1982), to, and in the Falklands (May - June 1982).
Pilbeam, T 2681 (written)	4 air mail letters written home to his aunt and uncle, January - March 1991, from the Gulf while serving as a Corporal with the 7th Armoured Brigade Workshop describing his experiences during Operation 'Granby'.
Whitticase, R F 2026 (written)	13 letters and a transcription of one letter written between 2 January and 11 March 1991 whilst serving as a Lieutenant with the REME (attached 16/5th The Queen's Royal Lancers, 1st Armoured Division) on Operation 'Granby' in the Persian Gulf.

CHAPTER THREE

Interview Study with Veterans Serving in the 1930s – 1940s

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the war experiences of WWII veterans. Specifically their experiences of social support from comrades and family, perceptions of societal reaction immediately postwar and at the time of the present study, and their opinions on the media's portrayal of WWII. These themes comprised the narrative content. In addition, the narrative form was analysed and specific attention given to the narrative coherence of the interviews as an indication of reconciliation.

3.2 Participants

Ten male veterans (80-86 years of age) participated in one-to-one interviews, which lasted on average between one and two hours. They were recruited via the Royal British Legion and the Burma Star Association. Seven served in the British Army, one served in the Royal Navy, and two served in the Royal Air Force. Selection was based on geographical location (Midlands, Devon and Cornwall, East and West Sussex, and the Solent area), and follow up phone calls were made to assess whether the veterans were still interested in participating when given more information about the study. Veterans were interviewed at their homes. In one case, an alternative venue was suggested by the veteran.

3.3 Findings

Thematic analysis revealed themes relating to perceptions of war experience, comradeship and communication, family support and communication, and societal support and opinion. Interesting patterns of themes were found between veterans with coherent (three participants), reconciled (two participants), and incoherent (five participants) narratives, which are discussed below. Findings are presented within these groups, with participant biographies to provide context (see Tables 6-8).

3.3.1 Coherent

TABLE 8. *Participants' Military Background (1930s-1940s - Coherent).*

Participant	Background
LI	At the time of the study, LI was 84 years old. He joined the Royal Navy in 1941, at the age of 20, and he served until 1946. The highest Rank attained was Lieutenant, and he served on Landing Craft. Theatres of war included Western Europe, where he participated in the Commando Raids in Norway, and the Sicilian, Italian, and D-Day Beach Landings. He was a member of a veterans' association.
QC	At the time of the study, QC was 85 years old. When he joined the Army in 1940, he was 20, and he served until 1946. The highest Rank attained was Lieutenant, and he served as a Chindit and Infantry Officer. Theatres of war included the Middle East and Burma. He was a member of a veterans' association.
KC	At the time of the study, KC was 81 years old. When he joined the Royal Air Force in 1941, he was 18 and he served until 1946. The highest Rank attained was Warrant Officer, and he specialised as a Bomber. Based in Britain, his main theatres of war included Germany and German occupied Europe. He was a member of a veterans' association.

3.3.1.1 Perceptions of war experience.

For veterans with coherent narratives, war experience was perceived as being a mixed experience, with positive experience and intense moments, but with positive outcomes for postwar life:

> ...and it occurs to me...that in fact what we were doing [1] was [1] a long term industry based sandwich course *[laughs]* [2] er [2] with much longer slices of practical experience *[laughs]* and rather more dangerous practical experience...but...I was impressed by the way in which my...Naval career [1] was handled [] I can see [1] especially looking at my own career...that it was planned carefully...to make the best use of it [4] [L366:373] [] I regarded it as advantageous...the benefits [1] that accrued for those really on a gap year...[]...I wouldn't recommend World War Three as a gap year to anybody...but there's no doubt...that...I [1] er [1] had made an adult decision to go into education *[career after service]*... [LI L463:474]

Interestingly, the normality of war was also highlighted, and this appeared to protect against traumatic interpretation:

> [2] strangely it became normal...this was our normal life...this is what we did...it's what we were paid for...and erm...we were of the risks of course...it would be silly to say we were not...but...it's a question of [1] rather similar...I remember my father saying about the First World War...he said...if a bullet has got your name on it...it gets you you see...that's the only way you can look at it...erm...[KC L212:217]

Another important theme was that these veterans reported factors that protected them from being affected by the traumas of war. For QC, his religion allowed him to deal with war experiences during service:

> ...I was a [1] committed Christian at the time [3] and [2] so [2] erm [3] it [2] things didn't get me down [2] erm [2] you found...some people...I'm thinking of *[name]* [1] he was a brave person...but towards the end of this...the Chindit campaign...it had just worn...worn him down...and one of the signs we found...when people don't sleep...that's a warning sign...they just [1] you know...are being overcome by it all [3] but I was very fortunate [6] [QC L241:248]

3.3.1.2 Comradeship.

Whilst comradeship was seen positively, communication of traumatic events did not occur, or was actively avoided by these veterans during service For instance, QC states that he did not speak about experiences during service, but did not provide a reason for this, and it was therefore interpreted as non-communication.:

> [1] during a war [1] I can't say I had...intimate conversations about it...[QC L256:257]

Avoidance took place also, and it would appear that the use of humour was an important coping mechanism:

> [2] erm [1] if one spoke about it [1] it was with the usual black or gallows humour that arises in these situations...we...we hadn't heard of [1] er [2] posttraumatic stress [2] er the two expressions in use were that you were shit scared...and if you were shit scared often enough you became bomb happy [2] [LI L190:193]

Alcohol use as a coping mechanism was also found:

> [1] no we didn't have stress and we didn't have counselling and we got drunk...that was it [4] [KC L517:518]

Interestingly, LI regretted not sharing war memories with comrades after service. Again, humour is used:

> ...*[it]* was an extremely good school...with a very genial staff room [1] but ah...initially with quite a big sprinkling of...ex-servicemen...erm [2] who didn't...again...one didn't talk...much about [1] I regret that we didn't talk about it...because some of them...right to the Head of Geography was in...special operations [1] in China [2] er...and they could have...one generally spoke about it...again in a jokey manner [1] [LI L503:508]

Despite not communicating with comrades, veterans' associations were perceived as being extremely important to these veterans, and they became more important as the veterans aged and had more free time:

[2] yes [2] yes it is important...erm [1] we *[the association]* were late starters [1] erm...the first...unofficial squadron reunion we had...after the end of the war was 1968...so we're talking about twenty two years after the war...before we even thought about...having a reunion...but the reason for that is quite simple...after the war we came out...we had either already married or we got married...we had families...and all our energies were devoted to our...marriage...and to our families...and to bring up children and that sort of thing...and suddenly we find the children leave the nest...and ah...we've got a bit of spare time [2] so [1] one of the chaps...organised ah...this first...reunion...which was held at the Royal Air force Academy Piccadilly...nineteen sixty [1] six... [KC L406:415]

QC was a member of an association for reconciliation between British and Japanese forces, aiming to help veterans who are troubled by their experiences. In the following quote, he spoke about the importance of this work and the benefits of communication:

...he *[comrade]* was more or less against any sort of seeing this Japanese woman *[University Professor doing work on reconciliation between British and Japanese troops]*...but anyway we managed...it all sort of changed...and all met...over there...and [2] he very sensibly made a tape recording to be put through the television of what he thought about the Japanese...and we all sat round...including this Japanese woman and listened to it...and then we left those two talking...in the room...and I [2] for sometime...an hour I think...and after this woman had interviewed him and said what she was doing for about an hour...he walked across the room and give her a big kiss and said I think you're doing a wonderful job...and...he's kept in touch with her...[QC L141:149]

3.3.1.3 Family support.

Family interactions were perceived positively immediately after service and in later life. In fact, this support was seen by LI to be imperative in adjusting to life after WWII:

[8] if we shift to the question of how one coped [1] postwar [1] the thing that occurs to me...is that I came out...into what was...and remained...a stable...rural...family...environment...I married till death did us part [1] I had three children...ah [1] I lived here [1] we've been here since 1948 [1] ah [1] I lived in the country...I had rural interests...gardening of bird watching...of shooting...fishing [2] a loner [1] but [1] erm [3] if one wanted therapy [2] one probably couldn't do better...than...plus [1] erm [1] stable employment...in a rewarding [1] and very happy job [1] [LI L494:502]

For QC, communication with family members had taken place throughout the lifespan:

...oh no I was very happy to talk about them...mmm... []...yes...I'm sure that's a help...I mean...I've known one or two people who just don't like to talk about it...you've probably come across them...and it's...not a good position to be in...if you can get talking about it...life gets much better... [QC L122:129]

For others, including LI, non-communication was more common, but there was no apparent *avoidance* of communication, and these veterans would talk about their experiences if asked:

> ...I think [1] yes [1] we talked about the...about my service...but [1] probably more about the...travel aspect of it [2] than anything else [1] [LI L449:450]

3.3.1.4 Societal support.

Positive perceptions of societal support, homecomings, and communication with society were the overriding themes that emerged from the narratives:

> oh...*[people were]* pleased to see you [1] I walked into the greengrocer...and she'd say...how's the noble Captain today and that sort of thing...erm...oh yes [1] you got by [1] and that was quite a [1] nothing... ah...nothing...terribly... ah...emotional and demonstrative...and people were very pleased to see you [1] yes [1] oh yes [1] quite welcome being back... [QC L105:117]

Additionally, commemoration and remembrance were important events for the veterans, KC explained that this was especially the case when the current day forces were present:

> [1] so we placed a memorial there...simply a Rolls Royce...Merlin propeller...mounted on a stone base...with a little plague with an inscription...and we hold our Remembrance Sunday [1] service there...every year... [] [1] yes...yes...the present squadron and the ah...squadron association...are represented...the...present Squadron Commander...and some of his lads who are flying the Tornadoes...they turn up at the ah...memorial for...Remembrance service...and we lay wreathes...and ah [2] it's nice [1] that we have...the present Squadron in uniform...and that completes it [3] [KC L457:482]

In terms of media portrayal and influence of war, perceptions were negative, apart from LI who explained how documentaries have helped him to understand his own fears. This was labelled *virtual comradeship*:

> ...I think where casualties are concerned I'm not the only [1] ex-serviceman...who fears fire most [2] and I've actually seen on television [1] a programme about the battle of the Atlantic [2] er...a survivor remembering what I remember...on the beach in Sicily [1] men with the skin...of their forearms hanging from their finger tips...[LI L273:277]

3.3.2 Reconciled Coherent

TABLE 9. *Participants' Military Background (1930s-1940s - Reconciled)*

Participant	Background
FNK	At the time of the study, FNK was 86 years old. He joined the Army in 1939 at the age of 19, serving until 1946. The highest Rank attained was Captain, and he served as a pilot in the Royal Artillery. Theatres of war included Burma and Malaya, but he also served in Northern Ireland from 1939-1941. He married during the war, but later divorced and remarried. FNK published his autobiography in 1997. He was a member of a veterans' association.
ET	At the time of the study, ET was 80 years old. He joined the Army in 1943 at the age of 18, serving until 1947. The highest Rank attained was Staff Sergeant, and he served with the Royal Signals in the Burma Campaign. Immediately after being demobbed, DT emigrated to Canada. He was a member of a veterans' association. His wife was present during the interview.

3.3.2.1 Perceptions of war experience.

Traumatic memories came back in later life for FNK and ET, and they attributed this to initial avoidance after service. Importantly, both veterans spoke of coming to terms with their memories in later life:

> ...for many years as I say we...we we didn't erm...we didn't erm...really think...you weren't encouraged to think about them in those days in fact...I...sitting down like this [1] it's only in recent...years...that I've...you know...the memories seem to come back...you know...I [1] sort of [1] like most people my age I have the odd lapse of memory but it's all recent stuff...and the more I think about the stuff the more vividly these things come back [1] [ET L418:423]

FNK and ET spoke in terms of positive and negative perceptions of war experience. It was both enjoyable and horrific:

> ...I spent a [1] a reasonably happy time in...in Bangkok [1] as I say there were plenty of people to do the work so the shifts were...er [1] were um...rather um...easy going [1] erm...in other words you had more time off than you had on [1] I was promoted to Sergeant and erm...that made it a little easier to in that we had our own mess and...could buy gin and whisky at 2 shillings a bottle *[laughs]* and gin and beer [1] erm [1] so really that part of my war experience was not harrowing at all [1] part...well the initial part was the most [1] my most harrowing experience of the war I suppose was the repatriation of the prisoners of war because we saw them in their worst state [1] erm [2] so we had a reasonably good time there...[ET L70:79]

Negative outcomes were also reported, in that war experience had taken a number of years out of life, and had subsequently affected civilian careers:

...and so it was a good career in the end once it got going...but given the war and the...difficult period afterwards...it did take its time...[FNK L169:170]

For these veterans, no risk or vulnerability factors were mentioned during the interviews. However, it is important to note that, unlike the coherent group, protecting factors were not present either.

3.3.2.2 Comradeship.

Once again, comradeship was described very positively. Communication of events occurred, but it appeared to be unsatisfactory. Traumatic memories were so well established that to simply talk about experiences in the immediate aftermath was not appropriate:

> ...he *[Principle of University College]* encouraged us to talk about what we'd done and that sort of thing and I think there we did...we did get an opportunity to get it...get it off our chests...but I don't think you were ever going to get an opportunity to get it off your chest in that sense were you...because...because it was pretty well established wasn't it... [FNK L219:222]

This communication appeared forced, and FNK preferred to avoid communication. In the following quote, the use of alcohol is mentioned and can be interpreted as a way of avoiding communication:

> ...and I don't think we *[comrades at Oxford University]* talked much about the war...in fact I don't think I ever remember doing it...we were much too concerned to meet at the *[name of]* Inn at night and...um...have a few...there was one chap [] who played the piano and I can remember singing my head off with him most nights...[]...I think we were doing it to get it out of our system really... [FNK L444:449]

Communication was also avoided by ET in later life, even though he lived by another veteran:

> [1] we both knew that we had served in different locations but we never spoke about it [1] we never spoke about it in those days...*[when they moved to new village in Canada]* [ET L470:472]

In later life, veterans' associations became more important for both veterans as a source of positive interpretation about war experience. Whilst the presence of communication is neither confirmed nor disproved, one can appreciate the value of veterans' associations:

> ...yes *[squadron association is important]* immediately after...[]...in the years after the war...I would simply go out to meet the blokes again...and have a drink with them and you know...pat them on the back and feel good about it and all that sort of thing... [FNK L327:331]

3.3.2.3 Family support.

In terms of familial support, interactions with family members were not always positive immediately after war service, ET explained how avoidance was encouraged in earlier life.

> ...for many years as I say we...we we didn't erm...we didn't erm...really think...you weren't encouraged to think about them in those days in fact...I...sitting down like this [1] it's only in recent...years...that I've...you know...the memories seem to come back...you know...I [1] sort of [1] like most people my age I have the odd lapse of memory but it's all recent stuff...and the more I think about the stuff the more vividly these things come back [1] [ET L418:423]

Communication did start to take place as the veterans progressed throughout life, and improvements in family relations occurred. In the following example, FNK implied that non-communication took place due to a lack of meaning and importance placed on war experience, which changed in later life:

> ...I can blame myself for not wanting to talk about it...I don't think I was exceptional in that aspect...I don't mind talking about it today...I mean I've written a book haven't I [] I thought I had something to talk about after a while... [FNK L176:179]

3.3.2.4 Societal support.

Societal support for both of these veterans was perceived as being very positive, and it appeared to help them come to terms with their experiences by feeling appreciated:

> ...yeah it is [nice to feel appreciated] [1] you...you do feel as though [1] what you did was...maybe worth while...[ET L559:560]

Commemoration and remembrance also led to remembering comrades:

> ...they [commemoration days] are very important because of...the chaps who died in Burma died half way round the world...didn't they...um...[]...and they died in horrible conditions...and um...I don't think we can break faith with those that we left behind...and it isn't just us...it's the nation...it's the nation who put us there...[]...I've had 60 years that they haven't had haven't I...and I feel [] quite emotional about that... [FNK L369:375]

Furthermore, communication in later life with members of society has also been a positive and reconciliatory experience for FNK:

> ...I spoke to a meeting once and it seemed to go down extremely well...and the pattern was really just simply to talk about....what one had done...and the sort of things that one had to face up to...[]...that says quite a lot the fact that it was worthwhile developing one because people seemed to want to know...but I've also noticed that young people...quite a lot of young people really do want to know these days... [FNK L233:239]

Finally, for both, media involvement was seen as being negative and concern was expressed for currently serving troops:

...I just don't like the way the media just blows everything up...I get very worked up about that...and I don't think they are contributing really...to the sort of things you wanted to know from me [] I don't know that I could go to war with um...with a journalist on my shoulder... [FNK L478:483]

3.3.3 Incoherent

TABLE 10. *Participants' Military Background (1930s-1940s – Incoherent).*

Participant	Background
EU	At the time of the study, EU was 86 years old. He joined the Army in 1939 at the age of 20, serving until 1957 in the TA. The highest Rank attained was Major, and he served as an operator in the Royal Signals in South East Asia. He was single during service, but married the year of return. He was a member of a veterans' association.
JI	At the time of the study, JI was 84 years old. He joined the Army in 1939, at the age of 17, serving until 1946. The highest Rank attained was Captain, and he served as Flail Tank Commander in various Army Regiments. Theatres of war included North West Europe, where he participated in the D-Day Normandy Beach Landings. In 1991, JI published his autobiography. He was a member of a veterans' association.
WU	At the time of the study, WU was 82 years old. When he joined the Army in 1941, he was 17, and he served until 1960. The highest Rank attained was Warrant Officer. The theatre of war for WU was Western Europe, where he participated in all the European war campaigns. He was a member of a veterans' association.
XT	At the time of the study, XT was 82 years old. When he joined the Royal Air Force in 1940, he was 18 and served until 1946. The highest Rank attained was Warrant Officer, and he specialised as a wireless operator and air gunner. He was based in Britain and tasked with searching for U-Boats. He was a member of a veterans' association.
BD	At the time of the study, BD was 80 years old. When he joined the Army in 1943, he was 17 and he served until 1947. The highest Rank attained was Sergeant, and he served with the Royal Signals. Theatres of war included Burma and Malaya. He was a member of a veterans' association.

3.3.3.1 Perceptions of war experience.

Within the incoherent narratives, traumatic memories were prevalent. In the following example, BD explains how a chance meeting with a comrade only a few years before the interview had triggered traumatic memories. At the time of the interview, he had experienced a nightmare every night since this meeting:

> ...but having...sunk [2] in the subconscious [2] a terrible event [1] and several events he started talking about...poor old *[name]* [1] nice guy...he didn't mean any harm...man I cursed him when I had the first nightmare [1] well it was that very night...got home [1] went to bed [1] and I wake up in a sweat...and I'm right back there with it all again...it was so life like...this is what I can't understand...I mean it's all those years ago [1] nothing's faded...even the smell I could smell [1] [BD L264:269]

There were mixed perceptions of war experience in the sample, but a number explained that their war experience had no positive outcomes:

> ...I don't think so [2] it may have benefited some people...but I don't think it did me [2] [XT L848:849]

Interestingly, a number also spoke of risk factors associated with their service, other than traumatic war experiences. BD explained that this had made service particularly difficult:

> ...wasn't always...easy...when you were working in jungle conditions...I found that um...the humidity...the climate...was the worst possible...enemy...and created so many jinx...with radios [] [1] they couldn't trust them because they would rust [1] and other people...felt that their uniforms...fell to bits with...[] [1] you would go like that *[shakes out imaginary shirt]* like that with your shirt...it would jump to pieces like you...just a...relentless war against...insects...dampness...and [1] fungus...mainly...and we used to get...fungus on your feet as well...like foot worm...it was...damp...really it was...um...not being used to the climate...was terrible...for us young lads... [BD L14:24]

3.3.3.2 Comradeship.

Like the experiences of the other veterans, comradeship was described positively. Non-communication and avoidance were also common during service. In the following example, EU explained that non-communication was associated with the absence of Army colleagues:

> ...well I mean most of the people I was...ah...had the same kind of experience [1] so [3] *[KB: Did you talk to each other whilst you were serving?]* [] [2] we had I think....five or six Brits...with three hundred Indians...and [1] you...were very much on your own [1] so there wasn't anybody to talk to anyway [2] [] [2] if you were serving with the RAF...or the Americans...and the Indians...you talked to them...because they were the people with you...but you weren't with your Army colleagues much of the time [1] [EU L35:51]

Explicit avoidance and the need or expectation to cope with experiences alone during service was also highlighted by XT:

> *KB: Did you talk to any of your crew about it [comrade being burned]?* WS: No...no...no [1] *KB: You dealt with it on your own?* XT: Mm...mm [1] I suppose [1] that's what you had to do I don't know...I'm not...I don't know [2] I don't know... [XT L907:914]

This expectation appeared to be embedded in military culture and these veterans appeared to avoid communication due to the fear of how they would be perceived by their comrades:

> ...he's probably thinking the same thing...and he daren't mention it to you and you daren't mention to him because...what he might think...and it's all on probabilities...but [1] get it in the open [1] because we know that these stresses...that erm [1] are real...I mean let's face it...the damage is real... [BD L881:884]

Non-communication also occurred after service due to absence of shared experience. When it did occur, the implication by EU was that of an unsatisfying exchange with younger veterans, with whom EU had no shared memories:

> ...the only time I talk about it is when I go to my Royal Signals dos...and there's...I think...three or four of us who were serving before the war...the rest were all much later...they're ex-National Service men...they're ex Korean war...things like that [2] so...that they respect us for what we did when we were in...but...there isn't a lot of talk to each other about matters of joint interest...not when we were serving anyway...[EU L267:272]

The importance of shared experience is emphasised below:

> ...I know I was yellow...because we took [tablets] every day...which turned the skin yellow...and so...you could recognise anyone that had come from the East...they'd got a yellow look...they'd all got jaundice...and you could see them...when you went down the town...on one occasion...there was a bloke walking along there with a yellow face...I said hang on...what mob were you with...*[laughs]*...and you could talk to him you know...and he'd suddenly come alive...cos he's...experiencing the same as you're experiencing...you know... [BD L146:151]

Departing from the positive theme of veterans' associations found in the narratives of the other WWII veterans, these veterans gave mixed reviews. In the following quote, associations are seen as very important, but unavailable. It must be noted that if BD had a veterans' association in this home town he might have had the opportunity to reconcile his traumatic memories:

> ...I don't get down to the meetings now...I used to go regularly to the British Legion [1] um [2] as I was saying [1] meeting *[name of man who triggered nightmares]* [1] he only died recently [1] erm [1] of all the things [1] I mean...I'd heard somebody from the Parachute Regiment there was three of us....in *[current home town]* [2] one chappy...he's got Alzheimer's...and they moved him into a home [1] *[name of man]*...and myself...only three in the parachute brigade...living

in *[home town]* [2] so [2] I'm the last one [2] [] [1] and we all realised...we were all keen to have a British Legion in *[home town]* [1] and we all agreed that we'd have another meeting [1] get together and get in touch with headquarters and start a legion branch up in *[home town]* [1] which we did [2] [] ...*[then]* he'd died in his chair [1] and shortly after that [3] *[name]* [4] he died [6] I seem [1] what I seem to touch [2] goes to pieces [4] so I had to wind up [2] no one was prepared to step in and help [1] and I wasn't prepared to do it all by myself...so [1] it wound up [1] no one was...just apathy [1] complete apathy...which didn't help me at all [1] so here we go again...another rejection [2] [BD L516:546]

3.3.3.3 Family support.

Family interactions were described negatively immediately after service, and in later life. There was also a perceived lack of understanding from family members. In the quote that follows, JI reported that he felt misunderstood:

[5] my wife of course is much younger than I...she was a school girl during the war [3] and erm...it doesn't mean the same to her [3] she was evacuated but again...it was to her grandparents....in Somerset [2] they ran a dairy...and she lived on quite a lot of clotted cream [laughs] as you can understand...she can't touch it now [laughs] [1] but erm...so [1] it doesn't have the same...impact I suppose [1] [JI L716:721]

Non-communication was reported with family members throughout life. In the years immediately after service, this was because returning veterans were encouraged to forget their war experience and get on with life. A theme that is present in the reconciled narratives also:

...did I talk to any of them [1] *[KB: yeah]* [1] no [1] because [1] you're told to forget it aren't you... [XT L768:769]

In later life non-communication continued, and was due to perceived boredom and lack of interest. EU explained that he did not communicate, but during this explanation the underlying emotion was negative and he seemed upset at this situation despite laughing:

[1] my children don't know [3] I mean they're old...my daughter's 56 [1] erm [3] I should think it's more a question of you know when you start talking about that...you see them falling asleep...so it isn't a matter that comes up [laughs] [1] [EU L263:266]

Finally, these veterans avoided communicating with family because they did not want to worry or burden family members or burden them with their experiences:

...not a lot [2] not a lot [4] erm [2] didn't want to worry them [1] but [2] they were very relieved of course [1] [JI L501:502]

Communication did appear to be occurring for one veteran, but only in the last few years. In the following quote, BD implied why communication may have been avoided in earlier life, but how it was becoming more important:

> ...oh yeah I can talk about it...I was reluctant at first...thinking that [1] perhaps I'm going round the bend...ah...and then I realised that this...is...only certain times this happens to me [2] [L900:902] ...well I'm sensible enough to realise that...people are not going to think any worse of me for this [1] because we are enlightened to some extent...that they don't think I'm bonkers...and avoid him...he's a bit strange...you know...there was that fear at one time...people would think you're odd...ah [1] got beyond that now...and realised that [1] people do understand a little bit more [1] [BD L922:926]

3.3.3.4 Societal support.

The majority of perceptions of societal support and opinion were negative. In the following example, WU described a negative interaction with a civilian after service:

> [2] by accident one time when I was coming out...of a public toilet [1] I collided with a young man [2] he said to me [2] you silly old bastard if I had my way you wouldn't last five minutes Dad [4] a great surge of anger went through me I could've punched a hole right in his head [3] cos I had to stop it...you know...I couldn't do that [2] to talk to me like that I just fought...I just fought a war to give him the freedom to say that to me didn't I [3] so I hated people [2] I hate...I couldn't get on with civilian life [3] I just...found it very difficult [2] [WU L684:691]

When these veterans did experience societal support, there were contradictions in perceived importance of this support:

> ...I don't say that it's important....but it's very [2] gratifying [1] I don't seek it [3] but the Dutch particularly [2] they [2] are very demonstrative [2] um [2] I mean we were in Holland a fortnight ago [2] in [town]...which was I was involved in liberating...and [3] there were literally tens of thousands lining the streets when we took part in a [1] in a motorised parade...I was riding in a jeep [5] we stopped at one point and one lady came out of the crowd and thrust her baby into my arms...I think she wanted a photograph taken [4] [JI L566:573]

In addition, communication was also negative due to perceived lack of understanding. Attempts had been made to talk to members of society about experiences, but its usefulness was questioned:

> [1] I do give talks [3] erm [2] one of my talks is called 1066 and 1944 [4] so [6] and erm [3] I show slides...some of which I've taken [2] and...some of which are from the War Office and so on [2] and erm [1] try and explain [2] and erm [2] people try and understand [2] but they can never really understand [6] [JI L539:544]

The theme of commemoration was described with mixed valence by the veterans. In the following quote, BD explained that for him commemoration was a negative event because VJ-Day (Victory in Japan) is perceived as being less

important than VE-Day (Victory in Europe). BD assumed from this that the
public were ashamed of the Far East veterans:

> [1] and what was worse that no on give damn about you...no one give a damn [1]
> and even now...if you notice...the last VJ celebration [2] Prince Charles...takes the
> cenotaph...and ah...not even *[Tony]* Blair turned up [2] representing the
> Government [1] who was it turned up...was it *[John]* Prescott [1] but when it was
> VE celebrations back in [1] back in June...it was the Queen was there [1] and Blair
> was there [1] all the big wigs were all there but...when it comes to VJ day [1] you
> get all the supernumeraries...they're still ashamed of us...I don't know why [1] but
> I think we did a great job out there...under terrible conditions...terrible conditions
> [1] [BD L394:402]

Finally, media involvement was reported negatively because representation
fails to portray the reality of war. This reinforces the belief that the public do not,
and cannot, understand war, which resulted in the perception of an unsympathetic
society:

> ...well society think that this is all just history and it's very interesting stuff you
> know and all that sort of thing...that's all it is...a story of some sorts [1]
> ah...society today accept it all...so many war stories...thousands of them on the
> telly and you read about them...make copies of them and get them on the telly...it's
> another war story...Hollywood are making...millions out of it all aren't they [] [4]
> but they're not putting it over the way it really is you know...you don't get the
> emotion [1] the anxiety...the gut feeling [3] [WU L658:665]

3.4 Findings from the Imperial War Museum

The IWM archives provided support for the interview themes. The issue
of mixed perceptions associated with war experience was echoed by Flatlow
(8091 IWM), who mentioned fatigue as the reason he did not enjoy his war
experience:

> God how tired we were. I felt that if I weren't so tired I would enjoy the whole
> thing.

Another quote provides context as to how mixed perceptions may arise during
service, with excitement being replaced by frustration and boredom:

> After an exciting beginning in the first three months of 1942, the squadron then
> spent twenty months of increasing boredom and frustration. [Barringer, 732: IWM]

In terms of outcomes, it is important to note that interpreting positive
outcomes from the war and recognising benefits of war service may not have
been a priority in the immediate aftermath of war, which may explain why
effects of war accumulate over time. This echoes the themes highlighted in a
number of the interviews:

> However, I wonder what is to become of me. But now it does not worry me – all I want is disembarkment [sic] leave and HOME! [Flatlow 8091: IWM]

The importance of veterans' associations, borne from intense camaraderie during service, was supported by a quote from the IWM:

> This unlikely mixture jelled into a tightly knit, albeit high spirited community to such an extent that many of them could not go back to civil life after the war without reviving the links they had formed in those days, which many of us still do, 50 plus years on, at an annual lunch. [Haworth, 3320: IWM]

Comments regarding societal support were also present in the archive material, and provided support for the concerns raised by the veterans. In particular, perceived lack of understanding was emphasised:

> And the very young were there too as it happened [at a war cemetery] – a group from Yatley Comprehensive school, Nr Camberley who were doing a study on the 1914-1918 war (how could they know – how could they understand? If we stood there could scarce comprehend?) [Watson, 6033: IWM].

The concept of commemoration being primarily to remember fallen comrades was also supported:

> Of what stuff is memory and recollection made…And there were many such with us – many a conversation when a Jock began "d'ye mind o' that……?" – or his English counterpart in the [] Artillery "Do you remember that…….?" This was indeed a Pilgrimage [to France in 1990] in many, many ways – and yet clearly centred on those who we shall never forget and who were no longer with us. [Watson, 6033: IWM]

Finally, feelings associated with VE versus VJ Day are not unique. An IWM interview highlighted the isolation associated with VE Day in 1945 for those still serving:

> Yes well obviously there were [VE Day] celebrations because don't forget Norwich had suffered badly from bombing and…and that had a big effect on the Battalion and London of course and everything else and I suppose…most people had…friends and family who had been involved in Europe erm…so there was a great feeling of relief there…but ah at the same time I don't think it did much for the Battalion's morale so far as being a fighting force faced with the prospect of going into further action erm we felt rather out on a limb. [Franses, 17353: IWM]

Whilst these themes cannot be related to the coherence of the narrative from which they are extracted, they do indicate the transferability of the interview themes. The original IWM documents and interviews were not collected with issues of social support and reconciliation in mind, and were not influenced by the aims of the researcher or archivist.

3.5 Discussion

The unique combination of narrative content and form analysis allowed exploration into potential differences between social support and communication between veterans with coherent, reconciled, and incoherent narratives. In addition, veterans spoke of their experiences throughout their lives, which added a life span perspective to the research. Thematic analysis of narrative content revealed that, akin to previous research, comradeship, family support, and societal support were important resources for these veterans (Hautamäki & Coleman, 2001; Hunt & Robbins, 2001b). Unlike previous research, the methodological approach allowed in-depth exploration of the different patterns of social support, which might shed light on why some veterans find it easy to come to terms with their experiences immediately after service, how others come to terms with traumatic memories in later life, and why others find it more difficult to reconcile their memories, or have difficulty finding meaning in their war experience. There was a clear delineation between themes associated with coherent narratives and incoherent narratives.

3.5.1 Perceptions of War Experience

Veterans with coherent narratives spoke about positive experiences during service, but not necessarily experiences which were unthreatening; LI spoke about intense combat situations. Positive outcomes for subsequent civilian life, and protecting factors during service such as religion or desire to serve, were also reported by LI, QC, and KC. The content of the reconciled narratives revealed that negative outcomes attributed by FNK related to the impact of service on his career, whilst veterans with incoherent narratives reported no outcomes. In terms of risk factors, BD, of the incoherent group, reported jungle warfare conditions. Interestingly, FNK and ET did not report either protecting or risk factors.

3.5.2 Comradeship

All veterans described comradeship positively, but communication appeared to be absent across all three groups. Avoidance and non-communication were present across groups during service and immediately after

service. Veterans with coherent narratives did not indicate that they had spoken to comrades in later life more so than veterans with reconciled or incoherent narratives. In particular, QC and JL did not communicate with comrades during service, but this was not seen negatively by them. LI regretted missing the opportunity to communicate after service, but not in the context of needing to communicate. In contrast, veterans with reconciled narratives also reported avoidance and communication. FNK highlighted that he had been encouraged to communicate, but simply wanted to concentrate on civilian life. Veterans with incoherent narratives reported negative experiences of being prevented from talking due to the military culture. Non-communication and avoidance with comrades contrast with the findings of Hunt and Robbins (2001b).

The themes supported the importance of veterans' associations (Hunt & Robbins, 2001b). Unfortunately, veterans with incoherent narratives desired veterans' associations, but for BD in particular, there was no opportunity to become involved. For EU, veterans' associations were not war specific, which may have lead to a perceived lack of understanding from younger veterans, and no opportunity to communicate even if there was a desire to do so (Hunt & Robbins, 2001b).

It is vital that further interviews are conducted with veterans who have reconciled traumatic memories to determine whether positive experiences of veterans' associations and satisfactory communication are found. In the current study, the only difference between coherent and reconciled narratives compared to incoherent narratives was that veterans' associations were viewed positively, but not that more communication occurred in this setting.

