# SOLDIERS' SENSE MAKING OF KILLING IN COMBAT: AN INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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# Abstract

Within Military Psychology, there seems to be little scientific research looking at how soldiers experience and negotiate killing in combat. Whilst theories have suggested an innate, phobia like biological resistance to killing among humans (Grossman, 1995; Marshall, 1968), criticisms exist for this research, which range from contradictory, ambiguous results, to a lack of methodological rigour (Engen, 2009; Murray, 2013; King, 2013). Generally, the literature suggests that whilst not a universal phenomenon, there seem to be degrees of resistance to killing amongst soldiers (Webber et al., 2013; Engen, 2008; Murray, 2013; King, 2013; Williams, 1999). This thesis addresses the gap in the literature, by exploring how combat soldiers make sense of and negotiate killing in combat.

Using an interpretative phenomenological approach, 7 autobiographies were selected from an initial list of 24 for study one, and 1 in depth semi-structured interview were analysed for study two, which elucidated the following themes: the warrior self, negotiating killing and death, group identity processes, decompression and validation to make sense of combat, and conflict to the self.

In conclusion, negotiating killing in combat was found not to be grounded on an innate resistance, but rather a complex combination of sense making of the self, based on the role of the infantry soldier, with strong moral and legal guidelines, and a sense of justice, freedom and democracy. In this way, killing in combat was accepted when it fit into the way the individual made sense of their role and experiences.

This thesis contributes to the underdeveloped field of killing in combat, by providing insight into the sense making of soldiers, and offers a detailed exploration of the warrior identity. This alternative way to study the phenomena experienced by soldiers in combat, has implications for evolving military, policy and strategy, specifically relating to the men-

tal health of combat soldiers both after the military, and in unique combat environment, such as piloting drones.

## Acknowledgements

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I owe Lt Col Dave Grossman a debt of gratitude for his work: On Killing, and On Combat, which introduced me to this fascinating area of study, which ultimately set my life path as a researcher within Military Psychology. Lt Col. Dave Grossman, an ex-serviceman and Psychologist, has contributed significantly to the research of killing in combat, specifically

his work in Combat, which totally broke new ground in both describing physiological and Psychological changes, which has helped countless people in the military and police. It has been a pleasure to work in a field with such intellectuals (and many others noted throughout this thesis) who continuously pushing the envelope, undoubtedly bringing about incalculable improvements to both the military, soldiers and police officer lives.

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Elio Martino, April 2016.

# Contents

# Chapter 1

# Introduction

## 1.1 Overview of the Thesis

This thesis primarily sets out to investigate killing in combat, and how soldiers make sense of not only this role, but their self as part of a combat infantry unit. The field of killing in combat is an under developed area of military psychology, which has yet to explore, or take into account the testimonies, and experiences of modern days soldiers, in an in depth, qualitative, psychological analysis. Thus this thesis sets out to address a gap in the literature, by attempting to better understand how soldiers understand and navigate killing in combat.

Predominantly, theories have suggested an innate universal resistance to killing among humans (Grossman, 1995; Marshall, 1968). Criticisms exist for this research, which range from contradictory, ambiguous results, to a lack of methodological rigour (Engen, 2009, Murray, 2013, King, 2013). Thus, whilst the literature suggests it is not perhaps a universal phenomenon, there seems to be varying degrees of resistance to killing amongst soldiers (Webber et al., 2013; Engen, 2008; Murray, 2013; King, 2013; Williams, 1999). Building upon recent studies which investigated factors that may impact soldiers' sense making of killing in combat (Webber et al., 2013), an interpretative analytical approach was utilised to explore soldiers' experiences, and the way in which they make sense of their selves and their social world in relation to killing and in relation to resistance to killing in combat.

Killing in combat is a major component of the infantry soldier's role, as such, it is somewhat surprising more qualitative, in depth account of soldiers' own testimonies have not

been investigated. As such, the research on if killing in combat is the main predictor of psychological trauma, is still debated. Despite numerous quantitative studies (MacNair, 2002; Maguen et al., 2010), the mechanisms underlying why and how some soldiers can kill in combat without trauma is conflicted and under investigation, requiring further attention.

In the age of drone warfare, soldiers are engaging in combat without leaving their country of residence, or even, for that matter, a cubicle. This rapidly evolving theatre of warfare is a debated topic, which once again is confronted with the concern over killing in combat and psychological trauma. Despite being thousands of miles from a warzone, this research also requires the need to better understand the mechanisms behind negotiating killing in combat.

To this end, this thesis analysed 8 cases of soldiers from their respective infantry units. The 8 cases represented a range of elite and regular infantry units, from the UK and USA to provide a glimpse into the sense making of their role as an individual charged with killing in combat.

## 1.2 Organisation of the Thesis

To begin the literature review, Chapter 2 will introduce and outline the major research contributors to the killing in combat literature. Beginning with the origins of the resistance to killing in combat theory, the researcher outlines how Marshall (1968), a military historian, ground-breaking research, which changed the way in which soldiers were understood to experience combat. By extension, Marshall's findings had a significant effect on the way the military approached training paradigms for soldiers. Indeed, Marshall's legacy still casts a shadow over military psychology to the present day.

However, Marshall's findings, have been a point of contention within the literature for over 20 years, based on his lack of methodological rigour, and non-scientific approach to data collection (Engen, 2009; 2011; Grossman, 2009; Williams, 1999; King, 2013). Based on this, Marshall's work has been said to be moulded to suit a hypothesis (Williams, 1999; King, 2013). Although Marshall's research is not considered as significant as it once was, it still has an impact on modern day research, and remains significant in that it addressed some serious problems within the military research, one of which was a failure to take into account the human component to warfare (Murray, 2013).

Grossman (2009), is noted as the intellectual inheritor to Marshall's concepts (Engen, 2008), in which he contributes to Marshalls concepts by adding more in depth, psychological theories to the resistance to killing in combat theory. Grossman's work, which suggests an innate, biological resistance killing, is used by military and police training schools to inform policy, and has influenced the academic world of military psychology. However, Because of these criticisms aimed at Marshall's work, the validity of Grossman's work has come under question, which although goes beyond Marshall's findings, is still ambiguous, and at times contradictory (Engen, 2008). As such, Chapter 2 will explore Grossman's proposals of how soldiers are conditioned to kill, to overcome this resistance to killing, and finally how they suffer the psychological consequences of doing so. These factors will also be contrasted with alternative and critical perspectives for each component of Grossman's research.

To begin, Grossman (2009) turns to evolutionary psychology, in which he details fight or flight, posturing and submission techniques adopted by animals, and by extension humans, during combat. The theory draws on evidence which supports an evolutionary advantage to avoiding killing one's own species, with numerous examples throughout history provided by Grossman.

The researcher argues that far from being an evolutionary mechanism designed to save the species, the preference over non mortal combat is due to a deeply selfish mechanism based on survival, which is far more consistent with the evolutionary research, more in line with costs vs benefits (Engen, 2008; Dawkins, 2006; Wilson, 1980). Claims by Grossman (2009) that animals do not kill their own species appear to be false, with chimpanzee warfare being a primary example, as well as among other mammalian species, often occurring when the risks of death are low (Wilson, 1980; Mitani, Watts and Amsler (2010)).

Secondly, the researcher explores Grossman's (2009) evidence for non-firers in history, in which Grossman provides documented cases that throughout wars, soldiers avoided shooting one another, even at a risk to their own lives. On focusing on the research that runs contrary to Grossman's theory, the researcher outlines that guns left unfired on the battlefield may be the product of many other factors, including, anxiety of killing oneself or team mates, inaccuracy, and technical issues, as well as a complication of stress and overload of working memory (Murray, 2013).

One of Grossman's strongest arguments is that it is increasingly more difficult to kill; the closer one is to the enemy. The researcher explores Grossman's (2009) evidence, including the effects of mechanical distancing (the use of technology to distance oneself), and how this impacts the resistance to killing theory. As a critique, the researcher investigates how the term Phobia to Killing in Combat may be misleading, because fear of death is a rationale response to combat (Murray, 2013). This leads to an exploration of the proximity effect, outlined by Grossman (2009), and alternative explanations to why it may be more difficult to kill the closer you are to the enemy. In this way this the researcher explores issues such as: increasing the chance of death, the closer one is to the enemy (Murray, 2013), as well as the mechanical distancing from a sniper and UAV drone operator's perspective, including PTSD rates for drone operators (Chapelle and colleagues, 2012).

Further, the researcher investigates mirror neuron research, and how they might play a role in ‘experiencing’ the same sensation as the individual being observed (such as pain), and the implications this has on the killing in combat literature. In light of this, it is argued that combat is a multi-faceted, complex experience, with many opportunities to witness extreme events, which may be troubling to an individual. These events are explored, with examples given, in the context of killing in combat.

The next section of this chapter investigates psychological research put forward by Grossman to support his killing in combat theory, such as obeying an authority figure, based on studies such as Milgram’s obedience to authority (Haslam, Reicher, Millard & Birney, 2014; Reicher & Haslam, 2011; Milgram, 2010). The researcher offers an alternative conclusion to Milgram’s studies, showing that obedience to authority can occur when an absence of a direct order occurs, and in fact the art of negotiation is an important part of Milgram’s findings (Gibson, 2013).

One of Grossman’s key contributions to this research area surrounds trauma after killing in combat: a reaction to overcoming this resistance (Grossman, 2009). Primarily, Grossman uses quotes from WWII soldiers, which details the trauma these soldiers experienced after killing in combat. In support of this, quantitative studies focusing on the prevalence of PTSD among combat soldiers relating to kilning in combat are also included (MacNair, 2002; Maguen et al., 2010).

The researcher explores how comparing the testimonies of conscript and modern day soldiers might provide some direction as to why some individuals experience killing in combat and others do not. These transcripts lead to explore the variable rates of PTSD reported in studies (Webber et al., 2013) with the question raised; why are there highly variable rates of PTSD, and why do well over 50% of combat soldiers not meet PTSD symptomatology? This chapter ends by exploring a social validation perspective, in which the

ways soldiers experience validating, or invalidating information about their killing have an effect on how they view their actions (Webber et al., 2013).

Chapter 3 focuses on what type of individuals volunteer to go into combat, and what this means for the killing in combat literature. The researcher explores who these 'warriors' are, what the term warrior means, and how it influences how they experience combat (Henriksen, 2007). From this, the role of masculinity in the formation of the 'warrior' or combat soldier concept is explored, with the implication that masculine concepts inform the way in which a soldier might view their role, as well as how they should behave and feel (Duncanson, 2007).

Finally, this chapter asks the question of how best to explore killing in combat from a soldier's perspective, to better understand how they experience killing, and make sense of this role in their lives. An interpretative phenomenological perspective is put forward as the ideal method for this thesis; an idiographic approach allowing the researcher to explore individuals' lived experiences, and how these individuals make sense of their experiences (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). IPA is accepted as a mainstream psychological methodology, allowing flexibility but providing a structure to conduct analysis. From this basis, the research questions posed are: I) how selected authors, who have served in British and the United States combat roles in the military, understand their sense of self and II) how soldiers in the combat arms experience and make sense of killing in combat.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodology adopted by the researcher, in order to undertake a fully qualitative analysis, specifically utilising an interpretative phenomenological approach. To begin, Chapter 4 outlines the epistemological approach the researcher has adopted based on Hermeneutic Realism, and how this in turn, informs the choice to focus on phenomenology, and specifically Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). After outlining the philosophical underpinnings of IPA, Chapter 4 explores IPA as a methodology, and how the emphasis on individuals' sense making of events, and sense making of the self,

makes IPA ideal  for this analysis. Following this exploration, Chapter 4 then outlines the rationale for the use of autobiographies, taking into account sampling, recruitment and how the semi-structured interview was conducted. Finally, the chapter ends by outlining the ethical considerations taken into account, and a step by step guide of how to conduct IPA, together with what constitutes as good practise for IPA, including details about the transcription and analysis process.

Chapter 5 serves to introduce the themes for the autobiographical analysis, found in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. This chapter begins by outlining the superordinate themes found in Chapter 5: the warrior self and negotiating killing in combat. These themes represent an in-depth exploration as to how soldiers made sense of their role of killing in combat, as well as how soldiers negotiate the act of killing in combat. Within this chapter, 2 tables are presented, the general themes for Chapters 5, 6 and 7, as well as the master table for both superordinate and subordinate themes, along with quotes and page numbers for Chapter 5.

Chapters 6 and 7 continue the analysis, by outlining the themes found, along with a master table of superordinate and subordinate themes, accompanied by quotes and page numbers. Chapter 6 explores how group identity processes and the validation of life paths, are established in soldiers' accounts of making sense of killing in combat. Chapter 7 explores how soldiers deal with a conflict to the self, presenting an analysis of soldiers' sense-making of their life during periods of transition following service in the combat arms.

The final analysis within this thesis is presented in Chapter 8 as an in depth semi-structured interview. Chapter 8 explores the following superordinate themes: The 'real me', Levels of Risk, 'Us', or 'them', The European Citizen and finally, Reflecting on Killing and Combat.

Chapter 9 serves as the discussion and summary for the thesis. In this chapter, the research findings are summarised and explored within the context of the literature and previous research. Chapter 9 outlines how the research contributes to the killing in combat literature,

along with contributions, and any contrasting views. A summary of the thesis and limitations to the research design is outlined.

Overall, Chapter 9 explores how this thesis contributes to the killing in combat literature by exploring the rich experiences of soldiers, and their sense making of killing in combat, in a way which contributes to the literature and builds upon the existing research that helps researchers understand the experiences of soldiers, warriors, and other personnel that may be asked to use lethal force (such as police officers) in a combat situation.

# Chapter 2

## Why Can't Johnny Kill? An Introduction to Soldiers Killing in Combat

> *"If Johnny can't kill, if the average soldier will not kill unless coerced and conditioned and provided with mechanical and mental leverage, then why has it not been understood before?"* (Grossman, 2009, p. 341)

War.

Warfare has been observed, recorded and has shaped and proliferated human culture for over 45 thousand years. From the recorded writings of Heroditus' infamous clash of Spartans against the massive forces of Persia, which inspired the blockbuster hit *300*, to modern portrayals of WWII in the Oscar winning film *Saving Private Ryan*. War is ingrained into society, and these renditions demonstrate not only our fascination for warfare, but also our understanding of how we as humans react to being in combat. Indeed, so prolific is this understanding of what a soldier is, prior to World War II Grossman, a military psychologist, (2009) notes:

> "It has always been assumed that the average soldier would kill in combat simply because his country and his leaders had told him to do so and because it was essential to defend his own life and the lives of his friends." (Grossman, 2009, p. 3)

However, this view changed in 1947, when General S.L.A (SLAM) Marshall, a respected military historian, altered the military's and Academia's view on combat permanently in his published work: *Men Against Fire.* Within this text he brought to light a controversial statistic: in WWII, fewer than 15% of soldiers were firing their weapons in combat (Engen, 2008; 2009; 2011). After conducting hundreds of interviews in a manner unparalleled to this day, Marshall declared that soldiers, as a general principle, had a resistance to killing their fellow man. This, Marshall suggested, was due to a cultivation of the fear of

aggression within society that becomes part of the normal person's makeup (Marshall, 1968). In *Men Against Fire* Marshall wrote:

> " ..that the average, and normally healthy individual –the man who can endure the mental and physical stresses of combat- still has such an inner and usually unrealized resistance to killing a fellow man that he will not, of his own violation take life if it is possible to turn away from that responsibility" (Marshall, 1968, p. 79)

Marshall generalised his findings not just specifically to WWII, or to American G.Is, but to all soldiers across time (Engen, 2009; 2011; Grossman, 2009; Williams, 1999; King, 2013). To be clear, Marshall's '*ratio of fire'* conclusions are as follows: during WWII, only 15-20% of infantrymen ever fired their weapon in combat, regardless of whether the soldier's life was in mortal danger. This percentage, declared Marshall, was not due to cowardice, or poor training, but a resistance to killing their fellow man (Engen, 2011; Marshall, 1968). Shortly after his discovery, Marshall was commissioned to be directly involved in designing the training methods of soldiers within the US military. In just 5 years after shaping the training of soldiers, Infantry's rate of fire had increased to 50% (in Korea) and by the time the Vietnam War had come around it had reached 95% (Dyer, 2006; Grossman, 2009; Marshall, 1988). Since Marshall conducted the only in depth literature on the subject, his work has gone virtually unchallenged for the past sixty years (Engen, 2008; 2009; 2011; King, 2013). Indeed, Murray (2013) suggests Marshall's report was accepted as 'gospel' for many armies, and to this day still casts a shadow over tactical psychological theory.

*Marshall, the Rocky Foundation*

Throughout the last 35 years- which incidentally coincides with Marshall's passing- a great deal of criticism has been directed at Marshall's general findings specifically pertaining to the ratio of fire report (Grossman, 2009; Spiller, 1988; Williams, 1999; Engen, 2009; 2011; King, 2013; Murray, 2013; Chambers, 2003). Some of these criticisms

are directed at Marshall on a personal level, which will not be considered within this thesis, on the grounds that such criticisms are considered by the researcher as *ad hominem*. However, a number of these criticisms are directed at his 'poor' use of methodology (Spiller, 1988), and non-scientific approach to data collection (Chambers, 2003). Further, Engen (2008; 2009; 2011) suggests that an analysis of Marshall's records found no evidence that Marshall ever undertook a detailed statistical analysis. It has also been stated- by researchers who worked with Marshall directly- that he never once asked the question directly about firing rates to soldiers (Engen, 2009; King, 2013). As one collaborator, John Westover admitted:

> "He did not gather evidence, weigh it ponderously, draw tentative hypotheses, then test them. If he did, it was not in an organized manner. Usually, from out of the blue he stated a principle, then he marshaled his evidence and statistics to back his concepts. Some of his statistics are subject to grave question as to source" (John Westover cited in Engen, 2009, p. 18).

Marshall's data collection was based on his own creation, which he called a 'mass interview' (Williams, 1999). This involved interviewing large groups of soldiers who had been in battle just hours previous to the interview. These interviews followed a structure based on instructions outlined and written by Marshall. In these interviews, the interviewer explained the reason for the interview and made it clear that rank was not a factor in the interview process; if a soldier felt unhappy with a superior officer's testimony, they were to speak out, and indeed, it was their duty to do so (Marshall, 1951). Marshall claimed to have conducted over 500 interviews during WWII (Williams, 1999), accounting for thousands of individual accounts. However, exactly how many interviews or data collected is open to debate. Williams (1999) suggests that Marshall's claim of interviewing over 500 units during WWII is impossible. Between the dates Marshall claimed to interview, there were only 493 days, two interviews in more than two company sized units would be difficult, and Westover (cited in Williams, 1999) admitted that they did not conduct

interviews every day. Leo Murray, a tactical Psychologist for the British Military, concurs that Marshall's 'scientific sounding' fire ratios were not the result of laborious study (Murray, 2013). Murray suggests that in fact his results turned out to be a 'bit of a guess', and were far from universal. In agreement with Williams (1999), Engen suggests that it is highly unlikely Marshall carried out the number of interviews he claimed, due to a lack evidence of any sound empirical data collection and statistical analysis (Engen, 2009).