3.5.3 Family Support

Some of the most interesting differences were found within family support. Veterans with coherent narratives communicated with family members immediately after war, as in the case of QC. When non-communication was reported, for instance by LI, it was combined with the *opportunity* to communicate in a supportive family environment, but no need to communicate. For FNK and ET, avoidance and non-communication occurred in earlier life but, in more recent years, their families had encouraged communication. These

veterans were using family members to process memories of war, which is in direct opposition to previous research findings (Hunt & Robbins, 2001b).

Veterans with incoherent narratives spoke of perceived lack of understanding, boredom, and not wishing to worry family members. The latter of these reasons is consistent with the buffering model of social support, and with the findings of Hunt and Robbins (2001b) who concluded that the family unit was used as a safe haven away from the reminders of war. JI explained how the family unit had encouraged him to forget. Of interest is that those with incoherent narratives implied a need to communicate; the use of the family as a buffer was only in part the choice of the veteran.

3.5.4 Societal Support

Societal support seemed to clearly delineate the three groups of veterans. For those with coherent and reconciled narratives, societal support, communication with society, and commemoration were seen in an extremely positive light, particularly for QC and JC. FNK reported positive exchanges with members of society, which helped him process his experiences and find meaning in them.

When contrasted with the experiences of veterans with incoherent narratives, differences in the themes gain significance. Those with incoherent narratives reported a lack of understanding from society, negative interactions, and negative aspects of commemoration, particularly in the case of WU and BD. This culminated in the sense that when veterans are struggling with their experiences, negative social discourse makes the task of reconciliation even harder. This finding is supported by the research of Hautamäki and Coleman (2001) who found that a positive societal environment and social discourse helped Finnish WWII veterans to come to terms with their experiences.

Importantly, media involvement was found to be positive for LI only in the form of *virtual comradeship* which, in the presence of non-communication, might help to explain the coherence of his narrative. Since the media portray and mediate the social discourse regarding opinions of war, the potential impact of negative media representation can be understood. For veterans with coherent and reconciled narratives, the media were perceived as being largely negative, but societal interactions and support were positive. This is in stark contrast to the

veterans with incoherent narratives, for whom media portrayal simply added to feelings of misunderstanding and lack of appreciation.

3.6 Summary

The findings from this study are both complementary and contradictory to previous research. By using a two level approach, patterns of social support were examined between groups of veterans with differences in narrative coherence. This research provides support for the main effect and buffering models, but in greater depth than previous research. This may be because the methodological approach provides insight into the subtle nuances by which these mechanisms work. The findings also highlighted the role of society as an extremely important factor in reconciliation. Memory comprises individual and collective memory (Hunt & McHale, in press), and as such the role of society in aiding or hindering the act of reconciliation cannot be overemphasised.

This research helps us understand how some veterans are able to communicate with family members and achieve reconciliation earlier in life, before critical resources such as cognitive ability, social networks, and physical health, diminish. Since this research allowed for retrospective investigation of social support experiences throughout the lifespan, we know that for various reasons some veterans did not process their memories in earlier life. For others, reconciliation did occur in later life, but this was achieved by communicating with family members in a positive environment. For veterans with incoherent narratives, reconciliation was desired but resources were absent, thus emphasising the implications of this research.

CHAPTER FOUR

Interview Study with Veterans serving in the 1950s – 1970s

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focused on the war experiences of veterans during the 1950s 60s and 70s. Specifically, analysis focused on their experiences of social support from comrades and family, perceptions of societal reaction immediately postwar and at the time of the present study, and their opinions on the media's portrayal of these wars. These themes comprised the narrative content. In addition, the narrative form was analysed and specific attention given to the narrative coherence of the interviews as an indication of reconciliation.

4.2 Participants

Nine male veterans (50-79 years of age) participated in one-to-one interviews, which lasted on average between one and two hours. They were recruited via personal contacts, the Royal British Legion, British Korea Veterans' Association, and Combat Stress the Ex-Services Mental Health Charity. Seven served in the British Army, and two served in the Royal Air Force. Selection was based on geographical location (the Solent area), and visits were conducted at Tyrwhitt House (Combat Stress HQ). Follow up phone calls were made to assess whether the veterans were still interested in participating when given more information about the study. Veterans were interviewed at their homes, or at Tyrwhitt House.

4.3 Findings

Thematic analysis revealed themes relating to perceptions of war experience, comradeship and communication, family support and communication, and societal opinion and support. Interesting patterns of themes were found between veterans with coherent (four participants), reconciled (one participant), and incoherent (four participants) narratives, which are discussed below. Findings are presented within these groups, with participant biographies to provide context (see Tables 9-11).

4.3.1 Coherent

TABLE 11. *Participants' Military Background (1950s-1970s - Coherent).*

Participant	Background
JC	At the time of the study, JC was 58 years old. He joined the Army in 1965 at the age of 18, serving until 1975. The highest Rank attained was Corporal, and he served in 1st Battalion Parachute Regiment. Theatres of war included Aden and Northern Ireland. He married during service. He was a member of a veterans' association.
EP	At the time of the study, EP was 72 years old. He joined the Army in 1952 at the age of 18, serving until 1954. The highest Rank attained was Private, and he served as an operating theatre technician in the Royal Army Medical Corps. Theatres of war included Korea. He was single during service. He was a member of a veterans' association.
CH	At the time of the study, CH was 73 years old. He joined the Army in 1952 at the age of 19, serving until 1954, plus 5 years TA service. The highest Rank attained was Driver B4, and he served as a driver and parachutist in the 16th Independent Parachute Brigade. Theatres of war included Suez. He was single during service. He was a member of a veterans' association.
UV	At the time of the study, UV was 77 years old. He joined the Army in 1947 at the age of 18, serving until 1978. The highest Rank attained was Lieutenant, and he served in the Tank Regiment. Theatres of war included Aden, Korea, Radfan, and Suez. He married during service. He was a member of a veterans' association.

4.3.1.1 Perceptions of war experience.

Participants in this group had not experienced traumatic memories associated with their service, or whose narrative implied no traumatic memories and/or the presence of a coherent narrative. EP provided an explicit statement of no traumatic memories:

...but...if you said did I ever have...bad dreams about it [2] was I ever really upset...no I wasn't...[EP L213:215]

Of the four participants, UV had positive perceptions of his experiences, whereas the other three had mixed perceptions. For instance, JC, a career soldier

from the 1960s-1970s, described his feelings towards different parts of his service, and highlights a sense of pride in the regiment:

> ...the next two years was really a kind of a grey patch because we were in the UK and apart from exercises there was nothing else going on...so it was actually quite boring...and then Northern Ireland came along...and I hate to make...I hate [1] appearing like I take pleasure out of other people's misery but at the end of the day it was all...I was in a...a regiment...that prided itself...on...erm...its combat experience...and sometimes you've got to have the chance to put it into action again...so erm [1] we spent the first four months touring with the battalion...which was like a fun war...[JC L28:34]

All veterans reported positive outcomes of service. For UV, it had a positive impact on his future career in the Army:

> ...well...I think it did...it...it helped my military career because after all...ah...you join the Army to fight...and...ah...I had...and erm [1] so I had that experience which...probably gave me edge on the people who hadn't.. [UV L173:175]

In particular, EP who served as a National Serviceman, emphasised how service matured him:

> ...in lots of ways...I think...I was still very very immature [1] but I think if you asked [1] any servicemen...even if they hadn't actually...taken part in any war...they would tell you that...service life matures you...but service life...as I saw it...matured me...very very quickly [EP L359:362]

Finally, all veterans in this group reported factors that protected them from finding their experiences distressing. JC provided an interesting assessment of the types of personal protecting factors, which included feeling prepared for service, confidence in expertise of comrades, being young at the time of service, and limited exposure to intense battle or war experience:

> ...I think that...within the brigade...within the parachute regiment...the training is such that you...you never really felt...that you were out of your depth...and I think that...now that causes you...that causes you stress...when you're in a position where...you know something's wrong and you can't do anything about it...but...I was never in that situation...you know...we knew that we were good...and that erm...may sound bigheaded...but that's how it is...and that's the mental...the mental image if you like...there was nobody out there who was better than you and you can handle it if they kick off...erm...so no...and I was young...I think...ah...and...I have talked to some of them...I've talked to some people who were in the Falklands...and I must say that none of [2] none of the kind of actions that I was involved in were...as intense as that...yes we had our moments...you know...shot [people]...but...it was more of an adrenaline rush...erm...than a constant sort of threat and fear...[JC L53:66]

4.3.1.2 Comradeship.

Comradeship was viewed positively. CH highlighted the importance of comradeship and the impact of loss on demobilisation:

...very good...very good...in fact...the biggest thing when you came back home
was the loss of comradeship...[CH 188:189]

Further to this, EP indicated that comradeship may have been the reason why he

did not find working as a medic in Korea distressing:

...we were always laughing and joking [] but I suddenly realised that perhaps this
was...almost some way in which people...released the stresses and strains of
actually having...to day in and day out...manage horrific injuries [EP L134:147]

Indeed, there is also implication of shared understanding, which added to the

support received from and given to comrades:

...but I thought that I had support...because it was a difficult job...and therefore it
was a difficult job...so...whoever had done it would've still had a problem [with
doing a particular job] [EP L202:203]

This seemed to allow EP to communicate with comrades during service, indeed

communication also continued after service at veterans' association meetings:

...I think it the main [1] I wasn't...really troubled myself [2] I...we would often [2]
talk when things were going on...erm [1] about this person's injury...and we would
say...oh I wonder how he is going to manage with that...or what is there really in
life...for him [1] ah...but I don't think I was troubled with that...[] it's the type of
occupation that you do talk a lot of shop [2] [EP L181:189]

Non-communication occurred during service and is expressed by CH to be an

expected and satisfactory way of dealing with experiences:

...no no...you...you were your own counsel...[KB: but that worked for you?]
yeah...yeah...[CH L266:270]

For JC, communication had taken place in later life:

...very often people would talk to me about it...obviously...a lot of my
friends...knew...what I'd done...and many of them had shared the same sort of
experience...and we'd talk about them [JC L156:160]

Finally, there were mixed perceptions towards veteran associations. Both

UV and JC held negative perceptions because of personal irrelevance. There was

no indication that these negative perceptions were a cause of distress or

disappoint to the veterans:

...I am a member of a veterans' association...that's how I got...your [KB: of
course...yeah...of course]...yes yes yes....but I'm a very poor member of the
veterans' association...I only joined for one reason [1] and that is...they were going
to...there was going to be a...parade in London...was it the 50th
Anniversary...probably was...of...of the truce...and I wanted to go on that
parade...I just had this feeling that I wanted to go...so I joined the veterans'
association...I went to a couple of meetings...and got swept up with them...and
went on this parade...on Horseguards and I'm glad I did...but erm...if it hadn't
been for that...I don't think I would be a member of a veterans' association [KB:
no?] although I get the...the...a magazine...I think it's once a month actually...or a

newsletter...and I enjoy reading it immensely...it's...it's very good...but I don't really get involved with veterans...and even my regiment...I've...I've...let it all go...er...because the Army has changed so much...ah...so different...that ah...I ah...I you know...I've lost interest really [UV L209:221]

In contrast, EP and CH felt positively towards veterans' associations:

...yes it is *[important]*...yes...yes...not to drink pints of beer or anything like that...just...comradeship...yeah...yeah...yeah...so it's strange...it's just those...experiences in life that have carried us right through...right to this day...erm..[CH L355:357]

4.3.1.3 Family support.

Negative interactions were not reported in this group, however only EP gave an example of positive interactions and support from his family after service:

...my father had had a little...piece put in the paper *[KB: ah]* that ah...EP is returning on the ah [1] erm...troop ship Empire...all well after...serving in Japan working in the hospital...I think it said as an operating technician...I can't quite remember that...but yes...there was that little bit I still have the cuttings from that...[EP L312:316]

In terms of communication, UV reported that he had spoken to his children about his experiences, and this was more important to him than perceptions of society:

...I think they probably are *[interested]*...erm...now it's difficult for me to judge...because I...I talk to my own generation...and we...of course remember it...and ah...I talk to my children...and they know about it...because they know that Daddy was...involved...so they're...they're quite interested...but...their contemporaries I don't suppose are...*[KB: no?]* erm [1] and that doesn't worry me [UV L192:196]

EP had spoken to his wife in later years, but this did not seem to be a priority. Finally, JC indicated that he avoided talking to his wife about his experiences because he did not wish to worry her:

...well from my...from my wife's perspective...I mean...she knew...what we were involved in...in a general way...and obviously worried about it...erm....but...I didn't feel any...you know...I felt that...if I told her...exactly what was going on then I'd only be reinforcing the worry...[JC L113:116]

4.3.1.4 Societal support.

UV and JC both gave positive descriptions of societal support after service. UV implied that receiving this support increased his own positive feelings towards his service in Korea:

...I think people felt that...Korea had to be done...and ah...I've often thought about it afterwards...and I...feel...ah...that it...that it was...a worthwhile operation...though a lot of people...lost of their lives...ah...I've never been back to

> Korea...but I did once go...to...a...a reception...in London...ah [1] oh...it must
> have been [2] a long time after Korea...when I was in the Army...and the
> Ambassador said to me...you were in Korea were you...and he
> was....incredibly...ah...forthcoming and grateful and everything else and said how
> marvellous it was...and then I thought to myself well perhaps it was...[UV
> L112:119]

JC felt that the majority of the population support the Armed Forces, and this
was an important factor for him in terms of his own feelings towards his service.
He also highlighted that he has had negative experiences of communication:

> ...I think we're fairly lucky in...in the UK...in particular...that [1] the public in
> general are able almost to divorce [1] the subjects of the serving soldier...and the
> conditions that create him [2] I can...I can remember...sort of Vietnam...when the
> American troops returned from Vietnam they were viewed as vile for doing jobs
> that they actually had no choice over...we don't have that in...well...we don't have
> it to that great extent in...in this country...most...most of the population are behind
> the Armed Forces...in...what they do...they may not be behind them...for the
> reason they're doing it...and I think we're lucky in being able to make that...that
> distinction...well the Armed Forces are...it's um...certainly everyone...most
> people I've spoken to...you know when you come back from [service]...you just
> talk to people and they just...accepted it was part of your job...one or two aren't
> entirely sure...bloody warmongers...baby killers...[JC L213:224]

Finally, EP expressed a lack of interest and understanding from the public, but
did not indicate that this he perceived this negatively:

> ...I came out...and I had to resume...life...that was what it was all about...I had to
> go into...into a job where I was paid...and ah...that was important [1] I
> think...people in this country really didn't have a lot of a clue...or didn't have
> much...experience...or anything about...where Korea was...and what was really
> going on...a lot of people really were totally unaware of the Korean War...and in
> the main it was only those who were affected by the Korean War which really had
> any real knowledge of it...also I think it was so close to the Second World
> War...that people really didn't want to go through that sort of...thing again...so...I
> can't say I ever had...anything negative...said to me...but [sighs]...I'm not sure
> [1]...that it was much...of a positive thing as well...[EP L389:401]

In terms of communication, UV spoke about non-communication after
the interview was terminated, which was attributed to people's lack of interest
and understanding, but again this was not interpreted negatively by UV; to
paraphrase:

> ...when I came home no one gave us a homecoming you weren't expecting
> anything it was just usual. People asked you about it, you said you'd just been to
> Korea and they just stopped, it was a conversation stopper but only because they
> didn't understand enough there was no negative opinion attached to it [UV]

The importance of commemoration was expressed by JC, CH, and UV, who
expressed the meaning and importance of commemoration articulately:

... I went for the people who'd been killed...erm...and I thank...the Lord...for the fact that I was still here...to do it...and ah...I also felt proud of the fact that I'd take part in something which I think was worth...worthwhile... [UV L275:281]

CH indicated that he was not interested in media representation. JC expressed concern of the dramatisation of war, in that it could lead to lack of understanding from members of society, but there were no negative implications for him:

...well...no...I think...the thing about policing...because we were young you see...policing and...the Army...through the eyes of TV dramatists...and of course they've got to keep you entertained for an hour...and they don't show you...sort of...touring down...a Belfast street...at sort of three o'clock on a January morning...nobody else about even the cats are indoors...and it's pouring with rain and blowing a gale...and you're wet through...and...and all you can think of really is...getting back to the barracks and having a cup of tea in an hour's time you know...people don't see that side of things... [JC L132:139]

4.3.2 Reconciled Coherent

TABLE 12. *Participants' Military Background (1950s-1970s - Reconciled).*

Participant	Background
DQ	At the time of the study, DQ was 70 years old. He joined the RAF in 1954 at the age of 18, serving until 1956. The highest Rank attained was Substantial Corporal, and he served as a medic in Air Ambulance. Theatres of war included Cyprus and Suez. He was single during service. He was a member of a veterans' association

4.3.2.1 Perceptions of war experience.

DQ explained that he had experienced memories in later life, but had come to terms with them. In the following extract, DQ indicated how he had suppressed his memories of service, but how they had re-emerged in later years with negative consequences:

...and I totally suppressed that memory...totally suppressed it...twenty years later [1] nineteen seventy six...I'm playing squash...and I'm now a senior lecturer at *[name of university]*...[]...and I'm...knocking at squash...because they'd been a lot of things about 20th...anniversary of Suez...and I'm knocking at squash with this lad...and I suddenly said...I wonder what happed to those lads I brought back from Cyprus...and somewhere...in my memory...I totally repressed the memory...and...I...I...I just collapsed...I just...I just...I wouldn't say I'd forgotten the memory...because after that...flashback...I remembered...and for some...considerable time...[]...I'm remembering flashbacks...it gave me nightmares...and everything else...really stressful...erm [1] [DQ L362:372]

DQ expressed negative perceptions of his service. Despite talking about feelings of pride, this was associated with the importance of masculinity in the military world:

> ...but I wanted to be part of the invasion...not because I had any moral desire to...kill or anything else [1] it was part of one's masculinity and generation...to prove one's masculinity to prove one's manhood...so you could look at your father's generation...and we didn't let them down... [L13:16] ...of course what you had to do was show you weren't afraid of blood and gore...[DQ L91]

In terms of outcomes, DQ highlighted the benefits of his service experience on his later career. In the following example, DQ described how service life provided him with intimate understanding of the rank system in UK prisons:

> ...I said ah...as one serviceman to another...and I think I might actually have...an older service number...what impresses me Sir...about your observations...what you're saying is this...that the Governors...the Officer ranks...are not over seeing the...Prison Officers...the NCO ranks...who are not being fair to the rankers...namely the inmates...you are...Professor...you've got it in one...and he said I'll have to talk to you...and he came over [DQ L586:592]

DQ identified a risk factor associated with his service, which was dealing with dead bodies in his capacity as an RAF medic:

> ...because as a medic...I saw a lot of bodies relatively speaking...so I saw more...impact of violence than the average serviceman obviously []...for example if you'd seen a crashed plane...the jelly and so on and so forth...again...because you're a young man...you suppress it and sit down on it and so forth... [DQ L262:266]

4.3.2.2 Comradeship.

DQ did not mention any form of communication taking place during or after service, but comradeship was seen as important throughout life. In the following quote, DQ described positive moments of comradeship outside the RAF:

> ...and we were in...the thing *[pub]*...and suddenly some Paras came...and they were tough...and they come up and said...you RAF medics...oh yes yes...and he's a Corporal *[laughs]*...my lad said...he...yeah yes we are...ah...were you at Suez...well he was he was...drinks are on us lads...and everything...you looked after our mates...you see...[DQ L229:233]

Comradeship after service was also perceived to be very important and gratefully received:

> I'm now a Professor...here at this university...I go with the Chief Probation Officer of *[county]* to see an MP [1] and ah...his name was...it doesn't matter...and he's wearing a Paras *[hat]*...and I said you were in the Paras were you then [] oh yes yes

yes yes...I said I was with the Paras...I said I actually served with Paras...were you in *[name of company]*...my dear chap...whatever you want...and we were mates and that was that...[]...my dear chap you were there...I...you're a medic...you looked after our chaps...wonderfully...and you know...I hadn't seen anybody from the Paras...from fifty six to...nineteen eighty six...but...I'd served with the Paras...[DQ L216:224]

4.3.2.3 Family support.

Little information was provided by DQ in terms of the impact of family interactions after service, or in later years. Regarding communication, it appeared that after the traumatic memory returned to him, DQ communicated with his wife about his experiences, and found relief in this:

...I told my wife that night [1] and ah [2] said I was really experiencing it...and I said...do you...do you think I was imaging it...do you think I was...kind of inventing it somehow...this kind of thing...and [1] we talked a bit about the war...and...put it back in its box...and...had occasional nightmares for some weeks afterwards...and I don't think I spoke again...about it...for a long long time...erm...[4] [DQ L412:416]

4.3.2.4 Societal support.

Descriptions of societal support and descriptions of communication after service were described negatively, which seemed to impact on DQ's perception of his service:

...so I'm stood on the station...feeling ever so proud...with all these people looking at me...feeling you know...I'm a I'm a I'm a real man you see...and this woman came to me...excuse me she said [1] were you in Su..Suez...and I said yes I was...and do you know she said...you're no better than Nazis [2] I was totally flummoxed...I mean...normally I'm not lost for words...but...I...I was literally flummoxed...I hadn't a clue what she was on about...and she walked off...and...I thought...and I was on the train...and in those days of course we talked to each other...and I said...I can't understand it...and other people in the carriage said...well you know...we didn't all agree with it...and I said...well how do know etc...well you know...some people feel *[it was wrong]*...I thought bloody civilians...and we'd been lied to...and it took me literally ten years to really understand...[DQ L452:463]

4.3.3 Incoherent

TABLE 13. *Participants' Military Background (1950s-1970s – Incoherent).*

Participant	Background
CJF	At the time of the study, CJF was 79 years old. He joined the Army in 1944 at the age of 17, serving until 1957. The highest Rank attained was Staff Sergeant, and he served in the Intelligence Corps. Theatres of war included Suez. He was single during service. He was a member of a veterans' association.
TO	At the time of the study, TO was 50 years old. He joined the Army in 1974 at the age of 17, serving until 1984. The highest Rank attained was Lance Corporal, and he served in the Army Catering Corps as a chef. Theatres of war included Northern Ireland, Belize/Guatemala, and the Falklands after surrender. He was single during service. He was a member of a veterans' association (including Combat Stress). At the time of the study, he was receiving treatment from Combat Stress for PTSD.
DX	At the time of the study, DX was 63 years old. He joined the Army in 1969 at the age of 24, serving until 1975. The highest Rank attained was Corporal, and he served in 1 Para. Theatres of war included Northern Ireland and UN duties in Cyprus. He was married during service. He was a member of a veterans' association (Combat Stress). At the time of the study, he was receiving treatment from Combat Stress for PTSD.
NE	At the time of the study NE was 70 years old. He joined the RAF in 1956 at the age of 19, serving until 1971. The highest Rank attained was not provided. He served as Photographer in Intelligence. He was a member of a veterans' association (including Combat Stress). He was receiving treatment from Combat Stress for PTSD at the time of the Study.

4.3.3.1 Perceptions of war experience.

All four veterans explicitly stated that they had traumatic memories, rumination, flashbacks, or nightmares. For instance, CJF explained the persistence of his memories:

> ...I've bloody carried that with me all my life yeah...[L619:620] ...I feel so bad about that you know...I really feel...I've always felt bad about that [2] and I do think about it and [2] I think about it quite often I don't mean everyday I don't mean every week even...but I bet there's not a month goes by...and that was when I was probably about 23 24 25 years of age...and I'm seventy bloody nine now [4] it's been a long time hasn't it *[KB: mm]* yeah...but I don't think about it you know...it slips through the memory or something...but it always comes back yeah...*[KB: yeah]* yeah...it always comes back...[CJF L657:664]

For DX this was attributed to the fact that he felt his memories of Bloody Sunday were manipulated by his commanding officers, and for this reason, he could not come to terms with them:

> ...the whole...thing...was a mish mash...you know what I mean...and it's like you know...I'm left with a guilt complex like you know...I swear blind to this day...I shot two terrorists with rifles...you know what I mean...but they were all coming out evidence evidence evidence...that I never did...and there's one shocking bit of it...I have...felt sure...even to this day I could still see...I have nightmares about it and ah [1] someone put it to me it's like a tape recording...and you rewind and...play it back...but you don't always play it back the same...as what you...saw in the first place *[KB: right]* you know *[KB: yeah]*...and it's a whole heap of...mind games...going down...[DX L208:215]

Of the four participants, both DX and NE had mixed perceptions of their experiences. This was summed up succinctly by DX:

> ...so that was nice...in general...but there's these little...blodges...you know what I mean *[KB: yeah]* ah...erm...black spots...like you know...[DX L301:302]

CJF had negative perceptions of his service in that he did not perceive his service to be combat, but found situations tense and unnerving due to the presence of snipers and ambushes:

> ...ah...I was a Sergeant...I was Intelligence there...I was Intelligence...the ah [1] I never...was in open combat...if you like...it was always a situation...well when I say always...when there was a situation...or if...there were a situation...it was the situation of...ah...well...like it is today...the Gulf and all that...not the Gulf...wherever it is...wherever it happens to be...the war in Afghanistan...you're sniped at...right...we had wire across the road and if you're on a motorbike you'd...bloody had it...and if were on a jeep...you'd got a vehicle with a...wire cutter at the front...which is ok if it didn't spring back and gouge your eyes out...but you know...that kind of thing...[CJF L230:238]

In terms of outcomes, TO and NE reported negative outcomes, CJF reported mixed outcomes, and DX reported positive outcomes. For TO and NE, negative outcomes were identified as being directly attributed to the mental and physical injuries sustained during service. In the following quote, NE describes physical injuries that resulted from an air accident involving the decompression of the aircraft, whilst in service:

> ...currently my knuckles...hurt...now they've hurt...since 1972 [2] and tomorrow morning my wrist will hurt [1] ah...then it'll be my shoulders on another day...*[KB: that must be exhausting]* my arm will be too heavy to carry...I have to have a sling with me...I'll have to get up one morning and I'll have to put bandages around my wrists...you know...pressure bandages...round my wrists...and I'll have to put something on my legs...or my toes some days...they they won't move and [1] I get such severe headaches that...the medication is 200 quid for three tablets [NE L521:528]

CJF emphasised that it had not affected his life in terms of outcomes, but DX highlighted the concept of maturation as a positive outcome:

> ...it was like...you know...join the Army and become a man...which I think I did like you know what I mean...*[KB: yeah]* it matured me a lot...and all that like...cos it was rough like you know...[DX L60:62]

DX and CJF also reported risk factors. For DX it was the lack of help he received after service. For CJF, it was the fear that he was likely to experience traumatic events:

> ...you know it can happen...you know it could happen you know it might happen but...it probably won't...but very often it does...you know...[CJF L238:254]

4.3.3.2 Comradeship.

Only CJF spoke about comrades, and gave a mixed description because he had to work alone:

> ...it was quite nice...a very small unit...quite intimate crowd...you know...and we got on pretty well...[L60:61] [] but...once...once tasked...you...you were alone...you were meant to be alone...[CJF L508:510]

In terms of communication, avoidance and non-communication were most prevalent during service. Avoidance was attributed by DX to be due to military culture, and was also the reason for avoidance with his family:

> ...er...no...no...I don't think so *[wouldn't have spoken about experiences]*...no...you know...that's another thing...it's like...I'm a soldier...you get up and do...when the going gets tough the tough get going type of thing...there's all the kind of mottos that we was brought up on you know...and erm...be a man stand up and get on with it like you know what I mean...so that macho business [2] was foremost in life all the time...[DX L443:447]

For both CJF and NE, non-communication took place during service. Both men wanted to speak about their experiences, but were prevented from doing so by their commanding officers. For NE there was a need to express the emotions he felt at the time of the air crash:

> ...I'd had a load of trouble because I...was under orders not to tell anybody...and I'm an obedient soul...I wanted to tell somebody...I'd...I hadn't even told my wife...I'm obedient...so...I didn't tell anybody...[NE L264:266]

CJF emphasised the need and desire to talk about the event, so that he could understand what happened:

> *KB: If...if...if the skipper had remained your skipper after that would you have spoken to him about it?*

CJF: oh yes...oh yes...yes I would've done...I would've had to...yeah...you see I don't actually know what happened...[CJF L632:636]

Veterans' associations were described in a variety of ways. For TO, veterans' associations were positive because they provided comradeship and understanding:

> ...I've got a few good friends here...we always seem to meet up at the same time *[KB: laughs]*...oh what are you doing here...and you're back in...you're back in the Army sort of thing...or whatever...you know...in the services...you've got the same comradeship...civilians couldn't really understand...all the comradeship that occurs...you know...and...that we do things for somebody else...[TO L252:257]

In a fine example of mixed perceptions, NE firstly explained why he felt negatively towards veterans' associations. He did not feel worthy of help because his accident did not take place in wartime:

> ...and I'm lucky...you know...I'm alive...I walked away [1] but [2] you can imagine me coming here *[laughs]* you don't have to imagine me coming here but...ah...Army and Navy guys who have been head butting bullets out of the way here...and my accident didn't even happen in a wartime situation [2] and how can I tell them...I walked away from a plane accident...you know [1] whereas they've been bombed and everything...so it was difficult for a time...[NE L364:370]

Secondly, he expressed how the veterans' association had helped him by providing an environment in which he can talk:

> ...it's always supportive...if it hadn't been for this place *[Tyrwhitt House]* I don't know how I would have been you know...because it does build up...unless you can talk about it to somebody...[NE L92:394]

Communication had begun to occur for DX in the context of the veterans' association, but he was concerned about how helpful communication was in the absence of truth:

> DX:...and then [2] we *[comrades]* recollect things...and there's things I've forgot...that he remembers...things that he's forgot and I remember...
>
> *KB: Does that sort of help piece the picture?*
>
> DX: Yeah...it gets it all...back to the right places you know...and when I turn around and say here...I said it was a glass door...they say it was a fucking glass door mate like you know what I mean...they switched the doors round you know what I mean...and I say they've got me battling over that you know...but still I don't know if he's just saying that *[KB: yeah]* you know...and you go round and round in circles...you know...you complete one circle then you're onto another one...and you go round all these circles until all these circles link up and you get back to square one again...[DX L996:1008]

4.3.3.3 Family support.

Descriptions of family interactions were described negatively both immediately after service, and during service. For TO, there had always been an absence of family support, and was partly the reason he chose to serve:

> ...I'm the black sheep of the family...my parents...as I say are divorced...my brother I haven't seen for...best part of twenty years...[TO L93:94]

DX described a lack of support from his wife immediately after service regarding of general support and understanding:

> ...well the wife walked out about 20 odd years ago [1] and she's saying like she never wanted to move to *[town]* in the first place and...erm...why...then why did I leave the Army...that was quite alright...and it was do you mind...if I'd stayed in...I would have been in the Falklands next...[DX L331:335]

> ...I wouldn't mind it if...just your wife turns round and tells you how great it *[self made gym]* is...and everybody told how shit it is...it wouldn't have mattered...but everybody told me how great it was...and she's telling me...and it destroyed me in a sense like you know...[DX L383:386]

In terms of communication, CJF had communicated with his nephew about his war experiences:

> ...I did mention a couple of things to *[wife's]* nephew in September last when we were talking about the Veterans' Week...and it...it happened to come out *[claps]...[tearful]* and I was choked then you know [3] [CJF L3367:369]

He also demonstrated avoidance and questioned the usefulness of communicating with his wife, in part because he was unable to talk about his experiences:

> ...but I've never spoken about it...I know I keep saying this...I've never ever spoken about anything like...and I reiterate...[wife] doesn't even know [2] why...well...*[claps]* what's the point of telling her [1] what's the point of telling her you know *[claps]* erm [2] I don't know whether I ever had the need to talk about it Karen [2] I didn't think I did...of course [3] maybe one thinks one doesn't need to you know I don't know...I don't know...[CJF L785:790]

NE had also avoided talking to his wife about his experience, and this avoidance was attributed to protecting his wife:

> NE:...but you know I never talk about it to my wife *[coughs]*
>
> *KB: Why don't you talk to her?*
>
> NE: Erm...she...she isn't able to take it...the women are not able to take it [NE L428:433]

TO had communicated with his family, but this took the form of non-communication because he did not speak about the traumatic experiences:

> ...ah...that I was in the Army...yeah...what I did...not...not going into like the detail...I don't tell them the gory bits *[KB: no...no]*...I tell them the good bits *[laughs]*...[TO L309:311]

4.3.3.4 Societal support.

Negative descriptions of societal support were reported by both DX and TO. TO expressed a lack of understanding and recognition for his service in Northern Ireland:

> ...but the one that [3] people...especially in England...don't praise if you like...is Northern Ireland...*[KB: yeah]*...because ...what a lot of people don't realise is that we were just out as a peacekeeping force...we weren't on any side...but both sides decided we were the baddies *[KB: yeah]*...[TO L198:201]

DX echoed this, but also suggested that society does not understand how and why veterans may not be able to adjust after service:

> ...what...not recognising our work out there...what we've done and what we've sacrificed and all that *[KB: yeah]* yeah...it gets you mad...[] yeah the time you're on the beach with a barbeque...we're sweating bullets out there like you know...and erm people are like...ooh...I'm free...how do you think you got free...you know...it's us at the front end...keeping all that...horrible...horrible shit away from your eyesight even...not even into your mind...not even into your feelings...you ain't going to feel nothing...of that...we're there to shield you from that...[] you don't see that you...what's in front of that shield...where is the havoc he's laying waste to...there...and that...and then he's got to come back and act normal *[KB: yeah]* you know what I mean...and what do you want...you know...we're doing that so you can act normal...you know...and then it's like...give us a little bit of regard...[CW L1233:1261]

In terms of communication with society, CJF did not communicate, and TO's descriptions were negative and emphasised the lack of understanding:

> ...here's a classic example...so I went to see the ah...community psychiatrist...and...he said oh what we'll do...we'll put you in the men's group [2] you know...which was...like a self help group...so...I went...and all they were talking about was...oh I went shopping yesterday...you know...and ah...oh my wife and I we're hoping to get over to Brighton...how's that dealing with...like...combat stress...*[KB: yeah exactly]*...and I said to him...you can't...you can't put me in with them...because they can't relate to me having to shoot a gun...*[KB: yeah]* and being fired at...seeing blown up bodies...and...you know...being shot at myself you know....how can they relate to that...I couldn't talk to them about my troubles...they couldn't relate to it...[TO L77:87]

Importantly NE described positive instances of communication based on his experiences as a counsellor, which have allowed him to understand his experiences and to start coming to terms with them:

> ...I want to think about it less...*[KB: yeah]* allowing myself...to...talk about it...and not be frightened of talking about it...when people...push it to the back of

> their head...I don't want to hear this...you know...because it really is...so incongruous...that...if you're sitting with somebody [1] then [2] what...you know...meet anybody who survived...say the Herald of Free Enterprise...who sits down and wants to talk about it...you can imagine them in a pub...suddenly having a bad moment...and...nobody wants to know...about that tragedy...whereas...I can...I can now...and that's the big difference...because I understand more...and why...I wasn't allowed to talk about it...didn't talk about it...why...and I do talk about it to recognise the fact that I shouldn't be talking about then I should be talking about it at a different time and I should be finding other ways of...of...of explaining it...which I am...in so much as I...there's certain episodes which I've written [NE L485:497]

In terms of commemoration, only TO and CJF commented on commemoration, but in both cases they were talking about commemorating either WWII (CJF) or the Falklands (TO). For both men, these were wars that they did not take part in.

Finally, TO provided a positive description of media representation. Once again, this was about the media representation of the Falklands war, rather than the media representation of Northern Ireland:

> ...it's good that the media have...remembered *[the Falklands]*...and my generation still remember people who were born in the second world war and we remembered them...now...the younger generation and remembering things that we did...[SN L195:197]

4.4 Findings from the Imperial War Museum

Findings from the IWM supported the interview themes. Perceptions were mixed and varied between excitement, fear, and pride. For instance, there is the sense of great excitement within a diary written by a National Serviceman whilst in Korea:

> 29th April At the moment there is a general air of anticipation and excitement in digging in for the defence of Seoul. [Potter 6882 IWM]

And a sense of pride for a veteran who also served in Korea:

> The attitude of a young man who was imbued with the honour of being part of the British Army [Stacpoole 12498 IWM]

For another veteran, there was a sense of fear and trepidation during service in Suez:

> As we drew nearer our objective, fears about submarines were supplemented by fear about mines. [Ashton 675 Pg 89.IWM]

This was echoed by another who described his perceptions of the jungle warfare he experienced in Malaya:

> Whether they were injured or wounded we didn't trouble to find out...we just shot them because if you was going to try to be chivalrous or humane you were going to lose your life and ah that was it...it's a dirty rotten way of fighting in my opinion anyway [Petit 17644 IWM]

Positive outcomes were also highlighted, with the benefits of National Service emphasised. Ives served in Malaya, and perceived his service to have been akin to University education:

> National service was the university of our youth – Malaya our particular campus. I shall never forget it [Ives 8179 Forward IWM]

In terms of camaraderie, the use of humour as a way of coping with experiences was an emerging theme:

> Personal relationships within the squad were, on the whole, very good. Camaraderie abounded, and I never came across any serious tensions or disagreements during this period. Humour, as for the recruit through the ages, was our weapon against the stresses and strains of the tough regime we were forced to endure. [Ashton 675 Pg 25.IWM]

Avoidance of communication was also highlighted by these veterans as a way of coping during service:

> Those of us who witnessed this scene [explosion] were considerable upset by it, and dared not dwell on it too much. [Ashton 675 Pg 115.IWM]

The use of alcohol was also supported within the archives as the following excerpt from an interview testifies:

> And the Sergeant said to me have you ever seen a dead man and I said no and he said right you're gonna see one now pick them bodies up...and they were dead bandits they'd shot three...and that's the first time I'd had contact with...a dead person...violently...I'd had contact with people who'd died like me aunties and people like that but I'd never seen a person who had been violently done to death as you might say and a [2] it wasn't too bad his body...it was his head he'd got the back of his head blown off and ah [2] some of his brains were coming down his nose [laughs] so I...when you first see that it's a great shock to you...I said to the bloke who was with me...you pick him up by the hands I'll pick him up by the feet [laughs] so he said yeah alright grabbed hold if his feet and um [3] [name] had been wounded badly [2] so we tried to clear an area to get a helicopter...some Brigadier wanted it so [2] we had to make a stretcher [] we was informed [2] that [name] had died of his wounds so ah [2] what we done when we heard the news was that we went into the NAAFI and ah just got drunk..."
>
> [Interviewer: as a reaction?] Well in a way...yes [] but you've got to relieve your feelings...I mean he used to be one of the greatest blokes in the platoon. [] ...to relieve our own feelings was to have a good beer up and to have a good sing song because in actual fact really what people don't realise is things like that you would never go back out into the jungle...and we didn't do it because we were callous we did it because it was the only way we could relieve our feelings and to bolster

> yourself and go back out there and face probably [2] what he was going to face or probably what he did face and we were going to have to do out there again in a couple of days or whatever and we would have to go through it all again and it could be anyone of us. [Petit 17644 IWM]

Continuing the theme of communication, another veteran explained the reason for subsequent non-communication with family and friends, due to a perceived lack of understanding:

> Over supper, I talked animatedly about my adventures. Although obviously pleased to see me home, safe and sound, they seemed oddly disinterested in what I had to say. It took me some time to realise that those who stay at home are seldom interested in the escapades of those who have travelled, even if they are close family [Ashton 675 Pg 219.IWM]

The impact on Ashton's ability to readjust to civilian life was explicit, but there was determination to do so:

> I suddenly felt very alone and a stranger in what had been my own social milieu [] In later years, when I read about the First World War poets such as Sassoon & Owen, I realised that this was a common problem to many of those returning from the front for their much longed for leave. They could not relate to the seemingly ephemeral quality of civilian life, and found themselves wanting to return to France where, for them, true reality appeared to lie. [] It would clearly take me some time to re-adjust, but re-adjust I most certainly would. [Ashton 675 Pg 219-220 IWM]

As with the 1930-1940s cohort, data from the IWM archives supported the themes that emerged during the interviews.

4.5 Discussion

As in the 1930s to 1940s cohort, the two level approach to analysis highlighted interesting differences between veterans with coherent, reconciled, and incoherent narratives. In addition, due to the nature of the cohort, exploration of National Servicemen and career soldiers also occurred, along with numerous wars. The thematic analysis of narrative content highlighted the importance of comradeship, family support, and societal support, which is in line with previous research with veterans of different war cohorts (Burnell, Coleman, & Hunt, 2006; Hautamäki & Coleman, 2001; Hunt & Robbins, 2001b). The inclusion of a wide range of individuals in this cohort allowed exploration into the individual experiences of servicemen who had different reasons and motivations to serve, and who served in different theatres of war. As in the 1930s-1940s cohort there was a clear delineation between themes associated with coherent narratives and

incoherent narratives, despite the differences in age, background, and military backgrounds.

4.5.1 Perceptions of War Experience

Across groups, veterans had mixed perceptions of their service experience. This is important to note, because it indicates that veterans with coherent narratives had experienced distressing and potentially traumatic events during their service. In addition, all veterans with coherent narratives expressed positive outcomes in relation to their service, and all reported the presence of protecting factors, which were attributed to the absence of traumatic memories and/or distress. For DQ (reconciled), perceptions of war experience were negative, but outcomes were positive. Only risk factors were highlighted by DQ and this was witnessing atrocity on a large scale in his capacity as an RAF medic.

Veterans with incoherent narratives had mixed, or negative, perceptions of their service and reported negative or mixed outcomes in all but one case; DX perceived his service to have matured him. This does not seem to be because he was a career soldier. TO, who was also a professional serviceman, reported negative outcomes. Differences in experience between groups are most noticeable in the field of outcomes and risk/protecting factors as opposed to perceptions of service.

4.5.2 Comradeship

Veterans with coherent and reconciled narratives described comradeship positively, and for those with coherent narratives, communication took place during and after service. There was an instance of non-communication, but this was attributed to the military environment by CH and not seen in a negative way. Additionally, veterans' associations were seen positively by both EP and CH in terms of maintaining comradeship. UV and JC perceived veterans' associations negatively, but this was because they were not needed. In contrast, in terms of reconciled coherence DQ provided no information about communication with comrades during or after service. Contact with comrades and service personnel in later life seemed to be very important to him.

For those with incoherent narratives, only CJF gave a description of comradeship. This description was mixed as he enjoyed the spirit amongst the

men, but as an Intelligence Officer he worked alone and therefore missed this camaraderie. In terms of communication, non communication and avoidance appeared to be the norm during service. In two cases, this non-communication was forced, and was identified as the reason why problems had occurred in later life. Communication had occurred for DX in later life after avoidance in earlier life but the usefulness of this was questioned due to the lack of information and confusion of events. In terms of veterans' associations, they were seen as positive and mixed, with mixed perceptions resulting from a sense of being unworthy of veteran status for NE.

In accordance with previous research, veterans communicated with comrades about their experiences (Hunt & Robbins, 2001b). Those with incoherent narratives were prevented from using comradeship to cope with their experiences and this may be an important finding. If individuals who have experienced trauma are unable to talk, despite wanting to, this may lead to problems in later life in the same way as avoidance.

Similarities and differences with previous research were identified in terms of the importance of veterans' associations. For those with incoherent narratives, findings were akin to previous research in that veterans' associations may be associated with mixed feelings. In terms of coherent narratives, both positive and negative feelings were expressed, which is a departure from previous research. It appears that this was not a difference between older and younger veterans, and may be attributed to the fact that both JC and UV were career soldiers, and as such may not need the support of veterans' associations in the same way as the National Servicemen EP and CH. It is difficult to draw conclusions from the reconciled narrative of DQ alone, but the absence of communication may be indicative. Across groups, the differences in types of communication seem to be of paramount importance.

4.5.3 Family Support

Between group differences lay in the realm of family support. Veterans with coherent narratives provided positive descriptions of family interaction, whereas those with incoherent narratives reported negative interactions both in earlier and later life. DQ did not comment on family interactions. In terms of communication, veterans with coherent narratives reported communicating with

family in earlier and later life. DQ reported communication in later life with his wife, and it would appear that she was the only person he spoke to about this experience. This finding is in opposition to the finding of Hunt & Robbins (2001b) because communication with family seemed to aid reconciliation.

This was not the case for veterans with incoherent narratives. Only CJF had communicated with a distant relative in later life, but continued to avoid communicating with his wife and close family for fear of breaking down. Similarly, NE and TO reported non-communication with family members. NE also reported avoidance which took the form of protection or buffering. DX avoided communication because of the macho image of the military. Interestingly, JC (coherent) also avoided communication due to reasons of protection, rather than the desire to maintain a safe haven for himself as reported by Hunt and Robbins (2001b). This is a subtle, but important, difference.

These results both complement and contradict the work of Hunt and Robbins (2001b) because avoidance and communication were attributed to various reasons, not all to do with the safe haven theory. Once again, those in the incoherent group implied a need to communicate, but the absence of opportunity.

4.5.4 Societal Support

Interactions with society also clearly differed between the three groups. For those with coherent narratives, descriptions were largely positive and commemoration was seen as being fundamental. UV indicated non-communication with members of society, and this was due to a perceived lack of understanding, but negative connotations were not expressed. In contrast, DQ (reconciled) indicated very negative descriptions of interactions and communication, which appeared to make him question the justness of his service in the Suez conflict. Similarly, those with incoherent narratives reported negative descriptions of interaction and communication, and instances of non-communication and avoidance. NE had begun to talk about his experiences, but only in recent years. The importance of commemoration was not expressed by veterans with reconciled or incoherent narratives. Lack of support may have either resulted in negative feelings towards service, or made coming to terms with experiences more difficult due to a perceived lack of recognition and support. This finding supports the work of Hautamäki and Coleman (2001).

In terms of media involvement, JC (coherent) emphasised the media's lack of reality. In contrast, TO (incoherent) gave a positive description of media involvement, but this was about the media representation of the Falklands War, which he was not involved in. For the 1950s-1970s cohort, it would appear that societal interactions keenly delineated between those with coherent narratives and those with reconciled and incoherent narratives.

4.6 Summary

Overall, differences between groups lie in a number of narrative content themes. Perceptions of war experience did not differ, but the nature of outcomes and risk factors did. Comradeship differed between groups mainly in terms of the type of communication taking place, with veterans with coherent narratives reporting more instances of communication with comrades. It would appear that veterans with incoherent narratives were prevented from talking and that this had an impact on the presence of traumatic memories in later life. Veterans' associations were more variably perceived, but for those with coherent narratives negative perceptions were attributed to lack of importance at current life stage.

Family interactions once again differed across groups, in that positive interactions were present for veterans with coherent narratives, and negative interactions defined those with incoherent narratives. Whilst communication took place for veterans with coherent narratives, avoidance was also reported but without negative connotations. It is important to note that communication with comrades did occur for this group, and this is in-line with the work of Hunt and Robbins (2001b). Contradicting previous research, for DQ (reconciled), communication with his wife appeared to be the main factor in his reconciliation. Communication for those with incoherent narratives was mainly defined as either non-communication and/or avoidance. The absence of a supportive family environment and inability and lack of desire to communicate resulted in an absence of opportunity to reconcile, especially in the absence of communication with comrades.

Societal support also appears to be influential in the reconciliation of war memories. For those with reconciled and incoherent narratives, negative interaction and communication were reported which appeared to have impacted negatively on them. In addition, commemoration was an important factor for

those with coherent narratives, but not for those with incoherent narratives. Given that these men represent veterans of the *small wars*, this is an important finding. It might be that more emphasis needs to be placed on explicitly including these wars in national days of remembrance. It is telling that TO and CJF spoke of commemoration in terms of WWII and the Falklands rather than their wars. This has important implications on a national scale in order to acknowledge these *forgotten* veterans after service.

CHAPTER FIVE

Interview Study with Veterans serving in the 1980s-2000s

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the war experiences of veterans during the 1980s 90s and 2000s. Specifically analysis focused on their experiences of social support from comrades and family, perceptions of societal reaction immediately postwar and at the time of the present study, and their opinions on the media's portrayal of these wars. These themes comprised the narrative content. In addition, the narrative form was analysed and specific attention given to the narrative coherence of the interviews as an indication of reconciliation.

5.2 Participants

Eleven male veterans (23-61 years of age) participated in one-to-one interviews, which lasted on average between one and two hours. They were recruited via personal contacts, the Royal British Legion, Royal Marines Welfare Offices, the Royal Army Medial Corps magazine, and Combat Stress the Ex-Services Mental Health Charity. Three served in the British Army, four served in the Royal Navy, and four were currently serving in the Royal Marines. Selection was based on geographical location (the Devon and Solent areas). Follow up phone calls were made to assess whether the veterans were still interested in participating when given more information about the study. Veterans were interviewed at their homes, Royal Marine Barracks, or Tyrwhitt House.

5.3 Findings

Thematic analysis revealed themes relating to perceptions of war experience, comradeship and communication, family support and communication, and societal opinion and support. Interesting patterns of themes were found between veterans with coherent (two participants), reconciled (four participant), and incoherent (five participants) narratives, which are discussed below. Findings are presented within these groups, with participant biographies to provide context (see Tables 12-14).

5.3.1 Coherent

TABLE 14. *Participants' Military Background (1980s-2000s – Coherent).*

Participant	Background
WX	At the time of the study, WX was 42 years old. He joined the Royal Marines in 1978 at the age of 16, and was still serving at the time of the study. The highest Rank attained was Colour Sergeant. Theatres of war included Northern Ireland and the Falklands. He married during the service. He was not a member of a veterans' association.
JS	At the time of the study, JS was 42 years old. He joined the Royal Marines in 1978 at the age of 16, and was serving as a Welfare Officer at the time of the study. The highest Rank attained was Warrant Officer. Theatres of war included the Falklands. He was married during service. He was not a member of a veterans' association.

5.3.1.1 Perceptions of war experience.

WX and JS explicitly stated that they had not been troubled by their service experiences. WX stated that whilst he had experienced distressing events, and had begun to think about his experiences in detail, he had never found his experiences traumatic:

> ...because in latter years I sort of find it...it pops up in my mind a lot more...you know...I think of *[name]* who's my mate who died...and he was like 20 and I thought, you know...I [2] I've had 20 years of life...good life...and he hasn't [L601:605] []...but erm...I don't [5] I don't have any mega...sort of...negative [2] I don't think I suffer posttraumatic stress in any way that I've been aware of [WX L612:614]

Both veterans spoke of mixed feelings towards service experience. In the following quote, WX expresses the mixture of emotions felt at the time of service. A sense of pride was implicit in the quote:

> ...we were apprehensive...but I was quite young...but the main feeling was sort of excitement...you know...being in such a high profile...sort of operation and the whole of the country aware of it [WX L20:22]

The importance of service was also highlighted:

> ...there was never a feeling of oh...you know...we're the sort of...peasant pawns being used...you know [1] even down to my level...as a 20 year old Marine...we understood the full implications of what we were doing and why we were going down there...you know...which er...I feel was important really...[WX L58:62]

JS spoke of the surreal nature of war, and again provided a mixed perception of his service:

> ...it was quite surreal really because...I mean...all our training from when you pass out or during passing out recruit training...umm...it's all obviously geared around preparing for combat and war fighting experience...and so...having discussed this with some of my colleagues at the time as well...as especially now when we've looked back and looked at it...it was quite surreal in that it wasn't just like another exercise...[JS L33:39]

JS reported positive outcomes. He believed that his service had helped him in his current role as Welfare Officer:

> ...what I would say though is it helps me in the job I do because I think I can empathise with them about how they're feeling about things...and therefore is it their feelings...you know...their psychological perception that is triggering what ever the presenting issue may be...and when...you know...from an empathetic point of view...I can engage with these guys although you never let them know this...because I've been through and maybe feeling and have felt the same myself at some stage [JS L328:336]

Finally, JS spoke about risk factors that he had identified in current troops, but this was not associated with his own experience:

> ... they go away and do operations...and many of the operations you do are dull...and mundane and boring...I mean...Northern Ireland...you know...that's probably about one percent of your time that you may do something that is marginally interesting...the rest of the time it's just mundane day in day out...out in all weathers day and night...up to your knees in mud [JS L514:520]

5.3.1.2 Comradeship.

Both WX and JS described comradeship positively and as a very important factor during service:

> ...so and it was quite, quite a good bit of camaraderie which I always remember...you know...at that time as we went past, and them *[Royal Navy]* giving it the old [1] yeah go and get them Royal...and the er the lads were giving it the old...yeah...keep 'em off our backs jack...or something like that...you know...a bit chad...but it was...was quite...you know at the time...quite erm...touching [4] [WX L158:163]

Both emphasised the role of black humour in coping with events during service:

> ...and I think, very much, and this is something that's er...drilled into you throughout your training...is humour...black humour [1] er to get you through this kind of thing...and that really does come to head when it comes to operations [JR L67:71]

Despite the importance of camaraderie in coping during service, neither WX nor JS reported communicating with comrades about their experiences.

Rather, JS reported non-communication and avoidance. In the following quote he suggested that avoidance resulted from military culture:

> ...in fact from talking to guys who have gone outside...who are outside...they're the ones who tend...now they're on the other side of the fence so to speak...they feel safe to actually talk about it now...whereas when you're in the club...when you're this side of the fence and you're still in the military and you've still got those barriers around you...you know...the military ethos of integrity and self-respect and not letting your barriers down because it falls outside the rank structure in a way [JS L339:347]

In addition, non-communication was also attributed to the military ethos. JS indicated that he would speak about his experiences if given the opportunity. Fundamentally, non-communication was not expressed with negativity. Veterans' associations were described negatively in that they were unimportant because both veterans were currently serving at the time of study:

> WX: but if I...as I say when I leave...I will join it...but while I'm in...I haven't joined it...I don't know why...but I just feel that it's something I'll do when I do leave...
>
> *KB: to keep the links?*
>
> WX: yeah...to keep the links...yeah...cos I think while I'm still in...I've got the links...you know... [WX L659:666]

5.3.1.3 Family support.

In terms of family interactions, WX described a street party held for him by his family and friends to be a positive experience:

> ...but they had arranged a secret street party so we had a big street party the next day like...you know, which was all er [2] which was again a real lovely experience...and they even talk about it now...you know...a lot of the old neighbours and stuff... [WX L570:573]

Despite these positive interactions, non-communication and avoidance were reported. JS had communicated about experiences, but not about the more intense experiences:

> ...we spoke about all the more glorious...the more glorified things...erm...as opposed to [1] the more [2] um...seedy is not the word either...but [3] misfortunate things...so you know I didn't...personally I didn't go back and sit there in front of my mum and dad and tell them...explain to them about the loss of some of my comrades who were killed [2] but I talked to them about, you know [1] jets flying at water level...and sort of...the dan dare type [1] stuff for example...[JS L247:256]

WX explained that he avoided communication due to his respect for the Argentinian forces:

KB: Did you talk to them about your experiences at all?

WX: erm...not really no...I didn't feel...I didn't feel that I wanted to really...erm...you know...I've got a lot of the old...the main questions...oh...did you kill anyone...you know...stuff like that...and I tended to [2]

KB: Not the sort of questions you want [2]

WX: ...no...not really no...no...not at all...because...erm [6] I felt that erm [5] you know...I felt a bit sorry for them...you know...the enemy...in some ways [1] although not that sorry...cos you know...three of my friends had died...and I was [2] I felt that [3] but you know...as humans I felt for them if you know what I mean [WX L575:588]

5.3.1.4 Societal support.

Positive and mixed descriptions of societal support were given. WX described the positive experiences of societal support from Falkland Islanders immediately after the surrender of the Argentinian Forces. Pride and importance of gratitude are implicit:

...the next...the next morning...we marched into Stanley like...you know...which was absolutely unbelievable because...you know...we were fully kitted up and everything...and all...all the locals were like...hanging over the fences...and...patting you on the back...and...they had bottles of wine and whiskey...letting you have a swig and that...you know [L508:513] and so...although they are grateful to Britain...they...they're grateful to the people of that era because of what happened...you know for them...so yeah...that was real good...you know...the people were just unbelievable...they really [1] looked after us...and you felt very special down there which was good [2] [WX L683:688]

JS also gave positive descriptions, but there was a perceived lack of understanding experienced at the homecoming:

...I'd say...if you said...how did you feel about it...I can actually remember that [2] on the one hand it was like erm [2] joyous...joyous to be back and to see all these people...on the other was this strange feeling of um [4] what's the word I'm looking for [2] not bitterness [2] but erm [2] but what are you people celebrating ...cos you've not actually been through this [2] you've just read it in the papers and seen it on the telly and everything...and I think also communications weren't then as they are now [1] and so...there was joy on one hand...and a bit of resent on the other...you've got all these people sat in the pubs going on about what we should do to the 'Argies' and this that and the other...and they're all there celebrating the fact we won...but actually they don't know what you've been through and so you resent that to some extent [JS L129:143]

Commemoration was seen by JS to be an important event in terms of both remembering fallen comrades and for comradeship:

...I was invited and all this that and the other...I did feel sad at not being able to go [3] for two reasons...one to pay my...personal respects to the guys that we lost from our unit...and also just to meet up with currently serving and ex-serving members that were there at the time...it's interesting to...for that...just that physical connect really [4] [JS L432:437]

Finally, media involvement was seen to improve society's understanding of the nature of war and combat. This was not in relation to his service but of the Iraq conflict:

> ...the empathy that those people have is a lot more... erm... is a lot more apparent now because they've actually seen it live on TV as it's happening... you know... the loss of civilians and service people...so I think to some extent...these days... erm...that perception has changed... and that's my view on it...having just been around Op Telic and working with families and all that kind of stuff...[JS L225:230]

5.3.2 Reconciled Coherent

TABLE 15. *Participants' Military Background (1980s-2000s – Reconciled).*

Participant	Background
TT	At the time of the study, TT was 42 years old. He joined the Royal Navy in 1979 at the age of 16, but he moved to the Army and served until 2003. The highest Rank attained was Warrant Officer, with the specialism of weapons. Theatres of war included Falklands, the Gulf War, Northern Irelands, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Iraq. He was married during the service, later divorced, and remarried. He was not a member of a veterans' association.
JJ	At the time of the study, JJ was 61 years old. He joined the Royal Navy in 1962 at the age of 18, serving until 1997. The highest Rank attained was Commander. Theatres of war included Falklands and the Gulf War. He married during service. JJ published his autobiography in 2002. He was a member of a veterans' association.
HB	At the time of the study, HB was 41 years old. He joined the Royal Marines in 1979 at the age of 16 and he was still serving at the time of the study. The highest Rank attained at this time was Lieutenant. Theatres of war included Northern Ireland, Falklands, Kosovo, and the Gulf War. He married during the service. He was a member of a veterans' association.
EX	At the time of the study, EX was 40 years old. He joined the Royal Marines in 1979 at the age of 16, and was still serving at the time of the study. The highest Rank attained was Colour Sergeant. Theatres of war included Northern Ireland, the Falklands, and the Gulf War. He was not married during previous service, but had a partner at the time of the study. He was not a member of a veterans' association.

5.3.2.1 Perceptions of war experience.

Veterans in this group had come to terms with their experiences. For instance, JJ explained how his memories, although still vivid, did not distress him in the same way as they did in previous years:

> ...the flames were in excess of one hundred feet high [1] um [2] and that's what we...we...we were faced with...so...I see that [3] I...I see the whole war in remarkable clarity from start to finish...um...unlike sort of normal life memories...you know they're fading just a little bit...um...I'm not dwelling on it quite so much...I think it's perhaps because I've got more of a positive outlook [2] but...I can bring back the memories as...clear as a bell [2] it only needs a trigger word...... [JJ L523:527]

TT described the differences between the wars and conflicts he had served in to express mixed perceptions of experience:

> ...apart from that it *[the Falklands]* was quite uneventful just the normal all the bits and bobs [2] erm [2] but the feelings of how you actually felt were actually when you got there after the war [1] not being funny...I've done three...the Falklands Conflict the Gulf War I and II alright [2] fighting the war...is easy...cos you know who your enemy are...when you do the mop up afterwards that's what...that's why you have more *[psychiatric]* casualties in Iraq now then when we did during the war cos they haven't got a clue who the enemy is [2] with the Falklands it's not such much who he is because you know it's the Argentinians all the Falkland Islanders they want to be British...so slightly different there [TT L179:187]

Both positive and mixed perceptions were present for this group. HB expressed the duality of both negative and positive emotions:

> ...there was a lot of apprehension obviously in the build up to it...there was also a lot of...I wouldn't say excitement...but a lot erm...a feeling that you're actually going to do what you actually want to be doing...what you are trained to do...so that was the sort of build up to things...obviously a lot of anxiety...[HB L7:11]

For EX, the theme of pride and proving oneself were dominant:

> ...it was my first...my first real taste of combat er [4] everybody [1] er [2] I think every man wanted...to go...I guess you [1] you have all that training...and it's...it's an opportunity to prove yourself...and I think that's what it is...I think that's what young men do [1] I saw it this time round in [1] with Iraq you know...young men wanting to go out and prove themselves [EX L9:15]

Both protecting and risk factors were identified by this group. For HB and EX, previous experience of conflict prepared them for the Falklands War:

> ...so I had a year and a half or I'd had a year and a half in the unit to develop those skills and accommodate them in arduous circumstances working in Northern Ireland [1] in the early eighties it was quite active out there...you know...it was good grounding to then move on to general warfare [HB L45:49]

For TT and JJ risk factors were identified. Despite perceiving the Falklands War more positively than service in Iraq. TT also suggested that warfare was a greater risk than peacekeeping due to the constant levels of fear in war:

...in a war you're always scared because you don't know what's going to happen...when you're peacekeeping walking the streets...it's easier...even though you don't know what's around the next corner [2] it's easier...like in Ireland you've got your Tricolour....Catholics [2] and you're Red White and Blue you're Protestants basically...and when you're walking through the Catholic areas you are one hundred percent on edge...as soon as you get to Red White and Blue pavestones....you relax and you walk on a little bit easier because you know you're not going to get taken out because you're in a safe area basically....[TT L743:750]

JJ highlighted the impact of guilt, dealing with fallen comrades, and concentrating on duties as risk factors:

...I had to climb on the bodies of people I had effectively killed...no problem at the time...because that was the job that had to be done [2] erm [2] but afterwards [2] that's when it came home to roost...[JJ L106:109]

5.3.2.2 Comradeship.

Comradeship was described positively during service by HB, EX and TT. For HB it was perceived to be a way of life and an important part of his identity:

...I've never been out of a military environment...erm [2] I've talked to people who have served...not only the Falklands...but in other conflicts since who are outside now...and they miss it massively...they miss the camaraderie...erm...so...my own feelings are...yes, you are better off still in the military [1] for myself...definitely because...when I joined I was sixteen...and I've never known anything other than that...twenty four years service...I've never known anything other than the Royal Marines [1] so for me to go out of that environment would be very difficult [2] whether I'd served the operational and combat scenarios or not...you know...and there is an awful lot of friendship to be found in the corps [1] you need it...and it's still there when you leave [1] [HB L219:229]

JJ gave a mixed description of comradeship. During the Falklands War, it was described positively; however, in his diary, which he read prior to the interview, it was described negatively in terms of rejection when he was trying to get help for his traumatic symptoms:

...I enclosed an extract of this book in a sealed envelope addressed back to me requesting it returned unopened if the recipient felt unable to willing help...the covering letter gave just the briefest of detail and if help was not to be forthcoming I wanted the expanded explanation with the narrative kept private...was it really too much to ask that...had they been flies on the wall would they have supported me yes or no...just not knowing is the worst part...I was prepared to receive back my envelope unopened...and had already drafted a thanks anyway letter...and the hand of friendship remains extended...I was gutted when the narrative came back with a short note requesting I respect the privacy which they value and not to make contact again....after thirty [13] years they say time heals but it does it....by opening the inner envelope they abused the privilege... [JJ L48:58]

During service, both communication and non-communication were reported. EX communicated with comrades on return from the Falklands War:

> ...to be honest I haven't thought a lot about support mechanisms...and coping...but I do think that it was important to...for that initial period to come back on the Canberra [1] to drink...to talk about it...to [1] chill out and to do things at your own pace [6] with people around you [2] [EX L486:488]

In contrast, TT indicated that during service, non-communication was the norm, and this was preferable in order to continue functioning in a combat environment:

> ...they didn't give you enough time to dwell on it down there...that's the whole point...if you sit down and dwell you're buggered...so [1] crack on...right...stand...duty...do this...do that do that....[TT L357:359]

Avoidance was also reported by JJ and TT. For JJ after service avoidance was attributed to the constraints of military culture:

> ...I used the old stiff upper lip that [1] officers don't have problems...erm...so there was this reluctance to [1] to seek help...because we had been trained to...to take it on the chin...um [1] so that's...sort of...part of the issue...[JJ L139:141]

Implicit in descriptions given by HB and EX was the assumption that communication did occur, but details were not shared due to assumed level of knowledge. This may have resulted in non-communication:

> ...and I think that anyone that goes all the way into it must have been involved in something similar [3] and...and also...somebody who is involved in it [1] or was involved in something similar like that [3] and can empathise, an awful lot of it is [4] erm [4] it doesn't need to be said [1] you can hint towards it...they'll nod, and you'll know that they know [5] [EX L474:488]

Communication at the time of the 20th Anniversary of the Falklands War was reported, and this was perceived as being a very important step in reconciling traumatic memories:

> ...I think everybody went to that reunion [1] we've had a couple of reunions previous to that...but the 20th anniversary was the big one...there was over four hundred people there [3] erm [1] and [3] I think at that weekend...it was a whole weekend...and at the end of that weekend I think there were a lot of people who were a lot happier within themselves about having been back together with people...talked about what happened...gone through all the scenarios[1] and I think from the Commanding Officer down...who was at the reunion [1] there was a lot of relief found at that reunion and I think a lot of skeletons were put to bed [HB L190:198]

Similarly, veterans with coherent narratives gave mixed, positive and negative descriptions about veterans' associations. Both JJ and HB gave positive descriptions in terms of practical and emotional support. For JJ, who was the only formerly serving veteran in this group, veterans' associations were perceived positively, and provided support for reconciliation:

> ....and of course having the Glamorgan Falklands Association...erm...which is a very strong association...and I must say...that was a great help...[JJ L179:180]

For TT, associations were seen as being important, but only for later life:

> ...you've got the South Atlantic Association I think it is [2] yeah...they've asked me to join and I've got all the bits and bobs [1] but I've never joined cos I know there are a few guys at work who are members of that...erm [2] but I haven't joined I'm not that old yet I don't think [1] that's my own personal...I'll join it when I'm an old fogey but I ain't that old just yet...[TT L996:1000]

In contrast, EX did not perceive himself as a veteran due to his service experience, and not his age. This has important implications for veterans who do not have an opportunity to speak with comrades during service or have lost contact with comrades over the years, especially if family interactions do not encourage communication:

> ...I was asked to join that and he gave me some [2] bits and pieces...you know...leaflets and that...but [6] I...I...in a way I don't feel like...although [3] make no mistake it was a proper war...people died...it was a massive fire fight...lots of ornaments and it was a fairly bitter affair...I don't feel that even after that...that I did as much as guys in the second World War...and when I see the remembrance day parades [2] and I look at the old war time Commandos [2] I think that...er [2] they went through...2...3...4 years...5 years of war some of them [3] and they have [2] they're [2] they have more reason for joining associations and marching and wearing their medals and their berets and all that kind of thing [3] I would feel a little bit of a fraud [1] if I did that [1] that's...that might be a jaundiced [2] view...but [1] there it is...[EX L269:280]

5.3.2.3 Family support.

In terms of family interactions, TT provided a mixed description of family interactions, and highlighted the importance of support from his grandmother:

> ...we're not a close family...and that was a real kick in the whatsits them saying that...so *[name of friend]* was with me...he had no family anyway...so when we docked in at Southampton you've got the whole ship down below decks trying to get out of these two doors to...rush at everybody...and me and *[name]* were sat on the flight deck like that *[sits back and crosses arms]* looking at them [1] and who was down there but my nan in pink always remember her [1] she was there...my parents were there on holiday to my nan's house [2] you see [2] but my nan's like that stuff you and my nan was there my parents weren't [2] [TT L403:411]

A positive description was provided by JJ:

> ...well...we were extraordinarily lucky on HMS Glamorgan...because we had [2] I think without doubt he was the finest leader that I worked under Captain *[name]*...and we had two ships companies...we had the onboard ship's company and we had the families...the Captain's wife lead the families from the front...so we never had any [1] well the last time I've seen something similar to that was in the Southern Squadron [] where the families really got together...but the Glamorgan was a very happy and very efficient ship...[JJ L315:321]

JJ reported speaking to his wife immediately after service. He felt his

wife could understand his experiences due her involvement with the families of

the ship during service in the Falklands:

> ...I think it helped it certainly made it a lot easier whilst we were fighting knowing
> that the families were all pulling together...[] you knew they were being looked
> after so all we had to worry about was what we were doing we didn't have to worry
> about the families...erm...and the fact that...they were...erm....sort of...basically
> our second crew...they went through it with us [1] erm...did make it easier...I
> recollect when I came home I said to *[wife]* I said...just read that *[the diary]*...and
> I'll sit down and read the newspaper...erm...and that [1] that helped her to
> understand just...what it was [] but the fact that they went through it as well we
> appreciated that....and we can talk...talk about it and we can share our
> experiences... [JJ L394:407]

Non-communication was highlighted by HB and EX in the years after the

Falklands, and this was due to a perceived lack of understanding. This was until

the 20th Anniversary, after which communication took place:

> ...when I got in *[from serving in the Falklands]*...my mum presented me with all
> the newspaper cuttings...right from day one...right up till the end...I've still got
> them actually...so...it was quite good to read about what had been said...about it in
> the press [1] and we discussed that...we discussed you know...things that had been
> written in the press and how they differed from...reality [] but I don't actually
> remember discussing personal experiences [1] I don't think I've ever, until [3] 2002
> when we had the 20th anniversary...that was the first time really I've ever discussed
> personal experiences with anybody [HB L164:181]

In a similar way, EX spoke about his experiences during the first Gulf War,

because the images and experiences had triggered his memories of the Falklands:

> ...the first time [2] certainly I thought...about [2] the Falklands in any graphic
> detail or really...sort of...brought it back to me was when the first Gulf War kicked
> off [3] and erm [4] it just started it all off...and I was in [1] a burbling wreck with
> my girlfriend at the time...[EX L496:500]

Prior to this, HB reported avoidance with his family until the 20th

Anniversary, due to unwillingness to burden his family:

> ...I don't know whether it's a male thing...but it's certainly a Royal Marine
> thing...that...you know...what goes on stays in your head sort of thing...it's not
> something to be...burdened onto other people...and I think...that...that reunion
> really gave everybody...including myself...especially myself...an opportunity to off
> load some baggage which you do carry round with you...and it's inevitable that you
> will carry a bit round with you because [1] I've been in service for twenty four
> years and all the places I've been and all the things...I've seen...as I say a lot of it
> hasn't been very pleasant...and it's not...something you want to burden people
> with...and so it is baggage that you carry around with you...and if can off load some
> of that [2] [HB L304:322]

The theme of not wanting to worry or burden family members was also present

for TT:

...no [1] I won't tell her [2] anything [1] if I'm in trouble...if I'm in a hot spot I won't tell her [1] erm [2] if I'm in the Garden of Eden by a swimming pool I'll tell her [2] and if I'm not I'll still tell her I'm in the Garden of Eden by a swimming pool...I will not...do not want her...she's got enough worries...thinking about me out there looking after my son without worrying about me [2] [TT L860:864]

5.3.2.4 Societal support.

Both JJ and TT gave negative descriptions of societal support both at the time of the Falklands War, and during the immediate aftermath. TT provided an example of his feelings when General Belgrano was sunk, and how the public's negative perception of this affected him:

...when the Belgrano got sunk...by a sub...there was hoo-ha...why was it getting sunk this that and the other...well we were hacked off because we were at war and if that thing had got in amongst ours...we're in deep...whatsits...[TT L68:70]

In contrast, HB provided a positive example of his homecoming:

...it was about midnight when we landed in Glasgow [2] the whole place was in darkness...and they taxied the plane round...and it was quite eerie...quite unusual to have everywhere in darkness and then we suddenly realised why...cos as soon as the doors opened...the lights went on and there was just thousands and thousands of people and a brass band playing and everything just...you know...and...it was amazing [HB L92:97]

HB later emphasised the importance of this positive homecoming experience:

...I think if you didn't feel you had done the right thing you can make yourself quite vulnerable [1] erm...in a situation [2] but I've never experienced it...but as I say...trying to gauge the reaction of the general public is...is very difficult...and...I don't really know what we expected when we arrived back [1] but we definitely didn't expect the reception we got [2] I think we thought [1] a small reception party up at the barracks when we got back was the sort of thing we were expecting [1] and [1] and obviously what we got as massive [1] and very...very nice to see...[HB L147:155]

Communication was mainly a positive experience for both JJ and EX. EX highlighted the importance of support in justifying actions:

...I've never had anybody say anything negative about it [2] and that's good...and that's [1] very comforting if you're gonna do that kind of thing [5] [EX L249:251]

Conversely, communication was perceived negatively by TT. Support was given whilst serving, but on a day to day basis support is not given and in its place is criticism and a lack of understanding:

...I'm not being funny but these do-gooders...these people who say everything should be whiter than white and the same colour the same shade... need to get their arse in the a real situation and then open their gobs to be honest...cos people like that have no concept of what it's like...um...to be under fire...under stress...underfed...under clothed....you know what I mean...and still carry on...[L334:339]

KB: Have you ever erm...when you came back from the Falklands...did you ever experience any negativity from society?