John Marshall (2000), the grandson of SLA Marshall reported in his book *Reconciliation Road* that he could find no solid evidence to support Marshall's findings. Indeed Chambers (2003) concludes after interviewing Frank Brennan (an individual who accompanied Marshall during the Korean War) that Marshall took minimal notes, and never asked directly about firing. Chambers (2003) concludes that at best the data was based on chance rather than scientific sampling, and at worst speculation (King, 2013). Engen (2008) sheds some light onto why Marshall's theory has perhaps had such a long standing legacy. One of the more difficult challenges in corroborating or critiquing Marshall's research, notes Engen (2008), is the logical fallacy of attempting to prove a negative. It is impossible to say with reasonable degree of certainty whether Marshall's findings are based on hard data, because no evidence exists of a rigorously carried out data collection methodology. Furthermore, there is little in way of corroborating evidence from other sources, with the only real evidence to support Marshall's ratio of fire, is Marshall's own work.

In an effort to further understand the universality of this resistance to killing theory, Engen (2009; 2011) analysed questionnaires drawn from Canadian combat infantry during WWII. Utilising tactical surveys from Canadian combat infantry officers in 1944 and 1945, Engen explored many aspects of infantry combat, including specific questions relating to the combat experiences to improve combat training. The evidence in Engen's study does not validate Marshall's claims, and instead finds no evidence seems to exist

that infantry soldiers had difficulty firing in combat. Further, Engen found that ineffective soldiers who did not fire were the exception rather than the rule. In fact soldiers tended to over fire their weapon- a direct contradiction to Marshall's theory. Surprisingly, Engen (2008) found that out of 163 officers, not a single one discussed the low rate of fire from their troops. Instead the open-ended questionnaires were filled with notes about: undisciplined fire, faulty weapons and poor marksmanship. This study was the first of its kind to take original data from WWII to challenge Marshall's theory. Crucially this analysis by Engen (2009) disputes the universality of Marshall's findings, a critical blow to the theory of resistance to killing.

With the exception of Marshall, Engen's research represents the most comprehensive data collection of WWII soldiers specifically aimed at better understand killing in combat. Whilst Engen originally investigated 300 surveys, only 163 were based on infantry officers, and thus analysed by Engen for the purposes of study. It has been suggested that this sample size is too small to warrant rejecting Marshall's ratio to fire (Sandy, 2013), based on the notion that Marshall proclaimed to have conducted hundreds of group interviews (Engen, 2008; Williams, 1999). Further criticism is based on cultural validity; Engen's focus was on Canadian soldiers only, whilst Marshall's work was based around American soldiers (Sandy, 2013). Although these differences do make it problematic to use Engen's findings to directly challenge Marshall's findings, it should be noted that Engen addresses these criticisms by acknowledging that his study was not intended to directly refute or support Marshall's claims. Engen notes the limitations in only addressing Canadian soldiers and suggests that the study was not meant to speak toward Marshall's data, but instead to test the universal applicability of Marshall's claims. Marshall claims his findings to be universal, thus any findings from other WWII soldiers are important in contextualizing the ratio of fire statistic, and as noted by Engen (2008), Canadian and American troops shared training style, equipment and geographical proximity; in short,

they had more similarities than differences. In this respect Engen's research is an important addition to the literature in understanding killing in combat, and the universal implications brought forward by Marshall.

Moving on from the debate over universality of resistance to killing, the researcher turns to the proposed increase in the firing rates, as reported by Marshall, from 1945 to the present day. As reported by Murray (2013) the increased firing rate phenomenon was actually due, in part, to the increased prevalence of automatic weapons post WWII, which, notes Murray, may also correlate with Marshall's fire ratio findings. As one author reports:

> "Whatever the case, even those soldiers who were firing at the enemy were not hitting him [the enemy]. Lack of marksmanship training and the philosophy of mass firepower accounted for the wild spraying of bullets with the automatic M16 that characterized much of the fighting in Vietnam, and for the fact many soldiers did not fire their weapons at all except in general ineffective bursts". (Sasser & Roberts, 1990, p. 87)

Additional factors Murray (2013) focuses on are the significant improvement and increased realism of combat simulation post WWII[1], which can no doubt have a multitude of effects that need to be considered on their own merit, before drawing conclusions on what is causing the increase in firing rates. As an example Murray (2013) notes that in Korea, soldiers found themselves in strong defensive position, firing at targets that were easy to pick off from relative safety. Murray likens this tactical situation to 'turkey shooting,' which he notes, is a drastic change from WWII and may have implications for the increase in firing rates. Murray (2013) also hypothesises that when kill rates are compared across history, it is clear that a musket was actually more likely to hit a crowd of redcoats at thirty meters than a modern assault rifle is to hit a camouflaged man crawling at 100 meters. In contrast to Marshall's (1968) research, Murray proposes that concluding the amount of rounds fired, are equal to amount of people killed, can lead to an artificial

[1] It should be noted that the increased realism and quality of combat simulation has been generally accepted as stemming from Marshall's theories.

‘kill rate’. Indeed, in Afghanistan Murray (2013) proposed that between 3000 - 5000 rounds are expended per kill. These numbers hide figures such as training, theft, loss and the donation of ammo to allies. Furthermore, the highest kill rate reported for a unit in Afghanistan is notably lower than the average for a musket battle, as such, just looking at kill rates alone, it appears that musket soldiers were actually twenty times better at killing than men with modern weapons. The plethora of complex factors can only lead to conclusion that at best, Marshall’s reported kill rates are tenuous, and must be treated with caution (Murray, 2013).

Overall, Murray’s and Engen’s research suggests that soldiers and researchers are biased by Marshall’s fire ratios, and have made the mistake of assuming that men are overtly inclined not to fight. Indeed Murray (2013) produces a quote after a discussion with Corporal Rabuka, which perhaps best illustrates this contrasting narrative:

> “Like many soldiers, Corporal Rabuka did not revel in killing, he did not brag about it and, unless he was at work, he did not talk about it. But he did do it. He hit maybe eight insurgents and half of them would have been dead by nightfall. Most of the time, most soldiers will fire their weapons when they have something like a valid target. Whether professionals like Rabuka or semi-pros like the men attacking his platoon, many take pride in shooting to kill.” (Murray, 2013, Chapter 6, Para. 9)

Although Marshall’s research no longer holds the same weight it once did, the impact his research had within the military cannot be overstated. King (2013) notes that Marshall did not ‘prove’ only 15-25% of US soldiers in the second WWII ever fired their weapons. However as a general critique of the performance of the typically poorly trained, and inadequately prepared US citizen consider, Marshall’s work is valid. Indeed Murray (2013) suggests that although Marshall may have inflated some of his numbers, he understood the realities of combat and whilst everyone else was looking at tanks, planes and bombs, Marshall was looking at people. It should also be noted that the researcher, in agreement

with King (2013), feels that the attack on Marshall's lack of 'interest' in statistical rigour seems overly criticised, if not unjustified. King (2013) comments how Marshall often used words such as "on average" and "approximately", whilst this researcher argues the lack of statistical tools available during the time 'ratio of fire' was published, warrant that Marshall's work be contextualised to its time.

The title of this chapter, why can't Johnny kill, is an important one, because despite the contributions, and limitations to Marshall's and Engen's work, neither have truly captured why it is that soldiers can, or can't, kill in combat. The term 'resistance' described by Marshall is a vague term, that serves simply as a descriptor which appears to lack supporting evidence and without explaining why, or even how a soldier experiences combat, and thus may have a 'resistance'. Indeed despite the many criticisms aimed at Marshall, the researcher is more critical of the lack of transparent, in depth exploration into how the soldiers themselves experience killing in combat. In making universal claims about how many soldiers kill in combat, and how this increases based on specific training methods, the research fails to capture how the soldiers themselves experienced these changes, and how, if at all, it affected the way in which they perceived the act of killing in combat.

## 2.1 Moving Beyond Ratios of Fire: An Innate Resistance

Marshall's ratios of fire statistics have been cited frequently throughout the psychological literature (Engen, 2008; Murray, 2013; Williams, 1999; King, 2013). One researcher in particular, David Grossman, whom Engen (2008) notes as the intellectual inheritor of Marshall's legacy, has continued on this line of research (Henriksen, 2007) and

subsequently dominated the field (Grossman, 2009; Molloy & Grossman, 2007; Grossman & Christensen, 2007).

Because Grossman's work built upon Marshall's legacy, researchers such as Engen (2009; 2011), Spiller (1988), Williams (1999), King (2013), Murray (2013) and others criticised the validity of Grossman's findings. Therefore, there is an implication within the literature, that such a universal resistance does not, in fact, exist (Engen, 2008; 2009). However, Grossman's theory of resistance to killing has gone beyond Marshall's findings, tackling the problematic topic of combat and killing on a theoretical level that had never been fully explored. Despite this, the nature of Grossman's theory of resistance to killing has been noted as being occasionally ambiguous, sometimes contradictory, and at best, overly simplified in nature (Engen, 2008; Murray, 2013). Indeed Grossman himself stated: "I believe that not being psychologically injured by socially sanctioned killing has been the norm throughout history, up until the twentieth century" (Grossman & Christensen, 2007, p. 170).

Grossman's work has received critical appraisal for his theory of resistance to killing. His book *On Killing* has become mandatory reading for the CIA, FBI, Army, Air Force, Marines and countless police academies across the globe (Grossman, 2009). In short, Grossman has influenced the academic and non-academic world alike. Based largely on Marshall's findings, Grossman states that a resistance to killing other soldiers has been documented over the centuries in all types of warfare (Grossman, 2009). Within each person, suggests Grossman (2009) is an 'intense' resistance to killing another person. The nature of this resistance to killing, notes Grossman, is a type of instinctive, biological disposition, based loosely on Freudian concepts of the Eros, the strong desire to live. Although notably influenced by psychoanalysis, Grossman accommodates the role of Social Identity, suggesting briefly, that this resistance to killing is a combination of factors,

including rational, environmental, cultural, social and hereditary factors (Grossman, 2009). Building on from this, Grossman suggests that within each person is an understanding that we, as a species, are linked, and to hurt a part, is to hurt the whole (Grossman, 2009).

In summary, Grossman understands this resistance to be a universal phobia, which Grossman notes is more than a fear; "it is an irrational, overwhelming, uncontrollable fear" (Grossman & Christensen, 2007, p. 2). Grossman adds unique primary and secondary data to Marshall's findings, which he draws upon to demonstrate a resistance to killing in modern warfare. In the following section this evidence will be divided by main themes Grossman puts forward, including evolutionary psychology, non-firers in history, demands of authority and trauma from killing. Within each of the main themes research accumulated by the researcher will be put forward which act to both support and critique this notion of an innate biological resistance to killing. Further than this, however, the author of this thesis will be specifically critiquing Grossman's ability to move beyond simply using the term 'resistance' as a descriptive term, a serious limitation of Marshall's work, by explaining why and soldiers have this resistance, and what is it about the soldiers experiences of combat that form this concept of a resistance.

*Evolutionary Psychology*

Grossman's work touches on animal behaviour as a means of demonstrating the universal resistance to killing one's species. Humans under stress, he suggests, are really no different to any animal (Grossman, 2009; Engen, 2008). Animals of the same species will almost never fight to the death; instead they will posture and use non-lethal combat in an attempt to protect the overall survival of the species. This behaviour, Grossman notes, can also be seen in humans. In his book *On Killing*, Grossman (2009) outlines animal behaviour of posturing and non-lethal combat, which is vital to the survival of the whole species, preventing needless death, and allowing males to live through early confrontations and

thus pass on their genes in adulthood. Roscoe (2007) supports this notion, by proposing the behaviour behind aversion to conspecific killing (killing one's own species) lies in the mechanism that deescalates violence when an opponent submits or withdraws. Roscoe suggests that there is an evolutionary advantage and merit to deescalating from a full-scale war, when both sides are potentially evenly matched, allowing one side to submit, or retreat.

Grossman also draws on research into hooliganism and violence presented by Marsh (1980), who notes that primitive tribes and street gangs all across the world provide evidence of a highly ritualised pattern of posturing, mock battles, and submission in human males during conflict. Grossman suggests that this evidence demonstrates that humans go through the 'perfect illusion' of violence because killing is the last thing individuals want to do in war. Building upon this, Grossman lists numerous examples of posturing to prevent fighting throughout war; from the plumed helmets of the ancient Greeks and Romans, giving the appearance of being taller and more fierce, to the Napoleonic bright coloured uniforms and shako hats, the sole purpose of which is to make the soldier feel taller and more powerful (Grossman, 2009). Indeed there is evidence to support the notion that soldiers' uniforms have been designed to intimidate the enemy. Cowley & Parker (1996) suggest that like other earlier military uniforms, the elaborate costumes from the Roman Empire (as an example) would serve not only as a means to identify them as a unit, but to intimidate the enemy. Posturing is not limited to uniforms, suggests Grossman, who proposes that from the war cries of the ancient Greeks, through to soldiers firing weapons in the air; all are signs of an attempt to daunt the enemy through non-violent means (Grossman, 2009).

*Limitations of Grossman's altruistic species theory*

Before delving into the limitations of Grossman's evolutionary aspects of killing in combat, it would be prudent to point out that this section of the thesis, and indeed the entire

thesis, is not exploring the highly complex, and disputed literature surrounding war-like behaviour as an evolutionary mechanism. In the book *War, Peace, and Human Nature,* Fry (2013) investigates the anthropological, sociological and at times, psychological literature surrounding the concept of warfare-like behaviour as an evolutionary adaptation of humans. Fry brings forward a plethora of researchers from a range of subjects to argue that in fact war is not an innate, nor an ancient part of human civilization. This research stands in contrast to popularised theories that warfare is as ancient as humans themselves (Holmes, 2008), and even in species predating humans (Wilson, 2013,) which has recently entered popular public discourse (Sussman, 2013) with articles in the New Scientist (Holmes, 2008) and Steven Pinker's book: *The Better Angels of Our Nature (2012).* Fry's message is aimed at demonstrating that humans can live without war, and that it is not a part of our evolutionary makeup (Fry, 2013), an undoubtedly worthy cause that brings into question the innate nature of humans being 'warlike' in nature. Generally speaking, this researcher is not arguing against the genetic, evolutionary nature of war-like behaviour in society, and will not further investigate these aspects. However, evolutionary research looking at primate violence and conspecific killing is required within this thesis to address Grossman's argument (which Fry has briefly used within his research) that there is an innate, phobia-like resistance to killing in combat, (Grossman, 2009). This researcher will utilise aspects of Fry's (2013) collection of research for this purpose, which serves to demonstrate the more precarious foundations of Grossman's research, specifically looking at evolutionary, animal behaviour, and the innate nature of the resistance to killing in combat. The researcher does not see this critique as having a greater impact on the literature surrounding the concept of living without war and the true age and nature of warfare-like behaviour in humans. In short, the debate whether war is, or is not an innate part of human nature is a separate issue to understanding resistance to killing in combat, and not an integral part of the debate.

Grossman proposes that humans, like animals, will prefer to posture and submit over mortal combat, in order to save the species as a whole (Grossman, 2009). In a comprehensive review, Engen (2008) submits that Grossman's description of natural selection is highly 'flawed'. Natural selection, he suggests, contrary to Grossman's explanation, is a deeply selfish mechanism, which as noted by Engen (2008) increases mating opportunities, and is not based on an altruistic sense of saving the species. If animals are to perform by submission and posturing instead of fights to the death, it is to increase their chances of survival (Engen, 2008). It is conceivable that restraint and posturing in intra-specific combat developed as adaptations in same species, since in nature, deadly combat would likely leave the victor almost as mauled as the loser (Engen, 2008). Indeed it does appear that Grossman's concept is inconsistent with current evolutionary and behavioural literature and research, which interprets intra-species killing behaviour as based on an adaptive, selfish mechanism promoting survival over species altruism (Engen, 2008; Dawkins, 2006; Wilson, 1980). Further, it is likely that animals avoid fights to the death because they are costly and will likely only occur when the cost of killing is low, or resources are high (Wilson, 2013). In short, natural selection has little to do with survival of the species, and everything to do with maximising inclusive fitness.

Further, Grossman's claims that animals do not kill within their own species, appear to be false. Over a ten year period, Mitani, Watts and Amsler (2010) observed one band of Ngogo Chimpanzees systematically annihilate a neighbouring faction. The researchers conclude that the male chimps went out on patrol, with the primary objective of seeking out the other faction. If the patrol discovered a weaker force, such as single male chimpanzee, they attacked and killed them (Mitani, Watts & Amsler 2010). This behaviour continued until the dominant faction annexed the opposing faction's territory outright. The researchers concluded that the Ngogo males acted in this way so that they could control more fruit, leading to faster reproduction and thus allowing the group to grow larger and

stronger. Wilson (2013) notes that this is not a one off event; detailed observations of intergroup killing have been reported from multiple chimp study sites including the Budongo, the Gombe and the Ngogo. Dyer (2006) observes that as many as 30% of chimpanzees are likely killed during war among male chimps.

Wrangham (1999) and Wilson (2013) comments that coalitional killing of adults in neighboring groups is not limited to primates, and also occurs regularly in other mammal specimens, such as wolves. Animal motivations for coalitional killing cannot be assumed to be merely a product of fighting for scarce resources or obvious initial mating benefits. Dyer (2006) and Wilson (2013) report acts of coalitional killing conducted when there was minimal risk to the attacker(s), when resources were not a primary motive. Wilson (2013) comments that there are times where male dominant chimps attack others without clear intention, engaging in bullying-like actions. This behaviour could be explained by Wrangham's (1999) imbalance of power hypothesis. This hypothesis suggests that selection favors the tendency to hunt and kill rivals, when the costs are sufficiently low i.e. when one party can attack another with impunity. Going further to challenge the biological innate nature of killing in combat is Wrangham's (1999) theory of an innate mechanism to conspecific killing. Simply put, Wrangham notes through observations of chimpanzees during tribal skirmishes, that the long term payoffs of deep incursions by chimps into each other's territory to kill the other tribe are opaque to the animals involved, thus there must be a biological, innate component behind the behaviour. Wrangham's (1999; 2006) imbalance of power hypothesis is perhaps one of the most influential studies investigating the reasons behind chimpanzee conspecific killing, by suggesting that chimpanzees have an innate predisposition to kill outsiders, even when not engaged in immediate competition for resources such as food. This leads the killing group to have more males during group confrontations over resources (Wrangham, 2006). There seems to be a substantial amount of support for this hypothesis. Recently Wilson and colleagues (2014) in collaboration with 30 other primatologists conducted an analysis of 152 killings in 18 chimpanzee

communities, and found the evidence supported the hypothesis for adaptive strategies for killing (increased access to resources and attackers outnumber the victims) as the reasons for coalitional killing among chimpanzees.