TT: Just a tad *[sarcastically]* it's not just the Falklands...it's Ireland the Gulf you name it...whether you're Army Navy RAF...it doesn't really matter [2] trained for war that's what we do...regardless of what service we're in...this is my Army head talking now...but it counts for all three *[Forces]* [3] we train for war and we train for war...so when we go down town to the local boozer and have a bit of a fight alright...we're thugs...get us out the town...yet soon as there is trouble who do they call...they call us...erm...you know about MACC and MACP...it's what we do to help the civilian community...and it's jobs we do for the civilians [1] like charities we build bridges we help out restoring homes...it's called MACC and MACP...erm....Military Aid to the Civilian Population basically that's what we do...erm...so....if *[town]* got flooded...the Army Navy RAF would be called in and we would help you say you got stuck in the house we'd winch you out you'd love us [3] for five minutes...civilians have a very short memory... [TT L442:457]

TT and JJ spoke in positive terms of the importance of commemoration, and the importance of remembering comrades. However, EX did not find commemoration to be of importance:

...I must have been one of the very few people who didn't attend the 20th anniversary last year [] erm [5] one of the guys I was working with was down there as well...and he...he [2] you know...he rode his bike up there...up to Scotland...and erm [1] up to *[name of]* Commando [3] and [4] met an awful lot of people who turned up...and I think it was about three-quarters of those who were in the unit at the time [3] turned up to this thing [1] but erm [5] I kinda shied away from that kind of thing...and I put on [1] I don't know whether I will go to erm...go to other reunions...but [2] somehow I doubt it...I just not that kind of person [EX L101:112]

Finally, media representation was perceived negatively by TT. He felt the public were unable to distinguish between the nature of duty and the politics attached to particular conflicts. This lack of understanding was also given as the reason for non-communication with the public:

....but the civilians over here don't realise what a cracking job the boys do over there...all they see is the body bags and bad press about Blair and that's basically what it is...they're against the government and therefore they're against what happens...so...you know...and you don't really talk about what you do or what did out there in civilian...company...the only time I normally talk about anything like this is in the Mess when I'm with the lads not in general public...so...a lot of people don't know...[TT L685:691]

5.3.3 Incoherent

TABLE 16. *Participants' Military Background (1980s-2000s - Incoherent).*

Participant	Background
QI	At the time of the study, QI was 43 years old. He joined the Army in 1980 at the age of 17, and was being discharged at the time of the study. The highest Rank attained was Lance Corporal, and he served as a chef in the Royal Logistic Corps. Theatres of war included Northern Ireland, Cyprus, and Iraq. He married during service, but later divorced. He was a member of a veterans' association (Combat Stress). At the time of the study he was receiving therapy for PTSD and panic.
QS	At the time of the study, QS was 23 years old. He joined the Army in 2001 at the age of 16, serving until 2005. The highest Rank attained was Gunner. Theatres of war included Iraq. He was single during service. He was a member of a veterans' association (Combat Stress). At the time of the study he was receiving treatment from Combat Stress for PTSD.
QH	At the time of the study, QH was 40 years old. He joined the Army in 1984 at the age of 18, serving until 2002. The highest Rank attained was Corporal. Theatres of war included Northern Ireland. He was married during service. He was a member of a Veterans' association (Combat Stress). At the time of the study he was receiving treatment from Combat Stress for PTSD.
HX	At the time of the study, HX was 60 years old. He joined the Royal Navy in 1962 at the age of 15, serving until 1991. The highest Rank attained was CMEA(P), specialising as a Marine Engineer. Theatres of war included Borneo, Malaya, Northern Ireland, Falklands, Gulf mine clearance. He was single and then married during service. He was a member of a veterans' association (including Combat Stress). At the time of the study, he was receiving treatment from Combat Stress for PTSD.
UF	At the time of the study, UF was 55 years old. He joined the Royal Navy in 1970 at the age of 20, serving until 1993. The highest Rank attained was Petty Officer. Theatres of war included the Falklands and Gulf War. He was married during service. He was a member of a veterans' association (Combat Stress). At the time of the study, he was receiving treatment from Combat Stress for PTSD.

5.3.3.1 Perceptions of war experience.

All veterans in this group were receiving treatment for PTSD and associated disorders from Combat Stress, and made explicit statements of having traumatic memories and flashbacks:

> ...I mean...that all came back...all that Falklands and that...all came back...and I was...absolutely petrified...and terrified...terrified...[] I thought I was just tired you know...just worn out...and he said...you've got PTSD...he said [5] [HX L494:501]

Mixed and negative perceptions were given by these veterans, but QI highlighted only negative perceptions. For him, peacekeeping was difficult, but warfare was even worse:

> ...I've done United Nations Cyprus...Northern Ireland...peacekeeping can be difficult...but being in a war...when there's missiles coming at you it's a completely different ballgame...especially chemical warfare...[] the rules of engagement are different...[QI L324:332]

Negative outcomes were reported by the veterans. QS indicated that his temper had been negatively affected by his experiences and that he had also attempted suicide:

> ...erm...the fact that I was [2] temper is very...variable...it's not as bad as it used to be...but it was very variable...erm...tried to take my own life...[QS L322:323]

In addition to this, QI and QH were concerned with the inability to find employment after service, due to their psychological and physical injuries, which made reconciliation more difficult:

> ...but...we all know the key is a job...but who wants to...but who would employ a 41 year old bloke...who keeps breaking down all the time *[crying]* so [2] the key is...finding...another job...to get happy in...and be happy with...whether it be shelf stacking...sitting on check out [3] driving a coach...whatever...it certainly won't be middle management or anything I thought it was going to be...and it certainly won't be the emergency services...what...which was the idea...on discharge before I came out...fire service...police...ambulance [3] first two years I was out there...nine...nine different jobs...[QH L740:746]

In terms of risk factors, a number were identified by the veterans. For instance, QI described feeling he would be the next one to be injured or to be killed:

> ...so you're thinking at the back of your mind...it's going to be me next....[QI L387:388]

In a similar vein, QS articulately described how the culmination of stressful events had an impact on his ability to cope with traumatic memories:

> ...it think it was...yeah...the combination of...Iraq...cos...again...there was three or four incidents out there...that...I wouldn't wish on my worst nightmare...worst enemy...erm...and...being shot in the leg...being put on sick leave...making...being made to feel like...nobody actually really cared...cos nobody would...admit what was going on...being in the Army...and then...being in an RTA...where the Doctors had made...my family and friends lie to me...cos there was four of us in the car...but they were only allowed to tell me there was three of us...because the guy behind me died [QS 394:401]

Also, QH explained how the protective military environment made him unprepared for the civilian life, which was a theme supported by QS and UF:

> ...you come out from such a protected environment *[crying]* [6] it's a protected environment...you live inside the wire...is the wire keeping you in or is it keeping people out...you know...but at the time you thought you were safe you know...that wire stops...them from gaining entry...easily...but at the same time...it stops you...going out...you know [can't hear] [4] yeah...I get up on a daily basis and I don't have to do absolutely anything [2] but when it comes to it...I ain't got a fucking clue what I want to do...I've got no direction [3] I've got these skills and qualifications that I don't know how to use [3] I've got a...red book *[tearful]* telling me what...I did for seventeen years [3] and...to look at it you'd think...fucking hell that's a strong recommendation you know...from the employer and all the rest of it...but I look at that now and that's five years old...and that's five years...old...based on 17 years of previous work...a lot of it...before my accident...and I've not got...the same physical and mental capabilities now...I had when I was...discharged in 2002 [QH L567:579]

The most comprehensive list of risk factors was offered by HX who described the impact of exposure to prolonged warfare, feeling unprepared for war, and the impact of lack of control and powerlessness:

> ...during the second week I had...I went to ask one of the guys one of the chiefs if I could have a weapon...cos I just wanted to sit outside and fire at somebody you know...because I couldn't...I didn't have the ability to fire back...and I found that most...I just ah...just...I don't know...I don't how to explain that...really...people were saying oh here they come to bomb you...just...and I couldn't do anything about it...just...[HX L283:288]

5.3.3.2 Comradeship.

Comradeship was perceived positively by these veterans. For QS, comradeship and working as a team was particularly positive during moments of combat:

> ...it's just...it was really [2] one of those moments where everybody got behind each other...we worked as a team...I've never known a guy from the command post...erm...the rear party sort of...through to stores like that...everyone was just piling on guns just to get rounds fired so guys could have a break...[QS L274:278]

Despite positive perceptions of comradeship, non-communication was common within this group. QS explained that non-communication occurred during service in order to remain functioning during battle and not letting the team down:

> ...no you can't do it...because...everyone's got their own problems...and basically you're carrying that person...everyone's got...you know...family at home...so if you start crying down breaking down...the only person you can go to is...the padre...because you've got to be strong...[QS L120:123]

Avoidance was also present during service for HX and QS. HX explicitly stated that avoidance took place after losing comrades and needing to deal with this alone:

> HX: ...all of the guys off the ship...six of them killed...[] that didn't go well at all...with anybody...that was...the most surreal moment when...when we'd realised we'd lost a load of lads like...everybody just melted away...off to bed...not a word was said [3]
>
> *KB: Yeah...so you sort of dealt with it on your own...*
>
> HX: We did yeah...and the next day it was all over you know...back to work...it was the same when we lost *[name]* it was the same actually when the Belgrano was sunk...it was...it was kind of [2] just melt away and not say anything...you know...just deal with it on your own...[HX L314:324]

Non-communication and avoidance remained the norm after discharge. In particular, QS avoided communication because he didn't feel it would help:

> ...I don't think so...I don't think anybody...can help...[QS: L457:459]

In direct contrast, he acknowledged the importance of communication and processing memories with veterans at Combat Stress due to shared understanding. Communication may only take place with veterans who are perceived to have similar experiences and therefore understanding. QS was the only veteran to communicate in later life:

> ...because we've all...been there...done it...experienced it...and they...most of the blokes there...they erm...it's just like being back at a regiment...we're all helping each other...part of the process is talking amongst ourselves...[QS L731:734]

Overall, veterans' associations, and in particular Combat Stress, were seen positively by the veterans in terms of providing support, respite, and comradeship. HX suggested the reason for this was that associations recreate the only way of life a veteran knows, which is comforting and familiar. This theme was echoed by QI and QS:

...cos I was in the forces for that long a time...it was...my home [1] and [2] suddenly it wasn't there...so I...had nowhere to run and hide if you like...and then...this place came along...and it's...it's replaced that...it's given me a camaraderie...and...the barracks if you like...this is like a barracks...and it's like...erm...it's it's like home again...[]...I think it's to do with this familiarity [3] it's the difference between having two gold fish bowls...and you've got...full of gold fish in that one...so they're all familiar with each other...he looks like me...you know...and you've got one gold fish bowl there [2] that's on it's own...have you got that *[KB: yeah]* and he's absolutely lost...not quite like a fish out of water...but he's got nobody to talk to...nobody to relate to...everybody looks different everything...the eyes looking through there look different to him...he's got no...nothing familiar round him [KB: yeah] I can only describe it like that...[HX L723:730]

QH also expressed similar opinions, but he questioned the legitimacy of his veteran status because he did not serve in combat situation:

...but this place is really...really helping...but it...it's not necessarily what happens in any one room...*[KB: in terms of the therapies?]* yeah...just being here...with ex service people...on a communal basis...is therapy in itself...and...it's not like going down the British Legion...you know I've tried going down the British Legion...but the British Legion's dying on its arse at the moment...[QH L712:716]

QH: this place is tremendous...but at the same time I feel guilty every time I come here...

KB: Why's that?

QH: Because I haven't been to war...and this place is called combat stress...I haven't been in combat...but at the same time...it's called...it was called and is called...ex-services mental welfare society...so that's what I put in my head...but at the same time...there's hundreds of blokes in Iraq...there's hundreds of blokes in Afghanistan [2] and there's...there's stuff going on about...going on...that you don't know about that I don't know about...and I'm sorry but...they...it's those blokes...that need this...more...because of what they've been through...and a lot of mine...could probably be dealt with local [3] you know...[QH L789:800]

Finally, TE expressed the problems in recovering; he would miss the comradeship found at Combat Stress. This is potentially detrimental to reconciliation, but highlights the power and importance of comradeship:

KB: do you see a time when you won't have to come here?

UF: I hope not...I hope not...I *[coughs]* [2] they say there's no cure for it...there is [2] you can actually...what's the word I'm looking for [3] learn to live with it...but [1] people have been coming here...since the second world war...erm [2] sometimes I like to think I could be cured and at other times I don't want to be cured...if that doesn't sound...stupid...

KB: Why's that?

UF: Because I...I would miss my friends...here...[UF L458:466]

5.3.3.3 Family support.

Negative descriptions of family interactions immediately after conflict and/or service were reported by all five veterans. Relationships with significant others were particularly negative in terms of an explicit lack of support. In the following quote, QH described his feelings of being blamed for his wife's depression:

> ...I sunk into a depression...I didn't even know I'd sunk into a depression...the wife had been to the doctor's six weeks before...put herself on...on antidepressants...coped with me for the next six months...not on antidepressants...and she said to me...you need to go and see the doctor...and get yourself some antidepressants...I've been on...on them for six weeks and you haven't known...because of you...and I was like...thanks...[QH L402:407]

QI also explained how a girlfriend provided no support when he wanted to talk about his experiences in Iraq:

> ...I had a partner when I got back...she threw me out...and I had a few girlfriends I couldn't...have a relationship with...because....well one of them said to me she got bored...erm...talking about it...cos every time I took her out we'd meet someone who would say where have you been QI we've not seen you you know...well I've been stuck over in Iraq...and she was there...oh not again...and I thought to myself...then the big rows would start you know what I mean...[QI L468:476]

Overall, non-communication and avoidance were present for three veterans. HX, QI, and QH stated that they did not communicate with family members due to a lack of understanding, boredom, or in the case of QH the absence of support and the inability to articulate the emotion of experiences:

> ...and my wife turned round and said why didn't you say anything [5] and you can't...normally you can't cos your crying...you can't tell when you're crying...it it...it takes over...it...it takes your vocabulary away...it takes all your expressive words away...[QH L425:428]

HX, QS, and UF reported avoidance. QS and HX avoided communicating with family for the same reasons as avoiding communicating with comrades. However, UF avoided communicating with his wife due to a desire to protect her from his experiences:

> ...I didn't talk to anybody...I didn't...I haven't even told my wife...even to this day...what I saw [1] it's called protection...it's part of the problem protection...you're protecting people...[UF L342:344]

UF was also the only veteran to report communication. This communication took place with his dog, perhaps because the dog does not need protecting. This may be the reason why experiences are spoken about in detail:

UF:...but when I'm in a mood...or when I'm on a downer...I talk to him...and we're walking along the path and I'm talking to him...and...he's looking around like this I can see what he's doing [1] but...I can talk to him [1] because...and then all of a sudden you know he'll look at me...and his tail will start to go...and I'm thinking you know what I'm talking about...you know what I mean...

KB: You talk to him about how you feel?

UF: Oh yeah yeah yeah...yeah...I talk to him about everything...yeah yeah oh yeah...

KB: So he knows...

UF: Oh yeah yeah yeah...he's knows everything...[UF L395:408]

5.3.3.4 Societal support.

All veterans had negative perceptions of their general interactions with members of society, other than UF and HX who made no statement. Both UF and HX gave negative accounts of their homecomings:

...no...I didn't...I don't like the experience of it...I don't like the...the...the experience of it because [2] the main reason was...if we had lost somebody...it would have been a bit of a downer [1] and I thought about it and thought about it and thought well [1] we haven't lost nobody thank god...but...when they asked for volunteers to come home early I volunteered cos I thought well let them do what they want [] I didn't...I didn't do the homecomings no...no I didn't like them...[UF L153:164]

In terms of communication, QS expressed his willingness to talk to people about his service experience, but that this did not happen often due to a lack of understanding and empathy. He felt people misunderstood him and his training:

...I don't think many civilians sort of grasp that...erm...you know...oh you're trained to do it...doesn't mean you're always going to pull the trigger...because most of us...have consciences [2] erm...if you shoot a man...he [2] it runs through your head...it's not something you forget about...ever...[QS L671:675]

Similarly, QI did not communicate due to previous negative reactions:

...someone...who's an idiot...who's taken photographs...of...be...Iraqis being tortured during the war...then...the person....you go to a pub and someone will say...oh did you put the boot in as well did you...and no girls want to know you either...cos they think you're an animal...it could be any regiment...but they...because you've been there...they're thinking ooh...was he part of it...do you see...and then people start...thinking that he's an animal...they're animals...they're all animals...[QI L296:304]

In terms of commemoration, negative and mixed perceptions were reported by all veterans excluding QH. QS expressed the importance of

commemoration, and how wars should be remembered individually to prevent veterans being forgotten. Within this quote, QS stated that he feels forgotten:

> ...and I don't think...combining...VJ Day...VE Day...you know...combining all these into one...that's not how it should be done...everyman served around the country around the world in different theatres of war...should be remembered...whether they are...forgotten soldiers like us...whether they are...the unnamed soldiers...[] they all fought for their country...they all fought...not so much so for our freedom...but for the freedom of other human beings...all over the world...and I think...if that gets forgotten...we've got nothing...it's something that Britain's always made a...big...sort of...thing about...but...it's slowly...disappearing...which is wrong...[QS L639:647]

HX had mixed perceptions of participating in the national commemoration for the 25th anniversary of the Falklands War. Whilst it was important to mark the event, the emotion involved was too intense for HX:

> ...I'm pleased I did something...I'm pleased I've done something at last yeah...it was...the first half an hour...or three quarters of an hour was...I was...it was...it was such an emotional thing...for me...I nearly walked off the parade ground you know...I just...I just thought I'm not going to handle it...I'm just not going to be able to keep myself together...and I just...I was...I was crying...like...and ah...but I was on parade [2] and I just...I just stood there cos that's my training int it...I just...I just couldn't I couldn't move...I just couldn't move you know [1] but I didn't want it to carry on...but ah...I stuck it out...and ah...after a couple...after a while [2] it was quite emotionless...when I was doing the march...when we actually walked down the mall and that...I was alright and I was quite happy then...I was actually on the move and marching...and the lads were all happy...they seemed to be...they seem to have got over the emotional bit you know what I mean...and everybody was joking and laughing and that [3] it was alright *[KB: that was useful?]* yeah that was good...but I was...I felt so embarrassed...because we couldn't march anymore [2] we were all out of step [KB: laughs]...we weren't actually concentrating on what we were doing...the...lads...I just felt so embarrassed by it...but erm...there was quite a lot of humour going on...[HX L405:421]

These emotions also caused QI and UF to avoid commemoration. For UF flashbacks were triggered by anniversaries, which override the significance of good memories:

> ...I didn't watch much of it *[KB: no]* no no I get...flashbacks...I get...ah...I saw a bit of Horseguards parade which...which was an old haunt for me...when I was in the Navy...I used to go down there when we were doing patrols....erm...when we were...doing ceremonies...we used to do horse guards' parade and that bought back memories...good ones...but I never watched much of it no...[UF L216:220]

In terms of media involvement, QS and QI perceived the media to give mixed messages to the public, which affect the way in which they are perceived as veterans. For QS, the public controversy surrounding the Iraq war was an issue for him because it did not represent his experiences of service:

...I was there...I know what I saw ah...and I will question anybody who hasn't
been out there who has their opinion of things...because I was there...I saw...what
was going on...erm...I saw some mass graves around there...[QS L600:602]

For UF, the media representation of the Falklands War was both positively and
negatively perceived. Media involvement during the conflict was perceived to
endanger the troops, but the general positive media view of the Falklands War
was perceived to be important:

...erm...the media never done us any good when we were down there...especially
the MoD telling the Argentinians *[laughs]* how to use their weapons a bit better...I
found that very frightening...erm [2] yeah the media never done us any harm
no...no they didn't do us any harm...they highlighted us a lot...which [1] I wish
they would do it know...especially because of this place [1] but it seems to...I
know this week's the...well last week was the 25th anniversary but...erm...I'd like
it a bit more...especially for places like this...[UF L206:211]

5.4 Findings from the Imperial War Museum

A number of themes from the interviews also emerged from the IWM
archive during analysis. Within the 1980s-2000s cohort, the need to prove
oneself in combat was a prevalent issue, and was also present in an IWM
interview with a Falklands veteran who served as a fighter pilot. There was also a
sense of positive outcomes with this:

I was coming to the end of my flight time and I thought wouldn't it be nice if we
could have something where we could actually prove what we'd be trained for
[Interviewer: so you'd never been in combat?] no none of us had. [] I don't yearn to
fly anymore...not like most ex fighter pilots I don't want to get up in the air
because I was lucky I did everything I ever wanted to do in the aeroplane...and
erm...so I have no regrets about leaving I have every...I thank my lucky stars that I
was fortunate to do what I did to be part of the Falklands operation and go through
that experience...if I hadn't done I'd always be wondering what I'd be like in
combat would it have been fine or not so...I was a lucky guy. [Ward 1280 IWM]

In terms of perceptions, fear was highlighted in a letter sent during the Falklands
War:

Well that was our first piece of action and I was scared stupid for the whole
time.[Canham 2690 IWM]

The reality of the situation was also reflected on in a similar way to the veterans
in this cohort:

You may have read in the papers that one of the officers was killed on Friday. His
[light tank] drove off a cliff while moving at night, and landed upside down 4 of the
boys were also badly injured, but they'll live. It was a bit of a shock to all of us, and
it certainly brought home the fact that this is not just another exercise. [Smith 1165
IWM]

As one would expect, comradeship was an important factor for these veterans. In the following quote, Colbeck, a Falklands veteran highlighted the bond between comrades:

> The parachute regiment was my tribe and I wandered like an outcast for six months without it [Colbeck 1182 Pg 10 IWM]

The importance of comradeship during service was also supported. The following quote is taken from a letter written by a serviceman in the Gulf at the end of the war to his friend who served in the Territorial Army:

> Your [sic] a real friend [name] and have kept me going in the right spirit through this war and for that I truly thank you.[Smith 1165 IWM]

In similar vein to the findings from the interviews, there were mixed perceptions concerning societal support. Interestingly, societal support was perceived positively during the Falklands War:

> We have just had a second delivery of BFPO 3000 parcels the first since Christmas which is kind of the British Public. That backs up how the kind the family has been which makes things just so much more bearable [Pilbeam 2681 IWM]

But not during the Gulf War:

> How is all this affecting people back home. Last time I was in England, I got the impression that most people were not very interested. It didn't affect them and it was all very remote." [Whitticase 2026 IWM]

These findings provide support for the narrative content themes found within the interviews of veterans from the 1980s-2000s.

5.5 Discussion

As in previous chapters, the two level approach to analysis highlighted interesting differences between veterans of each group. Unlike previous chapters, the veterans in this cohort represent career soldiers, including four currently serving soldiers. The thematic analysis of narrative content again highlighted the importance of comradeship, family support, and societal support, which is in line with previous research (Burnell, Coleman, & Hunt, 2006; Hautamäki & Coleman, 2001; Hunt & Robbins, 2001b). The wide range of service experience and age in this cohort allowed interesting comparisons and conclusions to be drawn in terms of the importance of social support and individual differences. As with the previous cohorts, there was a clear distinction between themes associated with coherent, reconciled, and incoherent narratives, despite these differences.

5.5.1 Perceptions of War Experience

Veterans in all groups had mixed perceptions of service. In particular, veterans with coherent and reconciled narratives reported mixed perceptions, with one positive perception from HB (reconciled). Veterans with incoherent narratives also highlighted mixed perceptions in that they found service experience both enjoyable and tense. Interestingly, only veterans with coherent and reconciled narratives spoke of feelings of pride and the importance of doing their duty despite feelings of anxiety.

Positive outcomes were reported by JS (coherent). His service experience provided him with the ability to empathise with soldiers in his role as welfare officer. No outcomes were indicated by veterans with reconciled narratives. In direct contrast, only negative outcomes were described by veterans with incoherent narratives. These outcomes revolved around changes in personality and the impact of service experience on the ability to find stable and fulfilling employment. This has important implications because the lack of suitable employment was associated with inability to start recovery.

Finally, no protecting or risk factors were identified by WX and JS (coherent). With the exception of JJ, who identified the risk factor of dealing with the bodies of fallen comrades, HB, EX, and TT (reconciled) all identified protecting factor including feeling prepared for service in the Falklands War. Conversely, risk factors were identified by four veterans with incoherent narratives, with the exception of UF who identified both risk and protecting factors. Risk factors in this group included feelings of helplessness and prolonged fear, the accumulation of stressful life events, sudden discharge, and lack of help after service. The importance of this finding is that, whilst the nature of service cannot be altered, helping adjustment into civilian life can be improved. This may lessen the burden experienced by these veterans and allow them to concentrate their efforts on reconciling traumatic memories.

5.5.2 Comradeship

JJ (reconciled) described comradeship in both positive and negative terms, which resulted from the lack of support provided by the Navy when he

was actively seeking help to overcome his traumatic memories. During service, comradeship was described very positively by all veterans.

In terms of communication, only avoidance and non-communication was reported by veterans with coherent narratives, which was attributed to the constraints of military culture. Importantly, both veterans were currently serving, which might have prevented communication. The absence of communication was not perceived negatively by these men, and as such, communication may not have taken place because these individuals had no need to communicate.

Veterans with reconciled narratives reported avoidance and communication during service. After service in the Falklands, communication had taken place for HB and TT, which helped them reconcile their memories. This is in accordance with previous research (Hunt & Robbins, 2001b). For veterans with incoherent narratives, non-communication and avoidance had been the norm but, at Combat Stress, QS had begun to talk about his experiences in detail. At the time of the study, this was not associated with successful processing and reconciliation but, in time, this may prove to be the case.

Overall, veterans' associations were described negatively by veterans with coherent and reconciled narratives. This was because they did not feel old enough to be veterans. For currently serving veterans, veterans' associations were unnecessary because comradeship was present in the military environment. The exception to this was EX (reconciled) who did not feel it was appropriate to label himself as a veteran because he did not serve in WWII. For veterans with incoherent narratives, veterans' associations were seen positively by all but QH, who also questioned his veteran status. This has important ramifications concerning the levels of guilt and unworthiness felt by these veterans, which may prevent them from seeking help and coming to terms with their experiences. These results both contradict and complement previous research. To conclude, the importance of veterans' associations may obscure subtle but important differences between veterans with and without traumatic memories.

5.5.3 Family Support

As with previous cohorts, differences were found in family interactions between groups. Veterans with coherent and reconciled narratives gave positive descriptions. The exception was TT who described negative feelings with his

parents, but the presence of support from his Grandmother. In contrast, all veterans with incoherent narratives provided negative descriptions of interactions, although improvement had been experienced by UF and PR.

In terms of communication, once again, veterans with coherent narratives reported only avoidance and non-communication with family members. As with comrades, the impression was that there was no need or desire to communicate. Those with reconciled narratives reported avoidance and non-communication, and this was associated with the constraints and expectations of military culture. JJ had communicated with his wife both in earlier and later life, and both HB and EX had communicated later in life, which provided an opportunity to process their memories. Whilst TT did not report communicating with family members, it is important to note that he did communicate with comrades. For all veterans with reconciled narratives, communication had taken place.

For veterans with incoherent narratives, non-communication and avoidance were present for the same reasons as given by veterans with reconciled narratives. This was with the exception of UF who communicated with his dog. Findings relating to communication with family for those with reconciled narratives contradict the work of Hunt and Robbins (2001b). Once again this highlights the necessity to explore these themes further.

5.5.4 Societal Support

Differences were also found in societal support across groups. Whilst positive and mixed descriptions were reported by veterans with coherent narratives, negative interactions were mostly reported by veterans with incoherent narratives. These descriptions, which sometimes resulted from direct criticism from members of society, revolved around a lack of understanding leading to feelings of ingratitude. This seemed to impact on the way these veterans perceived their experiences. Importantly, those with reconciled narratives had never been criticised for their participation despite negative descriptions.

In terms of communication, WX and JS (coherent) did not report specific communication with members of society. For veterans with reconciled narratives, communication had been positive, except for the experiences of TT who felt that the public soon forgot the contribution of members of the Armed

Forces to society. Veterans with incoherent narratives had experienced negative communication, which lead to non-communication and avoidance. Once again, the importance of societal support as cited by Hautamäki and Coleman (2001) is supported.

Commemoration was seen positively by veterans with coherent and reconciled narratives. For veterans with incoherent narratives, commemoration was seen in both positive and negative lights. The reason for this was that commemoration was seen as being very important, but negative affect prevented some veterans from taking part. Since commemoration was perceived to be important by these veterans, finding ways in which their participation can be encouraged is an important avenue for future research, as it may aid processing and consequently reconciliation.

Finally, mixed and negative perceptions towards media involvement were provided by all the veterans. Whilst the increased levels of media coverage may lead to greater understanding, recognition, and empathy, the concern of QS and QI (incoherent) was that heightened coverage can lead to false views which impact on how the public perceive veterans.

5.6 Summary

For this cohort, differences between groups lie in a number of domains. Perceptions of war experience did not differ to a great degree but, as with previous cohorts, the nature of outcomes and identified risk factors did. This is important as it suggests that veterans with coherent narratives may not necessarily be those who have experienced less stress during combat. Whilst perceptions of comradeship did not differ, the types of communication did. In terms of family support, negative interactions were more common for veterans with incoherent narratives. Despite this, communication did not occur for veterans with coherent narratives who reported positive family interactions. It may be that the absence of traumatic memories means that communication is unnecessary. Alternatively, it may be because both veterans in this group were currently serving at the time of the study and, as such may be at a different stage of communication to those who were formerly serving. To counter this argument, two members of the reconciled group, HB and EX, were also currently serving,

and this had not prevented them from communicating with comrades and family members both during and after service. This finding requires further clarification.