Going further, it is argued that this behaviour must be innate in nature, due to the fact that chimpanzees lack the ability to foresee the long term consequences of killing in this manner (Wrangham 1999; 2006; Roscoe, 2007). Wrangham postulates that because humans and chimpanzees exhibit similar tactical behaviour during raids on neighbouring tribes, the notion of an innate biological predisposition to conspecific killing can be applied to humans as well as chimpanzees (Wrangham, 2006;Wilson, 2014; Horgan, 2014), and in fact, humans and chimpanzees are both 'natural born killers (Wilson, 2014; Watson, 2014). Wilson, a proponent to the link between human and chimpanzee coalitional killing suggests that such evidence of chimpanzee coalitional killing, along with the similar pattern of violence shared between humans and chimpanzees, opens up the possibility that humans inherited these violent patterns of behaviour from a common ancestor (Wilson, 2014). Indeed, increasingly more evidence is being provided which demonstrates very similar behaviour between humans and chimpanzees. Until recently, modifying tools for the purpose of hunting has been considered a uniquely human trait (Pruetz & Bertolani, 2007). However recently, Savanah chimpanzees have been found to use tools, sharpened to a spear-like tip, in order to hunt animals. Twelve tools analysed found to have included five steps, including the trimming of the tool tip to a point (Pruetz & Bertolani, 2007). Further, there is evidence that these sharp tools were used as a spear, rather than a tool to probe or explore, which may have implications for the evolution of tool use and construction for hunting among the earliest hominids (Pruetz & Bertolani, 2007).

This view of an innate mechanism for conspecific killing is almost diametrically opposed to Grossman's theory of an innate resistance to killing in combat, although it is not without its share of criticism. Horgan (2014) suggests that the popularity of this imbalance of

power, innate mechanism theory has more to do with the militarism of our culture than scientific merit. Indeed, Horgan suggests that this thinking makes it easy to shrug off our responsibility to end war by simply blaming it on human nature (Horgan, 2014). In criticising Wilson and colleagues' (2014) data directly, Horgan argues that Wilson et al. directly observed only 15 killings- an average of 1 killing every 28 years in a typical community (Horgan, 2014). Horgan argues that since observational studies began in the 1960s toward understanding coalitional killing among chimpanzees, many of these killings have been 'suspected' or 'inferred' rather than directly observed (Horgan, 2014). Roscoe (2007) contends that using animal behaviour observational studies, is not strong enough support to suggest that humans have an innate biological disposition to killing one another. In fact Roscoe goes further and claims that the opposite is just as likely, and in partial agreement with Grossman, puts forward a hypothesis based on an aversion to killing one another. Roscoe contends that this aversion can be 'short circuited' (Roscoe, 2007, p.492) by virtue of being able to envision long term benefits of killing. Based on Browning's (1998) reconstruction of judicial interrogations, Roscoe proposes that the reports of the 500 or so middle aged and working class men drafted into a battalion directly involved in the execution of 38000 Jewish men gives insight into a resistance to killing theory. Roscoe postulates that the men of the battalion (RPB) had incentives for participating in these killings, with no discernible costs, and with career advancement for those who participated, and refusal was met, at worst, with opprobrium of their fellows. There was no personal risk to their safety and they were likely totally immersed into Semitic propaganda. If these men were innately motivated to seek out low cost opportunities to kill, as Wrangham's theory would suggest, then Roscoe argues that it is expected they should have participated eagerly in these massacres. However, 10-20% of the unit avoided killing, by requesting to be excused from execution details. The remainder of people did not seek out killing and almost all of them were disgusted by what they were doing.

There are several issues with Roscoe's (2007) hypothesis. Firstly, the evidence is based on a considerable amount of speculation. There were no diary records, interview or group interviews with transcripts to review and analyse reporting on the units' thoughts, feelings and motivations for their behaviour. Further, Roscoe's (2007) entire premise is based solely on one case among the entire human history of warfare, in which Roscoe does not appear to directly confront the limitation of using one group of individuals, in one period of time, from one country, to not only dispute a major theory, but formulate a hypothesis. Further, Roscoe himself points out that the battalion did contain increasingly enthusiastic 'killers', who actually volunteered to kill Jewish people (Browning, 1998). Indeed as time went on, the RPB became more callous and efficient with the execution (Browning, 1998).

Despite this seemingly unsubstantiated theory of altruistic behavior, Grossman (1995) applies this concept of non-lethal combat among animals to humans. Grossman proposed that posturing and non-lethal combat observed in animals is prevalent in humans during warfare. This behavior, Grossman argues, accounts for highly ritualised pattern of mock battles, which can be seen from street gang warfare, through to the ancient Greeks (Grossman, 2009). Dyer, (2006) agrees that during tribal battles (such as with the Mae Enga people), there are indeed highly ritualised battles that get called to a stop when someone is seriously injured or killed. However, Dyer also observes that these battles happen so frequently, they account for 25% of male deaths (Dyer, 2006). Further, these mock battles were initially used to survey the strength of the neighbouring tribe. If one side were markedly weaker than the other, then the stronger tribe would conduct violent night raids, which were nothing short of extermination (Dyer, 2006).Beyond these limitations outlined in regards to mock battles, and the notion of altruistic sense of species' survival, is the speculative reasoning Grossman puts forward for soldiers' uniforms being colorful and intimidating. Although there is indeed evidence military uniforms and helmets would serve both as a means to identify them as a unit, and to intimidate the enemy (Cowley & Parker,

1996), there is no evidence found by this researcher which suggests that this was to avoid battle, or undergo the 'perfect illusion of violence'.

Grossman attempts to form a biological, innate component to explain the resistance concept, by looking toward observed animal behaviour, and linking it to human behaviour in warfare. Despite the clear criticism within the literature for this innate altruistic species concept, as well as the idea of humans attempting to avoid combat through shows of intimidation, it is Grossman's inability to explain how this evolutionary mechanism is experienced by soldiers in combat, which the author of this thesis is most critical of. In not explaining how this resistance is experienced, or made sense of by soldiers, Grossman has not built upon Marshall's influential work. The conspecific literature on mammal, however contentious and highly debated, is still within its infancy when explaining humans' ability to kill one another, without suffering psychological trauma as a result. Although effort is made to link animal behaviour to human behaviour in combat, none explain, or offer an explanation as to how this instinct, or lack thereof, truly influences or impacts on the soldier. Although Roscoe's (2007) research is criticised by this author, it is worth noting that his research touches upon an important issue, namely how the people charged with killing experience, and make sense of the killing? Although this is not explored further, beyond some basic speculation, Roscoe begins to look at potential social and cultural influences, which may have impacted on why soldiers were willing, or unwilling to kill in combat. Despite the limitations of Roscoe's speculations, he does suggest that soldiers' experiences and sense making of their orders may play a role in killing in combat. These concepts are explored further in Chapter 3, in which the soldiers' sense making of combat is considered, in line with other research suggesting a sense making perspective.

*Non-firers in history*

During the 1800's America was locked into a costly civil war, fought primarily with black powdered muskets, which could fire up to three rounds per minute (Murray, 2013). This

relatively slow firing speed made a loaded musket a precious commodity on the battlefield, yet Grossman notes that during the battle of Gettysburg, out of the 27,000 muskets that were recovered from the battlefield, 90% (24,000) were loaded, 12,000 of which were loaded more than once. Grossman suggests that based on the average reloading times, over 95% of the muskets should have been found empty on the floor. In his own words:

> "If there is a desperate need in all soldiers to fire their weapon in combat, then many of these men should have died with an empty weapon. And as the ebb and flow of battle passed over these weapons, many of them should have been picked up and fired at the enemy." (Grossman, 2009, p. 22)

Further, Grossman proposes that due to the intensive drill training of the soldiers during this period, the notion that soldiers may have been 'mis-loading' their weapons is inadequate to explain why the weapons were found this way. Indeed Dyer (2006) notes the type of training undertaken by infantry during the civil war equated to thousands of hours of repetition to condition automatic reflexes including (but not limited to) loading and firing the musket. Grossman suggests that based on this evidence, the only natural conclusion is that soldiers were purposefully reloading already loaded guns, to avoid firing and hence, killing the enemy. Thus, in summary Grossman states that despite intensive conditioning of drills, soldiers avoid killing the enemy at all costs, which is a product of "powerful instinctive forces and supreme acts of moral will" (Grossman, 2009, p. 24).

*Limitations to Grossman's theory of conflict avoidance*

This concept of non-firers in history (Grossman, 2009) appears to stem from Dyer's research (2006), which suggests that the soldiers of Gettysburg spent hours drilling, loading and shooting techniques, until it became a conditioned, automatic response. Thus the only natural conclusion, according to Grossman (2009), is that soldiers were avoiding killing the enemy, by loading and reloading their weapons. Murray (2013) disputes this

claim by proposing this research does not address technical issues with the musket, inaccuracy with weapons, or the anxiety of killing oneself, or teammate. Further, Murray suggests that in fact, the reason why so many muskets were left with multiple unfired charges could be due to the combination of stress and an overload of the working memory (Murray, 2013). In an event of an overload of the working memory, muscle memory would take over, and the soldiers would revert back to dry firing drills, which often skipped over details like fitting the percussion cap (Murray, 2013). Further, Grossman's theory does not explain why killing rates in musket battles were twenty times higher than modern weapon warfare (Murray, 2013).

In both cases, the reasons behind why muskets were found with multiple unfired rounds, littered across the battlefield are hypothetical, based on the evidence available to Murray and Grossman. Without evidence directly explaining why these muskets were left unfired, either by direct testimonies or observational notes form individuals involved in the war, all evidence presented is at best speculative, and does not support a hypothesis of resistance to killing. Further, despite the investigation by Murray and Grossman to better understand whether soldiers avoided killing in combat, none have attempted to consider how soldiers experienced, or felt about killing, and thus, avoid killing. Indeed, a clear criticism and gap in the literature thus far, is that in over 50 years of research into reasons why a soldier would refuse to kill or fire their weapon on the battlefield, none have brought forward a vigorous and methodologically transparent psychological study, which investigates the first-hand account of soldiers supposedly avoiding, or not avoiding the act of killing in combat.

*Proximity to killing, and dehumanisation*

One of Grossman's strongest arguments is his proposed link between proximity to killing and resultant difficulty and trauma of killing- that is to say, killing from a distance (such as artillery and bombing) is easier than killing up close (such as with a blade or hands).

Grossman implies that from a distance, often subverted by mechanical means, the killer can pretend they are not killing another human being, but rather just eliminating a 'target' or 'threat' whereas up close, such denial of humanity becomes increasingly harder the closer the individual gets:

> "When the resistance to bayoneting or stabbing becomes tremendously intense, and killing with the bare hands (through such common martial arts techniques as crushing the throat with a blow or gouging a thumb through the eye and into the brain) becomes almost unthinkable". (Grossman, 2009, p. 98)

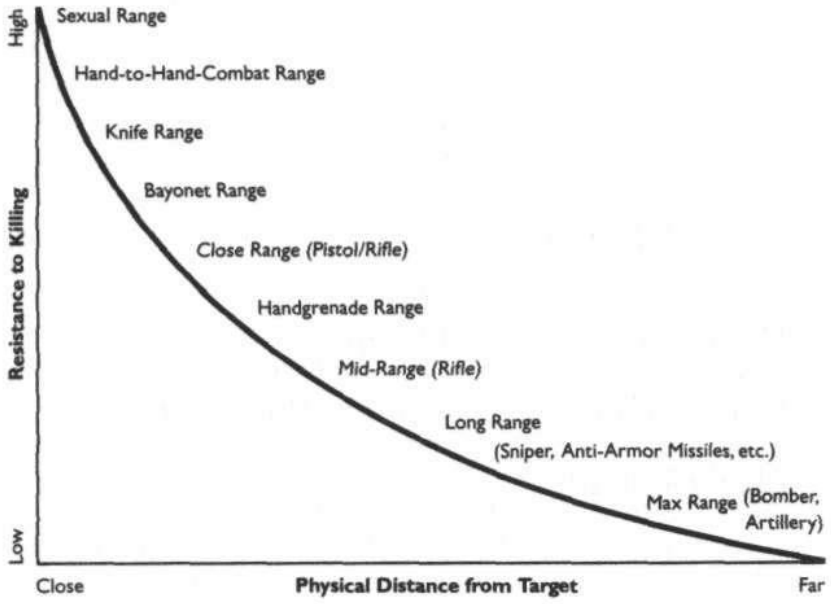


Figure 1. Grossman's link between physical distance from target, and level of resistance to killing (Grossman, 1996, p. 98).

Based on the way in which distance and killing is described by Grossman, it could be categorised within the well-researched area of dehumanisation. As an example, Grossman goes on to suggest that the reason bomber crews in the Royal Air Force (during World War

II) can bomb and subsequently be the cause of death of over seventy thousand people (Grossman, 2009), is primarily due to how the act of killing is experienced:

> "If bomber crew members had had to turn a flamethrower on each one of these seventy thousand women and children, or worse yet slit each of their throats, the awfulness and trauma inherent in the act would have been of such a magnitude that it simply would not have happened.
>
> But when it is done from thousands of feet in the air, where the screams cannot be heard and the burning bodies cannot be seen, it is easy." (Grossman, 2009 p. 100-101)

It is clear that Grossman is suggesting that this mechanical distance aids the dehumanisation process by separating the killer and the victims, thus altering how the killer views the process of killing. Dehumanising can be defined as depicting people or groups of people as less than human (Zimbardo, 2008; 2014). It allows individuals and groups to see others as 'enemies'; people that are different, with a different set of principles and outlook, deserving of torment, torture or even in its most extreme, annihilation (Zimbardo, 2008; 2014). Indeed throughout military history soldiers are fed a continuous supply of propaganda by dehumanising the enemy as monsters, as worthless, as a fundamental threat to the value and beliefs to the soldier's values.

Christopher Browning (1998) reconstructed testimonies and data of the judicial interrogations of 125 individuals from the 101st reserve police battalion (RPB), involved in Nazis final solution in Poland, between 1942 and 1943. The 500 or so middle aged and working class men drafted into RPB 101 were directly involved in the killing of 38000 Jewish men women and children. During this time the men were immersed within German anti-Semitic propaganda, and were free to kill their targets at no discernible risk to themselves. The out-group of Jews were not compatriots, but citizens of occupied Poland. This, argues Browning (1998), is the power of diffusing responsibility and dehumanisation of the 'enemy'. Building upon Grossman's dehumanising theory and based on Browning's findings, Roscoe (2007) agrees that physical distance is a tool used to dehumanise or render the opponent invisible. One such technique that has been successfully used

throughout history is the use of projectiles, such as the missiles. However, in dealing with the frequent nature of close proximity killing throughout history, Roscoe suggests that the dehumanisation techniques are also utilised in hand-to-hand and edged weapon combat. This process involves declassifying the enemy to a sub human form, and utilises terms that are more akin to hunting than combat when engaging with the enemy (Roscoe, 2007). This denies the individual conspecific status (being a human being), with an image that elicits killing responses appropriate toward nonhuman species (Roscoe, 2007).

*The closer you are, the easier it is to kill you: limitations to Grossman's Proximity to Killing theory*

Grossman's theorises that the nature of resistance to killing is a universal phobia (Grossman, 2009), which is to say, an irrational, overwhelming, uncontrollable fear (Grossman, & Christensen, 2007). Putting aside the question of semantics, Grossman proposes an intriguing perspective based on this: when the enemy is closer, one cannot deny their humanity, thus the 'innate' nature of resistance to killing becomes apparent. Murray (2013) proposes that the phrase: 'phobia of interpersonal violence' is confusing and misleading in understanding proximity and killing in combat. A phobia is an irrational fear, and the fear of being killed by another man, suggests Murray (2013), is far more rational than a phobia. Based on this suggestion, would a rational fear of death not increase with proximity? Using historical accounts it is possible to broadly state that the closer one is to the enemy, the greater the chance of death (Murray, 2013). Murray coins such a notion as the proximity effect (Murray, 2013). An assessment of battles during World War I campaign in Palestine of General Allenby's staff demonstrated that casualties during war increase as the attacker gets closer and easier to hit. Starting at 400 meters, there was a predictable increase in attacker casualties, with more than twice as many being killed at 200 meters, and nearly four times as many at 100 meters. Then, from fifty meters,

defensive fire rapidly loses its effectiveness (Murray, 2013). Meaning as attackers got closer; more defensive fire was going wide. Thus as one gets closer, the likelihood of death gets higher, and chance of fighting with a bladed edge becomes more likely, which inevitably instills fear (Murray, 2013).

A second point offered by the researcher as a criticism to Grossman's argument is the research into snipers and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV). Grossman suggests that mechanical distance, through the use of technology, will make killing easier, due to the dehumanising process. However, as reported by Sasser and Roberts (1990) snipers observe a target for extended periods of time, and even though they are at a distance, they see the individual perform humanising acts, such as talking to a loved one, going to the toilet eating etc, yet all the while demonstrating little resistance with killing the target when ordered. One might be tempted to argue that snipers dehumanise the enemy in other ways, based on training and individual personality types. However a detailed account by Garett Reppenhagen (2015), an American Sniper for the Cavalry Scout Sniper with the 1st Infantry Division in the US Army, who saw combat in Iraq, describes how he appreciated the complexities and strengths of the Iraqi people, and did not feel the need to dehumanise them by seeing them in such a 'narrow way'. Despite this, he understood and accepted his role as a 'perpetrator of violence and death' (Reppenhagen, 2015).

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), also known as Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) or more commonly referred to as 'drones' (Chappelle, Goodman, Reardon & Thompson, 2014) have been a topic of investigation within psychology over the last decade. The ever demanding need for drone pilots within western armies has caused a surge in requirement for pilots in order to meet the global demand for drone operations, which is quickly becoming the modern form of warfare (Chappelle, Goodman, Reardon & Thompson, 2014). Drone pilots operate and interact with targets and forces on the ground in real time,

high definition to (among other things) track, target and destroy enemy combatants (Chappelle, McDonald, Thompson & Swearengen, 2012). Although not subject to the threat of personal safety, nor the requirement to engage in hand to hand combat, a routine part of the operators' day-to-day activities involve killing, or being witness to killing, both of the enemy and of their allies on the ground (Chappelle, Goodman, Reardon & Thompson, 2014).

Scholars more critical of the use of Drone Warfare argue that drone pilots are unaffected when they kill human targets during missions, due to their absence from the battle field (Royakkers, & Van Est, 2010), labelling such individuals as 'adept video game players' (Calhourn, 2001). The implications of this are clear; drone pilots will not experience any resistance, or subsequent psychological distress from combat, because of the mechanical distance, as proposed by Grossman (2009). In contrast, Fitzsimmons and Sangha (2010), and Chappelle and colleagues (2012) argue that drone warfare killing is done in 'high definition', and in 'real time', with the consequences of the kill readily apparent and seen by the operator in graphic detail. Thus any mechanical distance is circumvented by the graphic realism of the kill. An excerpt from a drone pilot charged with observing and killing a bomb maker perfectly illustrates Fitzsimmons and Sangha's (2010) perspective on this issue:

> "We watched him wake up in the morning; we watched him leave for work in his vehicle; we tracked him to where he was building these weapons; we watched him eat lunch; we watched him go home and play soccer in his yard with his family — with his two little girls.... We watched him live with his wife; we watched him sleep; we watched him get up in the middle of the night, go to the back of his house and build weapons. We [had] been watching him for so long that we... [had] that part of the history with our operators, who are having the thought in their head of, 'I don't care what you think of this individual, he does have two daughters; I have seen him with his family". Fitzsimmons and Sangha (2010, p. 05) original source, by Shogol and Ricks (2012).

As might be expected by such conflicting research, the statistics for risk of developing PTSD among UAV operators vary quite considerably. Due to obvious political and military concerns, access to drone pilots for psychological testing and measurement is restricted (Chappelle, Goodman, Reardon & Thompson, 2014), Self -reported PTSD assessment of USAF drone operators of Reaper and Predator drones (weapons capability) revealed that 5% were at high risk of developing PTSD (Chappelle et al., 2012). A full description of PTSD, including more literature directly related to PTSD of soldiers in combat is provided in a section devoted to trauma in combat.

In a similar study Chappelle and colleagues (2014) analysed the surveys of 1084 USAF drone operators, with a response rate at 49%. Chappelle and colleagues (2014) reports suggest that a small subset of 4.3%, similar to Chappelle and colleagues' (2012) rate of 5% were found to report clinically significant PTSD symptoms. Generally speaking, the highest rate of operators being at risk of PTSD is between 7-10% (Chappelle, Goodman, Reardon & Thompson, 2014), and the lowest at less than 1% (Otto and Webber, 2013). In short, the research could be said to offer both support, and criticism for Grossman's theory of mechanical distancing. On the one hand, if operators are akin to computer game players, and can deny the humanity of the enemy, then the low PTSD rate would fit Grossman's theory of denying the humanity of the enemy. On the other hand, if the operators experience killing in 'high definition', and as supported by the testimony offered above, see the humanity of the enemy, then the low PTSD rates would not support Grossman's theory.

Up until this point, the research provided within this literature for better understanding killing in combat has been lacking in exploring how the soldiers themselves experience combat. Grossman argues that distance makes it easier to kill the enemy due to how the soldier experiences the enemy, or can deny the humanity of the enemy. However, Grossman does not provide analytical support for this concept by providing testimonies of soldiers specifically exploring their sense making of killing both close, and from a

distance. The UAV drone literature, however, shows signs of taking pilots' testimonies as an important step to better explore how soldiers experience and make sense of combat. Beyond the PTSD numbers, it is clear that the contentious issue within the literature is how the operators of drones experience combat, and killing in combat. If they experience combat like a 'computer game' then this may have profoundly different effects as compared to killing in 'high definition'. Unfortunately, this has yet to be fully explored within the literature. However, in what might be an emerging way to better explore killing in combat, and in possible support for Grossman's theory of proximity and killing, research has suggested close quarter combat may result in higher levels of distress. Recently, an analysis of 108 Canadian combat soldiers surveys reporting negative mental health outcomes, 24 reported engaging in hand to hand combat (Bouchard et al., 2010). It is Jensen and Simpson (2014) however, who have taken an in depth approach to exploring soldiers experiences of combat, from a qualitative perspective. and investigated soldiers' account to answer the question of proximity and combat. The researcher's analysed accounts of soldiers' experiences and impact of killing in hand to hand combat, using what the researchers describe as phenomenological philosophy and thematic analysis (Jensen & Simpson, 2014). The researchers concluded that the experience and aftermath of taking a life in hand to hand combat was disturbing, psychologically stressful, and required coping strategies. Ultimately, some members viewed their actions to be necessary to survive, and overall hand to hand combat was more emotionally taxing than shooting. Jensen and Simpson's (2014) research is a step in a positive direction for the killing in combat literature, in that it actually explores the soldiers' experience of killing in combat, whilst trying to better understand the mechanisms underlying accepting or not being able to accept killing in combat. Thus far in the literature this qualitative, in depth approach is missing. The researchers used open ended interview, for 9 soldiers who had served in the Special Forces or Infantry during the Vietnam War and Rhodesian bush wars, posing the question: "Please describe an incident of hand-to-hand combat with an enemy combatant

during combat operations." (Jensen & Simpson, 2014, p.470), and asked further questions, which are not listed, to clarify the responses. The authors had a research team help interpret the themes to mitigate researcher bias, and help form a coherent representation for the experiences combined. Although there is a clear attempt at a nomothetic methodological approach rooted in phenomenology, the study is not without its limitations. The framework put forward by Jensen and Simpson is not particularly clear, lacks appropriate guidelines or philosophical or epistemological underpinnings of why and how they conducted their analysis. For example, the researchers seem to have conducted a thematic analysis, based on phenomenological principles, however the researchers cite only Husserl (1931), and do not draw upon decades of available modern, psychological phenomenological or thematic research to rationalise their choice of method or otherwise describe their process and framework. Further from this, their analysis appears to lacks depth, and their conclusions do not seem to directly relate to their analysis. Indeed, in observing Jensen and Simpson's (2014) transcripts directly, the researcher found that the soldiers' description were primarily centered on the contrast between shooting and hand-to-hand combat, the emotional toll of the experience of hand to hand combat, and the act of self-defense. Indeed, hand-to-hand killing was considered a very different experience to shooting, it was more emotionally demanding, and required time to contemplate after the event. One soldier described that they 'almost felt bad', for the kill, and another described how he felt it might be difficult to accept, if one had not had experience in such engagements. The remaining two soldiers accepted the act as self-defense and self-preservation, dealing with these issues by writing a justification note to the soldier they killed, and not taking it personally. Indeed the researchers concluded that 2 out of 5 of the soldiers had no issues with killing in combat (Jensen, and Simpson, 2014). The researcher suggests that the results from the analysis seem to be mixed, and do not offer an exploration into what it was about this act that made killing in combat at close proximity more emotionally taxing. However, in bringing Jensen and Simpson's (2014) research

back to the current thesis, it is clear that they contribute by demonstrating the significance of sense making of killing, based on lived experiences, mind set, and sense making of the kill. Although Jensen and Simpson do not explore this further, it is experiences like this that may help better understand how soldiers experience killing in combat. For instance, why is this different? What different mindset does this require? What is it about the act that is more difficult? Likewise, one soldier described how life experiences may directly influence how one accepts the act of killing in combat. Again this is not explored further, but by understanding how, and why past experiences might help provide insight into the sense making of the soldier in processing these experiences. In summary, although Jensen and Simpson's research (2014) is ambiguous methodologically speaking, with some issues with the analysis and conclusions, it provides clear evidence that the step needed to better understand soldiers in combat is to explore first hand testimonies, and demonstrates how a qualitative analysis can help better understand how soldiers experience killing in combat.

*Demands of Authority*

Psychological research is rich with theories aiming to enhance our understanding of social influence, one of these areas is known as obedience to authority. Obedience to authority as a concept within psychology can be traced back to Freud, who hypothesised that obedience to authority is an unconscious process, deeply rooted in an individual's relationship with their parents (Freud, 2001). This, suggests Freud, is a combination of penis envy, and accepting the father's power, which is internalised, and thus the authority of the father figure is projected onto how one responds to authority in society (Freud, 2001). However, perhaps the most infamous study relating to this subject matter is Milgram's obedience to authority study (Haslam, Reicher, Millard & Birney, 2014; Reicher & Haslam, 2011; Milgram, 2010). In this influential 1963 study, Milgram wanted to test how far individuals would go to punish another individual, when told to do so by an authoritative figure.

Disguised as a learning experiment, participants were asked to administer electrical shocks to a stranger when they gave incorrect responses to scripted questions. The 'shock machine' was labelled with steadily increasing voltages, beginning at 15 volts, and increasing right up to 430- 450 volts, with the last two volts labelled 'XXX'. In reality the (hidden) learner was not receiving shocks, yet after each 'mistake' the learner screamed with pain to give the illusion of being administered a shock. Based on Milgram's (2010) results, Grossman (2009) suggested that 65% of the participants were willing to administer a lethal shock to the learner. This, Grossman (2009) suggests, continued even after the learner had stopped screaming in pain, and fell silent during the shocks. Grossman (2009) concludes the following from this study:

> "If this kind of obedience could be obtained with a lab coat and a clipboard by an authority figure who has been known for only a few minutes, how much more would the trappings of military authority and months of bonding accomplish?" (Grossman, 2009, p. 143)

Grossman postulates that various historical accounts can demonstrate how this obedience to authority phenomenon has aided in overcoming this resistance to killing in combat. Firstly, he points towards Marshall's research, which demonstrated that during WWII soldiers' firing rates sharply decreased to around 20% when battlefield leaders were not in close proximity to the soldiers firing (Marshall, 1968; Grossman, 2009). Secondly, based on additional observations ranging from the ancient world, such behaviour of Roman Centurions and techniques such as the Greek Phalanx, through to the behaviour of WWII soldiers, Grossman suggests that proximity to a legitimate authority figure with influence and clarity toward their role to kill the enemy is used to override this resistance to killing. He concludes:

> "In these and many other killing circumstances we can see that it was the demand for killing actions from a leader that was the decisive factor. Never underestimate the power of the need to obey". (Grossman, 2009, p. 146)

Grossman's (2009) body of work is continuously referred to in this thesis, despite the lack of exploration into how soldiers experience killing in combat, and lack of evidence ot support the biological component to this resistance to kill due to I) its major influence in modern day military research, and II) if there is a resistance, albeit one that is not based on biological mechanisms, then it is worth exploring to see if it can be understood from a social, and sense making perspective of the soldier. In attempting to explore this further, Grossman's work is critically analysed in light of the obedience to authority literature, to investigate whether there is any evidence that sense making of an order to kill, can be understood within contemporary psychological literature

Grossman (2009) asks the question: if this obedience to authority could be obtained from a scientist that the participant had only known for a few minutes, what could the military accomplish with months of bonding and the power of military authority which shapes training? The question is certainly a thought provoking one, and initially, Milgram's research seems to support this notion of obeying a higher ranking officer to kill in combat. Recent research (Gibson, 2013; Reicher, Haslam & Smith, 2012; Reicher & Haslam, 2011) however, has shed light on Milgram's research, to consider an alternative explanation to why individuals seemingly obey to an authority figure.

Gibson (2013) notes that Milgram's obedience to authority statistics were actually highly variable across conditions, with rates ranging from close to 0%, up to 100%. Gibson poses a question based on these variable statistics: if the conditions had a similar set up, and participants were in fact responding to obedience to authority phenomenon, then why are the results so variable? Reicher, Haslam and Smith (2012), and Reicher and Haslam (2011), argue that these rates differ depending on whether the individual identifies with the scientist, as a legitimate representative of science, or conversely to the learner, as an

everyday person they can relate to. They summarised that high obedience was a case of actively identifying with the experimenter, and by extension their mission, and low obedience was the case of identifying with the learner, who represents the general community.

In a study conducted by Reicher, Haslam and Smith, (2012), participants were given a description of Milgram's study, with 15 variants of levels of conformity. Based on these variations, the participants were asked to indicate whether they identified with the experimenter, or the learner. The findings suggested that the identification with the experimenter was a predictor of the level of obedience in the actual variant of the original Milgram study. At the very least, these findings suggest that there might be alternative or more complex reasons for why people engage in behaviours that seem to be based on a desire to obey and authority figure. These findings present a novel perspective to view Grossman's (2009) concept of obeying an authority figure to kill in combat, by suggesting social identification with the authority figure may play a role in decision making.

Going further than this, Gibson (2013) argues that in order to better understand this phenomenon, one can look at the levels of disobedience. When participants hesitated to shock the learner they were 'prodded' by the experimenter to continue shocks. These 'prods' were highly ineffective at eliciting the response to continue shocking. As an example, the 'prod' was used for 23 participants across two conditions, and only occasioned 2 people to further shock, and only 1 who was fully obedient to shock until the end.

When faced with 'prod' 4, a 'prod' that led the participants to believe they had no choice but to administer the shocks, most participants responded either by asserting that they did indeed have a choice, or by engaging with the experimenter in such a way they ultimately acknowledged that they did have a choice. Thus these studies may have little to do with obedience as conventionally understood. Instead, the rhetoric between the experimenter

and participant showed arguments designed to convince and persuade seem to have more effect at eliciting a response than forced obedience.

As such Milgram's studies show that obedience to authority can occur when an absence of a direct order occurs. Therefore the experimenter elicited obedience without a rigid order, and when a direct order was given, obedience failed. In this way the element of choice can be seen as integral to the decision of the participant.

In summary, Gibson (2013) demonstrates that the art of negotiation is an important part of Milgram's findings. Gibson demonstrated that the participants could be convinced to continue when the experimenter went off script and tried to demonstrate the wellbeing of the individual being shocked. This failed to elicit total shocks, but it kept the experiment going for several more rounds of questioning. Ultimately however, the vast majority of people did shock until the end, but the question is raised over whether this was due to obedience to authority, or the art of persuasion? The collected research presented in this thesis has provided new ways to interpret Milgram's findings, by exploring how individuals perceive not only the situation they are in, but the person giving them commands. Although the question over the reasons why participants shocked until the end, or not, remains unknown, the research provides insight beneficial to this thesis of exploring how soldiers make sense of combat. If individuals can be convinced by negotiation, then the question is what exactly is it about this negotiation that changes the perception of the act of, for all intents and purpose, killing another individual? What are the individuals beliefs, and life experiences, which guide their decision making process? If the decision to shock to the highest shock setting was based on identifying with the experimenter, or the subject, then what is it about the participants' view point that decides whom to identify with? What are their experiences of the situation, and other situations, which make them decide who they would identify with? With regards to soldiers in combat, does identifying with the commanding officer, rather than the enemy influence how they approach their role

as combatants, and does this contribute to be able to kill in combat without suffering subsequent trauma? This research further highlights the need to investigate how soldiers talk about and experience combat, and how they articulate their feelings towards individuals they encounter in combat, and how this forms a part of their sense making of killing in combat.

*Trauma to killing*

Perhaps Grossman's most significant contributions to Marshall's theory, are his comments on the psychological costs of killing in combat. Grossman describes this resistance to killing as a universal human phobia, an irrational, overwhelming, uncontrollable fear of a specific object or event (Grossman & Christensen, 2007). In line with this, Grossman goes on to suggest that the price soldiers' pay for this act has an 'extraordinary' traumatic and psychologically 'cost', which has a 'profound' effect on all those who participate (Grossman & Siddle, 2000). Based on this, perhaps the most striking evidence Grossman utilises to support this theory is through the use of quotes from soldiers. One such example is from William Manchester a soldier from WWII:

> "I was just absolutely gripped by fear that a man would expect me and would shoot me. But as it turned out he was in a sniper harness and he couldn't turn around fast enough. He was entangled in the harness so I shot him with a .45 and felt remorse and shame. I can remember whispering foolishly "I'm sorry" and then just throwing up…I threw up all over myself, It was a betrayal of what I'd been taught since a child." – William Manchester, WWII, in *On Killing* (Grossman, 2009, p. 116)

Litz and colleagues (2009) furthers this notion by suggesting one of the major causes of mal-affects for soldiers is the precarious positions they find themselves during warfare. These morally dubious positions, as suggested by Litz and colleagues (2009) include killing, and being in combat in general, but also involve other major components of war, such as being unable to help the wounded and firing on civilians. Further research, however, has specifically indicated that killing in combat was a major risk factor for psychological distress among soldiers, during both the Vietnam War and the invasion of

Iraq (MacNair, 2002; Maguen et al., 2010, respectively). Moreover, killing was found to be a significant predictor of PTSD amongst soldiers, whilst controlling for other factors that are commonly thought to be associated with PTSD, including those who did not kill, but were involved in combat and intensity of combat (Maguen, et al., 2010).

*An Unspoken Desire to Be in Contact: A Modern Military Perspective*

Grossman offers testimonies from a conscript based military within his book: *On killing* (2009) that provide compelling insight into how killing in combat affects military personnel. Specifically, they speak toward the 'phobia' nature of the innate resistance. Grossman's quotes from soldiers provide insight into the sense making of that individual; however, Grossman does not provide an analysis of these quotes, in an attempt to better understand why William Manchester felt distressed about the act, and what it was about the event, and his sense making of the event, which caused this distress. However, it is clear from this testimony, that a great deal of depth and wealth could be extracted from this transcript, and presumably transcripts like this, in order to better understand killing in combat. As such, it seems that Grossman has missed an opportunity to better explore soldiers' experiences of killing in combat. For example, by feeling 'betrayal of what I'd been taught as a child"(Grossman, 2009, p. 116) , is the author having trouble accepting the act of killing, based on the morals he was taught as a civilian, growing up in a society which denounces killing? This is speculation, but it does bring to light that this sense making has been largely ignored within the literature. The researcher now offers testimonies from modern day wars and voluntary military that provide a different perspective, within the context of killing in combat. The following quote is from Holmes (2006) book: *Dusty Warriors* interview with soldiers:

> "As a soldier and in particular an infantryman it is an unspoken desire to be in contact, to fire your weapon in anger and test yourself in combat. " (Dusty Warriors, Major David Bradley p. 59)

In the documentary *Ross Kemp in Afghanistan* (2012) we also see soldiers talking about how they view combat, and shooting to kill the enemy:

> "With the contacts, everyone will admit the first contact, you can't really go round saying all this sort of stuff but it was the most exciting moment of any of our lives, I think it's the combinating *[sic]* fact of everything you been training for…it's your bread and butter it's the one thing everyone in the army is does as a basic job…. my sections we sat there and we got down and we looked at each other and we giggled. " (Ross Kemp in Afghan, 2012, Un-named Soldier)

This discourse continues in the 2011 BBC documentary *Our War*:

> "Being in contact is almost like a drug, it's good fun, I know it sounds very very strange but being a soldier..there is nothing like being in contact.." (Platoon Sergeant: Simon Panter, Our War, ep. 1)
>
> "I remember walking down an alleyway thinking, this is brilliant, this is my first contact. I remember looking at Chris Grey, and he did the rock on symbol to me" (Lance Corporal Matt Duffy (Downs) Our War, ep. 1).