Important differences between those with reconciled and incoherent narratives were found. Veterans with reconciled narratives communicated with family and comrades, whilst veterans with incoherent narratives did not. This provides insight into the findings of Hunt and Robbins (2001b). The type of communication and with whom it is conducted varies greatly depending on the types of interaction with family and friends and whether a supportive environment is present. This represents a potential cohort difference. WWII veterans may not have communicated with family due to the social norms of the day, and were encouraged to talk with comrades. For some, talking with comrades is not feasible and so family communication may be vital for processing.

Once again, societal support appears fundamental in reconciliation by determining the societal narrative of particular wars. It may not be coincidence that most of those with coherent and reconciled narratives were Falklands War veterans, compared to only HB and UF with incoherent narratives. The remaining veterans with incoherent narratives had served in Iraq, Northern Ireland, and Cyprus, which are either highly controversial or forgotten wars. Whatever the reason, negative social interactions appear to also influence the likelihood that the veteran will communicate with members of society. Finally, whilst commemoration was seen as being an important event by almost all the veterans, the ability to take part was negatively influenced by the presence of traumatic memories. It may be argued that the veterans who most need to feel positive about their experiences and have the support of society may be those who are unable to participate.

5.7 Discussion of Interview Findings between Cohorts and Groups

The findings across cohorts both complement and contradict previous research. This may be because the methodological approach provided insight into the subtle nuances by which social support mechanisms work. The findings also highlighted the role of society as an important part of the reconciliation process across cohorts.

5.7.1 Differences within Groups

In order to determine cross cohort differences, findings were compared between themes found for coherent, reconciled, and incoherent narratives.

5.7.1.1 Coherent across cohort:

Perceptions: The 1930s-1940s cohort reported positive and mixed perceptions, positive outcomes, and an absence of traumatic memories. Protecting factors were also reported. The same pattern was found in the 1950s-1970s cohort. One difference was present for the 1980s-2000s group, and that was the absence of any protecting factors. Both these veterans were currently serving, and consequently this may provide an explanation in terms of the continuation of the military environment being a protecting factor.

Comradeship: For all the cohorts, comradeship was perceived positively. Non-communication and avoidance during service were reported for veterans in the 1930s-1940s and the 1980s-2000s cohorts. The 1950s-1970s cohort reported instances of non-communication during and after service, and they also reported communication and no avoidance. Views of veterans' associations differed across the three cohorts, with 1930s-1940s veterans perceiving them positively, 1950s-1970s veterans having mixed perceptions, whilst the 1980s-2000s veterans holding negative perceptions of associations. This does appear to be due to age differences. Some veterans perceived veterans' associations negatively because they did not feel old enough to be a veteran.

Family support: Positive family interactions were reported by all the veterans across cohorts. Non-communication, avoidance, and communication characterised the 1930-1940s cohort. Avoidance and communication occurred for the 1950s-1970s cohort whereas, for the 1980s-2000s cohort, avoidance and non-communication were identified, but no communication. It is important to note that negative connotations were not attached to instances of avoidance and non-communication. The important factor for these veterans was that there was opportunity to communicate, but they felt that they had no need to talk about their experiences.

Societal support: Overall, experiences with society were positive. For the 1930s-1940s cohort, positive communication had taken place and the veterans

had positive experiences of commemoration. Veterans in the 1950s-1970s cohort also reported positive perceptions of societal support and positive experiences of commemoration. Non-communication was present, but again held no negative connotations. Veterans in the 1980s-2000s cohort reported both positive and mixed societal support. The mixed societal support resulted from support after the Falklands War, and whilst a positive experience, it led to feelings that society was not able to fully understand war experiences. Overall, mixed and negative views of media representation were held.

5.7.1.2 Reconciled across cohort.

Perceptions: Positive and mixed perceptions were reported by veterans in both the 1930s-1940s and the 1980s-2000s cohort. DQ, of the 1950s-1970s cohort, reported only negative perceptions. In terms of outcomes, mixed outcomes were identified by the 1930s-1940s and 1980s-2000s cohorts, whilst positive outcomes were reported by DQ. Protecting or risk factors were not identified by the veterans in the 1930s-1940s cohort, but veterans in the 1950s-1970s and 1980s-2000s reported both risk and protecting factors. Veterans across cohorts reported the presence of traumatic memories in earlier life, which they had subsequently come to terms with.

Comradeship: Veterans across cohorts described comradeship positively. Whilst DQ did not comment on the type of communication, if any, that had taken place during or after service, communication was present in the other two cohorts. For the 1930s-1940s cohort, communication had not taken place during service and avoidance had occurred initially after service. Veterans in the 1980s-2000s cohort displayed similar patterns of avoidance and non-communication, but one veteran reported communication during and after. In terms of veterans' associations, both the 1930s-1940s and 1950s-1970s cohort held positive perceptions in terms of their importance. Veterans in the 1980s-2000s cohort held mixed views and this was again due to the age of the veteran, although one veteran felt that he was not worthy of veteran status when compared to WWII veterans.

Family support: Perceptions of family interactions differed across cohorts with veterans of the 1930s-1940s cohort reporting negative interactions in earlier life, but improved interactions in later life. The 1980s-2000s cohort reported

positive and mixed interactions in earlier life. DQ made no comment. It is clear that patterns of communication were similar across cohorts with avoidance and non-communication being replaced by communication in later life. All veterans had spoken with family members about their experiences and found that this aided reconciliation.

Societal support: As one may expect, veterans in the 1930s-1940s cohort experienced positive interactions with society, positive communication, and positive experiences of commemoration. In comparison, for DQ, negative interactions and communication were reported. He had served in the Suez crisis, which was controversial. Finally, veterans in the 1980s-2000s cohort reported negative and positive societal support, but they also had positive experiences of commemoration. Mixed perceptions of societal support may relate to the fact that these veterans served in the Falklands War and the societal support received at the time was welcomed but was also perceived as lacking empathy. Societal support seems to differ across cohort, but the majority of societal support was perceived positively. Where it was not, as in the case of DQ, it was perceived as being the reason why he had not been able to come to terms with experiences sooner. In terms of media representation, the overall finding was that these veterans held negative views of media involvement.

5.7.1.3 Incoherent across cohort.

Perceptions: All veterans across cohorts reported mixed or negative perceptions of their war experience, bar one veteran in the 1930s-1940s cohort. In terms of outcomes, two of the 1930s-1940s veterans reported positive outcomes, and two reported negative outcomes. For veterans in the 1950s-1970s cohort, negative, mixed, and positive outcomes were reported. Veterans in the 1980s-2000s cohort reported only negative outcomes. Protecting and risk factors were reported by the 1930s-1940s veterans, whilst only risk factors or mixed factors were reported by the 1950s-1970s and 1980s-2000s cohorts. As one would expect, most veterans across cohorts reported experiencing traumatic memories and were currently troubled by them.

Comradeship: Almost all veterans reported positive descriptions of comradeship. The only veteran not to was CJF in the 1950s-1970s cohort who reported mixed perceptions because he worked alone. In terms of

communication, non-communication and avoidance were the norm across cohorts. When communication had taken place, it was recent and unsatisfactory. All cohorts expressed both positive and mixed perceptions of veterans' associations. Unlike veterans with coherent and reconciled narratives, these negative perceptions were attached to wanting to find support from associations, but feeling unable to. For the 1930s-1940s cohort comrades had died, which meant that these veterans did not have a suitable veterans' association available to them. For those in the 1950s-1970s and 1980s-2000s cohorts, fears were based on not deserving veteran status and help due to lack of combat experience.

Family support: The majority of veterans across cohorts reported negative interactions in earlier and later life. In accordance with this, non-communication and avoidance were the norm across cohorts. Communication had started to take place at the time of the interview, but this had only occurred for three individuals across cohorts.

Societal support: Mixed and negative interactions and communication were reported by the majority of veterans. In addition, deliberate avoidance and non-communication were reported by veterans in the 1950s-1970s cohort, and non-communication by a veteran in the 1980s-2000s cohort. Importantly, themes regarding commemoration were also similar between the 1930s-1940s and 1980s-2000s cohorts, with mixed or negative perceptions being reported. This was either due to the inability to participate in commemoration because of traumatic symptoms, or not being recognised by society. For instance, BD felt that Burma veterans had been forgotten because, whilst VE Day was commemorated, VJ Day was not to the same extent. Commemoration was not mentioned by the 1950s-1970s cohort. Overall, media representation was perceived with negative or mixed perceptions across cohorts.

5.7.2 Differences between Groups

Patterns of communication were similar for each group across cohort, which suggests that the process of reconciliation and the factors that aid reconciliation may be universal across age and service experience. For this reason, findings across cohort are combined to form three groups, coherent, reconciled, and incoherent, in order to assess the principles that may be related to these different stages of narrative coherence.

5.7.2.1 Perceptions.

Veterans with coherent narratives reported positive and mixed perceptions of their war experiences, whereas those in the reconciled group reported positive and mixed, but one veteran in the reconciled group reported negative perceptions. For veterans with incoherent narratives, perceptions were mixed and negative, with one report of positive perceptions. In terms of outcomes, positive outcomes were reported by veterans with coherent narratives, whilst positive, negative, and mixed outcomes were reported by veterans with reconciled narratives. For veterans with incoherent narratives, the overwhelming finding was that outcomes were negative, with few reports of positive and mixed outcomes. Protecting factors were reported by veterans with coherent narratives, with no reference to risk factors. Three veterans with reconciled narratives reported protecting factors, whilst two reported risk factors. For veterans with incoherent narratives, risk factors were reported by the majority, with two instances of protecting and mixed factors.

There were no main differences between groups regarding their perception of war experience. This is an important point, because it suggests that the presence of protecting factors and positive outcomes of war are particularly important for reconciliation, especially since positive outcomes are associated with finding meaning.

5.7.2.2 Comradeship.

Overall, veterans gave positive descriptions of comradeship, and all groups reported avoidance and some instances of communication during and after service, although communication was not the norm with comrades. Patterns of non-communication in particular differed across groups. Non-communication was common for veterans with incoherent narratives. Avoidance was defined as the lack of communication that was the choice of the veteran, whereas non-communication was a lack of communication that was not the choice of the veteran. This suggests that veterans with incoherent narratives may have a desire and need to communicate. For veterans in the 1980s-2000s cohort, non-communication with comrades might have been due to the nature of discharge from the service and, as such, their support networks had been removed before adjusting to civilian life.

In terms of veterans' associations, younger veterans with coherent and reconciled narratives gave negative descriptions, but this was because they felt they were too young to need them. For veterans with incoherent narratives there was a sense that, whilst veterans' associations were important, they were unavailable. Once again, the differences between groups can be appreciated in that veterans with incoherent narratives require support but have not been able to find this support.

5.7.2.3 Family and friends.

Interactions with family and friends followed clear patterns across groups. Veterans with coherent narratives reported positive interactions in both earlier and later life, veterans with reconciled narratives reported mixed interactions, which improved in later life, and veterans in the incoherent group reported negative interactions both in earlier and later life. In terms of communication, veterans with coherent narratives reported non-communication and avoidance, but also communication in earlier and later life. Despite the presence of avoidance and non-communication, these veterans implied they did not need to talk about experiences.

Veterans with reconciled narratives displayed a pattern of earlier avoidance and non-communication, with a move towards communication in later life. The presence of avoidance and non-communication in later life does not contradict these findings but suggests that, once reconciled, veterans will not necessarily talk about their experiences perhaps for the same reasons as veterans with coherent narratives. Veterans with incoherent narratives reported avoidance and non-communication. In these cases, avoidance was attributed to wanting to protect family members from experiences. Communication had taken place in later life for some of these veterans but this was a recent development.

Veterans with incoherent narratives indicated that they would like to talk about their experiences but they do not have a supportive family environment in which to share their experiences. This is a very different concept to the veterans with coherent narratives who do no communicate, but would be able to do so within a supportive environment should they wish.

5.7.2.4 Societal support.

Perceptions and experiences of societal support differed greatly across groups. For veterans with coherent narratives, descriptions of support, and experiences of communication and commemoration were positive. There was one instance of non-communication but, once again, this was the choice of the veteran. Veterans with reconciled narratives reported negative and positive descriptions of support and positive experiences of communication. Commemoration was perceived positively. For veterans in the incoherent group descriptions of support, communication, and commemoration were all perceived negatively. Negative feelings towards commemoration were due to the inability to participate because of traumatic symptoms.

For all groups media involvement was perceived negatively. Positive descriptions were given by a veteran with an incoherent narrative, but he did not comment on the media coverage of the conflict he was involved in but the media coverage of the Falklands War. He perceived this positive coverage to be very important to veterans because it demonstrated recognition. One veteran with a coherent narrative spoke positively about the media representation of his own experiences because a documentary reflected his own experience.

5.8 Conclusions

Themes of social support did not differ across cohort, but did differentiate between veterans with different levels of narrative coherence. Those with coherent narratives reported more instances of communicating with comrades, family, and society members. When non-communication and avoidance did occur, this did not seem to impact negatively on the veteran. Veterans with reconciled narratives reported improving relationships with family members and an increase in instances of communication. Veterans with incoherent narratives reported poor relationships with family members, and non-communication and avoidance with comrades and family. These veterans reported wanting the opportunity to talk, but the inability to do so, and negative interactions with members of society. Once again, it must be emphasised that from the results we cannot conclude that it is the experience of social support that leads to coherent or reconciled narrative. Despite this, these findings have important implications for future research.

CHAPTER SIX

Societal Opinion and Support in relation to the Reconciliation of Traumatic War Memories

6.1 Introduction

The narrative content of interviews with veterans across cohorts highlighted the importance of societal support in the reconciliation of trauma by encouraging processing of memories in a supportive environment, supporting the findings of Hautamäki and Coleman (2001). Particularly, societal support was found to be an important differentiating feature between veterans with coherent, reconciled, and incoherent narratives. In some interviews, societal opinion and support was implicitly linked to the media's positive or negative portrayal of war as representative of overall public opinion.

This chapter examines this theme by investigating societal opinion, media representation of wars, and societal perceptions towards veterans. Evidence was derived from both an archival study (Mass Observation Archive; MOA) and a questionnaire study. Throughout the chapter, links are made with the interview data in order to achieve triangulation.

6.2 Media and Societal Opinion

Results from the interviews demonstrate that a positive societal environment may play an important role in the process of reconciliation. Veterans gain an impression of how society perceives war by interacting with members of society, and through media representation. The British media and military have been intertwined since the Crimean and Boer wars. During the Crimean War, W H Russell, a civilian reporter for *The Times,* reported war to civilians (Allen, 1996). The development of media technology throughout the 20th Century has ensured that civilians now bear witness to war. News travels faster in a largely uncensored environment. The Korean War was the last war to be completely censored (Taylor, 1992). The *Vietnam syndrome* has persistent impact on the way war is represented by the media. During the Falklands War, there was heavy military censorship (Allen, 1996) because it was believed that media representation could influence public opinion (Taylor, 1992).

Consequently, the Falklands and Gulf Wars were reported by pooled journalists selected by the military who signed specific declarations concerning what they could report (Allen, 1996; Badsey, 1996). Overall, only 6% of Falklands War coverage in the BBC and Independent Television Network (ITN) bulletins showed images of the Task Force, and this coverage was predominantly non-violent (Morrison & Tumber, 1988). The current Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts have little overall censorship due to the Internet, but the official position appears to be criticism of Iraq and support for the troops serving in Afghanistan.

Media representation is partial. It is either influenced by quiescence (the down playing of certain aspects of public opinion, which contradict political motives) or is used to promote a critical analysis of events (Lewis, 2004). Of current concern are the techniques used by media to portray a persuasive, authoritative pro-war narrative, or a critical, analytical anti-war narrative. This has important implications because pro-war narratives have been found to increase support (Eveland, McLeod, & Signorielli, 1995). Media representation has a potential continual impact on veterans in terms of valence of representation and changing public opinion in light of revaluation.

The concept of narrative is prevalent as an individual means of making meaning *and* a societal means. Collective memory, as described by Halbwachs (1992), comprises social memory, political memory, and collective representation. Collective memory is evoked by the use of framing, and by reference to the public past including commemoration, historical context, and historical analogy (Edy, 1999). It may be argued that collective memory is both represented in, and influenced by, media; that is, media may use historical analogy to deliver authoritative or critical war narratives, which are in turn implied to reflect public opinion.

Framing retells or revaluates a war by comparing past and present events of a war. By doing so, positive or negative opinion held in the initial stages of war can be reignited at a later stage. This only works when the dominant narrative remains consistent and does not change; otherwise the narrative becomes incoherent and unpersuasive (Schwalbe, 2006).

Evoking the past also occurs a number of years after war and is achieved through commemoration, historical analogy, and historical context. First, media coverage of commemoration is used to celebrate or reflect social consensus. If a

war is commemorated, the message is that it has never been controversial, or it stops being controversial and is legitimised. For instance, the Suez crisis received no formal commemoration in 2006 for its 50th anniversary. In June 2007, Britain held a national commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the Falklands War. Arguably, the result is that Suez remains controversial in collective memory, whereas the Falklands War is legitimate and worthy of commemoration. For the veteran, commemoration is a gauge of societal opinion and support and, when reported, provides a sense of nationwide recognition and appreciation. Commemoration is indicative of societal approval whether or not this reflects true societal opinion.

Historical analogy provides a powerful frame for memory and has predictive power. Collective memory is employed to evoke opinion and predict potential outcomes of an event by presenting the past as gauge (Edy, 1999). Whether these predictions support or criticise a particular war is determined by the media (Lang & Lang, 1989). Some researchers perceive historical analogies as propaganda. Sheffield (1996) comments on the World War I (WWI) language used during the initial stages of the Falklands War to remind the public of the severity of the conflict. This could have lowered morale and support for the British invasion but, as Martin Shaw argues, Margaret Thatcher evoked the more prevalent and recognised British traditional myth of war within collective memory, based on an "appropriation of second world war memories" (Shaw, 1997, p. 193). Using the MOA, he further argues that this was also attempted during the Gulf War.

Walsh (1997) argues that a World War II (WWII) narrative did run through media representation during the Gulf War, but the analogy failed to convince because the WWII collective memory was very different to the way the Gulf war was portrayed by the media. The Gulf War was high tech and the news pictures like a computer game. Furthermore, it was not fought in defence of British land and/or people. It was not the *boys-own adventure* of the Falklands War, and so the narrative was incoherent even if the Gulf War was perceived to be legitimate (Taylor, 1992). Despite this, Falklands War veterans have reported feeling their *hero* status is inappropriate, and they are unlike the WWII veterans to whom they are tacitly compared (O'Brien & Hughes, 1991).

Positive evocation of collective memory might be expected to be positive for veterans during and after the Falklands War, but members of the Task Force were extremely vocal in their dislike of the nationalistic style used by *The Sun*, and particularly the 'Gotcha!' headline. It demonstrated a lack of empathy for the Argentinian troops and failed to realise that this tragedy could have happened to the British Task Force (Morrison & Tumber, 1988). This echoes JS's comments during his interview, in which he emphasised the lack of understanding shown by members of the public. Morrison and Tumbler found that the readers of *The Sun* were also unsupportive of the tone, but not the troops. The public might have been sympathetic, but this was not perceived by the veterans due to media representation. This highlights the fine balance between supporting troops whilst respecting troops of other nations (Carruthers, 2000). It would be extremely naïve to suggest that the *Falklands model* represents the perfect scenario for veterans.

In terms of the war in Afghanistan, there has been a change during 2007 to represent the Armed Forces in a sympathetic manner. The front page headline of The Independent on 1st October 2006 read; "Betrayed: How we have failed our troops in Afghanistan" (Elliot, Woolf, & Whitaker, 2006), followed by an article in the same issue featuring veterans' stories of courage and medal honours (Owen, 2006). Within the coverage is the following quote: "We [Britain] have not been involved in a campaign like Afghanistan in living memory" (Woolf & Goodchild, 2006). It could be that, whilst the governmental approach is to treat Iraq and Afghanistan as the same conflict, more liberal journalism is determined to present them as separate issues. The explicit lack of historical analogy is particularly interesting because, whilst history might be objective, media representation is purposefully subjective and emotional (Edy, 1999).

In contrast, Iraq was recently likened to the Suez crisis to evoke negative feeling towards Iraq (or at least the Government) (Bourke, 2004; Edy, 1999). The persuasiveness of this analogy is questioned because it may not be as well known. Analogies may be inappropriate, and this emphasises the importance of differentiation so that the individuals who serve in the Armed Forces do not become part of any potential political controversy.

Historical context provides the underlying details of historical events. By providing the public with historical accounts of wars, younger generations are

better able to appreciate the historical analogy providing the pro or anti-war message through a coherent and understandable narrative. In these ways, a pro-war/anti-war opinion is mediated by age and presence of lived memory of an event (Schuman & Corning, 2006; Schuman & Rodgers, 2004).

Susan Carruthers argues that it has always been the role of the media to boost morale both in limited and total war (Carruthers, 2000). There has been a move away from this aspect of representation to a more critical appraisal of the politics of warfare using a number of techniques. Media representation impacts on veterans in terms of perceived societal support especially when the private narrative of the veteran is not reflected by the public narrative. For instance, Korea is not forgotten, as is often argued, but deliberately ignored by the British public (Bourke, 2004), which supports the research of McCranie and Hyer (2000). The problem is then exacerbated when an anti-war narrative is the only coherent narrative presented to the public.

Fundamentally, the media are perceived by the public to be the middle person, representing governmental policy and providing a snapshot of societal opinion during war and many years after (Badsey, 1996). It has been suggested that coverage of wars and conflicts may result in combat fatigue in the broadest sense of the word (Carruthers, 2000). Whether or not this leads to greater or lesser sympathy for Armed Forces personnel is highly contentious, and is the focus of the current chapter. It might be that media influences opinion, which in turn influences perceptions towards veterans. Conversely, veterans may be affected by media because they believe that they reflect societal opinion.

The above research tells us much of the theory behind media representation, but it does not explore public opinion or opinion towards veterans. The following research further investigates the themes highlighted by the veterans during their interviews.

6.3 Mass Observation Archive

6.3.1 Research Context

Following Shaw's (1997) lead, the MOA at the University of Sussex was visited to gain a snapshot of public opinion at the time of each war and perceptions towards veterans.

The MOA provides material relating to autobiographical memories of participants (Kavanagh, 2000). Observational, survey, and written directive data exist from the original study, conducted from 1937 to 1955 (Sheriden, 2002), including data about WWII and Korea. In 1981, the MOA initiated the New Project that asks observers to write on specified topics on a quarterly basis. The New Project continues to the present day and data are available from the Falklands to the Iraq War. Unfortunately, there are no data for the wars occurring between 1955 and 1981, which represents the 1950s-1970s cohort. Government social surveys, opinion polls, and newspaper clippings are also available (Summerfield, 1985) but, on viewing, these were deemed unsuitable for comparable analysis between the Old and New Projects.

6.3.2 Method

Visits were conducted on the 17th and 18th May 2006, and the 10th, 14th and 17th May 2007. Prior to the visit, relevant material was found on line and requested, using the archive's web based research facility (www.sussex.ac.uk/ library/speccoll/collection_introductions/massobs.html). The type of material available varied between the Old and New Projects, and Table 17 provides a description of the materials used for each war.

Analysis was the same for all sources of data. Thematic analysis was used to extract deductive themes concerning overall opinion to specific wars, opinion towards the troops/veterans, opinion towards celebration/ceremony, and the use of historical analogy. Quotes were transcribed so the data could be analysed in the same way as the interview data.

The same challenges are present for the MOA as are present for the IWM. Although every attempt was made to maintain objectivity, the volume of data challenges this with specific themes being highlighted deductively, rather than inductively. However, it is important to remember that within the theme of *societal support* there are both positive and negative examples, which allowed for both positive and negative examples to be searched for in the data. For the benefit of transparency and context, all quotes have the MOA document number, and can be traced back to the original data.

6.3.3 Findings

The findings are presented by cohort. WWII represents the 1930s-1940s cohort, and Korea appears alone representing the 1950s-1970s cohort. Directives concerning the Falklands War, Gulf War, Sierra Leone, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq represent the 1980s-2000s cohort.

TABLE 17. *Materials requested from the Mass Observation Archive.*

Material Requested	Description
Political Attitudes and Behaviour Box 5(25/5/I: Mass observation war questionnaire, Nov 1939)	Compiled survey notes conducted by observers during November 1939
Directive: War – Reactions to outbreak Sept 1939	Microfilm directives including opinion towards war and reactions to BBC coverage
Directive: War – Oct 1942	Microfilm directives
Directive: War – Political Events Feb/March, August, 1945	Microfilm directives
Korea 1950 TC9 Box 1 (9/1/A B C D)	Compiled survey notes conducted by observers during June, July, August, and October 1950
Falklands/Malvinas War (Special directive April 82. Postscript September 82)	Written accounts from Mass Observation participants (Part 1)
Gulf War (Aut/Wint 90, Spring 91	Written accounts from Mass Observation participants (Part 1)
Summer 93 (Current events: Yugoslavia/Somalia/Ireland)	Written accounts from Mass Observation participants (Part 3)
Aut/Wint 94 (Current events: Ireland)	Written accounts from Mass Observation participants (Part 3)
Spring 99 (Current events: Kosovo/Bosnia)	Written accounts from Mass Observation participants (Part 3)
Summer 99 (Current events: Kosovo)	Written accounts from Mass Observation participants (Part 3)
Spring 03 (The War in Iraq)	Written accounts from Mass Observation participants (Part 1)
Summer 05 (Current events: Iraq/Afghanistan)	Written accounts from Mass Observation participants (Part 3)

6.3.3.1 WWII.

Opinion towards WWII was mixed. In addition, very few statements were made regarding the troops with only a few individuals making spontaneous statements about the troops:

> Well, I suppose Hitler has got to be stopped, but it seems a bloody shame, all these young men. [M25D].

Concern was also shown in terms of troops being forgotten after service:

> The books I read of good men shelved, and all these who had no part in the active war shoved into important places; witness Neville Chamberlain with Lloyd George completely out of the picture, even when the menace of Germany overshadowed Europe. Officers and soldiers and sailors, selling matches on the street. [F, 1980].

Celebrations were a feature of the August 1945 directive. All individuals made comparisons between VE Day and VJ Day. For the most part, these comparisons were negative, being "half-hearted" [F, 3388] and having an "air of repetition" [M, 1093]:

> In general (so far as V.J. Day was concerned) I did not feel the enthusiasm I felt for V. Day and this seemed to be generally the case with other people. [M, 1108]

This is of particular relevance, because the perceived unimportance of VJ Day celebrations mirrors the comments made by BD during his interview, which led to feelings of shame and being forgotten by society. It is interesting to note that the nostalgic positive view towards veterans may be a result of collective, historical memory, and not based on the actual opinions held by members of society at the outbreak of war.

6.3.3.2 Korea.

The Korea directive highlighted mixed perceptions towards the war, but analogy with WWII and fear of communism provided motive and justification:

> Only one way & that's like we [stopped] Hitler, to try to stop the aggression. We don't want another war but we've got to see to it that the world can live peacefully afterwards. [M40D]

Troops were perceived with concern, but there were few spontaneous comments. The main theme was that men would have to serve so soon after WWII:

> It's terrible. I don't see why we should be talking of a war so soon after the last. All these young fellows they've only just got back into Civvy Street – home from the last war – they want to settle down to a home & family & they don't want to be involved in another war. [M35D]

One comment was made about the media and this was negative in nature:

> In my opinion the papers are causing a lot of trouble. We don't know half of what goes on in Russia, & neither do they. [M48]

Unfortunately, these comments shed little light on the societal support received by Korean veterans on their return. Despite this, these findings in part support the themes from the interviews, which indicated that these veterans were supported, but soon forgotten, by society. Indeed, UV only perceived his role in Korea positively after the declaration of support from a member of the public.

6.3.3.3 1980s-2000s.

In terms of opinions towards the wars within this cohort, there were mixed opinions towards the Falklands War within the directives. A number supported the war:

> Mrs Thatcher will carry the support of the country on that point [protecting the Islanders way of life] and the task force – which must have our support in this dangerous and debatable situation. [MA13]

Others were against the war, but the majority of individuals who questioned the political motives explicitly separated politics from the troops:

> My own opinion is that the Falkland campaign was brought about by political ineptitude, and whilst not doubting the bravery of our forces, the campaign itself has been used in a jingoistic manner by Mrs Thatcher. [MB37]

Mixed or ambivalent opinions were voiced in the Gulf War directives. Unlike the Falklands War in particular, these opinions seemed to extend to the troops. One individual questioned the behaviour of the forces, suggesting that they behaved inappropriately, based on news reports. Media representation may have resulted in negative perceptions:

> If thousands of Iraqis have been killed and only a handful of allies we must have been shooting them in the back as they fled. There is no other way we could have shot so many for so few casualties. [FJ931]

The following statement of support represents a minority opinion within the Gulf War directive:

> With such dreadful events under way, I can only think of support for those who serve in the Gulf and for their relatives. Friend and foe alike will need all help and consideration when the firing ceases. May careful diplomacy and negotiations try to find some justice and peace in the Middle East. [FB84]

The contributors had mixed perceptions of Afghanistan, but fears and support for the troops were expressed:

> It seems as if it's begun – US special forces are reported to be inside Afghanistan. I feel quite depressed. Lots of servicemen & innocent civilians will die before this is over. [FA2801]

Along with explicit statements of praise:

> It was such a dangerous mission, I salute every one of them. [FH260]

There were mixed perceptions towards the Iraq War, but those who were against the war expressed very strong opinions towards the immorality of the war:

> The invasion of Iraq was immoral, illegal and counter productive. [MM2852]

> The war in Iraq has brought shame on this country and any respect in the world we once had has diminished if not disappeared. [FB1771]

Within a number of comments, the observers explicitly separated the troops from the political context of the war:

> My thoughts and prayers are with our troops but I still don't condone this war, in fact, I am very much against it. [FF2949]

In terms of peacekeeping efforts in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Sierra Leone, sympathy was expressed for the troops:

> I am definitely doubtful that the presence of UN forces is of any benefit and feel horrified at the US plan for air strikes. [] The unenviable position of British and other UN troops in their attempt to provide aid must also be a matter of concern. [FS1570]

> UN troops cannot be sent anywhere without pay and equipment and they should not be expected to impose peace on combatants who have not settled their dispute. Faced by the appalling carnage in Somalia, Bosnia, Rwanda etc. journalists and others have been far too ready to call for UN troops. [FM2164]

Comments were also made regarding media representation and involvement. Media representation of the Falklands War was perceived negatively and, interestingly, there was concern as to how this may have affected perceptions of the troops:

> I'm afraid that the publicity that this affair has attracted can do nothing but devalue the efforts of our forces in the Falklands, even if these efforts should perhaps never have been necessary. [MA18]

For the Gulf War, media representation was perceived negatively and, in some cases, news items relayed by the media led to the sympathy for the troops and their families:

> .....it would have been dreadful to have put up with the barrage [of the media] then to which we are subjected now. For those people who had members of their families in the area it could not have made it any easier to have had so much talk on the subject. [FL1625]

Media representation also appeared to result in negativity towards the troops from one respondent:

> The next major media coverage was for the plight of our troops out in the Gulf and the families left at home. Tough. They chose that way of life and all the peace-time advantages it brings. I have no sympathy for them now they are caught up in something they and their families did not expect. They had a choice to join up in the first place and they have made it. [MA2464]

Media representation of Afghanistan was perceived negatively with concern that it would endanger the troops. Others believed that the nature of media representation made it difficult to find meaning in the events, and thus understand the nature of the conflict:

> I was horrified to see the newspapers today – full of pictures of burning skylines and the "Gung-ho" attitude of the press is alarming, too. [FH2637]

Regarding the Iraq War, media representation was, once again, viewed negatively. There was an element of unreality to the coverage, which may increase sympathy for troops or create distance:

> It feels very uncomfortable to be sitting in your comfy armchairs, or eating your dinner when you have the terrible images of bombings coming at you from the TV. [FP3008]

Opinion towards commemoration was also interesting since the importance of societal support was recognised for the Falklands War:

> I was a T.V. viewer for the parade, it was indeed a well deserved salute to the forces & men who took part in this incredible feat at getting to this far distant place and carrying out their duties so successfully in the face of dreadful weather conditions & and everything else that they had to deal with. [FB53]

> I cannot understand why people again and again complained about this parade. Can't they see that these veterans deserve to be celebrated and honoured? [FD152]

One female contributor questioned the tone of the victory parades, but still separated this opinion from her opinion towards the troops:

> I shall not be in London for, nor shall I watch, the official parade on T.V. I still think this was a war which should never have been allowed to happen and while I

sincerely think all credit should be given to the forces who had taken part, I consider far too much fun is being made of the "victory". [FB49]

For the Gulf War, celebration or ceremony was deemed to be inappropriate. In the following quote it is suggested that the nature of media representation had changed the nature of the war to such an extent that people felt reluctant to show support. Unfortunately, this might mean that people were also disinclined to support the troops:

> I & my friends do not feel we should have a victory parade. The Americans give the impression its [sic] a big noisy movie goodies against baddies & we won. [FR1452]

Quite conversely, the importance of ceremony for veterans of Afghanistan was recognised by one of the respondents:

> Yesterday I watched the Remembrance services on T.V. [] I think that from reprts [sic] in our Sunday Telegraph the recent events have brought it home to people that this is not about long ago events, but about the here and now. British soldiers are still fighting wars and being killed or maimed in action. [FH2639]

In contrast, Remembrance Day was also reflected on by one observer in terms of the Iraq War. He highlighted the bravery of WWII veterans and the pride associated with this war and contrasted this with the Iraq War:

> Immediately after the election we celebrated the 60th anniversary of V.E – Day. The end of the Second World War in Europe. Now that was a time when we felt proud to be British. Significantly Blair and his government had little interest in such celebrations. Rather put their miserable war in the shade. [MH1543]

Analogies were also prevalent in the directives concerning wars and conflicts in the 1980s-1990s. The Falklands War evoked analogy with WWII, which provided motive and justification for the war:

> I suppose, with hindsight, this is rather like the Germans marching into the Sudeitenland (?? Sorry about the spelling!) and other places, unopposed by us...and from those small beginnings we had a terrible war. I think that generally there is tremendous support for Mrs Thatcher and her policy in the Falklands. [FJ293]

Analogies with WWII also provided implicit justification of the Gulf War:

> Saddam Hussein is another Hitler [] I loathe the man. [ME1510]

Largely this was not felt by other contributors, who compared the Gulf war with the Falklands:

> I do not feel that this is as completely justified a war as the Falklands war was, nor did I think it will arouse the same kind of patriotic feelings in people, but that remains to be seen. [FT544]

Regarding peacekeeping in Bosnia and Kosovo, media representation in 1999 appeared to result in analogies being drawn with WWII and, thus, justification of action:

> The more I see and hear of the crisis in that area the more I am reminded of the horrors of the Nazi regime in the 30's and 40's. [MA2848]

Analogies between the Falklands War and Afghanistan were also drawn, providing justification for Afghanistan:

> It's certainly in a far more noble cause than Thatcher's military crusade over the Falklands 20 years ago. [MC2256]

Vietnam was the analogy used by observers to describe Iraq and predict outcomes. One observer warned of the similarities between the two wars:

> I do hope USA keeps Vietnam firmly in their sights if they decide they have to go to Iraq. [MR1389]

The findings from the MOA suggest that troops were not perceived negatively, but that explicit support wavered particularly in the case of Iraq. Whilst some veterans in the 1980s-2000s cohort might have picked up on positive opinions, it is quite clear that some were exposed to sometimes very negative opinions. As highlighted in the interviews, support for the Falklands was relatively high.