The accumulated 20 hours of video recorded footage from the documentaries listed above demonstrate a general consensus of excitement and anticipation of entering combat; these individual testimonies describe various combat soldiers talking about and describing the act of killing in combat. It should be noted that a phobia is often defined as an irrational fear triggered by a stimulus, which the sufferer will make a significant effort to avoid (Bourne, 2011). A phobia can cause people to organise their life around avoiding the phobia and may cause considerable anguish (NHS, 2015). In some case, even thinking about the phobia may cause anxiety (NHS, 2015). The researcher submits that the testimonies demonstrate a few select examples that are not in line with viewing killing in combat as a phobia, as postulated by Grossman (2009). Undoubtedly, and indeed during this research, there will be testimonials like the ones gathered by Grossman, which show soldiers talking about the psychological repercussions of killing in combat. Although such testimonies are not in on themselves enough to disprove, or prove the resistance to killing

hypothesis, the conflicting reports, combined with the surrounding literature, challenge the idea of universal innate phobia of killing in combat. As noted by Popper (2002) "no matter how many instances of white swans we may have observed, this does not justify the conclusion that all swans are white" (Popper, 2002, p. 27). However, the researcher is not intending to unequivocally disprove Grossman's research, only to suggest an alternative perspective, which based on the testimonies above, and in line with Jensen and Simpson's research, could be further explored by not asking *if* soldiers can kill in combat without a biological resistance, but *how* soldiers can kill. Indeed these testimonies demonstrate that in order to understand the contrast between what Grossman presented, and what is presented within this thesis, one must explore why, and how these soldiers have come to experience, and understand killing in combat. The above testimonies, although only brief, provide a wealth of information about how the soldiers view killing in combat, thus it stands to reason that soldiers have a great deal to say about combat, and by extension, a great deal to add to the current literature.

*Is The Kill Legitimate? Another Look at Psychological Trauma in Combat*

Initially, research into modern wars, such as the invasion of Iraq, has specifically indicated killing in combat as a major risk factor for psychological distress, such as PTSD, among soldiers (Webber et al., 2013). Post -traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is broadly defined as a person exposed to a traumatic event, who persistently re-experiences the event, causing clinically significant distress or impairment (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Indeed studies such as Maguen and colleagues (2010) note how during the Iraq war, killing in combat was the best predictor for psychological dysfunction, after controlling for other variables such as combat exposure. However upon closer scrutiny of the data, soldiers diagnosed and meeting clinical diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) were in the minority. Maguen and colleagues (2010) found that among the soldiers who killed in

combat (40% of soldiers) only 16% met PTSD criteria. As Webber (2013) notes, this statistic suggests over 50% of soldiers who killed during battle returned home in relatively good mental health. Indeed, units that experience the harshest combat conditions, show PTSD rates to be around 30 percent; In short, more than half of soldiers do not experience diagnosable psychopathology (Mathews, 2013). Mathews (2013) goes on to say that specialised combat units, such as the Navy SEALS show PTSD rates of less than 5%, despite being involved in frequent and intense combat. Further, such statistics do not offer explanatory insight about what might be protecting/preventing soldiers from experiencing trauma as a result of combat exposure and killing in combat.

Maguen and colleagues' (2010) study was selected as they specifically looked at killing in combat, and not just combat in general. Their findings are at the higher end of reported PTSD symptomatology of what has been uncovered within the literature. A meta-analysis of combat-related PTSD by Richardson, Frueh and Acierno (2010) found rates of PTSD vary considerably between 7-17%. This variability, the researchers suggest, is due to sampling and measurement differences, timing and variability of combat exposure. In an attempt to make sense of findings such as these, Webber and colleagues put forward a social validation perspective for understanding killing in combat (Webber et al., 2013). The researchers propose that the perceptions of others about killing in combat are projected onto the soldier, and factor into how and whether the soldier views the killing as either legitimate or not, which in turn has an effect on the psychological health of that soldier. As a result, soldiers will surround themselves with people who validate their view of the war.

In Webber and colleagues' (2013) study, participants completed a bug extermination task. Once participants were asked to kill the bugs, they were presented with social validating or invalidating information about killing the bugs by an actor who pretended to agree or disagree with their actions. When they were asked to kill bugs they experienced higher levels of distress and guilt when they perceived socially invalidating information.

Webber's (2013) social validation perspective focuses on what factors play a role in soldiers accepting the task of killing in combat, in an attempt to better understand how over 50% of soldiers go home psychologically healthy, in comparison to soldiers who meet PTSD criteria . In this way, Webber's (2013) findings provide a foundation to further study the implications of perception of the self and validation of others in relation to killing in combat. The PTSD research presented asks important questions about the effects of specifically killing in combat by demonstrating that correlations, although highly variable do exist between killing in combat and suffering psychological trauma. However, regardless of whether the rates were closer to 50% or as low as 7%, the statistics fail to answer why some soldiers can seemingly kill in combat, and others can't. Thus, with such varied rates of trauma rates, and no clear understanding of what it is about the soldiers' sense making of combat that either prevents subsequent PTSD, or contributes to the trauma, there is a clear gap in the literature which has yet to be explored. Going further than simply asking weather 'Johnny can Kill', Webber's study moves beyond statistical rates of PTSD, to exploring how soldiers make sense of information about killing in combat. By suggesting that validating, or invalidating information about the kill influences the individuals' perception of killing, Webber's research has implications for the direction the literature could naturally evolve toward in order to better understand killing in combat. Questions can be raised about how participants process this information? Why was it validating, or invalidating? How did they make sense of this information, and how did it conform, or go against their sense making of not only themselves, but the act of killing.

Offered as a type of counter narrative to Grossman's resistance to killing in combat, and further evidence that soldiers' sense making of experiences need to be addressed, is the emerging notion over the last decade, of soldiers enjoying their combat experience, as alluded to by some of the testimonies investigated in the section: *An Unspoken Desire to Be in Contact: A Modern Military Perspective*. Jones (2006) suggests that in recent times

there has been a reinvestigation into how soldiers can survive, psychologically speaking, the horrors of warfare. Ferguson (1998) makes a compelling case about the nature of WWI, that contrary to Grossman's theory, soldiers actually took pleasure in combat, and fought with enthusiasm, which potentially prolonged the conflict. Further to this, Ferguson comments that it was because of the danger; soldiers enjoyed combat, and in fact took pleasure in killing in combat. Bourke (1999) contests that although an initial resistance to killing does exist, the training soldiers received turned civilians into effective soldiers which experienced intense feelings of pleasure with killing in combat. Indeed, Bourke argues, to not be able to cope with killing are deviating from the norm. Going further, the argument is made that those unable to express this need to kill in combat were at heightened psychological risk (Bourke, 1999). Gray (1970) suggested that individuals both hate, and love combat, revelling in the delight of destruction, and even finding front lines more endurable than the rear areas. Based on the testimony of 24 cases and over two decades of clinical work, Nadelson (2005), concluded that soldiers willing and eager to kill in combat in Vietnam were ordinary individuals before enlistment, and again argues that after the resistance had been overcome in training, soldiers began to become addicted to and excited about the idea of killing, similar to sexual arousal or recreational drug use. These experiences and historical observations, Jones (2006), Nadelson (2005) Bourke (1999) , Gray (1970) and Ferguson (1998) about the effects of war and militarization on individuals, offer not only an alternative narrative to Grossman's work, but further evidence that very little is truly known about the soldiers' experiences of combat. Why is it, for example, the military training overcomes this resistance? And what is it about combat, which becomes exciting? How do soldiers make sense of killing in combat, to the degree that they far from avoid it, they enjoy it? Why would they both enjoy, and hate combat?

*Complexity of combat*

In line with the notion of exploring killing in combat by investigating soldiers' direct experiences and sense making of killing in combat, there is an additional issue within the literature which has yet to be explored; the complexity of combat. Without investigating the soldiers' direct experiences, how is it possible to tease apart what is causing psychological trauma to the soldiers? Combat is a complex, multi-faceted experience, which forces military personnel to live through many unpleasant stimuli and phenomena. In this way it is difficult to 'tease apart' the psychologically distressing aspects of combat, and as such, truly investigate how they process the act of killing in combat. To briefly demonstrate the complexity of issues that could cause psychological trauma during killing in combat, a case study is presented. Christian Slater was a Mortuary Affairs officer in The Marines, whose job was to 'process' the bodies of the dead (Hirschfield, 2014). During this time, Slater describes graphic scenes of handling and observing heavily mutilated bodies on a daily basis. Slater describes strict orders by a higher ranking soldier to not use the 'fallen angels' names, only their rank. Further, Slater suggested that any act that may humanise the dead marine was discouraged, including sorting through family photos, or even looking at their faces. Personalising the dead was akin to torture for the mortuary affairs unit. The effects of handling and dealing with dead bodies up close led to Slater to attempt to take his own life. He described seeing the faces of the dead stare at him, he became distant, withdrawn, flat and lifeless (Hirschfield, 2014) and was eventually diagnosed with PTSD.

These experiences and feelings described by Slater closely mirror those of the soldiers Grossman (2009) includes in his work On Killing, and may provide further evidence to understanding how the events of seeing dead people, and the human aspect of that act, is different to the act of killing. Combat as a whole is a highly intense event and environment, subjecting individuals to a range of unpleasant stimuli. As we can see from Slater's

(Hirschfield, 2014) testimony, he suffered feelings similar to those of the soldiers Grossman suggest are from killing in combat, yet his feelings come from experiencing and being subjected to death on a daily bases, not to killing in combat. In this short testimony alone, it becomes clear that to better address the gap in the literature of killing in combat, one must investigate how the soldier experiences combat, what is it that they experience, both positive and negative, what causes psychological trauma from their experiences, and by extension, how they can negotiate the act of killing in combat.

# Chapter 3

## How Can Johnny Kill?

Marshall, and to a greater extent Grossman's work, has shifted the focus of military research onto the human component of warfare, providing a richer and deeper understanding of how individuals and groups react in combat. This shift has had a real world impact on soldiers' lives, and cannot be over stated. Nor can it be ignored, as it serves as the foundation to all subsequent killing in combat research. Nevertheless, Marshall's research has come under significant criticism (Spiller, 1988; King, 2013; Murray, 2013), which has led to an overall acknowledgment within military psychology that soldiers' resistance to killing in combat is heavily disputed. Although grounded in the research by Marshall, Grossman's work on resistance to killing has gone beyond Marshall's findings, tackling the problematic topic of combat and killing on a theoretical level that had never been fully explored. However, the nature of Grossman's ideas of resistance to killing has been noted by other scholars as being ambiguous, contradictory, and at best, overly simplified in nature (Engen, 2008; Murray; 2013). Indeed, despite Grossman's claims of the innate, universal nature of resistance to killing, he also states:

> "It is largely a twentieth century affliction, a modern, self-inflicted psychic wound, to believe that you will be mentally destroyed or emotionally harmed by the act of killing during lawful combat. I am convinced, based on with interviews with hundreds of men and women who have had to kill, that if you tell yourself that killing will be earth shattering, traumatic events, then it probably will be. But if you do the rationalization and acceptance ahead of time, if you prepare yourself in the lore and spirit of mature warriors past and present, then it does not have to be a traumatic event…
>
> …I believe that not being psychologically injured by socially sanctioned killing has been the norm throughout history, up until the twentieth century". (Grossman & Christensen, 2007, p. 170)

To date, there is still very little research on killing in combat. Whilst Grossman and Marshall focused primarily on conscript (obligatory service) soldiers, more contemporary

research (including the current research) focuses on soldiers from a modern professional army, who were in engagements throughout the last 20 years. The literature proposes that albeit perhaps not a universal phenomenon, there seems to be varying degrees of resistance to killing. Thus the natural question is not whether humans can kill without a universal resistance described by Grossman as a phobia (Grossman, 2009), that is to say, an irrational fear, but rather, how do soldiers negotiate killing in combat, without suffering psychological trauma?

Roscoe's (2007) investigation, which was outlined in section 2.1 of this thesis explored and speculated the motivations of individuals within a Polish battalion to kill, or not kill Jewish people during WWII. Although this research had some clear methodological issues and somewhat unsubstantiated conclusions, Roscoe's hypothesis as to why the Polish soldiers killed, or refused to kill, does lead to some interesting concepts that may indicate some potential avenues for further investigation of how soldiers experience killing in combat. Although speculative, Roscoe (2007) describes the contextual nature of killing; killing is morally and legally abhorred and heavily penalised. However, in combat it is encouraged. As such, it is not the objective act of killing which should be investigated, but how that act is perceived, and made sense of by the individual soldier. Indeed throughout human history there have been a number of civilisations dedicated to warfare. For example, ancient Greek history tells us of Spartan society and its constitution, completely focused on military training and excellence (Cartledge, 2004; Conolloy, 2006). Going to war was considered the duty and role of the Spartan citizen, and only those who died during victorious combat would be granted a headstone (Conolloy, 2006). Military training began at seven years old, and remained in reserve duty well into later life (Conolloy, 2006). Indeed Herodotus (2008) suggests that the pursuit of glory, through a glorious death, was a strongly desired and respected philosophy for the ancient Greeks. Indeed the concept of gaining glory in warfare, and dying valiantly in battle was deeply entrenched

into Greek society (Homer, 2003; Herodotus, 2008). As such, it is clear that if killing can both be respected, desired, and form a part of a soldiers life pursuit, whilst at the same time lead to severe psychological trauma, it becomes clear that it is the way in which the act of killing is made sense of which needs to be better understood and investigated. Indeed it seems to be the case that there is a great deal of complexity and context involved in understanding killing in combat for human beings, which may go beyond the concept of a biological innate drive, and, as the current research proposes, toward the possibility of cultural, social and sense making aspects to conspecific killing. Indeed research such as Webber's (2013) social validation perspective, breaks away from previous schools of thought, by focusing on how soldiers view themselves in their social world, and seeks to explain how soldiers who do not meet PTSD criteria view killing as either legitimate or not, based on perception of others' views on their actions of killing. Although an important contribution to the literature, Webber does not explore in detail, how and why individual soldiers can kill in combat, and the coping mechanisms developed for soldiers who live healthy lives post deployment. In short, Webber's findings provide an excellent platform to further study the implications of social and cultural aspects, and specifically the perception of the self and validation of others with regards to killing in combat. However the research does not further knowledge as to why, and how these soldiers made sense of killing in combat.

## 3.1 Who Is Johnny? A Masculine Warrior Perspective

Based on this research by Webber (2013), Roscoe (2007), and historical texts providing conflicting reports of acceptance to conspecific killing, this research turns to the social, cultural and individual factors involved accepting conspecific killing amongst humans is to explore the individual's way of making sense of these social factors. Beginning, with research into modern day conflict, Litz and colleagues (2009) suggest that being a witness

to, or partaking in a devastating event, such as combat, may be responsible for 'moral injury'. The researchers suggest that if the soldier witnesses, or does not have the ability to prevent a situation which runs contrary to a deeply held moral belief, this event could lead to dissonance and be a factor in PTSD. Thus if the person is unable to integrate and accept these experiences, they are more prone to PTSD symptomatology (Litz et al., 2009). The concept of 'moral injury' is based on the examination of the PTSD literature, including literature reviews, collections of surveys and after-action reports across a span of studies, in which Litz and colleagues (2009) examine the difficult events experienced by soldiers during combat, and the unconventional nature of war, which lead to soldiers using their own moral judgement during combat. Litz et al. (2009) explore the mediating factors of causing distress in a soldier during combat, including personality factors, group processes, religious beliefs, and social and cultural variables, which moderate and mediate moral injury. Litz and colleagues argue that an expected part of a 'warriors'' experience includes violence and killing, and in times of war, killing and being witness to killing are to be expected and prepared for by the soldier. However, individuals may face unexpected events, such as the killing of non-hostiles, which may bring about feelings of guilt and shame. Such events may be counter to deeply held moral beliefs of the soldier, or their expectations of war, which may include witnessing cruel behaviour, or failure to prevent an action which runs contrary to one's moral beliefs.

This research by Litz et al. (2009) provides some insight into potential research areas to investigate further relating to soldiers' moral beliefs and culture which may influence this ability, or inability to kill in combat without 'moral injury'.Pertaining to this, motivations for joining a combat unit, and the moral beliefs of the combat soldier could influence how soldiers experience combat. Castano, Leidner, Slawuta (2008) suggest that group memberships, and particularly the social identities that individuals derive from such memberships are important aspects that must be considered for a thorough understanding

of combatants' behaviour. Indeed Chacho (2001) found, during the Second World War, motivations to volunteer for an elite combat unit, which was guaranteed to see extended periods of combat, to be complex. These soldiers chose an elite combat role, in which killing was a critical part of the job, based on desires to push themselves hard, to be surrounded by like-minded people and to fulfil an idealism they had about the war they were fighting, to name a few examples. This research was based on voluntary combat units during WWII, and based on open ended surveys completed by soldiers after the war had ended, provides interesting insight into the motivating factors and possible identity of the soldiers for wanting to join a combat unit that would be dropped behind enemy lines and thus see extended combat. However, Chacho (2001) does not provide an analysis of how these soldiers made sense of these experiences, and what aspect of their cultural and sense of self pushed them to seek out these roles.

Building upon who these soldiers are, what motivates them, and to flesh out Litz et al.'s (2009) description of the 'warrior' role, and expectations of killing and witnessing killing in combat, Henriksen (2007) argues that in order to understand soldiers who are willing to kill in combat, it is imperative to distinguish between those who kill in a combat zone, and those who are 'merely there' (Henriksen, 2007, p. 195). Described as 'warriors', Henriksen (2007) refers to those individuals who are well adjusted members of society in peacetime, as 'natural soldiers'. These individuals, he suggests, volunteer for combat not because of a personality disorder predisposing them to being aggressive psychopaths (Henriksen, 2007; Grossman, 2009), but due to an individual and existential commitment to warfare. As such, the warrior is defined as: "a soldier with a personal and existential commitment to master and experience warfare, who is willing and able to kill and risk sacrificing his life in combat" (Henriksen, 2007, p. 199).

Following on from this, Dyer (2006) describes this warrior individual as "a natural soldier who derives his greatest satisfaction from male companionship, from excitement, and from

conquering of physical objects" (Dyer, 2006, p. 117). In their later work, *On Combat,* Grossman and Christensen (2007) also highlight the importance for an individual about to enter combat to accept their role as 'sheepdog/warrior' to justify killing in combat. The warrior/sheep dog is outlined by Grossman as:

"an individual who protects the weak, protects their community, faces the 'bully', stands tall, thinks ahead, and avoids aggression is possible and if not, win, and win fully" (Grossman & Christensen, 2007, p. 130).

In line with this, sheep dogs, suggests Grossman, (Grossman & Christensen, 2007; Moore, Hopewell, Grossman, 2009) are able to cope with violence, aggression and killing in combat. Indeed based on 'hundreds of interviews', taking into account Vietnam and SWAT team members, he goes further to suggest that the warrior might look forward to battle, or reluctantly accept it as their role, either being an acceptable reaction (Grossman & Christensen, 2007).

Warrior soldiers are trained for arms and to fight and kill (Mackavey, 2005).The term 'warrior' is used throughout military doctrine as a way to instill the values of the modern soldier. For example, within the guidelines and values set out by the U.S Army, both in the forming of training guidelines for soldiers (US Army Training Circular on The Warrior Ethos and Soldier Combat Skills, TC 3-21.75, August 2013) as well as within the Soldier's creed (U.S Army, 2013), the term warrior is presented as a term to describe the ideal modern day soldier. A summary of these desired qualities are summarised in the British Army doctrine operations (British Army, 2015) section 2-18, *Fighting Power* guidelines, which state:

> " Warrior Spirit. The British soldier should embody a warrior spirit. He should be tough, resilient, innovative, highly-motivated and compassionate. He should have an offensive spirit and a desire to get to grips with adversaries and challenges. He should not hesitate to engage in combat - to fight - using controlled violence when necessary". (British Army doctrine operations, p. 34)

Beyond describing the warrior as someone who is willing to engage in battle, the traits (such as toughness, courage and aggression) noted in the army doctrine, and by Henriksen (2007), Dyer (2006) and Grossman (Grossman & Christensen, 2007) provide a possible link between masculinity and being a soldier. Indeed, engaging in warfare is seen in western discourse as a 'manly' thing to do, or the penultimate expression of masculinity (Enloe, 1993; Whitworth, 2004). In this way, Enloe (1993) suggests that masculinity is traditionally connected to war and combat. A soldier can often link themselves to this idealised warrior status (Bourke, 1999) whose role includes to fight, and protect others (Elstain, 1987). In this way, being in the infantry is seen as the epitome of the 'heroic warrior' (Hockey, 2003). Morgan (1994) suggests that the warrior seems to be a key symbol of masculinity in society. Indeed in heroic paintings, comic books and popular films, the gendered connotations are inescapable (Morgan, 1994). Soldiers' tales often involve linking themselves to idealised warrior similar to heroic figures in combat literature and films (Bourke, 1999).

The soldier hero has proved to be one of the most durable and powerful forms of idealised masculinity within Western cultural traditions since the time of the ancient Greeks (Dawson, 1994). Military virtues such as aggression, strength, courage and endurance have repeatedly been defined as the natural and inherent qualities of manhood, whose apogee is attainable only in battle (Dawson, 1994). Celebrated as a hero in adventure stories telling of his dangerous and daring exploits, the soldier has become a quintessential figure of masculinity (Elshtain, 1982; 1987). Indeed to be an infantryman, the epitome of the heroic warrior, one had experience and navigate the hazards and hardships that come with that role (Hockey, 2003).

Ultimately this includes the gender ideology that men are socialised from boyhood to see their masculine identities tied to protecting women while tolerating violence (Enloe, 1993). In western cultures terms associated with strength, rationality and objectivity are often

associated with masculinity, whereas femininity with weakness, irrationality and subjectivity (Hooper, 2000). Young men have been socialised into ideas associated with masculinity, soldiering and of being a warrior, through family norms, movies, male role models and television programmes (Cooke and Woolacott, 1993; Whitworth, 2004).

Although various descriptions of masculinities exist (DeVisser & Smith, 2007), the generally accepted model of masculinity in western society is known as hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Connell, 2005). This influences how men negotiate their masculinity (Connell, 1995; Connell, & Connell, 2005) and is based on, but not limited to: toughness, violence, aggression, endurance, bravery and suppression of emotions like fear and grief (Connell, 1995; Duncanson, 2007). Any other traits, usually standing at a contrast to these, are considered non-masculine (Duncanson, 2007). Masculinities are actively negotiated in relation to both social structures and physical embodiment in on-going and complex processes (Brod & Kaufman, 1994; Connell, 1987; 1995; 2002a; Hooper, 2000).

However, understanding behaviour based on hegemonic masculinity is often more complex than behavioural traits might suggest. These masculinities might manifest themselves in complex ways, such as men promoting masculine traits like athleticism, in order to avoid generally typical masculine social behaviours like drinking (DeVisser & Smith, 2007). In order to better understand these complex behaviours De Visser & McDonnell (2013) investigate the idea of 'masculine capital'. Data suggests positive associations between perceived masculinity and engagement in traditionally masculine health behaviours (De Visser & McDonnell, 2013). This is especially true for individuals who place an importance of gender role stereotypes on their one gender identity (De Visser & McDonnell, 2013). De Visser, Smith and McDonnell (2009) suggest that men acquire 'masculine capital' by engaging in masculine behaviours, in order to engage in what would be considered less typical masculine behaviours. In this way complex masculinities, such

as ‘metrosexual’ can be understood as men engaging in a sophisticated dynamic of traditionally masculine characteristics, such as earning power paired with traditionally more feminine concerns over appearance (DeVisser, et al., 2009 ). In this way to be manly can be perceived as possessing the attributes of a potential warrior (Enloe, 1993), whilst accepting the realities of being a soldier, which means to be subservient, obedient, and almost totally dependent, which are traditionally not masculine traits (Enloe, 1983).

So far the literature appears to be problematic in that any attempt to understand the experiences, or sense making of these experiences by ‘masculine’ ‘warrior’ soldiers killing in combat is derived from standardised surveys, about specific PTSD constructs, limiting responses to a finite set of parameters (Jensen and Simpson, 2014). In seeking to explore first-hand account of killing in combat without these restraints, Jensen and Simpson (2014) used phenomenology to uncover the richness and complexity of killing during hand to hand combat, uncovering the individuals lived experience, using thematic analysis (Jensen & Simpson, 2014). This paper was criticised by the author in Chapter 2 at length, however in brief, the researchers used open ended interviews for 9 soldiers who had served in the Special Forces or Infantry during the Vietnam War and Rhodesian bush wars, to better understand hand to-hand combat with an enemy combatant during combat operations (Jensen & Simpson, 2014). Although the researchers had a strong nomothetic approach for gathering the data, and analysing that data, the framework put forward by Jensen and Simpson is not particularly clear; both lacking appropriate guidelines and epistemological underpinnings of why and how they conducted their analysis. Of greater importance to this research however, their analysis appears to lacks depth, and their conclusions do not seem to directly relate to their analysis.

Despite the limitations, Jensen and Simpson (2014) have taken an important step forward in this area of research by attempting to investigate the richness and complexity of killing in combat (albeit, hand to hand combat), using a phenomenological approach. This

approach, suggest Jensen and Simpson, allows the researchers to capture the essence of the soldiers' individually lived experiences. The contribution that Jensen and Simpson (2014) have made to the literature should not be understated, by suggesting that that hand-to-hand killing was different to shooting the enemy, and more 'emotionally demanding', requiring contemplation on behalf of the soldier to process, the authors are providing insight into the soldiers' sense making, and how important it is to get a better understanding of this sense making. Although Jensen and Simpson do not explore this further, it brings to light important questions about why soldiers experienced combat differently, based on their life, and their sense making of combat.

Hitherto, the research has demonstrated a limitation in understanding soldiers' sense making of killing in combat from a universal, innate, biological perspective. Modern research points toward a complex combination of soldiers' sense making factors, such as social validation (Webber et al., 2013), cultural and moral beliefs (Litz et al, 2009), masculinity (Duncanson, 2007), and a 'warrior spirit' (Henriksen, 2007; Grossman & Christensen, 2007), which stem from the individual and existential desires to excel in combat and to be 'tried in battle' (Henriksen, 2007, p. 207). That being said, there has been limited peer reviewed research exploring in depth how infantry soldiers perceive and make sense of killing in combat. Indeed with the exception of Webber and Colleagues' study (2013), and Jensen and Simpson's (2014) partially thematic account of hand-to-hand combat, the modern research described in this article are based on peer reviewed commentary pieces, which does not outline a clear methodology or analysis in understanding the sense making of the soldiers' experiences of killing in combat. Thus there is a significant gap in the literature which explores how soldiers experience and make sense of killing in combat. So far, the research suggests that a soldier who will kill in combat is a warrior, a masculine term intimately connected to proving themselves in combat, to be tested through tough ordeals, based on what they perceive to be the ultimate

expression of masculinity. Yet it is unclear how infantry soldiers (those committed to killing in combat) themselves express and negotiate killing in combat. Moreover, how do they make sense of their selves as this masculine warrior outlined in the research? To clarify these points, the present study sought a methodology that understands how the actor- an individual who is creating and making sense of their social world-perceives and makes sense of killing in combat.

*A Phenomenological approach*

As suggested by Jensen and Simpson (2014), a methodology focusing on soldiers' sense making of events and their self can provide insight into how soldiers make sense of killing in combat. Qualitative analysis follows an idiographic approach, which not only provides the opportunity to undertake a rich, detailed analysis, but also offers a way to examine how people make sense of life experiences in order to address issues in Psychology (Smith et al., 2009). In understanding human behaviour, an idiographic approach can be used to challenge assumptions and preconceptions, as well as explore research that is so far limited (Smith et al., 2009), such as killing in combat. This allows the researcher to explore themes that might otherwise go unnoticed, helping to build a better understanding of soldiers' experiences and sense making of killing in combat.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) assumes an individual to be a cognitive, linguistic, affective & physical being, and assumes a chain of connection between people's talk and their thinking and emotional states (Smith & Osborn, 2008). This is particularly relevant to the current research, as it provides a method for examining in detail the personal lived experience of participants making sense of their experience (Smith, 2004). Lived experiences are noted as being vital in how individuals cope with life experiences (Smith and Osborn, 2008) which suggests a link between how soldiers view killing in combat and sense making of the combat experience.

Moreover, Smith and Osborn (2008), and Smith (1999) note how IPA is very well suited to analysing an individual's life experiences, as it focuses on the self as a sense and meaning making agent. The self is based on experiences which when studied, can be used to explore change throughout an individual's life. These experiences can often be life changing or significant events, and IPA allows the researcher to explore how the participant reflects on those experiences. In this way IPA sets up a framework which the researcher will adopt for the purposes of analysis within this research. Finally, IPA can be considered an approach that fills a niche within the methods and analysis available to psychologists, by capturing both experiential and qualitative data, whilst maintaining a dialogue with mainstream psychology (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

### 3.2 Research Questions

Drawing upon the literature provided in section 3.1, the present research sought a way to better understand what factors play a role in soldiers' sense making of conspecific killing, looking at soldiers' social, moral, cultural and sense-making of both the self and experiences of combat. Taking into account personal experiences and the context of those experiences is required to provide an in depth understanding of an individual's motivations, intentions, experiences and sense making (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009). Further, an interpretative phenomenological approach provides the researcher with the opportunity to explore combat soldiers' sense making of their life experiences, their sense of self, and combat. Thus an Interpretative Phenomenological analytical approach was used to explore **I)** How do soldiers in the combat arms experience and make sense of killing in combat? **II)** How do soldiers who have served in the British and United Stated combat roles in the military understand their sense of self?

# Chapter 4

# Methodology

## 4.1 Introduction to the Methodology

This thesis explores the way in which soldiers understand their sense of self, and killing in combat. In this way, this thesis is primarily interested in the sense making of soldiers who are charged with killing in combat, to further understand not only how they make sense of their lives and experiences of combat, but how they specifically negotiate the act of killing in combat, and integrate these experiences within a sense of self-concept.

In order to explore this topic, the thesis undertakes a fully qualitative analysis, specifically utilising an interpretative phenomenological approach. To begin, this chapter outlines the epistemological approach the researcher has adopted based on Hermeneutic Realism, and how this in turn, informs the choice to focus on phenomenology, and specifically Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Next, this chapter outlines the philosophical underpinnings of IPA based on Phenomenology, as originally described by Husserl and further explored by Heidegger (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009), Hermeneutics, and Ideography .

After outlining the philosophical underpinnings of IPA, this chapter explores IPA as a methodology, and how the emphasis on individuals' sense making of events, and sense making of the self, makes IPA appropriate for this analysis. Following this exploration, this chapter then outlines the rationale for the data, which are autobiographies and an in-depth

interview. The ethical considerations of both types of data are also assessed. Finally, the practical, step by step guidelines of how IPA is carried out, and what constitutes as good practise for IPA is outlined, including details about the transcription and analysis process.

## 4.2 Transparency in Conducting Scientific Inquiry

*Epistemology*

The researcher frames their epistemology within hermeneutic realism (Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006), based on the philosophical works of Heidegger. This epistemological stance recognises that reality exists outside of human consciousness and existence, but that this reality can only be understood through the lens of the individual. Thus the question of a separate existence of an objective and subjective reality can only arise because humans are here to ask such questions (Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006). Crucially, whilst reality is not dependent on human existence, the interpretation of that reality very much is. In essence it is impossible to remove the human lens from the way in which we understand the world in order to find out how things are experienced in an objective way (Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006). Indeed Heidegger, a prominent philosopher in Hermeneutics, and the basis of this researcher's understanding of hermeneutic realism, adopted a realist position (Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006), who sought to better understand how humans experience an objective reality, which exists outside of human consciousness.

From a purely pragmatic view, and for all purposes relating to this research, this perspective serves to demonstrate that the researcher's interests lie in the subjective experiences and sense making of reality, and more specifically the phenomenon of killing in combat, rather than seeking an objective description of such phenomenon. This stance also highlights the researcher's pragmatic approach to utilising a methodology that is best

served to exploring the sense making of individuals, rather than engaging in an epistemological debate regarding the nature of reality and knowledge. In short, the researcher has avoided using this thesis as a platform to investigate whether an objective reality exists outside of human consciousness, which can be defined and governed by laws, and has instead focused on the subjective experiences of the individual.

An example of how an individual might view a mundane object, such as an oak table, may provide clarity and make this issue of pragmatism less abstract. For instance, an individual might describe a crimson-stained oak table as a solid, robust ugly furniture item, which reminds them of their grandparents' house when they were growing up. In this example, the researcher is not interested in whether the table exists or not outside of the individual's experience or whether it is objectively 'ugly'. Instead the researcher is interested in exploring the meaning the table holds for that individual (the influence of the 'boring' grandparents' house) and by extension how that affects their sense making, experiences and ultimately, behaviour.

The focus of this thesis will be on analysing individuals' sense making of their experiences. This focus differs to other forms of phenomenology which seek a more descriptive, precise account of individual experiences, in an attempt to meet the rigours of the natural science (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Therefore, the analysis of individuals' experience will be based on interpretation rather than an objective and purely descriptive analysis.

## 4.3: Introduction to IPA

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is a relatively recent and novel qualitative approach developed by Smith in the mid 90's (Hefferon & Rodriguez, 2011; Smith, 1996, 2010, 2011; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009) in order to address research issues in psychology and social sciences. IPA can be considered an approach within methods and

analysis in psychology, which both captures qualitative data, whilst maintaining a dialogue with mainstream psychology (Smith, 2004; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). IPA is a research approach committed to the examination of how people make sense of their major life experiences (Smith, 2004; Smith, 2011). In this sense IPA is a psychological approach to analysis, as opposed to being borrowed from another subject, aimed at providing answers for applied or real world psychology (Smith, 2004; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Grounded in psychology, IPA differs from other forms of qualitative analysis by focusing on phenomenology and hermeneutics; as such it is concerned with exploring experience in its own terms and what happens when the everyday flow of lived experience takes on a particular significance for people (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2008; Smith, 2004, 2011; Hefferon & Rodriguez, 2011). A strength of IPA is its suitability to explore meaningful experiences in people's lives. These experiences may take on a major significance to the individual, who will then engage in a considerable amount of reflecting, thinking and feeling as they work through what it means (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2008; Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006). This phenomenological approach of exploring how an individual makes sense of these experiences leads to its second theoretical axis: hermeneutics, the theory of interpretation. IPA is based on the idea that human beings are sense making creatures, and thus any narrative by the individual will reflect their attempt to make sense of their experience. IPA adopts a double hermeneutic approach to analysis, a second layer to the analysis that focuses on how the researcher interprets the narrative provided by the individual, in order to better understand their experiences (Eatough & Smith, 2006). In this way it can be said that the IPA researcher is trying to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of their experiences (Eatough & Smith, 2006; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Each of these major components of IPA will now be discussed.

## 4.4 Philosophical Underpinnings of IPA

*Phenomenology*

As a concept, phenomenology originated with Husserl and was further refined by Heidegger as a methodology in the 20th century. Husserl viewed phenomenology as the examination of the human experience (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Specifically, Husserl was interested in a level of depth and rigour which allowed the opportunity to explore what made experiences significant to an individual. Husserl's approach involved stepping outside of our everyday experiences (Husserl & Heidegger, 1927; Husserl, 1983; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009) in order to better examine them. It was here that Husserl introduced the concept of examining the individual's perception of an object, instead of examining the object itself (Husserl, 1983; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). In essence, Husserl emphasised the reflective nature of phenomenology, the need for people to bracket off their taken-for-granted world, in order to concentrate on the individual's perception of that world. In order to do this, individuals go through a series of reductions, each reduction getting back to the essence of the experience of the phenomenon by avoiding the distractions of previous assumptions (Husserl, 1983; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

Husserl however, was a philosopher and not a psychologist, as such most of his writings on phenomenology are conceptual, and avoid detailed steps on how to conduct an analysis. Furthermore, Husserl was more interested in describing how to carry out first person phenomenology than exploring the experiences of participants (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). In contrast, Heidegger was interested in understanding relationships, the environment, and how individuals make these experiences meaningful (Heidegger, 1985). In a sense, Heidegger's work contextualised phenomenology, focusing on factors such as

language and time, and how these form a hermeneutic lens with which we make sense of the world (Heidegger, 1985; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Critically for Heidegger, phenomenology sought to explore something latent, that might come to the surface when explored, and thus he connected phenomenology to hermeneutics by interpreting the unexplored experiences and sense making of individuals (Heidegger, 1985; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

In summary, Husserl established the importance of focusing on experiences from a critical view point, by examining one's perception of an object, instead of the object itself. Building upon this, Heidegger focused on using this method to explore the experiences of others, by contextualising the individual to the culture and time to which they belonged, and exploring individuals' sense making of these culture and time specific experiences.

*Hermeneutics*

Hermeneutics can be seen as the 'critical' aspect of IPA, which may, in part be why IPA has been widely accepted in psychological science and indeed social sciences in general. Originally used as a philosophy to provide more accurate interpretations of biblical and historical documents (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009), hermeneutics is an approach used to uncover the original intentions or meaning of a text, taking into account context (time and location) and what it may mean in the present day.

In terms of how this can be applied to phenomenological psychology, this thesis turns to the work of Schleiermacher (Palmer, 1969; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009) whose interpretations focused on the grammatical and the psychological, thus taking into account both the exact meaning of the text or narrative, as well as the individuality of the author. In this way Schleiermacher offers a holistic account of the interpretative process using a hermeneutic philosophy/lens. Schleiermacher (Schleiermacher, 1978; Smith, Flowers &

Larkin, 2009) suggests that authors use unique grammatical techniques to impose intention upon their text or narrative. This meaning is open to interpretation by the reader, taking into account the context in which the author belonged to (Schleiermacher, 1978). By taking into account the intention of the author, narrative techniques such as use of grammar and context (the author's time and place in history), this perspective provides the analyst with the possibility of connecting the text to psychological theory (Palmer, 1969; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009), a concept which will be explored within section 4.4: *IPA as a method*.