Opinions were almost entirely mixed across all wars, and the nature of media representation, and its impact on perceptions towards veterans also differed. The perceived importance of commemoration also varied. Finally, the use of analogies was common, and in some cases evoked positive memories, and a justification of war, whilst in other cases provided warnings and a lack of motive.

6.3.4 Discussion

The opinions within the MOA directives reflect the perceived support of the veterans highlighted during the interviews. Of interest, the three Iraq War veterans who participated in the interview study did not feel the support implied in the directives. It might be that negative media representation and controversy is a more powerful indicator for veterans than the actual opinion held by society

but never voiced to veterans. This has important implications for how wars are represented.

There are points to be aware of when using the MOA. The respondents tend to be disproportionately female and over the age of 40. Despite this, the education and socioeconomic status of respondents seems diverse (Summerfield, 1985). No directives were conducted between the Korean and Falklands Wars, and thus no comparisons can be made between the interview data and MOA for the 1950s-1970s cohort. Finally, the MOA data cannot provide information regarding the current perceptions of wars and veterans, which continue to affect they way veterans cope with their memories. For this reason, a more systematic and specific approach is required to investigate the impact of media on societal opinion on wars and veterans.

6.4 Societal Opinions of British Wars and Conflicts from WWII to Iraq: A Questionnaire Study

6.4.1 Questionnaire Rationale

An online questionnaire study was developed, which was quick and easy to administer and had the potential to reach a diverse population (Dixon & Turner, 2007). The aim was to capture public opinion of wars to allow greater exploration of the issues surrounding the role of societal support in the reconciliation of traumatic war memories. It was vital to study these issues in greater depth since the veterans in the interview studies spoke of the importance of societal approval and support, and the role of the media in portraying support. The method of sampling is described in the following sections. In order to capture *societal opinions* a broad demographic sample was required. To achieve this, the University of the Third Age, SAGA, and the BBC and ITV news websites were approached and asked if they would post the questionnaire weblink onto their website. The researcher had previously helped both the BBC and ITV with programme concepts and recruitment of participants, and both had offered help with researcher's recruitment in return. Despite this, in all cases, no help was provided, even though the researcher followed up the request on a number of occasions. A press release (see Appendix Q) was also distributed, which resulted in an interview with a local Southampton radio station, and contact from Channel 4 requesting advice for programme concepts and

recruitment. In both instances reciprocity was agreed, but did not happen despite the researcher's efforts.

6.4.2 Questionnaire Development and Design

The questionnaire was designed and constructed using the School of Psychology's psychosurvey tool. It comprised an information and consent page (see Appendix G), demographic questions (see Appendix H and I), six question sections, and a debriefing page (see Appendix J).

Following a list of demographic questions, the next section concerned whether the participant had ever been a member of the British Armed Forces, which service they belong(ed) to, and veteran status. All participants were asked the same questions in relation to family members (see Appendix K). This was included in order to determine if this factor impacted on perceptions of war veterans. After this, questions were asked concerning knowledge and opinion of British wars, perception of media representation, and perception of veterans. Responses were scored on a 7-point Likert scale. These are listed in Table 18 (see Appendix L for example screen shot). Finally, participants were invited to add additional comments, and debriefed.

TABLE 18. *List of Questions Concerning War and Conflicts.*

Question	Scale
How would you describe your knowledge of the following wars/conflicts?	1 = Extremely poor, 2 = Very poor, 3 = Quite poor, 4 = Neither good nor poor, 5 = Quite good, 6 = Very good, 7 = Extremely good.
How positive or negative is your overall opinion of the following wars and conflicts?	1 = Extremely negative 7 = Extremely positive
What was the media representation of the conflict like at the time of the conflict?	1 = Extremely negative 7 = Extremely positive 8 = N/A I was not born/too young
What is the media representation of this conflict like in the present day?	1 = Extremely negative 7 = Extremely positive
How positive or negative is your opinion of the British veterans of the following wars and conflicts?	1 = Extremely negative 7 = Extremely positive

It was predicted that knowledge and opinion would be related to perception of veterans, but that this relationship would be influenced by the nature of media representation. For example, better ratings of knowledge and positive opinions would be positively correlated to with perception of veterans. It was also predicted that media and opinion would be positively correlated, and that this in turn would correlate with perceptions of veterans.

6.4.3 Method of Sampling and Recruitment

A pilot study was conducted with colleagues, and friends of the researcher who were currently or formerly serving. No changes were required to the main components and the pilot data were included in the final analysis. Participants were recruited from the University of Southampton undergraduate participant pool, two online research websites (www.onlinepsychresearch.co.uk and www.projectleipzig.org), the Psychology Postgraduate Affairs Group email list, and friends and family of the researcher. All participants were asked to forward the questionnaire to their family and friends, resulting in snowball recruitment. This sampling technique recruited a younger population, and purposeful sampling took place in order to recruit older members of the population, who would be able to answer the *media then* question (but was not successful, as described above).

6.4.4 Participants

In total 236 people took part in the study. Of this number, 21 were initially excluded because they did not enter any information or answer any questions. After this, 33 cases were excluded because these individuals did not complete the *perception of veterans* section. Of these excluded cases, 54.5% were female, 24.2% were male (the remaining number did not respond to this question). In terms of ethnicity, 93.9% were white, and 6.1% were Asian/Asian British. Ages ranged from 17 to 68 years ($M = 31.6$ years). Regarding education, 6.1% held GCSE(s), 33.3% held A Level(s), 24.2% held a Bachelor degree, 33.3% held a Masters degree and/or PhD, and 3% held an alternative qualification.

After cleaning the data the responses of 182 individuals, four of whom completed a paper and pen version of the questionnaire, were included for

analysis. In terms of gender, 59.9% were female, 28% were male. Regarding ethnicity, 97.3% were white, and .5% were Asian/Asian British, and 1.1% were of mixed race. Ages ranged from 16 to 73 years of age (*M* = 27.14 years). In terms of education, .5% held GCSE(s), 1.6% held GNVQ(s), 50.0% held A Level(s), 18.1% held a Bachelor degree, and 24.7% held a Masters degree and/or PhD. Eleven participants were either currently or formerly serving representing 6% of the sample. Of these 11 participants, five (41.7%) were veterans. In terms of relatives, 83 (45.6%) of participants had relatives who were currently or formerly serving and, of these, 48 participants (26.4%) reported that their relative was a veteran.

6.4.5 Analysis

Exploration of the data revealed that all variables had skewed distributions. The removal of outliers and transformation of data were considered. Since the skewed distributions were the result of extreme opinions, it was decided that these outliers represented valid opinions and would not be removed, nor the data transformed. For this reason, the analysis consisted of non-parametric correlations. In addition, the *media then* responses were excluded from analysis due to the lack of variation.

6.4.6 Results

Means for each variable and for each war are presented in Table 19, and Figure 2 depicts the patterns of means for each war.

TABLE 19. *Mean Scores for Questionnaire Variables by War.*

War	Knowledge M	Opinion M	Media Representation M	Perception of Veterans M
WWII	4.84	3.82	4.66	6.10
Palestine	2.24	3.15	3.58	4.79
Malaya	1.63	3.29	3.76	4.81
Korea	2.52	3.23	3.63	4.84
Suez	2.10	3.21	3.64	4.82
Kenya	1.66	3.26	3.70	4.79
Cyprus	1.86	3.27	3.74	4.80
Aden	1.52	3.27	3.79	4.79
Radfan	1.38	3.26	3.8	4.78
Borneo	1.76	3.25	3.74	4.80
Vietnam	3.76	2.47	2.66	4.91
Northern Ireland	3.88	2.68	2.93	4.95
Falklands	3.73	3.31	3.84	5.30
Gulf War	3.80	3.20	3.50	5.27
Bosnia	3.25	3.08	3.24	5.02
Kosovo	3.20	3.07	3.23	5.02
Sierra Leone	2.63	3.06	3.25	4.93
Afghanistan	4.29	2.79	2.73	5.14
Iraq	4.94	2.31	2.18	5.10

Means for Knowledge, Opinion, Media, and Veterans by War/Conflict

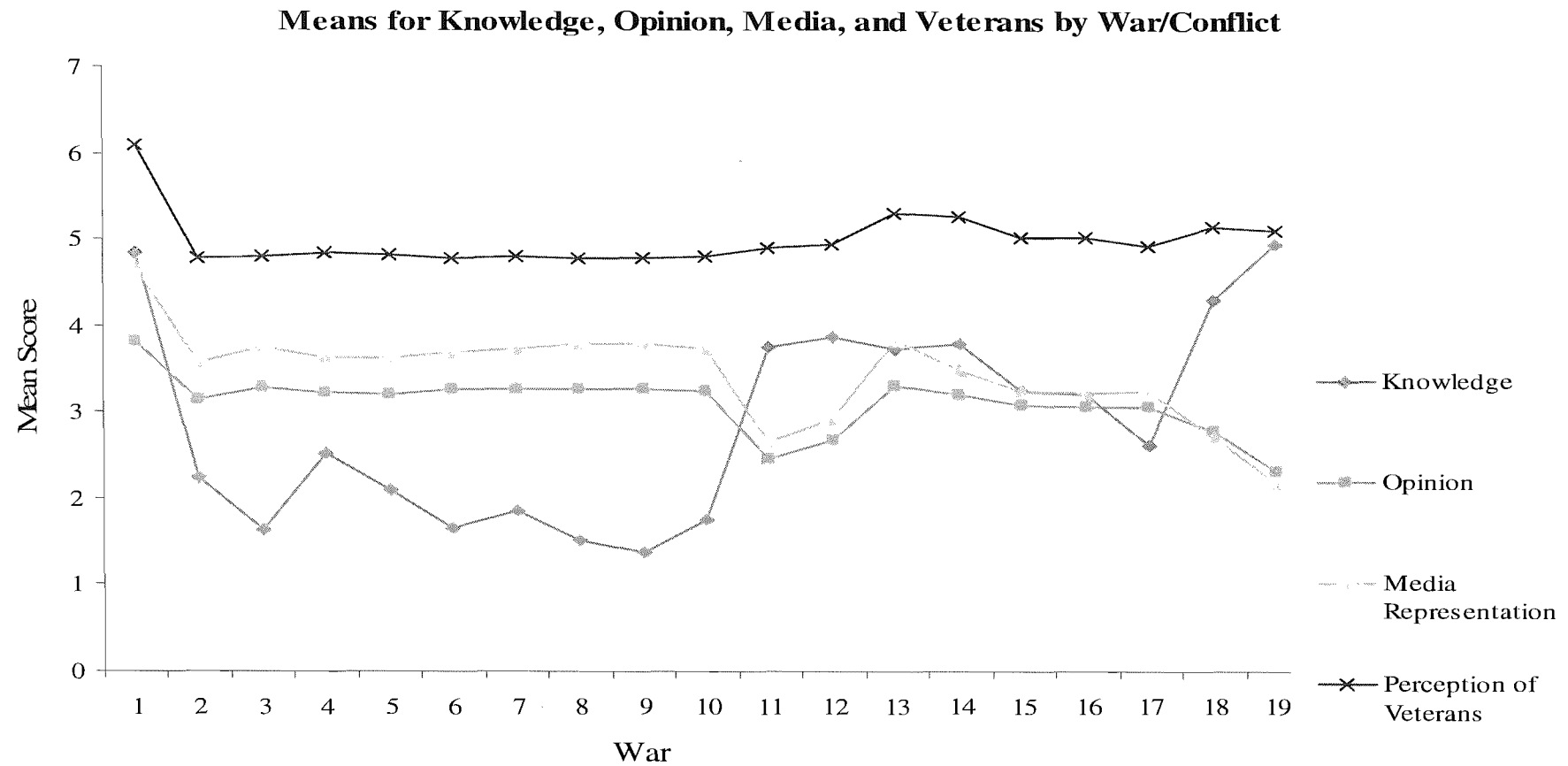*Figure 2.* Line graph indicating mean scores for knowledge, opinion, media representation, and perceptions towards veterans for each war and conflict.
Note. 1 = WWII, 2 = Palestine, 3 = Malaya, 4 = Korea, 5 = Suez, 6 = Kenya, 7 = Cyprus, 8 = Aden, 9 = Radfan, 10 = Borneo, 11 = Vietnam, 12 = Northern Ireland, 13 = Falklands, 14 = Gulf War, 15 = Bosnia, 16 = Kosovo, 17 = Sierra Leone, 18 = Afghanistan, 19 = Iraq

The most obvious patterns that emerge from Table 19 and Figure 2 are the relationships between knowledge and perception of veterans, and opinion and media representation.

The mean knowledge score for WWII is relatively high (see Table 19), which decreases for the small wars from Palestine to Borneo inclusive. From Table 19, it is clear that Radfan received the lowest mean score for knowledge. Mean scores then increase for Vietnam and remain relatively high until the peacekeeping tours of Bosnia, Kosovo, and Sierra Leonne, with scores ranging from 2.63 to 3.25. Knowledge scores increase once more for the recent conflicts of Afghanistan and Iraq, the former receiving the highest mean score.

The mean scores for perception of veterans follow a similar pattern. From Table 19, it is clear that the highest mean score was given for WWII veterans. Mean scores are lower for the less well known wars, including Palestine through to Borneo, and similarly for the peacekeeping tours of Bosnia, Kosovo, and Sierra Leone. As with mean knowledge scores, mean perceptions of veterans increase for veterans of the Falklands and Gulf Wars, and Afghanistan and Iraq. It must be noted that on average, no veterans were perceived negatively, which relates to the findings from the MOA. Significant correlations between knowledge and perception of veterans are displayed in Table 20.

TABLE 20. *Correlations between Knowledge and Perceptions towards Veterans.*

War	*Knowledge* M	*Perceptions* M	*r*
Iraq	4.94	5.10	.155*
WWII	4.84	6.10	.317**
Gulf	3.80	5.27	.225**
Falklands	3.73	5.30	.328**
Kosovo	3.20	5.02	.152*
Sierra Leone	2.63	4.93	.181*
Korea	2.52	4.84	.226**
Suez	2.10	4.82	.300**
Cyprus	1.86	4.80	.181*
Malaya	1.63	4.81	.197**

Note. **$p<.01$ *$p<.05$

Table 20 demonstrates that lower mean scores for knowledge were significantly correlated with less positive perception of veterans for 10 of the 19 wars.

The mean scores for media representation and opinion follow very similar patterns across wars. None of the wars had positive mean scores for opinion, with the highest mean score being for WWII (3.82). Scores for media representation were similar with the highest being for WWII (4.66). Mean scores for both variables decrease for the small wars of Palestine to Borneo, and decrease further for Vietnam and Northern Ireland. Scores increase for the Falklands, but steadily decrease from this point onwards. Iraq received the lowest mean scores for both media representation and opinion. Significant correlations between media representation and opinion are displayed in Table 21.

TABLE 21. *Correlations between Media Representation and Opinion.*

War/Conflict	*Media Representation* *M*	*Opinion* *M*	*r*
WWII	4.66	3.82	.596**
Falklands	3.84	3.31	.378**
Malaya	3.76	3.29	.404**
Cyprus	3.74	3.27	.328**
Suez	3.64	3.21	.410**
Korea	3.63	3.23	.499**
Gulf	3.50	3.20	.367**
Sierra Leone	3.25	3.06	.369**
Kosovo	3.23	3.07	.484**
Iraq	2.18	2.31	.177*

Note. **$p<.01$ *$p<.05$

Of the 19 wars, 10 yielded significant correlations between media representation and opinion, with less negative views of media representation being correlated with less negative opinions of wars. The total means of opinions and media representation for all 19 wars yielded a significant positive correlation ($r=.978$, $p<.01$) demonstrating the powerful relationship between media representation and opinion alluded to in Figure 2.

Also of interest are the relationships between perception of veterans and media representation and opinion, and also between knowledge, media representation and opinion. Figure 2 indicates that, particularly for the small wars, when knowledge is low, opinions and media representation are rated as being closer to four and therefore more neutral. In terms of perception of veterans, when opinions and media are rated on average to be neutral, perception of veterans is less positive. In particular, although mean scores for opinion and media representation for Vietnam, Northern Ireland, Afghanistan, and Iraq are among the most negative, perception of veterans scores are higher for these wars than the small wars. Tables 22 and 23 highlight significant correlations for these less obvious relationships.

TABLE 22. *Correlations between Knowledge, Media Representation, and Opinion.*

War	Knowledge and Media Representation (r)	Knowledge and Opinion (r)
WWII	.267**	.279**
Falklands	.235**	.337**
Gulf	.159*	.269**
Cyprus	-.203**	-
Suez	-.214**	-

Note. **p<.01*

As shown in Table 22, there are significant positive correlations between knowledge and media representation of WWII, the Falklands War, and the Gulf War. Higher mean scores for knowledge are correlated with more positive scores for media representation. The inverse is true for Cyprus and Suez, where higher mean scores for knowledge are related to more negative perceptions of media representation.

TABLE 23. *Correlations between Media Representation, Opinion, and Perception of Veterans.*

War/Conflict	Opinion and Perception of Veterans (r)	Media Representation and Perception of Veterans (r)
WWII	.248**	.245**
Falklands	.250**	-
Gulf	.216**	-
Afghanistan	.167*	-

*Note. *p<.05 **p<.01*

Table 23 indicates that the only significant correlation between media representation and perception of veterans was found for WWII, indicating that more positive media representation scores are correlated with more positive perception of veterans. In terms of opinion and perception of veterans, significant correlations were found for WWII, the Falklands War, the Gulf War, and Afghanistan. Correlations indicate that WWII veterans were perceived more positively than veterans of Afghanistan, and that this is correlated with more positive opinions towards WWII compared to Afghanistan.

6.4.7 Summary

In terms of correlations between variables and perceptions of veterans, knowledge was correlated with perceptions, with higher mean scores related to more positive perceptions of veterans, which supported the hypothesis. Also of importance is the finding that media representation and opinion were positively correlated, with more positive perceptions of media representation correlated with less negative opinions. In particular, total means for these variables yielded a significant correlation, once again supporting the hypothesis.

Where opinion is correlated with perceptions of veterans, the more negative the opinion towards the conflict the less positively veterans are perceived. Also, when knowledge was rated as being particularly poor, which was common for the wars and conflicts during the 1950s and 60s, mean scores of perception of veterans was also at their lowest.

Whilst media representation was only directly correlated with perception of veterans for WWII, it was also correlated with knowledge and opinions. More

positive perceptions of media representation correlated with higher mean scores for knowledge, with the exception of Suez and Cyprus, which yielded significant negative correlation.

6.4.8 Qualitative Findings

The comments made by participants were also analysed in order to provide depth and potential explanations to the patterns of correlations found in the questionnaire data. The majority of comments made by participants revealed sympathetic opinions towards the veterans of all wars and conflicts. For instance:

> No war can ever be considered positive and all veterans should be treated equally because they all had a chance to serve and die for their country and this should be respected (Female, White, British, 20, England, A Level).

This sympathy appeared to remain, despite limited knowledge of some of the wars and conflicts:

> I know too little about many of the wars concerned so am sorry that my response may be of little (if any) use. I have a negative perception of most wars because I believe that it is always possible to avoid war. I have huge respect for any veteran of any war due to the harsh experiences involved and have responded as such. (Male, White, British, 19, England, A Level).

Some participants extended this to suggest that service personnel were not being given the care they deserve from the government:

> Veterans do not receive their due amount of recognition nor the burden of care which the state owes to them (Gender unknown, White, British, 34, England, Masters/PhD).

In terms of negative opinions, the following quote also revealed why opinions towards all these wars, even WWII, were rated negatively:

> The only wars that I really know about are one that happened currently and what I learned about in school which was mainly the first and second world wars. I wouldn't say that I viewed any war in a positive way because people died. For example the second world war was good because it stopped Hitler but I wouldn't view it positively because of the crimes to humanity committed [sic] by the Nazis [sic]. (Gender unknown, White, British, 18, England, A Level).

WWII was perceived least negatively by the participants, which may be due to collective memory. WWII has been, and remains, an important part of the British identity and culture. In the quote below, the participant implied that

positive views towards WWII were due to the scale of home nation involvement and that war stories had been shared with younger generations:

> I think the reason that I have positive views of WW2 veterans is because more people experienced WW2 at home and consequently their experience has been shared with younger generations including myself. Most current wars (discounting terrorism) are fought on fronts that do not directly involve people at home. (Female, White, British, 33, England, other).

This leads onto another issue within the comments, which centred on the difference between the conscripted and professional service personnel and the view that conscripted personnel were more worthy of sympathy and recognition:

> Feel most wars are unnecessary particularly if we started them I would have a more negative view. I feel it is a foolish choice of occupation and feel little sympathy for those in war who chose that career. Different if drafted to fight (Female, White, British, 28, England, Masters/PhD).

Indeed, another participant believed that troops should be prepared for their combat roles:

> Don't really have enough knowledge to have an opinion but I feel if you sign up to the army then you should expect to be shot at. I'm grateful that they do it but they shouldn't be compensated for doing their job (Gender unknown, White, British, 27, England, A Level).

This finding links to a theme raised by PR during the interviews. PR felt that civilians expect professional service personnel to be able to deal with war experiences because they have been trained for combat. Similarly, negative comments were also made towards the concept of Northern Ireland as a 'War', and implicitly those who served in Northern Ireland as veterans:

> Interesting to refer to Northern Ireland as a 'war'. Wonder what the people on the ground would make of that?! (Gender unknown, White, British, 26, England, Masters/PhD).

This is in accordance with the themes from DX's interview, in which he explicitly stated that, although Northern Ireland was a peacekeeping mission, it was a combat situation but that this is misunderstood by members of society. In addition, DX also explained his frustration with society for criticising the behaviour of personnel in Northern Ireland. This theme was also reflected in one participant's comments in the questionnaire. In the following quote, the participant explains how her opinion towards wars is influenced by the morality of the war. Behaviour of troops does affect this perception to some extent:

> It is difficult to separate media coverage at the time and media coverage today. My opinions of veterans reflect more a moral decision about the justice of the conflict

in which they were involved than necessarily their behaviour during the conflict (though that is relevant to current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan). (Female, White, British, 28, England, Masters/PhD).

This is an interesting comment because, in the interviews, QI also explained how he had received negative comments from members of the public due to the media portrayal of the behaviour of troops in Iraq.

As the results from the questionnaire would testify, negative perceptions towards veterans were not the norm within the sample. A number of the comments centred on themes of sympathy and explicitly stated that perception of veterans may be influenced by the motives and reasons for wars:

> I feel very sorry for the servicemen and women who are asked to do a job by the Government and ultimately are vilified by society because of the politics surrounding the conflict. (Male, White, British, 33, England, Masters/PhD).

Knowledge was correlated with perceptions of veterans to a greater extent than opinions. The following quote highlights this:

> I have respect for all the people that have to go to war and do their job protecting etc under the orders of others maybe some times it may be the wrong thing but they still have to bite the bullet an put their lives on the line to protect others (Male, White, British, 23, England, Masters/PhD).

The media was commented upon and, in some cases, it was mentioned in relation to service personnel and the fear that the media influences society's perception of personnel:

> I feel that we are not supporting our British troops. Whether people agree with the war or not in Iraq and Afghanistan I consider that they vent their concerns in the wrong manner. Many of my friends are in the British Army and are fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq and they feel they do not have the support of the British public. I consider that the British Military are doing the honourable thing and helping a country that has been in crisis for a very long time. And that the media is influencing vulnerable young people into believing that it is bad to stand up for your rights and country. (Female, White, British, 20, Wales, A Level).

A veteran also explained that the media often place the lives of service personnel at risk:

> The men and women of the Forces do not chose to go to war they are sent by our government. Since the TV news is now operational 24 hours day then a conflict can fill many hours a day on the screen. This gives all the so called experts to nit pick through every thing and the presenter to put their own point of view across. As far as the TV news go the story is every thing even if it puts lives of the soldiers at risk. To give you an example Goose Green in the Falklands the BBC informed the world when the Para's left the camp en route for Goose Green and gave an approx; arrival time. This gave the Argentineans time to reinforce the Garrison (Gender unknown, White, British, 70, England, Masters/PhD, veteran).

Others were also concerned about media representation but, in line with the patterns of correlation, this was not associated with perceptions of veterans:

> I think that the media grossly misrepresents the best interests of this nation and does a total disservice to all the men and women of the Armed Forces who work so hard and risk their lives to protect the media's supposed right to 'free speech'. It completely abuses its position and warps the perceptions of ignorant people who do not know or understand anything about wars and conflicts and yet profess they do. A little bit of knowledge in the wrong hands..... (Gender unknown, White, British, 30, England, Masters/PhD).

It is interesting that concern towards media representation and impact on service personnel was voiced by two individuals who had served, or who had strong links to the military.

Whilst media and knowledge were rarely correlated in the findings from the questionnaire, one participant indicated that much of their knowledge of wars had come from the media:

> Most of my knowledge of the wars has not come from history lessons or school but public knowledge so media representation is obviously very influential in my perceptions of certain wars. Other wars that have not been pervasive in the media in my lifetime I have a limited knowledge of. (Female, White, British, 18, England, A Level).

Finally, one participant raised the question of whether media influences opinion, or vice versa:

> In my view: The media tends to support the position of the government of the country in which it is based if involved in a conflict - or having a significant interest in the outcome. The media appears to lag behind public opinion in some areas whilst attempting to appear leaders/supporters of the majority view. Opinions of the suitability of war are largely lead by the government and media propaganda and true particularly a true understanding of reality 'in the field' difficult to obtain even from troops - who tend to favour their own position and actions. The way in which troops are viewed seems to change over time with a tendency to mellow understanding and support. Wars for purely political/financial advantage such as Iraq place troops in a very difficult position and leave politicians waffling. (Gender unknown, White, British, 58, Scotland, Masters/PhD – TA (not a veteran)).

6.4.9 Discussion

Results from the MOA and questionnaire study demonstrate that veterans are not perceived negatively, but that some veterans are perceived more positively than others. The reason for this appears to be due to greater knowledge of certain wars. Media representation and opinion were also correlated with knowledge. The most significant correlation was between means of opinion and media representation.

A number of limitations were present in the current study. Firstly, the sample comprised young, well educated individuals. For this reason, extremes of opinion may not have been present in the sample resulting in a lack of variance in scores given to each war. Equally, the sample might have displayed demand characteristics. It must be stated that during data collection, the anniversaries of Suez and the Falklands War were commemorated, which may have raised the profiles of these conflicts. Also, the Government were criticised by the Royal British Legion for the lack of support and welfare offered to members of the Armed Forces. This may have made participants more aware of the experiences of veterans (BBC News, 2007).

The non-parametric distribution of variables also prevented the use of parametric statistical analysis, particularly the use of multiple regression. This would have allowed investigation into the directional causality of these correlations, and an understanding of the relative contribution of each variable within the model. It is unknown as to whether media representation mediated the relationships between knowledge and opinion, and perceptions towards veterans. Intuitive directions of causality are that knowledge predicts perception of veterans, and media representation predicts opinion. Determining the nuances of these relationships presents important future research.

There were also methodological issues. A number of participants commented on the terminology and phraseology of the questions. This focused on the definition of a *positive* or *negative* opinion. This is articulated in the following quote:

> I found it difficult to rate my perception of a war or conflict. On the one hand I believe that wars and conflicts are fundamentally a very bad thing because of the amount of death and suffering involved. On the other hand on very rare occasions there appears to be little choice but to go to war (e.g. WWII). I might support the decision to go to war (and view this positively) whilst believing that war is a very bad thing (and view this negatively). (Male, White, British, 30, England, Masters/PhD).

Participants also commented on the nature of media representation and what constituted positive or negative representation, which may have impacted on the findings. Arguably, the absence of media coverage, or recognition of media coverage, is a different concept to perceiving media representation as neutral:

> It is unclear what you mean by what is my opinion on the media coverage - do you mean do I think the media coverage expressed a negative / positive view of the conflict or that my opinion of the media coverage was negative towards the

coverage? Similarly opinions to the war and veterans - to the purpose of war? to the fact it happened? to the outcome? Too broad a question to say positive or negative to. Also - I know nothing about some of the conflicts in between ww2 [sic] and the 70's so it would be good to be able to say that I was not informed enough to comment rather than the neither positive or negative comment which could mean that I feel the war etc was neither positive or negative. (Female, White, British, 32, England, Masters/PhD)

Based on the questionnaire results, media and perceptions of veterans were uncorrelated. Despite this, qualitative findings suggested that for more recent wars, knowledge was gained from media coverage. Further exploration of this potential relationship is needed particularly if knowledge does predict positive perceptions of war veterans.

Findings from the questionnaire study both support and contradict the themes highlighted by the veterans during their interviews and findings from the MOA. The results reveal that, whilst a number of wars were perceived negatively by participants, this was not related to their perceptions of veterans. Rather, knowledge was correlated with perceptions of veterans.

When participants reported good levels of knowledge, ratings of veterans were more positive than wars that were less well known, despite negative opinions. In fact, when opinions were particularly negative, but knowledge was good, perceptions towards veterans remained positive. When knowledge was rated as poor, veterans were perceived less positively, providing support for the idea that being a veteran of a forgotten war may have a greater impact on the ability to reconcile memories than being a veteran of a controversial war (McCranie & Hyer, 2000). This has implications for media representation, but also for disseminating knowledge to members of the public.

In terms of the interview studies, when opinion towards war was rated positively by participants in the questionnaire, for instance WWII and the Falklands War, the majority of veterans in the interviews believed society were supportive of their actions. For the wars that were rated more negatively in terms of opinion, but not in terms of perception of veterans, the veterans in the interviews still reported negative perceptions of societal support and negative interactions with society. It would appear that, whilst veterans may be perceived positively by society, veterans gauge levels of support based on opinion and the valence of media representation (Yorke, 1999). This is an important

interpretation, particularly as opinion and media representation were also highly correlated.

6.5 Conclusion

The findings from this exploratory study have implications in terms of theory and practice. The most interesting correlations were derived from WWII and more recent wars. It appears that collective memory plays a part in forming opinions towards WWII and perceptions towards WWII veterans in the present day because a number of the wars in the 1950s and 60s did not yield significant correlations. When knowledge was rated as poor, opinions towards the conflict and towards the veterans were neutral.

The results imply a necessary change in the nature of media representation. There may be a need for two types of coverage; one which covers the political angle explicitly, and one which covers the experience of the troops. It must also be argued that a sympathetic coverage may aid reconciliation at the interpersonal level. Veterans who return to a family who have experienced sensitive reporting and who have not witnessed the dangers their family members are exposed to in detail may be better able to understand and provide support during the homecoming. Indeed, it is practice in the welfare of the Armed Forces for family members to be coached on what to expect when the veteran returns. In addition, perceiving support from society may be paramount in veterans' adjustment.

CHAPTER SEVEN

General Discussion and Concluding Remarks

7.1 Introduction

This thesis investigated how war veterans reconcile their traumatic war memories, and whether younger veterans can be encouraged to reconcile their memories before reaching later life. In later life, life review traditionally occurs and has been documented to make reconciliation difficult due to loss of cognitive, physical, and social resources (Baltes & Lang, 1997). The research took a narrative approach, in which life review is the reflection on the life story that is created throughout the life span (McAdams, 2001).

The interview studies with 30 war veterans provided insight into factors that may aid or hinder the process of reconciliation in younger and older veterans. Narrative analysis was used to determine the types of social support associated with coherent, reconciled, and incoherent narratives. This allowed initial conclusions to be drawn regarding potential differences between different stages of the reconciliation. Triangulation of interview themes was achieved using the IWM document and sound archives.

One of the most important findings was that social support themes associated with the different types of narrative did not differ across cohort. Themes highlighted by veterans with coherent narratives in the 1930s-1940s cohort did not differ from those in the 1950s-1970s and 1980s-2000s cohorts, even in terms of the type and importance of societal opinion and support. In addition, the structure of the narrative did not differ across cohorts, which strengthens the validity of the narrative approach throughout the lifespan. This has important implications for potential interventions on an applied level, but also implications for the role of narrative development and life stories from a lifespan perspective.

Interview themes also highlighted the importance of societal support in reconciliation. The MOA was visited, and a questionnaire study was conducted, to explore past and present societal support for specific wars. Results indicated that, whilst veterans of all wars and conflicts are seen positively, members of the

public are more critical of controversial wars, which in turn impacts on perception towards veterans. Opinion appeared to be linked to media representation, but knowledge of wars predicted perceptions towards veterans to a greater extent. Findings suggest that members of the public have more positive perceptions of veterans from well known wars, but that veterans may gauge recognition from media representation. These themes are discussed in more detail.

7.2 Discussion of Themes

7.2.1 Perceptions

Perceptions of war experience related to feelings associated with war, such as fear, pride, excitement; the interpretation of positive or negative outcomes; and factors that either protected the individual from interpreting events as traumatic, or increased the likelihood of traumatic interpretation.

Veterans with coherent, reconciled, and incoherent narratives regarded their experiences as positive, negative, or mixed, and there did not appear to be a pattern that delineated groups. Importantly, veterans were not delineated by the nature of their war experience either. Veterans with coherent narratives did not appear to have experienced qualitatively or quantitatively different types of combat compared to those in the reconciled and incoherent groups. This supports previous quantitative research that argued against a simple dose-response relationship (Fontana & Rosenheck, 1993). The interview findings support the assertion that other factors affect the impact of war on individuals and how they subsequently cope in the aftermath.

The identification of risk or protecting factors would fall into this category, in that the way the event is perceived by the individual is influenced by external factors. For instance, veterans with coherent narratives identified more protecting factors, such as religion, preparedness, and perceived importance of their duty, than did those with reconciled or incoherent narratives. Specifically, veterans with incoherent narratives identified more risk factors, such as lack of control over events and culmination of stressful life events (including sexual abuse during childhood) (Benyamini & Solomon, 2005; de Jong et al., 2001). Previous research has suggested that being young at the time of service can

increase the likelihood of PTRs. This was not found in the current study. Some veterans perceived being older at the time of service to be a protecting factor, whilst a number of veterans felt their youth had been advantageous to them. Despite this apparent contradiction, on inspection of the literature, measures of age may not take into consideration amount of service experience and preparedness (Wolfe et al., 1999). Veterans in the current study highlighted feeling prepared and in control of events as protecting factors.

The ability to find meaning from events was central to the concept of a coherent narrative, and may be linked to perceiving positive or negative outcomes from service. Veterans with coherent narratives reported more positive outcomes compared to veterans with incoherent narratives who tended to report negative outcomes. Previous research has suggested the importance of limiting negative outcomes, and has related this to hardiness (Waysman, Schwarzwald, & Solomon, 2001). Hardiness has been defined as an opportunity to develop in the face of adversity (Benotsch et al., 2000). This is linked to the concept of positive outcomes and overall narrative coherence in the current study. Furthermore, the ability to perceive positive outcomes may in turn be related to changes in outlook and posttraumatic growth (Joseph & Linley, 2005; Joseph et al., 1993).

The concept of positive outcomes also links to the work of Elder and colleagues, and the concept of the turning point within the life span perspective (Elder, 1986). Veterans who perceive gains unique to their service experience, such as maturity and preparation for future employment, suffer less psychological distress after service (Elder, 1986; Elder et al., 1991; Elder, Shanahan, & Clipp, 1994). This is certainly supported in the current study with themes highlighting the perception of service as a university course, and *growing up* due to service. Those with incoherent narratives seemed to experience difficulty attributing meaning to events in terms of positive outcomes, and lacked an integrating purposeful theme within the narrative form. This is an important finding, because it specifically relates previous research from the perspective of personal resources, such as religion and hardiness, and research based on developmental theory, to fundamental aspects of narrative coherence. It would appear that taking a lifespan approach, that integrates the concept of finding meaning through narrative, can shed light on previous research and offers interesting directions for future research.

7.2.2 Comradeship and Family

A veteran's ability to find meaning in events, or to avoid confronting the memory, is intricately linked to social support by either promoting processing or avoidant coping strategies. The current study provides interesting detail regarding the different patterns of social support that are potentially related to coherence and therefore reconciliation. Themes revealed that, indeed, comrades and family did support the processing and avoidance of war memories and, as such, the concepts of the main-effect and buffering hypotheses (Cohen & Wills, 1985) were supported. However, there was no general consensus for the patterns of social support found by Hunt and Robbins (2001b), in that other veterans aid processing and family supports avoidance.

Veterans with coherent narratives communicated with family members and comrades. Interestingly, instances of non-communication and avoidance were also reported, but the reason for this was that these veterans did not need to talk about their experiences. The use of non-communication and avoidance in relation to trauma are spurious terms for this group because this type of communication was not perceived by the veterans to be negative or maladaptive, as the literature suggests. The presence of a supportive environment in which communication *can* take place and the ability to make meaning naturally may be perceived to define veterans with coherent narratives. This has important implications because there is often the assumption that, if a veteran does not talk about his/her experiences, then this is detrimental to well-being. These findings remind us that this may not be the case, and that, equally, it must not be assumed that all veterans have experienced trauma.

Veterans with reconciled narratives used both comrades and family members to support processing and avoidance. The concept of comrades aiding processing is in accordance with previous research, but the simultaneous use of family by some veterans is also of interest. It would appear that whether it is comrades and/or family members who support reconciliation is dependent on the needs of the veteran, and the resources available to them. Older veterans reconciled their experiences a number of years after service, and it might be argued that family members supported processing because these veterans were no longer serving and so may have not kept contact with comrades. For younger

veterans (some of whom were still serving) improving relationships with family members seemed to prompt processing to occur. This might be because currently serving veterans felt unable to communicate within the military environment, whilst younger formerly serving veterans did not feel able to join veterans' associations because they did not feel like veterans. This was a common theme in the narratives of younger veterans.

Once again, this has vital implications because there is an assumption that only comrades can aid processing, due to shared experiences. Interventions based on this concept may miss an opportunity to employ the potentially valuable resource of family members. These results suggest that it is possible to achieve reconciliation within the family environment.

In accordance with previous research, veterans with incoherent narratives communicated with comrades, but further exploration found this communication to be unsatisfactory. Interestingly, these veterans did use family members to aid avoidance by providing a safe environment to buffer against traumatic memories. For three of the veterans, communication was beginning to take place but only with family members with whom relationships were improving. It would be interesting to perform follow up interviews with veterans with improving relationships to determine whether similar patterns to those of the reconciled group begin to emerge.

An important finding from interviews regarding veterans with incoherent narratives is that these individuals do not seem to *avoid* talking about their experiences with comrades as much as they feel *prevented* from talking about their experiences. If this is due to the perceived ethos of military culture, it is logical that these veterans may turn to other sources of support, in this case family members. For veterans with negative family interactions there is also an additional problem. These findings have ramifications for our understanding of war trauma, because it is often assumed that war veterans construct their own barrier, which prevents them from coming to terms with their experiences. If we accept the findings from these interviews, it may be argued that other people within the veteran's immediate environment might instead construct the barrier and, if lifted, reconciliation may occur.

7.2.3 Societal Support

Overall, the findings regarding societal support concur with previous literature. Fundamentally, societal support seemed to be linked to reconciliation in that the presence of a supportive environment provides a backdrop for reconciliation to occur (Hautamäki & Coleman, 2001). Predicted cohort differences, with, for example, WWII and Falklands veterans reporting positive experiences of societal support, and, for example, Korean and Iraq War veterans reporting negative experiences of societal support were not supported (McCranie & Hyer, 2000). Rather, veterans with coherent narratives reported more positive exchanges with members of society when compared to veterans with reconciled or incoherent narratives regardless, of war.

Societal support themes highlighted the issue of different experiences of societal support *within* cohorts, and how these may in turn be related to reconciliation. A number of WWII veterans in the study reported positive experiences of societal support, but WWII veterans with incoherent narratives reported negative interactions. BD felt misunderstood by members of the public because his service in Burma was not given the same recognition as service in Europe. Also, some of the Falklands veterans in the study reported a perceived lack of understanding from members of society who took pleasure in celebrating victory, but did not recognise that these veterans may have lost comrades. In addition, they felt such celebration was inappropriate, and did not feel like heroes (O'Brien & Hughes, 1991).

This finding relates to the concept of collective memory, or public narrative (Halbwachs, 1992), and the importance of congruence between the public narrative and the veterans' private narratives (Davies, 2001). It might be that veterans in the coherent group were able to find meaning in their experiences because of positive perceptions of societal support. Their private narrative was congruent with the public narrative and therefore no resolution was required. When the public narrative and private narrative are incongruent, regardless of war cohort, reconciliation may be hindered. It might be argued that for public support to have true therapeutic potential it must be seen to be informed and truthful, appropriate and proportionate, and reflecting the beliefs of veterans. In

this sense, *empathetic* support is required rather than support *per se.* How to achieve this requires further investigation.

The MOA was consulted to probe the nature of public opinion towards specific wars. A questionnaire study was then conducted to specifically investigate knowledge, opinions, media representations, and perceptions of veterans in a range of wars. These results indicated that veterans were perceived positively, regardless of the war they fought in, but veterans of the more well known wars were perceived more positively than their lesser known counterparts, regardless of valence of opinion. Opinion and media representation were correlated, suggesting that either opinion is influenced by media representation or vice versa, but this did not affect the perceptions of veterans. Whilst society may hold positive views of veterans, veterans may themselves gauge public opinion based on media representation. Therefore, there is a need to explicitly separate coverage of troops from political debate so veterans do not mistake this for lack of support. Knowledge of wars must also be disseminated to the public so that veterans of lesser known conflicts receive recognition and acknowledgement, and therefore support. Since memory comprises individual memory and collective memory (Halbwachs, 1992; Hunt & McHale, in press), the role of society in aiding or hindering the act of reconciliation cannot be overemphasised.

7.3 Limitations

Despite revealing interesting thematic patterns across groups, a number of limitations of the research may be identified. First, it is difficult to infer causality from the data obtained. It is not known at this stage whether social support themes and narrative coherence are causally related and, if they are, the direction of this causality. The interviews provide a snapshot, but the actual process of creating coherence was not studied. Rather, the focus of investigation was the end product, the presence or absence of a coherent narrative, and the differences in social support associated with these groups. Veterans with reconciled narratives reveal more clues regarding causality but, once again, these clues are based on the veterans' beliefs, and may not reveal the actual causal direction. For this reason, conclusions are tentatively drawn. Regarding the sample, it might be argued it was self-selecting, and consequently biased in nature, with veterans

who were able to talk about their experiences being more likely to volunteer to participate. In reality, veterans with different experiences of traumatic memories volunteered to participate, including the recruitment of younger and older veterans with PTSD due to purposeful sampling. This resulted in interesting and important diversity. Despite this, it is important to note that veterans in the incoherent group, particularly those who were receiving formal treatment for PTSD, had made the decision to find help, and therefore talk about their experiences. It is impossible to avoid this bias, due to ethical reasons, but the strength of qualitative research lies in its ability to enter the world of the participant. Whilst it would have been impossible to interview veterans who were actively avoiding their war experience, veterans with reconciled and incoherent narratives allowed insight into the reasons for avoidance, even though they were now beginning to talk about them.

Limitations also exist regarding the use of a qualitative methodology. Due to the semi-structured interview schedule, the interviews did not cover all possible themes, for example, some veterans did not talk about their family interactions. Thought must also be given to the fact that a female, and in all but one case a younger female, conducted the interviews. It was clear to the veterans that the researcher was not part of the military, and therefore did not have experience of combat or military life. In order for the researcher to gain the trust of the veteran, the veteran was encouraged to lead the interview. One might expect machismo to have affected disclosure, yet on reflection, these veterans spoke frankly and in great complexity about their war experience and their subsequent attempts to cope. Perhaps the presence of a young female led to barriers being broken down so that the veterans were able to speak honestly and without fear of judgement (Gubrium & Holstein, 2001; Schwalbe & Wolkomir, 2001; Warren, 2001).

Interviewing war veterans raises interesting issues. Although these veterans were willing to participate, a number were suspicious of the research and/or very emotional at the time of the interview. It would have been unethical to probe into areas the veteran was not willing to share, particularly with an outsider who had yet to gain their trust. The result was that it was not always possible to determine whether communication was facilitating processing, or whether it was an example of non-communication (talking of war experience, but

not traumatic events). When veterans reported talking about events with the implication that this was about the traumatic detail of the event, it was coded as communication. This of course raises another issue in that for the veteran it could have been see to have aided processing, but this may not have been the case in reality. Although not all topics were covered by each veteran, the rich detail of themes could not have been achieved otherwise. Despite this necessary restriction, the themes uncovered by qualitative analysis were comprehensive, and saturation was reached with only ten veterans, and so whilst conclusions are drawn tentatively, they may be drawn confidently in this respect.

In terms of the narrative coherence criteria, results demonstrate that these successfully differentiated participants, which was in line with the theoretical background of the model (Androutsopoulou, Thanopoulou, Economou, & Bafti, 2004; Baerger & McAdams, 1999; Habermas & Bluck, 2000). The narratives of veterans with PTSD were coded as incoherent, which is an important finding in terms of providing validation for the model. It may be argued that the researcher's knowledge of PTSD diagnosis impeded the ability to code the transcripts without bias. It is important to note that the researcher was aware of this, and followed the analysis protocol in order to limit bias.

There was one exception to this pattern. EU explicitly stated an absence of traumatic memories, but his narrative was coded as incoherent. He displayed contradictions between his verbal statements of affect, and his non-verbal behaviour in the interview, and lacked meaning regarding his war experience. It could be that the researcher interpreted these non-verbal behaviours incorrectly, and EU did not feel the need within the interview to attribute meaning to events. It might also be that EU was avoiding his memories, which would have led to the explicit statement of no traumatic memories, but also would have resulted in a lack of meaning if he had not engaged with these memories. This is an important finding. Whilst it may highlight the limitations of the narrative coherence model, it also questions the assumption that trauma narratives are defined by fragmentation alone. Rather, lack of meaning and integration (Tuval-Mashiach et al., 2004) may also result in a dissociated narrative (Janet, 1909). It may also explain why some research has failed to differentiate between traumatic and non-traumatic narratives based solely on fragmentation (Gray & Lombardo, 2001; Rubin et al., 2004).

Taking a different methodological stance, this incongruence between verbal and non-verbal affect is given an alternative explanation. Discourse analysis also focuses on non-verbal behaviours such as laughing and crying. When a traumatic event is relayed to an audience, and the narrator laughs, this does not represent incongruence and incoherence, but rather an attempt by the narrator to make the audience more comfortable (Gubrium & Holstein, 2001). This is an important distinction because the use of different methodological approaches may result in a participant's narrative being coded as incoherent when it is coherent. More research is required to explore this potential weakness of the narrative coding criteria.

The use of different types of data, such as archival data from the MOA and IWM, also poses potential caveats. These caveats concern the type of person who contributes to these archives; in the case of the MOA, contributors tend to be disproportionately female and over the age of 40 (Summerfield, 1985). In the case of contributors to the IWM, it is important to realise that these individuals have a natural desire to narrate and document their experiences by the very virtue of contributing to an archive. Also, it is difficult to remain objective when using these sources of information due to natural time constraints during the research process, which results in deductive analysis alone.

Finally, the narrative coherence model was formulated on the narratives of British war veterans, and was based on previous research grounded in Western concepts of narrative. Within Western culture, history is seen as linear; that is we move forward in time through a beginning, middle, and end. Within Eastern culture, history is seen as cyclical; that is repeating patterns occur throughout time. These cultural influences affect *autobiographical* time (Brockmeier, 2000), so that the construction of the autobiography, or the life story, will reflect cultural concepts of time. Since orientation and structure is an essential aspect of the narrative coherence model, it may only reflect coherence as defined within Western society and therefore be applicable to veterans who reconcile in Western society. Also, the role of society and collective memory may also differ between cultures (Brockmeier, 2000; Wang & Brockmeier, 2002). Therefore, the extent to which this may be applied to veterans from other cultures must be investigated in order to build a cross-cultural understanding of narrative coherence.

7.4 Implications

7.4.1 Clinical Implications

The findings suggest that veterans can reconcile their traumatic memories in earlier life, and provides insight into the types of social support that may aid processing, the role of the narrative in reconciliation, and the impact of media representation. Findings from the reconciled group suggest that reconciliation may occur naturally without the need for formal therapy, and this may be achieved by creating a coherent narrative, which is oriented, structured, consistent in affect, and integrated.

This raises important implications for the way war trauma is treated and the types of intervention offered to veterans. It may be suggested that simply facilitating communication within a supportive environment, with the specific intent to create a narrative of war experience, may lead to reconciliation. This is already the basis of Narrative Exposure Therapy (NET) (Neuner et al., 2004). This formal therapy requires repeated verbalisation of traumatic memories to encourage habituation to, and integration of, the memory, leading to the remission of PTSD. This does promote processing and narrative coherence, but such therapies are intrusive and intense and may not appropriate or necessary for the majority of veterans with sub-clinical symptoms. These therapeutic interventions rely on regular contact with a health professional, and veterans may have to wait for this formal treatment. Additionally, the influence of social discourse on narrative coherence and reconciliation is not recognised in these current therapies. Memory is not individual. It is influenced by the wider social and cultural memory of the event (Hunt & McHale, in press). The interviews suggest that veterans may be able to reconcile without formal therapy presenting the possibility of a self help intervention.

On a cautionary note, communicating with comrades or family members may be appropriate for veterans with subclinical levels of PTRs and psychosocial dysfunction, but not for those with clinical levels. If the difference between subclinical and clinical levels is quantitative, processing and reconciliation may be achieved this way. If the differences are qualitative, it may be inappropriate to suggest that the veteran can reconcile traumatic war memories by creating a

coherent narrative. The literature would suggest a quantitative difference due to the nature of trauma narratives derived from clinical and neuroscience research. Findings from the current study also suggest that creating a coherent narrative may reduce PTSD symptoms, as a number of veterans in the reconciled group had been diagnosed with PTSD but had come to terms with their memories. However, without knowledge of other factors, and the causal path towards reconciliation, it cannot be concluded that, because interview narratives were coded as reconciled, this was due to communication with comrades and family members.

Finally, this approach may be used to understand Type I traumatisation, such as rape and natural disaster, and Type II traumatisation, such as sexual abuse particularly, since service in the Armed Forces may constitute either Type I or Type II trauma depending on length of service for instance.

Based on the research findings, it seems appropriate to encourage veterans to talk about their experiences immediately after the event/service. What is particularly salient is that comrades *and* family members can aid this process. It seems feasible to suggest the renewed importance of regimental stories, because they may aid the creation of a coherent personal narrative. In addition, the role of family members may ensure that the individual narrative of the veteran is supported, so that the collective narrative and the personal narrative develop simultaneously.

7.4.2 Theoretical Implications

The findings from the interviews provide unique insight into the role of social support in reconciliation and potential relationships with narrative coherence. Previous research implies the importance of social support in aiding processing or avoidance of traumatic memories. This study contributes to current understanding by exploring the role of coherence in reconciliation, and the types of social support associated with narrative coherence. Cognitive processing has influenced the area of trauma and subsequent coping and reconciliation (Brewin, Dalgleish, & Joseph, 1996; Creamer et al., 1992), but this study also implicates narrative coherence within this process.

In terms of narrative theory, narrative coherence did not differ across cohorts. Previous research suggests the drive to create a coherent life story starts in adolescence, but the achievement of coherence occurs later in life at the stage of life review (Butler, 1963). Particularly, the ability to find meaning in events and to integrate events in the life story is often accredited to older adults (Erikson, 1994). McAdams (1993) suggests that meaning is continually constructed throughout the lifespan through the creation of a coherent narrative in order to maintain narrative identity. The current research suggests that younger people are able to create meaning from events, even when those events threaten to shatter core assumptions (Janoff-Bullman, 1992). The importance of social support in this process appears fundamental. Implications for narrative psychology as a whole, and particularly the role of narrative in reconciliation, arise from the findings

In terms of the definition of narrative coherence, previous research concerning traumatic memories has focused on fragmentation alone (Rubin et al., 2004). The current study supports theoretical research concerning narrative, which suggests that coherence is more than a lack of fragmentation (Tuval-Mashiach et al., 2004). The case of EU emphasises the importance of taking a more holistic approach to the definition of narrative coherence and, indeed, the perception of traumatic symptomatology. Whilst EU reported no traumatic memories in terms of, for example, flashbacks, his narrative was coded as incoherent due to a lack of meaning and purpose. This could have been an example of avoidance but, equally, although a veteran may not have traumatic memories, they may be experiencing guilt, lack of meaning, and purpose. These factors are as detrimental to well-being as the presence of traumatic memories, and may indeed exacerbate symptoms and prevent reconciliation. For the above reasons, the narrative coherence model requires further validation and this could be achieved through its use in clinical settings.

Regarding the impact of ageing on the presence of trauma, this research helps us understand how some veterans are able to communicate with family members and achieve reconciliation earlier in life, before critical resources such as cognitive ability, social networks, and physical health, diminish (Baltes & Lang, 1997). This research allowed for retrospective investigation of social support experiences throughout the lifespan, and information was collected

regarding the various reasons why veterans did not process their memories in earlier life. Knowledge was also gained regarding the problems related to reconciling memories in later life. For instance, older veterans spoke of the unavailability of social support networks, and that due to bad health they were unable to actively seek social support.

The absence of social support networks was also an issue for veterans who had been medically discharged as a result of their traumatic symptoms and/or physical injury. This sudden change presents problems to younger veterans that are normally associated with later life. A sudden discharge due to mental or physical illness may be akin to retirement in terms of loss of identity and loss of social support, and ill health in later life. It may be argued that what are normally considered issues for older people are in fact social ageing factors as opposed to physical ageing factors. This has theoretical implications in terms of how researchers perceive old age and associated concepts, which may be life stage rather than age concepts.

It appears that collective memory does play a role in determining opinions towards wars and conflicts, and furthermore, that certain mechanisms are used to evoke collective memory. Evidence was inconclusive as to whether this in turn influenced societal opinions towards veterans. Rather, knowledge of wars and conflicts was related to perception towards veterans. How knowledge is disseminated, and the role the media plays in this process, require further research.

Despite this, veterans reported societal support to be fundamental to reconciliation. From the questionnaire study, it may be suggested that veterans gauge societal support from media rather than from interacting with members of society. Once again, this requires further research, but the importance of congruence between the public and personal narratives was implicit within this process (Davies, 2001).

7.5 Future Research Directions

There are a number of important future research directions. The relationship between social support and narrative coherence requires validation, and could be achieved through longitudinal studies. This would centre on veterans with traumatic symptomatology, and investigate social support

experience and narrative coherence in order to determine to what extent they are related.

Alternatively, a narrative intervention could be tested, which would centre on encouraging narrative development with concurrent tests of traumatic symptomatology. The research would concern the extent to which an intervention, based on developing narrative coherence, could effectively reduce the psychosocial dysfunction of war veterans with sub-clinical traumatic symptoms.

In order to achieve this, veterans would be interviewed and the model applied to the transcripts until saturation is reached, which would determine whether the model captures all relevant aspects of narrative coherence. Once tested, the intervention would be developed, and its effectiveness tested. In order to enhance effectiveness, the NDP would be based on the themes of social support found in the current study. The intervention would involve disseminating information about the nature of traumatic memories, acknowledge the veterans' disinclination to talk about memories, and encourage communication to occur with comrades, family members, and members of society. It would also include information for veterans' associations and family members.

Two stages of a pilot would be conducted. First, participants with reconciled narratives would be asked to review the information in the intervention and comment on its suitability, acceptability, and usefulness. Second, veterans with posttraumatic symptomatology would take part in the intervention for one month. After the pilot study, the Randomised Control Trial would be conducted. Veterans would be allocated to either the intervention group, or the control group who will be given a pack comprising non-narrative techniques (e.g. relaxation). These veterans would complete questionnaires and take part in interviews at three time points; baseline, Evaluation 1, and Evaluation 2. Evaluation 1 would measure initial changes in the questionnaire scores and narrative coherence. Evaluation 2 would measure the maintenance of these changes. Comparisons would be made between the intervention and control groups in order to assess the effectiveness of the narrative intervention.

The model also needs to be tested cross-culturally. To achieve this, research should focus on veterans from other countries in order to analyse their narratives and the types of social support that aid or hinder the process of

reconciliation. In a similar vein, understanding societal opinion and how this contributes to reconciliation must also be determined. Research would focus on the factors that influence the opinions of members of society, and how veterans gauge societal opinion.

7.6 Concluding remarks

By taking a unique narrative approach, a theoretical model of social support and narrative (in)coherence throughout the lifespan was formulated. There is great potential for a therapeutic intervention to be developed from the findings based on the natural process of making meaning. This would promote more effective and potentially more cost effective ways to facilitate reconciliation for veterans of all ages. The only difference between those with coherent and reconciled narratives, and those with incoherent narratives, was the presence of a supportive personal and societal environment providing opportunity for communication. Such an environment should be available to veterans of all ages.

This thesis presents a number of issues pertinent to social policy implications and implications for intervention. During the research, anniversaries of WWII (60th), Suez (50th), and the Falklands (25th) took place, and the current conflicts of Iraq and Afghanistan were taking place. These factors seemed to propel the concerns of currently and formerly serving personnel into the mainstream. Current media representation focused on fears that veterans not do receive suitable support, and that troops in Afghanistan and Iraq are potential mental health casualties. The Royal British Legion began the campaign *Broken Covenant*, claiming the Government have broken the Military Covenant and do not demonstrate due care to current and formerly serving personnel (BBC News, 2007). It could that change is occurring, and the implications of this research may be readily accepted by those who work with veterans, and even by society as a whole who are becoming more aware of the issues facing current and former service personnel.

The current research highlights the importance of societal support for veterans of all ages, and the need to recognise the achievements of current and former service personnel, arguably through mass media and other forms of knowledge dissemination. Equally, the findings highlight potential for

reconciliation to occur earlier in life through the natural process of making meaning and creating a coherent narrative. Support networks were found to be fundamental to this process, whether these were the presence of a supportive family environment or access to comrades through veterans' associations. Future research should focus on the ways in which achieving narrative coherence can be facilitated using support networks before later life, or before traumatic symptoms progress to clinical levels.

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Narrative Content Coding Manual

IMPACT OF WAR EXPERIENCE

Perception of service experience: Feelings during service: Description of feelings at the time of the event. This includes positive, neutral and negative feelings:

o   Positive descriptions – including: Excitement/High morale/Enjoyment/Preparedness/Intimacy/Knowing the enemy/Doing what you're trained to do/proving yourself and one's masculinity/Pride

   i.e. Excitement:
   ...so we went through the Burma campaign...um...all I can remember about that is that it was all very exciting...and ah...and contribution to what was going on improved the experience...

o   Neutral descriptions/mixed emotions – including: Both positive and negative emotions/Normality of War/doing your job/Not questioning the motives/Questioning the motives/questioning the motives/Strange/weird

   i.e. Normality of war:
   ...apart from that it was quite uneventful just the normal all the bits and bobs...

o   Negative descriptions – including: Low morale/Boredom/Annoyance/ Apprehension/Tension/Fear/Distress/Tiredness/Frustration

   i.e. Frustration:
   ...I was confined to garrison which was very boring...I then erm...was lucky enough to become...ah...a second in command driver to a...a Captain's [] which erm...which enabled me to stay away from guard duties...erm...that was quite a...erm...debilitating erm...experience really...for any serviceman...so boring...erm...plus the fact...that it was erm...quite worrying at times...remember we were young...and so many things happened in the middle of the night...

Outcomes of service experience (after service): Defined as events occurring after service that have been directly attributed to service. This includes costs, benefits, or no outcomes:

o   Costs – including: Presence of traumatic memories and/or PTSD symptoms in the context of resulting from experience/Injury (and sequalae)/Loss of time in a career:

   i.e. Presence of traumatic memories
   ...this has stayed with me all my life [1] it doesn't keep me awake at night [1] I'd be lying...it does not keep me awake at night...but it's there in the morning...it's there now [1] it'll be there tomorrow...it'll be there the next day...I can't forget it [1]

   i.e. Injury
   currently my knuckles...hurt...now they've hurt...since 1972 [2] and tomorrow morning my wrist will hurt [1] ah...then it'll be my shoulders on another day...[KB: that must be exhausting] my arm will be too heavy to carry...I have to have a sling with me...I'll have to get up one morning and I'll have to put bandages around my wrists...you know...pressure bandages...round my wrists...and I'll have to put something on my legs...or my toes some days...they they won't move and [1] I get such severe headaches that...the medication is 200 quid for three tablets...

o   Benefits – including: Breadth of life/Experience /Maturity/growing up quickly/confidence/Self discipline/Opportunities/benefited future job/benefited future job ('Sandwich course')

   i.e. Breadth of life/Maturity/growing up
   ....growing up I should imagine........oh yes....back then...I was a twenty year old...when I went away...I was....26 when I came back...or 27......and.....you see when I went away I was responsible for me....and when I came back I was responsible for a...a great deal...and I had been a staff officer as well....so....you'd got the overall things you were doing...which were rather larger than...one would ever have done as a civilian........I mean....I......if I'd have stayed in....doing life insurance until I was 27...I wouldn't have had the breadth of life that I've had...

o   Explicit statement of no costs or benefits and of war just part of life:

   ...I don't think so [2] it may have benefited some people...but I don't think it did me [2]

Nature of service experience: Including protecting and risk factors, and reasons for presence of war memories in later life.

o Protecting factors (other than social support): Defined as factors identified by veterans that stopped them perceiving events to be traumatic – including:

    o Exposure to danger (brief vs prolonged)
    i.e. *yes...yes...I've never had any hang ups...I think I was very lucky...in my service in Korea...erm...because [1] a...I wasn't in Korea at...at the worst time...*

    o Having a job to do – importance of the job/Being kept busy:
    i.e. *I think the other factor [1] when one moves to the periods of intense danger [2] normally one has got a job to do [1] er...if one...were [1] totally unemployed [1] then [1] erm [1] it would have been much worse [2]*

    o Religious/Spiritual faith:
    i.e. *[2] the greatest help to me...I was a [1] committed Christian at the time [3] and [2] so [2] erm [3] it [2] things didn't get me down*

    o Preparedness – feeling capable:
    i.e. *...so I had a year and a half or I'd had a year and a half in the unit to develop those skills and accommodate them in arduous circumstances working in Northern Ireland [1] in the early 80s it was quite active out there...you know...it was good grounding to then move on to general warfare...*

    o Age – young at the time of service being advantageous
    o 'it's not going to happen to you'

o Risk factors: Defined as factors that were identified to increase perception of events as traumatic, and factors affecting adjustment to civilian life:

    o It's going to be you next/it's going to be you next – fear of death:
    i.e. *...so you're thinking at the back of your mind...it's going to be me next...*

    o Prolonged exposure to danger:
    i.e. *we were like we've had it now...but we only got hit twice...and then erm [2] and that...because we had to do the same routine everyday for three...for three weeks and a bit I think...we had to close up...and then run through the same procedure...everyday...they're amassing here they're amassing there...they're amassing everywhere...and by this time...they'd....their targets had moved off...you know...the Royal Marines had gone to...Goose Green and...you know all that sort of stuff...so they were attacking different positions now...but we...it was still the same fear...even though they didn't attack us...because we knew they were in the area...and we'd got conditioned to this first week...and...and so that went on...for me...for nearly two weeks...the same fear...the terror...oh god...it wouldn't leave me alone...*

    o Lack of control/involvement during action:
    i.e. *during the second week I had...I went to ask one of the guys one of the chiefs if I could have a weapon...cos I just wanted to sit outside and fire at somebody you know...because I couldn't...I didn't have the ability to fire back...and I found that most...I just ah...just...I don't know...I don't how to explain that...really...people were saying oh here they come to bomb you...just...and I couldn't do anything about it...*

    o Combination of events either after service (i.e. divorce) or before service (i.e. childhood sexual abuse):
    i.e. *because of this PTSD I've got has brought back problems as a child...that's that's that's brought them back up [1] because erm [1] I was s...sexually and physically abused as a child and that has brought this out as well...*

    o Sudden medical discharge/no advice about pension, benefits, civilian finance etc, or help adjusting to civilian life 'rat race':
    i.e. *I was discharged and then I was...never put...in touch with anybody or anything you know...*

    o Older during service.
    o Doing the job, but only thinking about events afterwards during the 'quiet times'

o Presence of traumatic memories in later life: Defined as factors attributed by veterans to be the reason for the presence of their current traumatic memories/PTSD:

    o Deliberate avoidance immediately after the war (with alcohol use)
    o Unconscious suppression:
    i.e. *...if you'd have asked me...the year before...I could have told you stories about Suez...but I had...no recall of that memory at all...it was a total...total repression...*

    o Natural course of ageing (retirement/reminiscence):

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i.e. ...the further we got away from the event...the more...from my point of view...the more memories came forward...if you know what I mean...um...and became established and therefore you were looking back on what had happened...you had more time to do that...

- o Triggered by experience/anniversary/commemoration

- o The need for truth/unanswered questions:
   i.e. the whole...thing...was a mish mash...you know what I mean...and it's like you know...I'm left with a guilt complex like you know...I swear blind to this day...I shot two terrorists with rifles...you know what I mean...but they were all coming out evidence evidence evidence...that I never did...and there's one shocking bit of it...I have...felt sure...even to this day I could still see...I have nightmares about it and ah [1] someone put it to me it's like a tape recording...and you rewind and...play it back...but you don't always play it back the same...as what you...saw in the first place [KB: right] you know [KB: yeah]...and it's a whole heap of...mind games...going down...

SOCIAL SUPPORT

Comradeship: Description of comradeship and types of support gained:

- o **Good**: i.e. Marvellous, tremendous, a family, 'Bother Officers etc
   Reliance/Cohesiveness/Reassurance/Intimacy/ Good/Morale/Good spirit/jovial/Working to shared goals/cooperation/Dependent on each other/ 'literally in the same boat'/Humour (including gallows/black humour when not associated with communication)

   i.e. Oh that was very good [1] in the jungle...everybody helped each other...nobody er....er [1] yeah I mean you were on own the erm...you were literally dependant on each other...[]...if somebody got a parcel from home all of us shared...it wasn't a question of these are mine [1] they went around everybody...share [1] there were very few instances of selfishness or erm...[L188:195]...there was a great atmosphere of cooperation and [1] just because you had to [1] [laughs]...

- o **Absence** of comradeship: working alone or with different units all the time.
   i.e. but...once...once tasked...you...you were alone...you were meant to be alone...

Communication of service experience: This can be associated with either communication during service and/or communication after service, but is coded explicitly as during or after. Categories include communication, non-communication, and avoidance of communication:

- o **Communication** of the potentially traumatic events of service. Must be an explicit statement of talking about traumatic events in particular

   - o Present:
      i.e. so anyway we were round my house and it came up five years of the Falklands you know Prince Andrew won the war...you know..............but anyway......and we weren't gonna watch it but it popped up......er.....and we started talking.......so my ex mrs went ah.....so she put the cigarettes in front of us beer and just sat by....

      i.e. and that's the first time I could ever talk about it...so five years to actually saying anything....

   - o Absent: If not explicit, it is not coded as communication:
      i.e. I'm quite fortunate in the fact that...erm...my best Army buddy...he only lives...what...a couple of miles away...we meet up twice...two or three times a week...have a couple of pints...have a good old chin wag...talk about the Army...and he comes here as well...[KB: what do you talk about?]...about our time in the Army...like if he's had a difficult night...or...difficult day...he'll tell me about it...and you know...I gee him up...