In keeping with the layered philosophy of hermeneutic philosophy, a meaning of a word must be taken into the context of the sentence; however, the sentence is also interpreted based on the cumulative meaning of individual words (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). This may initially appear circular, but this approach is vital to the interpretation of rich, contextual data in keeping with the principles of IPA. In this way, the interpretation of the text as a whole, and as a sum of its parts, is based on the researcher's sense making, which can be altered with the addition of narratives which can add meaning to the original narrative being analysed (Palmer, 1969; Schleiermacher, 1978; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). In this way the hermeneutic circle provides a useful way to understand the concept underlying IPA, that is, of exploring the text within the context it was written. Much like other qualitative analysis, IPA follows a linear fashion of analysis, with a step by step guide. However, the influence of hermeneutic philosophy forms a crucial aspect of IPA analysis, in that the analyst can go back and forth through the hermeneutic circle when analysing, in order to provide a rich, detailed contextual analysis.

*Ideography and sample size.*

Ideography can be thought of as the concern with the participant's particulars, in that it is committed to the detailed examination of a particular phenomenon as it is experienced (Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009; Eatough & Smith, 2006). This focus on the particulars can be divided into two objectives: commitment to the particular, and commitment to the sense making and context of the particular (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2008). This allows the researcher to take into account both how individuals experience these particulars, as well as context (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009; Smith, 2011). Inevitably this focus on the detailed examination of these experiences lends itself to small, purposefully selected samples, which can begin as a single case, and lead to more general claims over time as more cases are analysed (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). In this sense, rather than avoiding generalisation, IPA gives the researcher the opportunity to establish generalisability in a more cautious manner. Of particular significance to this thesis, IPA's key aim is to utilise this idiographic approach and make a contribution to Psychology through challenging assumptions, preconceptions and existing theories within Psychology (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009; Smith, 2004).

A typical challenge to an idiographic approach to data collection, such as a case study, is that it lacks credibility as a scientific method. However, Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) and Sloman (1976) argue that an idiographic approach can actually provide more detailed and meaningful data than the broad, reductionist nomothetic approach. Bromley (1986) suggests that the concept that an idiographic approach can only be exploratory, whilst nomothetic approaches lead to more definitive results, is a misconception within Psychology. Harré (2008) goes further, and argues that in attempting to meet the standards of the natural sciences when studying human behaviour, nomothetic researchers who avoid using qualitative analysis, are missing the fact that qualitative techniques often come much closer to meeting the ideals of the natural sciences. Indeed Harré (2008) comments that quantitative descriptions are, although often more convenient, not essential to conducting

scientific analysis. Yardley (2000) suggests that qualitative research is often criticised for failing to employ a representative sample, and present objective findings based on reliable measures. However, Yardley (2000) argues that a sample size large enough to be statistically significant cannot be analysed in depth, by virtue of requiring such vast quantities of data that any such undertaking would become too complex and difficult to manage (Yardley, 2000). It is for this reason that qualitative researchers employ theoretical sampling of smaller numbers, often chosen for their specific attributes or experiences (Yardley, 2000).

In summary, IPA is committed to explore, in detail, an individual's experiences and sense making of these experiences, and as such is aligned to an idiographic approach. In line with this, IPA often focuses on smaller sample sizes, placing emphasis not only on the individual(s), but the differences and similarities between individuals and cases, giving IPA studies the opportunity to make more general claims over time (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009; Smith, 2004, 2011).

*Summary of phenomenology, hermeneutics and ideography*

Based on the philosophy of Heidegger, IPA recognises that it is not actually possible to remove ourselves, our thoughts and our meaning systems from the world, in order to find out how things 'really are' in a definitive way (Larkin, Watts and Clifton, 2006). In this way the researcher subscribes to hermeneutic realism (Larkin, Watts and Clifton, 2006), In that reality is not dependent on us, but the exact meaning and nature of reality is (Larkin, Watts and Clifton).

In exploring the philosophical underpinnings of IPA, it becomes clear that an IPA researcher is not primarily concerned with a subject matter (such as killing) but the

individual's experiences and understanding of killing. As such, their account of killing can provide meaningful insight into the person that produced it. In this sense, it is understood that the individual is made up of their experiences, culture and location in time and space. Therefore, the analyst can only glimpse at the person's current subjective mode of engagement, with some specific context or aspect of the world: a central aim of IPA. Thus the analyst is interested in the person in context, their relation to that object, and how they make sense of, experience and engage with the phenomenon of interest.

IPA aims to go further than describing experiences, by recognising the inherent difficulties of knowing where identification ends and interpretation begins. Thus, IPA researchers accept the unavoidable inherent bias of the researcher's interpretation of the reality of the individual author. Generally speaking, this focus on making sense of an individual's sense making, and accepting inherent bias, allows the researcher to make cautious inferences, and gain an insider's perspective.

## 4.5 Applying IPA to the Current Study

IPA was found to be a method suitable for the current research, as it provides a way of examining the sense making of individuals' experiences (Smith, 2004; 2010; 2011), and more specifically for this research: how individuals cope with life experiences (Smith & Osborn, 2008) such as killing in combat.

IPA is tied to an epistemological and theoretical position, which can be seen as a type of 'recipe' approach to qualitative analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). As an early career researcher, this was found to be ideal to help ground the analysis into a concrete stance, set guidelines that could be understood and developed to provide a rich analysis. Specifically, it was felt that this grounding in theory and epistemology, with an emphasis on meaning

making and the link between thought and action, made IPA a suitable method for understanding sense making of killing in combat. Standing at somewhat of a contrast to this style of analysis is what Braun and Clarke (2006) call the second camp of qualitative analysis, which is not tied to any epistemological or theoretical stance. An example of this would be Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Thematic Analysis (TA) and IPA share some common traits. Both TA and IPA are methods for identifying and reporting patterns, or themes, within the data set (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Although both involve searching across the data set to find repeated patterns of meaning (Braun and Clarke, 2006), TA tends to place more emphasis on this than IPA. In this way TA is used to find meaning and patterns across a data set, to form a coherent, running theme in order to formulate theories or concepts, it is for this reason that TA tends to focus on larger sample sizes, and broader, over reaching themes than IPA. Both IPA and TA have a commitment for the analysis to be grounded in the data set, by including in quote text to demonstrate transparency. In doing so, the reader of the analysis can check how closely the analysis is based on the textual data. In terms of the analytical procedure, there are some obvious similarities, such as familiarising oneself with the data set by immersing oneself in the data, reading and re-reading, noting initial ideas down, and generating concepts that will later become themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The process of naming and identifying themes shares parallels, and seek to work both as an individual theme, and to serve as telling an overall arching story of the analysis itself. Likewise, both IPA and certain approaches to TA are, to an extent, rooted in phenomenology, in that they both focus on subjective human experiences (Guest et al, 2012). In this regard, the individual's experiences and feelings are emphasised throughout the analytical process (Guest et al, 2012).However, as noted by Braun and Clarke (2006), TA can adopt a social constructionist approach, which is, broadly speaking, informed by the critical epistemological stance of Foucault (1985). This approach differs substantially from IPA's phenomenological stance, in that it is concerned with the function of discourse, allowing

the researcher to focus on power relations in society, how objects and subjects are constructed through talk (Parker, 1992), and by extension how people perceive the world.

However it is the emphasis of the over-arching narrative and the formulation of theoretical models, in which IPA and TA deviate from one another and that ultimately influenced the researcher's decision to adopt IPA. TA is focused on generating codes, which later help form more detailed themes and thematic maps, a type of code map which aid the researcher to see any repeating themes, and consistency in the analysis across the data set (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This commitment to forming a bigger picture is emphasised in TA, perhaps due to its lack of epistemological underpinning, making the analysis broader and by the same token, arguably a more shallow analytical process. In this way TA is designed to construct theories that are grounded in the data (Guest & Nancy, 2012), by identifying possible themes, comparing and contrasting the themes, and building theoretical models (Guest & Nancy, 2012). On the contrary, IPA has a commitment to focusing on the everyday experiences of reality in great detail in order to understand a particular phenomenon (McLeod, 2001; Hoolway and Todres, 2003). As such, IPA is considered focus is more on in depth, high quality themes and sub themes, instead of placing such a strong emphasis on an over-arching story and building theoretical models (Braun and Clarke, 2008). Finally, a method such as TA has what is sometimes referred to as a 'branding problem' (Braun and Clarke, 2006), in which there is a lot of variability in both quality and method used in published studies (Antaki et al, 2002; Braun and Clarke, 2006). Indeed, there is no agreement on what TA actually is (Tuckett, 2005), as there is no accepted or prescribed way of conducting the analysis. In contrast, IPA has very clearly defined procedures and epistemological stance, which is discussed in detail in section 4.3.

There are two further additional points which, in the eyes of the author, made IPA the preferred choice over a method such as TA for this thesis. One of the major strengths for IPA, that this author would argue is a potential weakness in TA, is its suitability to explore

meaningful experiences in people's lives. These experiences may have taken on a major significance to that individual, who may use abstract language, metaphors, and considerable reflecting to work through the meaning this experience has within the context of their life narrative (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2008; Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006). The second point is that by sacrificing the options TA can offer, to talk about cultural discourse, power and influence in society, and the way in which cultures may be constructed, IPA removes the pretence of understanding the subject matter, in this case, killing, to focus on the individual's experiences of the subject matter, and what it means to them. In this sense IPA is offering a glimpse into that person's experiences of killing in combat, which forms their sense making of their life as a soldier, and as a civilian, without drawing the focus way onto topics such as discourse surrounding killing in society, and social constructs within the military.

In summary, Thematic Analysis is considered one of the core, key research methods to learn within qualitative analysis, as it requires the researcher to learn a broad set of skills, such as coding, and re-coding, clustering themes, immersing oneself in the data set by reading and re-reading the data, and being transparent throughout the analytical process. These skill sets share similarities with other qualitative analytical methods (Brain and Clarke, 2008), Making TA an excellent way to be introduced to qualitative analysis. Indeed TA has been suggested to be more so a set of skills than a method (Boyatzis, 2000), which in on itself, is not necessary a negative. However, the ambiguity of what constitutes a good TA, the lack of epistemological framework to guide the research process, and broader, the shallower analysis focusing on constituency over depth are some of the reasons it was found to be less ideal for this thesis than IPA. Indeed, IPA was found to be a good fit for analysing the sense making of combat soldiers, as it is concerned with the sense making of experiences as an individual reflects on the significance of events that transpire in their lives. In making assumptions that the individual engages in cognitive

processing, in order to express and make sense of the significance an event has to them, IPA assumes a link between people's talk, thought processes and emotional states. In this way an individual may engage in hot and cold cognition. Hot cognition is considered more of an instinctive response; coloured by emotional bias, where as cold cognition tends to be more analytical, derived from logic. Combined, these mechanisms allow the researcher to examine the meanings individuals place upon their lived experiences (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

The second axis of the double hermeneutic approach can be divided into empathy and scepticism. Empathy is used to discover the original meaning of the participant's narrative, whereas scepticism gives the researcher the opportunity to take a step back and be more critical with the narrative (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). This approach allows the researcher to simultaneously play both a critical and empathic role during data analysis; on one hand the researcher can explore the mind-set of the individual, whilst simultaneously not taking the information provided at face value (Aresti, Eatough & Brooks, 2010). Of particular interest to this research is IPA's 'unconstrained' approach, by taking into account how the researcher's own conceptions affect their ability to understand the observed individuals' personal world, whilst at the same time being able to ask critical questions about the motivations of the participant and what they are trying to achieve (Smith and Osborn, 2008).

In combination with empathy and scepticism, the analyst brings in psychological theories and perspectives to the analysis, to draw out the meanings of the experience (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). In this way, the IPA analyst adopts a 'centre-ground position', which provides the opportunity to be in the shoes of the author or participant, whilst also being able to be critical and reflective of the author's narrative (Smith et al., 2009).

A strong IPA analysis requires the marriage of phenomenology and hermeneutics. Without the phenomenology, there would be nothing to interpret, yet without hermeneutics, there

would be no lens through which to discover the phenomenon (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). IPA can be viewed as a tripod of philosophies (hermeneutics, phenomenology, and ideography), which, combined, provide the researcher with the tools to produce rich, exploratory analysis. Indeed, much like a tripod, IPA cannot maintain stability without the third critical component of IPA; an adherence to an idiographic philosophy. An insightful analysis into a person's sense making of lived experiences can make a significant contribution to Psychology; IPA offers not only the opportunity to gather the painstaking detail required for such an analysis on a case by case basis, but also similarities and differences across cases (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

Phenomenological analysis has a commitment to empathic exploration of a topic, combined with sophisticated theorising, in order to avoid superficial, common sense analysis (Yardley, 2000). Indeed IPA is designed to provide rich insight into individuals' lived experiences, and is appropriately set up to develop a contextual understanding of the experiential dimensions of emotion (Eatough & Smith, 2006). Eatough and Smith (2006) suggest that emotions can be expressed using metaphors to articulate how individuals both feel and experiences emotions. In investigating how anger is experienced, Eatough & Smith (2006) explored how participants used emotional metaphors to try and articulate anger into something meaningfully expressed through language. For example, Marilyn, one of the participants in Eatough & Smith's (2006) study, described their anger as 'very hot' and 'trembling', a way to try and make sense of a very intense, difficult emotion to express without metaphors.

Further, Eatough and Smith (2006) suggested that emotions as a metaphor can be used to distance the author away from undesirable qualities which they feel do not represent them. In the case of Eatough & Smith's research, problems with angry outbursts were 'animalistic', and 'wild', which was the opposite of being a woman: i.e. 'peaceful, gentle, harmonious' (Eatough & Smith, 2006. p 489). These emotional metaphors can also

represent a transformation from a ‘rational civilised person, into an irrational uncivilised animalistic being’ (Eatough & Smith, 2006, p 489).

Schmitt (2005) suggests that metaphors may highlight or hide experiences, feelings and emotions and it is the ability of the interpreter, and often their lived cultural experiences, which dictate the quality of the analysis. Of particular significance to the present research, Schmitt (2005) demonstrates how speakers/authors may use metaphors as a tool of communicating the way in which they view people who share common activities, and those that do not. As an example, men describe drinking in terms of manliness, strength, power and combat (Schmitt, 2005). Often, drinking was associated with proving one’s manhood and feeling strong, whilst one who does not drink is ‘not fit’, ‘not a real man’ (Schmitt, 2002b). However, when one individual decided to stop drinking, the reverse became true; abstinence meant proving one’s ‘strength’ ‘power’ and overall image of a strong male (Schmitt, 2002b). The researcher would argue that the double hermeneutic nature of IPA makes it an ideal method to explore emotional metaphors, not only in the cultural and time context, in which they are provided, and the experiences and sense making of the author, but also the analyst’s sense making of the authors’ narrative.

In summary, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) assumes an individual to be a cognitive, linguistic, affective & physical being, and assumes a chain of connection between people’s talk and their thinking and emotional states (Smith & Osborn, 2008). This is particularly relevant to the current research, as it provides a method for examining in detail the personal lived experience of participants making sense of their experience (Smith, 2004). Lived experiences are noted as being vital in how individuals cope with life experiences (Smith and Osborn, 2008) which suggests a link between how soldiers view killing in combat and sense making of the combat experience.

Finally, in relation to combat, and specifically killing in combat, IPA is well suited to exploring how the individual makes sense of significant life experiences. These

experiences can be life altering when the individual attempts to make sense of, and reflects on these experiences, within the context of their lives (Smith and Osborn, 2008; Smith, 1999). On a personal note, as suggested by Yardley (2000) , Elliott, Fischer and Rennie (1999), and Braun and Clarke (2006), this researcher, as an early career academic, was grateful to have a qualitative methodology with clear guidelines to adhere too, which they also felt would be accepted academically.

## 4.6 Autobiographies and In Depth Semi Structured Interview

Within this thesis it is integral for IPA to be committed to an idiographic approach (Hefferon & Rodriguez, 2011). In this sense the adage 'less is more' applies; fewer individuals examined in greater depth is preferable to a shallow analysis which attempts to analyse many individuals (Hefferon & Rodriguez, 2011). It is this adherence to an idiographic approach which leads Hefferon and Rodriguez (2011) to suggest that a PhD thesis should contain between 4-10 individuals. Smith and colleagues (2009), Smith, (2004) and Smith (2015, personal communication) suggest that broadly speaking, 5-10 individuals is satisfactory for a PhD thesis. However, Smith clarifies that such factors should be looked at on a case by case basis and as of yet, there are no 'firm' guidelines for a PhD thesis. Indeed, recently the creator of IPA, Johnathan Smith, suggested the following guidelines, which were posted to PhD students via email:

> "There is no prescribed figure for a sample size for a PhD. There *[sic]* are many factors to take into account.
>
> Broadly of course IPA is concerned with quality over quantity but a supervisory or university panel will want to be sure that a requisite amount of effort has gone into the work. Therefore the smaller the number of participants, the greater the need that each case or interview is of high quality, has rich data and required considerable effort to collect". (Smith, 2015, personal communications)

Rather than focus on a specific number, Smith (2004) suggests that the nuanced nature of the analysis within IPA calls to focus on a small sample size, so that one can focus on quality, over quantity. Indeed Smith (2004) urges Doctoral candidates to consider conducting a single case study, further highlighting the demand for in depth analysis over breadth. It was this flexibility, and focus on quality over quantity, which led the current thesis to eight individual cases, as well as the focus on autobiographical data.

Originally the researcher intended to use the autobiographies as both supporting evidence, and to help design the interview questions, with a primary aim of conducting semi-structured interviews for the analysis. However, an initial reading of the autobiographies provided unparalleled detail in both depth and scope that the researcher did not originally anticipate. Thus study one, as outlined below, comprised of autobiographical data. Study two, listed under section 4.9, discusses the semi-structured interview.

Secondly, although the researcher of this thesis gained ethical approval (see Appendix A), there were quite naturally some topics which could not be probed by the interviewer. The subject of killing in combat is a sensitive one, and the researcher wanted to avoid psychological distress to the best of their ability. In this way, the autobiographies allowed the researcher to explore the sensitive topic of killing in combat in detail, from a variety of individuals, without the concern of solely relying on this information being forth coming over several interviews.

Thirdly, it cannot be assumed that soldiers will be willing to share intimate, violent details of warfare with a civilian who has not experienced combat. In contrast, the autobiographies offered unrestricted reflective accounts from soldiers about killing in combat, and combat in general.