- o **Non-communication** of war experiences: Defined as the lack of communication of traumatic events due to either the perceived unimportance of events by self or others, being told by someone else not to talk about experiences, or lack of opportunity. This may involve the veteran wanting to talk but being unable for a number of reasons. This is applied either during or after service:

   - o Perceived lack of interest from others

   - o No desire/or perceived need to share experiences

   - o Shared experience resulting in assumed understanding and support but no communication:
      i.e. and I think that anyone that goes all the way into it must have been involved in something similar [3] and...and also...somebody who is involved in it [1] or was involved in something similar like that [3] and can empathise, an awful lot of it is [4] erm [4] it doesn't need to be said [1] you can hint towards it...they'll nod, and you'll know that they know [5]

o Loss of comrades (losing contact, or death, illness)/ Absence of individuals with shared experiences in common:

i.e. *the only time I talk about it is when I go to my Royal Signals dos...and there's...I think...three or four of us who were serving before the war...the rest were all much later...they're ex-National Service men...they're ex Korean war...things like that.........so...that they respect us for what we did when we were in....but...there isn't a lot of talk to each other about matters of joint interest...not when we were serving anyway...*

o Lack of opportunity (due to military ethos):

i.e. *in fact from talking to guys who have gone outside...who are outside...they're the ones who tend...now they're on the other side of the fence so to speak...they feel safe to actually talk about it now...whereas when you're in the club...when you're this side of the fence and you're still in the military and you've still got those barriers around you...you know...*

o Inability to articulate emotion/events

i.e. *and I don't find it easy to talk about it [2] to try to express the feelings and emotions...*

o **Avoidance** of communication of experiences: Defined as the personal choice/deliberate/explicit desire to avoid talking about (traumatic) events and/need to cope alone:

o Coping alone, and not burdening people:

i.e. *because it was a job that I took on...and it was erm [3] you don't want to burden other people with...problems you've got...*

o Use of gallows humour/euphemism

i.e. *[2] erm [1] if one spoke about it [1] it was with the usual black or gallows humour that arises in these situations*

o Alcohol used to cope with memories alone

o Staying away from situations where communication may occur

o "Stiff upper lip" – communication is not done in the military – maintaining kudos whilst serving.

i.e. *...the military ethos of integrity and self-respect and not letting your barriers down because it falls outside the rank structure in a way*

o Machismo

i.e. *Er...no...no...I don't think so [wouldn't have spoken about experiences]...no...you know...that's another thing...it's like...I'm a soldier...you get up and do...when the going gets tough get going type of thing...there's all the kind of mottos that we was brought up on you know...and erm...be a man stand up and get on with it like you know what I mean...so that macho business [2] was foremost in life all the time...*

o **Veterans' Associations and/or personal contacts**: Relating to the importance of veterans' associations in terms of coping with events/comradeship (excluding communication):

o Importance of continued comradeship (code as positive)
Importance increases as life gets quieter/Being with people who understand/All have something in common:

i.e. *KB: Is it important to you that it's [squadron association] is still...Participant:...oh abs...oh it is yes...it's a big chunk out of one's life you know...seven years...*

o Non-importance continued comradeship (but not rejection of comradeship) (code as negative):
Too busy to meet with comrades – too busy with life/Not a veteran yet – too young/still in service:

i.e. *I don't actually see myself as a veteran...because to me...a veteran is an old bloke...with grey hair...with a load of medals on his blazer and his grey trousers [laughs] and I don't put myself in that league yet [laughs]...to some of these young lads...you know...I'm old enough to be their dad...and I could be there if I wanted to be...but no [1]*

o Feelings of rejection/absence of VA and/or comrades/not feeling like a veteran (code as negative).

i.e. *I was asked to join that and he gave me some [2] bits and pieces...you know...leaflets and that...but [6] I...I...in a way I don't feel like...although [3] make no mistake it was a proper war...people died...it was a massive fire fight...lots of ornaments and it was a fairly bitter affair...I don't feel that even after that...that I did as much as guys in the second World War...and when I see the remembrance day parades [2] and I look at the old war time Commandos [2] I think that...er [2] they went through...2...3...4 years...5 years of war some of them [3] and they have [2] they're [2] they have more reason for joining associations and marching and wearing their medals and their berets and all that kind of thing [3] I would feel a little bit of a fraud [1] if I did that [1]*

Family/Friends Support:

o Description of interactions with family excluding communication (positive ie 'stability' or help practical help provided but no communication/negative ie 'impediment' lack of understanding) and contact with home during service:

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i.e. .....we're not a close family...and that was a real kick in the whatsits them saying that....so [name of friend] was with me....he had no family anyway...so when we docked in at Southampton you've got the whole ship down below decks trying to get out of these two doors to...rush at everybody...and me and [name] were sat on the flight deck like that [sits back and crosses arms] looking at them.....and who was down there but my nan in pink always remember her.....she was there...

i.e. [8] if we shift to the question of how one coped [1] post war [1] the thing that occurs to me...is that I came out...into what was...and remained...a stable...rural...family...environment...I married til death did us part [1] I had three children...ah [1] I lived here [1] we've been here since 1948

i.e. I'm the black sheep of the family...my parents...as I say are divorced...my brother I haven't seen for...best part of twenty years...

o **Communication** of the potentially traumatic events of service. Present or absent:

  o Reasons for communication - families had been a "second crew" and could understand.
  i.e. well...I used to talk to my wife about it till the cows came home....she had to put up with it.....[] It....I think it helped it certainly made it a lot easier whilst we were fighting knowing that the families were all pulling together....you knew [] you knew they were being looked after so all we had to worry about was what we were doing we didn't have to worry about the families....erm....and the fact that....they were...erm....sort of....basically our second crew...they went through it with us.....erm...did make it easier....I recollect when I came home I said to [wife] I said.....just read that [the diary]...and I'll sit down and read the newspaper.....erm.....and that.....that helped her to understand just...what it was....the big worry for the families was they never knew where we were....we knew they were relatively safe....and so the stress levels for them were high throughout.....but we had a fairly good idea when the heat was off...erm....at least we knew when we were up against it.....erm......but the fact that they went through it as well we appreciated that.....and we can talk...talk about it and we can share our experiences............

o **Non-communication** of war experiences: Defined as the lack of communication of traumatic events due to either the perceived unimportance of events by self or others, being told by someone else not to talk about experiences, or lack of opportunity. This may involve the veteran wanted to talk but being unable for a number of reasons:

  o Travel/exciting experiences, but not traumatic experiences
  i.e. I think [1] yes [1] we talked about the...about my service...but [1] probably more about the...travel aspect of it [2] than anything else [1]

  o Experiences are not unique
  i.e. I can blame myself for not wanting to talk about it...I don't think I was exceptional in that aspect...I don't mind talking about it today...I mean I've written a book haven't I [] I thought I had something to talk about after a while....

  o Concern for the future from self and family
  i.e....I think [] my mother and father were interested [] but they never asked me about it [] he [father] was concerned that I...you know...now had made something of my life...

  o Perceived lack of interest/understanding: Tried but they were bored/couldn't understand:
  i.e......my children don't know...I mean they're old....my daughter's 56.....erm...........I should think it's more a question of you know when you start talking about that....you see them falling asleep...so it isn't a matter that comes up [laughs]......[] no.....no.....you see...when you get to my age and you talk to people...if you're talking to them about the past...that shuts them up pretty quickly [laughs]...so you've got to...look at the forward looking...what you're going to do...not what you have done....

  o No opportunity

  o Encouraged not to talk about experiences
  i.e....for many years as I say we...we we didn't erm...we didn't erm...really think...you weren't encouraged to think about them in those days

  o Inability to articulate emotion/events

o **Avoidance** of communication of experiences: Defined as the personal choice/deliberate/explicit desire to avoid talking about (traumatic) events and/or coping alone/protect the family from experiences/burden:

  o 'You were pleased to have it behind you'
  i.e. You were pleased to have it behind you [1] you [1] you were happy that you were back...I mean you knew a lot of people who didn't come back [1]

  o Use of alcohol

  o No one could understand therefore communication avoided/did not try

i.e. *not when I first got...it...it took a lot of time for a lot of people to drag things out of me...sort of...sort of the hardest things...KB: Would you tell anybody them? PR: I don't think so...I don't think anybody...can help...*

o Pointless talking about it because of the risk of breaking down and that communication would not help.
i.e. *and my wife turned round and said why didn't you say anything [5] and you can't...normally you can't cos your crying...you can't tell when you're crying...it it...it takes over...it...it takes your vocabulary away...it takes all your expressive words away...*

o Perceived need to protect family/Didn't want to worry them/Don't want to burden people:
i.e. *I didn't talk to anybody...I didn't...I haven't even told my wife...even to this day...what I saw [1] it's called protection...it's part of the problem protection...you're protecting people...*

o Machismo

Societal Support

o **Description** of experienced societal support:

i.e. *...well they didn't want to know you know...they just...didn't understand [3] they thought that [6] well they adopted a superior attitude or poo pooed the idea that you were just nobody...because you'd...come from the forces*

i.e. *...pretty bland actually...*

o Homecoming (presence/absence and valence)
i.e. *...it was about midnight when we landed in Glasgow [2] the whole place was in darkness...and they taxied the plane round...and it was quite erie...quite unusual to have everywhere in darkness and then we suddenly realised why...cos as soon as the doors opened...the lights went on and there was just thousands and thousands of people and a brass band playing and everything just...you know...and...it was amazing*

o People being able/unable to separate task force from politics:
i.e. *I think we're fairly lucky in...in the UK...in particular...that [1] the public in general are able almost to divorce [1] the subjects of the serving soldier...and the conditions that create him [2] I can...I can remember...sort of Vietnam...when the American troops returned from Vietnam they were viewed as vile for doing jobs that they actually had no choice over...we don't have that in...well...we don't have it to that great extent in...in this country...most...most of the population are behind the Armed Forces...in...what they do...they may not be behind them...for the reason they're doing it...*

o **Communication** with society: Defined as communication talking place on a one to one basis with members of society excluding family and friends.
   o General communication: good or bad:
   i.e. *...so I'm stood on the station...feeling ever so proud...with all these people looking at me...feeling you know...I'm a I'm a I'm a real man you see...and this woman came to me...excuse me she said [1] were you in Su..Suez...and I said yes I was...and do you know she said...you're know better than Nazis [2] I was totally flummoxed...*

   o Giving talks as a guest speaker to older and younger generations: (good/bad)
   i.e. *...I spoke to a meeting once and it seemed to go down extremely well...and the pattern was really just simply to talk about....what one had done...and the sort of things that one had to face up to...[]...that says quite a lot the fact that it was worthwhile developing one because people seemed to want to know...but I've also noticed that young people...quite a lot of young people really do want to know these days...*

   o Feeling misunderstood/unappreciated by members of society.
   i.e. *I don't think many civilians sort of grasp that...erm...you know...oh you're trained to do it...doesn't mean you're always going to pull the trigger...because most of us...have consciences. [2] erm...if you shoot a man...he [2] it runs through your head...it's not something you forget about...ever...[]got no problem with telling people I've served...as long as they're willing to...listen to what I have to say*

   o Avoidance and Non-communication defined as above.

o **Commemoration:** All comments relating to commemoration and remembrance.
   o Importance for others (to remember the dead/friends):
   i.e. *...they [commemoration days] are very important because of...the chaps who died in Burma died half way round the world...didn't they...um...[]...and they died in horrible conditions...and um...I don't think we can break faith with those that we left behind...and it isn't just us...it's the nation...it's the nation who put us there...[]...I've had 60 years that they haven't had haven't I...and I feel [] quite emotional about that...*

- o Importance for self (must be correct and suitable/remembering one's own involvement/feeling appreciated)

  i.e. *Yeah it is [nice to feel appreciated] [1]you...you do feel as though [1] what you did was...maybe worth while...as I've said in that thing [1] we fought for Burma...and it's a terrible*

- o Negative implications – no recognition:

  i.e. *[1] and what was worse that no on give damn about you...no one give a damn [1] and even now...if you notice...the last VJ celebration [2] Prince Charles...takes the cenotaph...and ah...not even Blair turned up [2] representing the government [1] who was it turned up...was it Prescott [1] but when it was VE celebrations back in [1] back in June...it was the Queen was there [1] and Blair was there [1] all the big wigs were all there but...when it comes to VJ day [1] you get all the supernumeraries...they're still ashamed of us...I don't know why [1] but I think we did a great job out there...under terrible conditions...terrible conditions [1]*

- o Non-importance: You remember them all the time, not just on Remembrance Day or during other formal commemorations.

  i.e. *Remembrance Day to me is...three mates that I...you know...I think...the accent has always been on the World War I and World War II...but I think more and more now I notice that erm...commentators do bring in...you know...British forces are still serving...on the front...and it's fair to say that...since the second world war we've only had one year when no British soldier has been killed in action...nineteen sixty-eight [laughs]...and it's just...an ongoing low lying rumble...and yeah I lost three mates in Aden and ah...I remember them...they're the people I think about...but...I've been a long time away from them...and...it's not just two minutes on a certain day...quite often something will happen and trigger a memory...and then you remember your mates...you know...it's not ah...it's not like the Church on Sunday thing [laughs]*

- o Avoidance because it is too emotional and triggers flashbacks:

  i.e. *I didn't watch much of it [KB: no] no no I get...flashbacks...I get...ah...I saw a bit of horse guards' parade which...which was an old haunt for me...when I was in the Navy...I used to go down there when we were doing patrols....erm...when we were...doing ceremonies...we used to do horse guards' parade and that bought back memories...good ones...but I never watched much of it no...*

- o **Media Involvement:** All comments relating to the way in which media represents wars and conflicts:

  - o Positive – virtual comradeship defined as support gained via the media:

    i.e. *I think where casualties are concerned I'm not the only [1] ex-serviceman...who fears fire most [2] and I've actually seen on television [1] a programme about the battle of the Atlantic [2] er...a survivor remembering what I remember...on the beach in Sicily [1] men with the skin...of their forearms hanging from their finger tips...*

  - o Negative: unrealistic/lacking in truth

    i.e. *I've read anything that's going about....the Far East...just to see...whether they knew what I knew...and it's not always as accurate as it might be...ones that are written now...are not....not very good....I mean....recently I read a book in which somebody said that erm...Bengal...sorry Assan....which is now Bangledesch...it isn't......I mean this was in a book........I mean....you wonder who did the proof reading...well.......it's...it's strange isn't it....people put pen to paper....write things....and they haven't a clue....*

  - o Negative: Risks the lives of service personnel by giving details

    i.e. *Erm...the media never done us any good when we were down there...especially the MoD telling the Argentineans [laughs] how to use their weapons a bit better...I found that very frightening*Should do more to highlight and remember veterans.

  - o Impact on perceptions towards troops:

    i.e. *the empathy that those people have is a lot more...erm...is a lot more apparent now because they've actually seen it live on TV as it's happening...you know...the loss of civilians and service people...so I think to some extent...these days...erm...that perception has changed...and that's my view on it...having just been around OP TELLIC and working with families and all that kind of stuff...*

Appendix B – Consent Form

Reconciling War Memories throughout the Lifespan: The Experiences of Younger and Older Veterans

Consent Form for Research Participants
Information sheet

I am Karen Burnell, a PhD research student from the University of Southampton. I am requesting your participation in a study regarding the reconciliation of war memories throughout life, and factors that either aid or hinder this process. This will involve taking part in an interview lasting approximately one hour. Questions will be loosely based around your experiences of war, society's reaction to war, and support provided by family and comrades. Personal information will not be released to, or viewed by, anyone other than researchers involved in this project. Results of this study will not include your name or any other identifying characteristics.

Many people often find this process a worthwhile and enjoyable task. However, the nature of these memories may cause some discomfort, and so your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw your participation at any time. If you have any questions please ask them now, or if you have any questions in the future, please contact me Karen Burnell at kjb103@soton.ac.uk or on 023 8059 5108.

Signature   Date

Name   *Karen Burnell*

Statement of Consent

I _____ have read the above informed consent form. I understand that I may withdraw my consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefit to myself. I understand that data collected as part of this research project will be treated confidentially, and that published results of this research project will maintain my confidentially. In signing this consent letter, I am not waiving my legal claims, rights, or remedies. A copy of this consent letter will be offered to me.

(Circle Yes or No)

I give consent to participate in the above study   Yes   No

I give consent to be audio taped   Yes   No

I give permission for the use of verbatim quotes to be used (knowing that any identifying characteristics will be removed)   Yes   No

I understand that these audiotapes will be destroyed after analysis   Yes   No

Signature   Date

Name

I understand that if I have questions about my rights as a participant in this research, or if I feel that I have been placed at risk, I can contact the Chair of the Ethics Committee, Department of Psychology, University of Southampton, Southampton, SO17 1BJ. Phone: (023) 8059 3995.

Appendix C – Armed Forces Questionnaire

Armed Forces Experience

Please fill in the following form and circle where appropriate:

WWII Falklands War Gulf War other(s): (please specify e.g. N Ireland)			
Army RAF Royal Navy Royal Marines Other (please specify)			
Year joined forces: Age when joined: Year left forces:			
Date of Birth:			
Gender: M / F			

Marital status when serving:

Highest Rank attained and Current Rank:

What rank(s) were you when you served in the above war(s)?:

Could you briefly list the missions/campaigns you were involved in:

Please fill in appropriate section:

Army: Unit/Regt/Div   Trade/specialisation:

RAF: Squadron and description (e.g. Strike Squadron)
                                             Trade/specialisation:

Royal Navy: Unit/Ship   Trade/specialisation:

Royal Marines: Unit/Ship   Trade/specialisation:

Are you a member of any Veterans' Associations?   YES/NO
Please specify

Appendix D – Interview Schedule

- General questions about personal military history. These would either follow on from the first question as prompts, or be posed as initial questions concerning military history.

  - How long were you serving for?
  - When did you join and why?
  - Was it something you always wanted to do (for non-conscripted wars perhaps, but above questions will determine relevance)
  - Tours of duty/history of service (again, relevance will be assessed).

- Could you tell me more about your experiences in [relevant conflict]?

  - And then what happened/What was that like?

- What was your memory of your homecoming/leave/leaving the forces? (All events that brought the individual back into the civilian world)

  - What were people like?
  - How did people react?
  - How do you think they felt/What were their attitudes towards the conflict/you?

- How do you think your generation feels now towards [the conflict]? How about the younger generations? How does that make you feel?

  - Feeds into Remembrance Day and memorials etc.

- Have you ever been troubled by your memories?

- Were/are there any particular ways you dealt/deal with your experiences and memories then/now?

  - Family
  - Vets' Associations/Comrades
  - What was/is the social support like? Why did/do you find it supportive? If the social support provided or sought has changed over the years, why has it changed over the years?

- Looking back, is it easier to talk about them now? Why?

  - (Depending on relevance) Do you think you will ever want to talk about it sometime in the future? Why/Why not?

Appendix E – Debriefing Form

Reconciling War Memories throughout the Lifespan: The Experiences of Younger and Older Veterans

Debriefing Statement

The aim of this research was to explore the ways in which family, comrades and society may aid or hinder the process of reconciliation throughout the lifespan. It is expected that support that aids the processing of these memories to form a coherent story helps veterans to reconcile war memories; whereas support that aids the avoidance of memories would result in the task of reconciliation being left until later life if at all. Your data will help our understanding of how and why memories may be reconciled in earlier or later life stages. Since later life brings other problems to the fore, having to reconcile war memories at this stage of life may be an unwelcome task. This study will provide more information as to how we can help veterans who wish to create a coherent story to do so earlier in life. Once again results of this study will not include your name or any other identifying characteristics. The research did not use deception. You may have a copy of this summary if you wish, and you may also request a summary of the research findings once the project is complete.

If you have any further questions please contact me Karen Burnell at kjb103@soton.ac.uk, or on 023 8059 5108.

Thank you for your participation in this research, it is greatly appreciated.

Signature _____   Date _____

Name: *Karen Burnell*

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel that you have been placed at risk, you may contact the Chair of the Ethics Committee, Department of Psychology, University of Southampton, Southampton, SO17 1BJ.
Phone: (023) 8059 3995.

Further information

Combat Stress: www.combatstress.org.uk, contactus@combatstress.org.uk, 01372 841600.

The Royal British Legion: www.britishlegion.org.uk, 020 8781 3004.
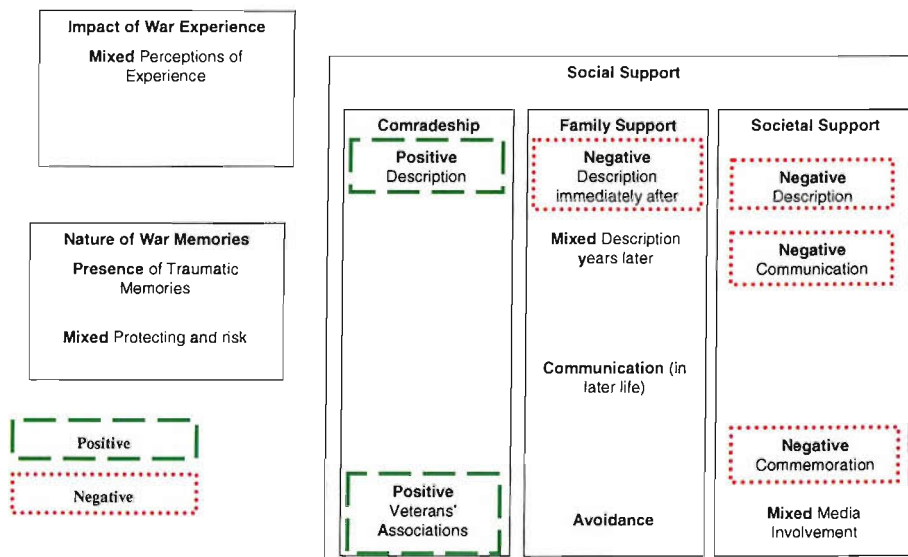
Appendix F – Analysis Protocol

Stage	Description
1. Transcription	• Natural pauses in speech represented as an ellipsis (…). • Longer pauses, such as a pause of four seconds represented as follows [4]. • Emotions represented using square brackets e.g. [laughs]. Non-verbal actions also enclosed in square brackets e.g. [claps].
2. Narrative Content: Thematic Analysis	• Themes defined as specific patterns of interest and applied to units of meaning e.g. either whole sentences and/or paragraphs. • Analysis at the manifest (directly observable material) and latent (material requiring interpretation) levels. • Initial themes coded within the interviews. • 1 interview revisited and coded into exclusive 'in vivo' categories; only one code applied to one unit of meaning using the wording of the veteran as a label. • Application of in vivo categories applied to the remaining interviews. • Within original in vivo categories were split (splicing), or were linked together (linking). • Finalised themes then applied to each interview transcript using colour coding and labels. • (See Appendix A for coding scheme if deductive analysis is required).

3. Narrative Coherence Analysis	• Transcripts analysed for narrative coherence using narrative coherence model for the elements orientation and structure, affect, and integration (see Appendix B).
	• Coded into coherent, reconciled coherent, or incoherent:
	    • Coherent: All elements of narrative coherence present and no presence of traumatic memories as determined through narrative content.
	    • Reconciled Coherent: All elements of narrative coherence present, but presence of past traumatic memories which are no longer traumatic (ascertained from content).
	    • Incoherent: Absence of at least one element of narrative coherence and/or presence of traumatic memories.

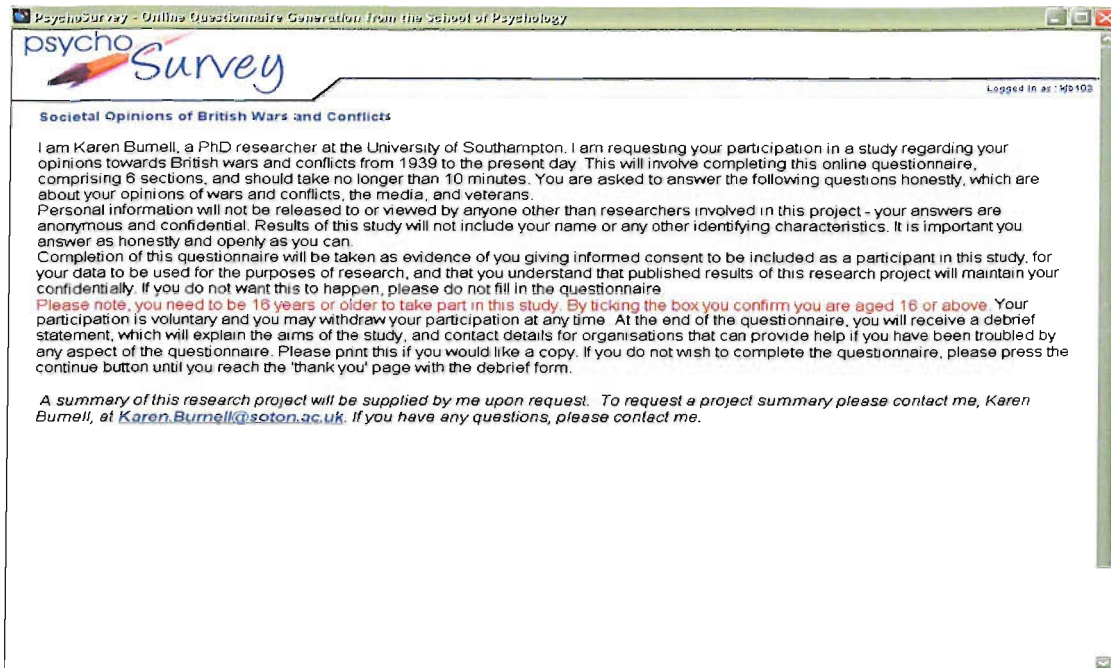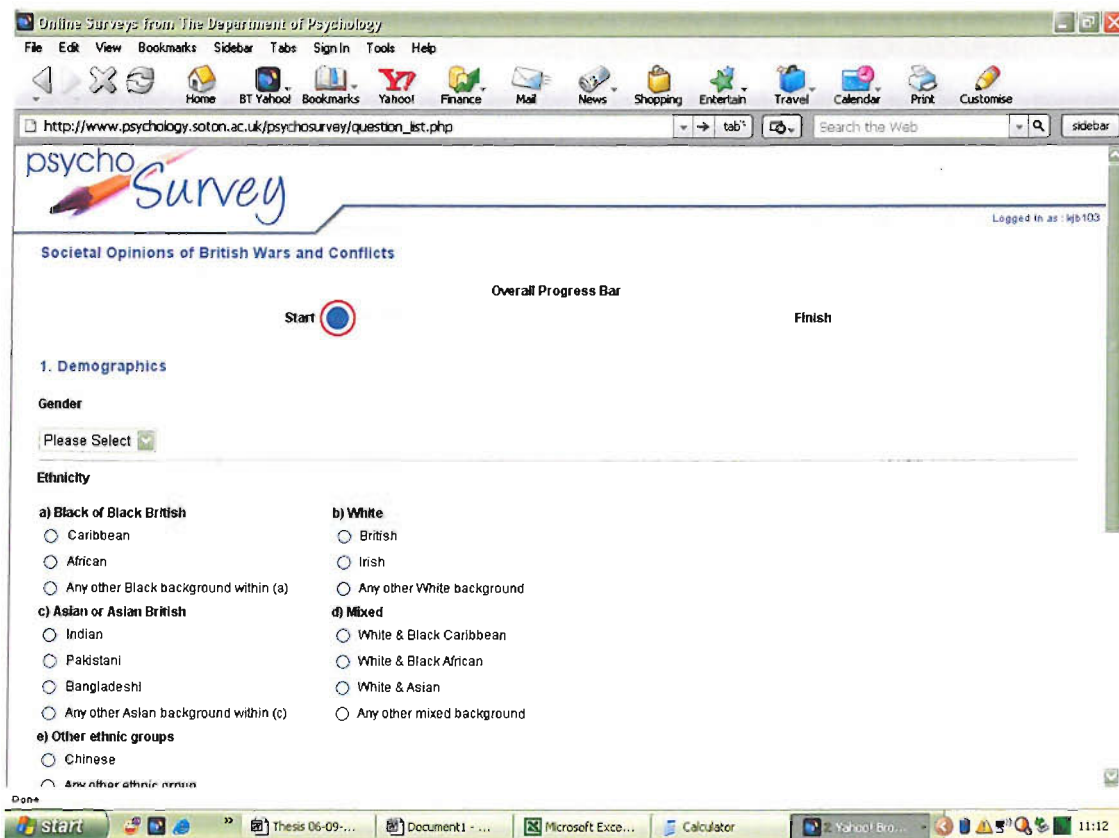| 4. Exportation of Quotes	• Exportation of narrative content quotes into a excel spreadsheet with participants in columns (with biographical information) and narrative content themes and coherence elements in rows. Allowing for exploration of the data within and between participants.
5. Case Study Model	• Summaries made of narrative content themes from quotes, and a positive/negative value given to description of relationships/war/interaction. Absent/present value given to types of communication. See below for example.
6. Summary Model	• All case studies amalgamated into coherent, reconciled coherent, and incoherent models. Values determined by majority e.g. if 3 participants describe family interactions positively, and 2 describe them negatively, value is positive.

Narrative Incoherence - UF

Appendix G – Online Questionnaire Consent Page

PsychoSurvey - Online Questionnaire Generation from the School of Psychology

psycho Survey

Logged in as : kjb103

Societal Opinions of British Wars and Conflicts

I am Karen Burnell, a PhD researcher at the University of Southampton. I am requesting your participation in a study regarding your opinions towards British wars and conflicts from 1939 to the present day. This will involve completing this online questionnaire, comprising 6 sections, and should take no longer than 10 minutes. You are asked to answer the following questions honestly, which are about your opinions of wars and conflicts, the media, and veterans.

Personal information will not be released to or viewed by anyone other than researchers involved in this project - your answers are anonymous and confidential. Results of this study will not include your name or any other identifying characteristics. It is important you answer as honestly and openly as you can.

Completion of this questionnaire will be taken as evidence of you giving informed consent to be included as a participant in this study, for your data to be used for the purposes of research, and that you understand that published results of this research project will maintain your confidentiality. If you do not want this to happen, please do not fill in the questionnaire.

Please note, you need to be 16 years or older to take part in this study. By ticking the box you confirm you are aged 16 or above. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw your participation at any time. At the end of the questionnaire, you will receive a debrief statement, which will explain the aims of the study, and contact details for organisations that can provide help if you have been troubled by any aspect of the questionnaire. Please print this if you would like a copy. If you do not wish to complete the questionnaire, please press the continue button until you reach the 'thank you' page with the debrief form.

A summary of this research project will be supplied by me upon request. To request a project summary please contact me, Karen Burnell, at Karen.Burnell@soton.ac.uk. If you have any questions, please contact me.

Appendix H – Online Questionnaire Demographics

Online Surveys from The Department of Psychology

File   Edit   View   Bookmarks   Sidebar   Tabs   Sign In   Tools   Help

Home   BT Yahoo!   Bookmarks   Yahoo!   Finance   Mail   News   Shopping   Entertain   Travel   Calendar   Print   Customise

http://www.psychology.soton.ac.uk/psychosurvey/question_list.php

psycho Survey

Logged in as : kjb103

Societal Opinions of British Wars and Conflicts

Overall Progress Bar

Start   Finish

1. Demographics

Gender

Please Select

Ethnicity

a) Black of Black British
- ○ Caribbean
- ○ African
- ○ Any other Black background within (a)

b) White
- ○ British
- ○ Irish
- ○ Any other White background

c) Asian or Asian British
- ○ Indian
- ○ Pakistani
- ○ Bangladeshi
- ○ Any other Asian background within (c)

d) Mixed
- ○ White & Black Caribbean
- ○ White & Black African
- ○ White & Asian
- ○ Any other mixed background

e) Other ethnic groups
- ○ Chinese
- ○ Any other ethnic group

Appendix I – Online Questionnaire Demographics (continued)

Appendix J – Online Questionnaire Debriefing Page

Appendix K – Online Questionnaire Example of Veteran Status

Appendix L – Online Questionnaire Example of War/Conflict Section

Appendix M – Press Release

Ref: 07/   **5 March 2007**

Research study seeks society's views of British wars and conflicts

War veterans who talk to comrades and/or family members about their traumatic war experiences, and who feel supported by members of society, find it easier to come to terms with what they have been through than those veterans who do not.

Researchers at the University of Southampton have been interviewing formerly-serving veterans of a number of wars and conflicts, from World War Two through to the ongoing war in Iraq, as part of a study looking at the impact on veterans of society's opinions and the media's portrayal of war.

Initial findings show that, whilst some veterans find talking about their experiences rewarding, others would like to talk but feel unable to do so. These veterans said they felt misunderstood by family members, and did not have a local veterans' association to turn to.

In addition, the study shows that both negative media coverage of a conflict and negative interaction with people on a veteran's return also makes it harder for them to deal with their memories. It appears that a supportive environment, which encourages communication, is necessary for veterans to readjust. World War Two veterans cite strong societal support as very important in coming to terms with their experiences and memories, whereas Suez veterans experienced negative responses which made things more difficult for them.

Karen Burnell, a PhD student in the University's School of Psychology who is leading the research study, says: 'Opinions differ greatly across society about the value of various wars and conflicts. We are exploring how the views and opinions of the media and wider society of those conflicts, negative and positive, directly affect the way that veterans cope with the traumatic aftermath of their involvement.'

First-hand written accounts from civilians of their opinions of specific wars and conflicts are also being researched to complement the one-to-one interviews with veterans. The accounts form part of the Mass Observation Archive at the University of Sussex and cover all wars from WW2 to Iraq. The Archive contains records of the work of the social research organisation Mass-Observation, which was founded in 1937 to study the everyday lives of ordinary people in Britain.

Researchers are now seeking to find out more about the impact of society on veterans and are asking people across the UK, especially older people, to complete a short online questionnaire about their views of war and the media's portrayal of war. The questionnaire can be found at: http://www.psychology.soton.ac.uk/psychosurvey/survey_start.php?surveyID=86&preview=yes

The study, which is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, is also looking for more veterans to take part and be interviewed. Volunteers should have served either between the 1950s and 1979 in Suez, Aden, Korea, Malaysia, or Northern Ireland, or any time in the 1980s in the Gulf War, Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, or Iraq. They must either have come to terms with their traumatic experiences or must still be dealing with them.

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