Fourthly, a narrative offers insight into an individual's meaning making based on their telling and sense making of plots, themes, individual subjectivity and moral justification of

who a person was, and will be (McAdams, 2011). Indeed McAdams (2011) highlights the significance of agency within one's narrative in battling depression and other psychological disturbances, linking emotional closure (Pals, 2006a) and themes of redemption (McAdams, Reynolds, Lewis, Pattern & Bowman, 2001). Of significance to this study, McAdams (2011) notes that these narratives are not 'set in stone', as such adults can continuously update and alter their narrative, as gains and losses change their perspective on who they are (Birren, Kenyon, Ruth, Shroots & Syendson, 1996).

Thus in line with an idiographic and phenomenological approach, autobiographies were found to provide detailed exploration of life experiences and sense making, applicable to this research. Indeed studies using published autobiographies as data for IPA have made valuable contributions to understanding sense making of experiences and shifts in identity (Smith, 1999; Spiers & Smith, 2012; Boserman, 2009; Williams, 2004).

## 4.7 Study one: Textual Data Search

Phase One - Textual data search and collection. Utilisation of secondary sourced data, as well as archives, diaries, autobiographies and interviews to understand human behaviour during wars is a well-established method of elucidating combat motivations (Engen 2008; 2009; Chacho, 2001; Stouffer et al., 1949; Grossman, 2009; 2007; Dyer, 2006; Bartone, 2005). The first step was to verify whether any autobiographies had been used within academic writing, and had been validated as appropriate for analysis based on richness of content. PubMed, PubPsych, Google Scholar, Pych INFO and ProQuest, were considered the most appropriate resources for the academic search of relevant papers by the author, as combined they provided the most comprehensive list of available journals and books in academia for sciences, including psychological sciences. In order to meet this requirement a list of 'key terms' and 'hot words' were used which would lead to a search of available autobiographies within psychological research. These terms included*: Soldiers'*

*autobiography, soldiers' accounts of combat/killing, infantry soldiers, warfare, war, combat, killing in combat, experiences of war, experiences in Afghanistan/Iraq, soldiers account of Afghanistan/Iraq, soldiers testimonies of combat, frontline, sense making of combat/killing in combat/warfare*. For each word or string of words, Boolean logic (MIT libraries, 2016), that is to say, applying mathematical word sets and database logic using 'and', 'not', and 'if was used manually within the search function, in an attempt to get the most comprehensive results possible. These were checked against the inclusion/exclusions criteria (see section 4.8) to see if any were contesters for the analysis. Based on the inclusion/exclusion criteria, the most comprehensive online book depository and sales website, Amazon was used to search for all available autobiographies. Within the constraints of the criteria outlined in section 4.8, dozens of mainstream autobiographies of soldiers in combat are available to explore the alleged universal notion of a resistance to killing. It should be noted that upon reading of the autobiographies, 29 were initially selected, and from those 12 were selected to be potentially suitable based on the inclusion/ exclusion criteria. At the time of the data search, noted works which focused loosely on autobiographical, or survey which allowed elaboration within combat psychology and experiencing warfare were Stouffer (1949), Chacho (2001) , and Engen's (2008) research. All of the above researcher's works are described in detail within the introduction, which were all, without excpetion based on WWII experiences. Furthermore, none of the researcher's works provided transcript of the original data, or the open ended surveys. In an effort to track down the original data, used by Chacho (2001) and Stouffer (1949), the author contacted the archive centre: The U.S Army Heritage and Education centre (http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ahec/contact.cfm), to request those documents. Since they were unable to provide them electronically, the author of this thesis flew to the United States to view them personally, and check for any available information that could be useful. No such information, which was relevant to the research questions, could be found beyond statistical tallying of words used in surveys and open ended questions, which

would have formed an entirely different analysis based on a quantitative analysis, with broader implications and shallower analysis, deviating from the research questions. Further, the inclusion/exclusion criteria excluded data from WW2 soldiers combat experiences for this analysis, a rationale for this in included in the introduction, as well as sections 4.6 and 4.8 in the method section of this thesis.

## 4.8 Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria and List of Autobiographies

Phase Two- Inclusion-exclusion criteria.

It should be noted that whilst checking the survey and interview response data in the U.S Army Heritage and Education centre, it became quickly apparent that information from WWII would not be appropriate for this study. Although the surveys studied were from an all voluntary combat unit (the airborne unit), and so were appealing to the author to be more relevant for today's military, failure to volunteer to that unit would mean conscription into another unit. Further, whilst reading the surveys, it also became clear that many soldiers were 'coerced' into 'volunteering' for the airborne unit, by being given ultimatums of serving in less desirable units, offered more pay and promised more holiday. As such, in order to analyse data relevant to today's modern all voluntary military, it was important to use autobiographical data which was based on the modern concept of voluntary, professional military.

Further, it was decided early on, in an effort to be transparent during the analytical process, that the autobiographies would be easily accessible and meet the criteria of being: published by an official publisher, in English, and that their story be easily authenticated, if required. Crucially, it was important that these narratives, or accounts of soldiers be officially published, so that there is some guarantee that an official, well respected publisher authenticated the narrative, and that the body of work had a reasonable standard

of grammar and spelling. Amazon provided the easiest and best way to confirm these criteria, and so a search began using the category search using the amazon search function was as follows:

**Step one**: search **Books**> **Biography**> **War and espionage**. This provided over 30,000 entries.

**Step two**: narrow down the search to relevant autobiographies using the following three functions:

An **advanced search** with the following key words and dates:

Nothing published before **1982** (please see inclusion exclusion bullet point below)

Keywords: **Afghanistan**, **Iraq** (modern day wars), autobiography. This produced just over 100 entries.

**Step three**: The author also checked entries under, **Gulf war**, **Special Forces**, **the Falklands**, **and bestsellers** to make sure nothing was missed. The amount of autobiographies (excluding memoirs, unofficial, biographies, and collection of accounts) under this was just over 250 entries.

The scope of the mentioned texts is too extensive to gather all the available data. An initial screening of the autobiographies was required in order to evaluate which are suitable in terms of scope and depth of personal experience. Therefore, the inclusion- exclusion criteria were based on a systematic analysis of documents based on the level and richness of information they can provide. The previous literature and research was also used to identify appropriate sources. This analysis was based on the following criteria:

**Inclusion**

- Studied by previous researchers and known to contain a rich amount of information.

- Text that offers insights into an individual's personal experiences based on locating and briefly sorting through the available text.
- For the modern soldier's perspective autobiographies based on a voluntary modern professional Military that dates back no further than the Falklands War (1982) due to changes in training, weaponry and attitudes in the military that occurred around this time.
- The focus will be mainly on the major combat units in both the British and United States Military (Royal Marine commandos, British Infantry, Special Air Service, United States Marines, United States Infantry, U.S Navy SEALS).

**Exclusion**

- For the modern soldier's perspective autobiographies that predate 1982 will not be considered.
- Conversations that happen in an unofficial capacity.
- Biographies because they are not written by the author in a first person narrative.
- Reporters' autobiographical account of being entrenched with infantry soldiers, even those containing direct quotes from the soldier.
- Must be from a combat or frontline position.

The autobiographies were also screened for amazon reviewer comments to partially, but not exclusively, check authenticity. For example, if a reviewer claimed the story to be untrue, wildly dramatised and factually incorrect, and provided details of their military identity to be able to confirm that they have personal knowledge of why these events were untrue, or were willing to be contacted to confirm their authenticity, the author of this thesis either excluded the autobiography outright or investigated the authenticity further by checking reviews from newspapers, or autobiographical reviews. The only time autobiographies were excluded outright for this reason is if the overwhelming majority of

reviewers, with military background, suggested the story was in some way false or misleading, and provided concrete examples and details of why, often confirmed by other reviewers. Even then, this was cross checked with other reviewer websites and military forums. It should be noted that based on these conditions, 29 autobiographies were initially selected, and from those 12 were selected to be potentially suitable based on the inclusion/ exclusion criteria.

Further, the researcher continued to read and re-read each autobiography several times in order to become immersed in the data. At this point, the researcher made a choice of autobiographies which gave a variety of British and American soldiers, from a range of infantry units within this criteria (however this was secondary to depth, richness and scope of the data). 7 were selected for analysis based on finding a balance between I) the different combat arms, II) a narrative not based on a single event of war, or a commentary on the political ramifications of war, and III) based on an account of the individual's life before, during, and, where possible, after the armed forces. Ultimately, the 7 chosen reflected the most articulate, introspective and sensitive account of sense making of the self and experiences in their life. Overall there were 2504 pages of data to read, filter, analyse and write up for the combined 7 autobiographies, and significantly more for the original 12 autobiographies, which were also read for criteria selection purposes. These autobiographies were cross referenced on NCBI/PubMed and Google scholar to check that they had been previously used in any scholarly articles; none were found to have been previously studied. Based on the outlined criteria and after an initial screening of the available material, the following autobiographies, including descriptions of the authors' rank, unit and serving country, were used for the analysis:

**Table 2 Autobiographies (total 7)**

| Author | Book | Unit | Rank | Military type | Year | Pages |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Patrick Bury** | **Call sign Hades** | 1st Royal Irish Infantry | Captain | British Army | 2011 | 303 |
| **Rorke Denver** | **Damn Few, Making the Modern warrior** | Navy SEALS | LT Commander | US Navy | 2013 | 290 |
| **Andy McNab** | **Immediate Action** | SAS (Special Air Service) | Sergeant | SAS | 2008 | 498 |
| **Nathaniel Fick** | **One Bullet Away** | 1st Battalion, 1st Marines | Captain | US Marines | 2009 | 372 |
| **David Blakeley** | **Maverick One** | Path finders | Captain | British Army | 2013 | 309 |
| **Howard E Wasdin** | **SEAL team Six** | Navy SEALS | Petty Officer | US Navy | 2011 | 344 |
| **Russell Lewis** | **Company Commander** | Parachute regiment | Major | British Army | 2013 | 391 |

## 4.9 Study Two: Recruitment and Ethics for Semi Structured Interview

Although the researcher chose to focus mainly on autobiographies, it is noted by Smith (1999) and a range of other IPA scholars (Smith and Osborn, 2008; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009) that semi-structured interviews are perhaps the most used and preferred method of analysis whilst conducting IPA. This is unsurprising when considering the flexibility, depth and possibilities to uncover unique information provided by the semi-structured interview (Smith and Osborn, 2008). In line with this, as a second study, an in depth semi-structured interview was conducted to provide additional wealth of information that might build upon the themes found from analysis of the autobiographies. Specifically the interviewee was selected as they served at a time just after a major war (WWII), but was not subject to conscription service. The participant, Jay (pseudonym), joined the Royal Marine commandos in 1965 at 16 years of age, and served for 7 years and 10 months. This type of individual was chosen as it was felt it gave the best chance to explore a unique perspective on combat and killing in combat, which was not based on the modern military which fought in Afghanistan and Iraq. Due to the exploratory nature of this research, and in line with the guidelines set out by Smith (1999; 2004) on the merits of one participant analysis, an in depth semi-structured interview was thought appropriate for this thesis. Jay's testimony provides a level of insight into the sense making of soldiers that was not found in the autobiographies (please see discussion for more details). This unique account, which was sought out to add depth to the understanding of sense making in combat from a perspective of a military, in transition from conscript service, to the modern professional military which exists today. It was hoped that Jay would build upon this sense making of being in combat, by exploring a combat soldier's perspective of killing in combat, during this transition period. Thus, in accordance with the guidelines set out by Smith and Osborn (2008) the following analytical plan was used as a guide and template in conducting an IPA study.

Phase One- Recruitment. All ethical issue related to the accessibility and recruitment strategy within the ethical guidelines to collect participants has been ethically approved, (See Appendix A, G). The participant, for the in depth semi-structured interview, did not require specialised access and as noted in the ethics release form, it was the experience of the researcher that simply building a 'rapport' with the military and ex-military community was sufficient to gain access to the individuals in question. A detailed description of the procedure undertaken in order to recruit participants was submitted to the Southampton Solent Ethics board and approved (Appendix A, G), which is detailed as follows:

Participants must be either serving (active) or retired Military personnel, and will therefore be recruited from establishments, such as Veteran associations (VA) and from Military groups, (such as forums) which will be found by the researcher. It is anticipated that the participants will come from Military groups and forums –such as army rumour service (aarse.co.uk, military forums.co.uk), as well as VA associations. It is also likely that some participants will be referred to by organization leaders/managers/forum masters and word of mouth. It is also the case that these groups are under-researched in regards to killing in combat as such topics have gone undisputed until recently, it is therefore important to gauge their reactions to combat. As such participants will be recruited from the various VA associations, forums and word of mouth. At this stage it is difficult to know exactly which associations and mediums will be used, as it is at the discretion of each association as to whether they wish to be posted the recruitment material and give me access to engage with their members. However the following will be initially contacted:

- Army benevolent fund
- British Armed forces association
- Combat stress
- Help for Heroes

- The Royal British Legion

VA associations and forums will be initially contacted via email with the relevant recruitment materials. Once the forums and VA associations have agreed to be involved, the researcher will provide the recruitment materials to the prospective participants, either by posting online, putting up posters, or coming in to brief the project and requirements.

Potential participants will be asked to provide a response as to whether they wish to participate by replying to the thread, placing a request form in a confidential box or by letting the researcher know directly. This information will then be collected by the researcher at the end of the day (in VA associations) or as an ongoing process on the forums. This visit will also provide the opportunity for the researcher to answer questions, and to discuss the research with those who wish to participate. Should there be more potential participants than are required, the researcher will pick the participant based on rank and position in the military (information is requested on contact sheet), in order to get the most eclectic range of responses. There will be associations where no confidential information is required. For example, in forums, names are already often replaced by a username that represents the individual user. However, since usernames available publicly can be traced back to the original identity of the individual, all participants will be given aliases.

Those who are not chosen will be written to and explained why, and thanked for their interest. This will be important, as rejection can be taken personally, especially in regards to something related to combat. Appointments will then be made to conduct the interviews at a time and place convenient to the participant.

Due to the qualitative nature of the current methodology, only a small sample size is needed (between 6 and 14 participants). The participants will be fully briefed and offered to opt out if they feel uncomfortable with either notion. The interviews 1-1.5 hours, and

will be provided with refreshments and the opportunity to take breaks. There will be no financial or other reward/incentive. The benefit to participants will be that they will be able to express their views and have their voices heard. They will in effect be given a voice, which is a key aspect of the nature of qualitative research and until recently, something lacking in military combat research. It is expected that this research will contribute to the combat literature and Military policies. Considering the prevalence of the existing model of resistance to killing, along with its noted limitations and criticisms, this research will be important in further understanding killing in combat and its effects.

Interviews based around questions exploring the world of combat and killing can be a sensitive issue. However, the researcher has written an extensive rationale behind both the questions chosen and why the researcher believes they are appropriate to ask, which can be found in the Ethics Release Checklist (Please see appendix A), which is detailed as follows:

The author sought the assistance of Jane Adlard, a Psychology lecturer at Southampton Solent University, to add to professional expertise for this study, in order to act as an experienced professional for assistance whilst interviewing the participants. Jane Adlard is a Chartered Forensic Psychologist, member of BPS Forensic Division, Registered Practitioner Psychologist with the HCPC and Masters in Forensic Psychology. Jane has extensive experience working with, interviewing and treating prisoners with a variety of vulnerabilities within the prison system. As such, Jane appeared to be the ideal candidate to assist me in one interview, by being available for the following:

1) Jane will be conducting a screening process of the interviewee pre interview. As suggested by Jane:

“I've had a look and would be happy to have a chat with [Name deleted] if [gender deleted] still wishes to take part. I think just some general questions to see how [gender deleted]

feels about discussing [gender deleted] time in the military would be ok." (Personal correspondence, March 31st 2014).

2) Guidance of behaviours to look out for whilst interviewing the participants, in order to identify signs of anxiety or distress.

3) Jane will be close by and instantly contactable by phone should the participant exhibit signs of distress during the interview. Jane is able to intervene at any point in the interview should the participant show any signs of anxiety or distress.

Rationale

The following rationale has been devised in alignment with the current literature on killing in combat:

Litz et al. (2009) describes the following:

> "It is important to appreciate that the military culture fosters an intensely moral and ethical code of conduct and, in times of war, being violent and killing is normal, and bearing witness to violence and killing is, to a degree, prepared for and expected…For example, it makes sense that most service members are able to assimilate most of what they do and see in war because of training and preparation, the warrior culture, their role, the exigencies of various missions, rules of engagement and other context demands, the messages and behavior of peers and leaders, and the acceptance (and recognition of sacrifices) by families and the culture at large" (p697).

It has been recognised that unlike the world of a civilian, killing in combat is a central role of a modern day, professional soldier. According to the researcher's experience of reading dozens of biographies and documentaries about the military, cultural norms are established within the military that allow soldiers to freely and openly talk about the act of killing as a way of venting, debriefing, and inoculating. This is not to say that one should understate the psychological implications to the welfare of soldiers when pursuing the topic of killing.

Further, other psychological studies have already posed such questions to military personnel. For example, Maguen et al. (2010) devised a survey that was administered to over 2700 soldiers after deployment to Iraq and included the following questions:

(a) During combat operations did you become wounded or injured?

(b) During combat operations, did you see the bodies of

dead soldiers or civilians?

(c) During combat operations, did you personally witness anyone being

killed?

Soldiers responded to the following question to assess direct

and indirect killing experiences, "During combat operations did

you kill others in combat (or have reason to believe that others

were killed as a result of your actions)?" The response format was

dichotomous (yes/no).

Although it is understood that interviews are more substantial than surveys, the researcher believes that taking into account the current literature's views and practices, as well as the

help offered by Dr. Murdoch and Jane Adlard, the subject of killing in combat can be explored in an ethically safe manner.

The researcher has sought the assistance of Dr. Nicholas Murdoch in order to act as a gatekeeper and experienced professional for assistance whilst interviewing the participants. Dr. Murdoch is a researcher in Psychology at the University of Portsmouth. For ten years he served as a Medical Technician within the Royal Navy, working alongside a Consultant Psychiatrist in order to treat service members with anxiety and depression.

Dr. Murdoch is a consultant and expert advisor with the Trim4Veterans association (http://www.trim4veterans.org/our-team/expert-advisors/) and has offered to help recruit veterans for the purpose of interviewing them. Dr. Murdoch works closely with this community and is aware of the sensitivity and needs required to engage with members of this population. As such, he appeared to be the ideal candidate to help develop:

4) A screening process for the veterans in his association for the study.

5) A checklist of behaviours to look out for whilst interviewing the participants, in order to identify signs of anxiety or distress.

6) To sit in the interviews so that a specialist and trusted, trained expert is present throughout, should a participant exhibit signs of distress.

7) Dr. Murdoch will also advise and help develop questions that display sensitivity to the topic at hand and to the community.

As an individual who spent time in the Officer Training Corps, and spent 6 months going through the RAF elite combat selection process, the researcher has met, spent time with and been interviewed by individuals in the military. The researcher has a small but useful understanding of military culture, life, and Identity, which has helped to not only design appropriate questions for the interview, but helped build a rapport between the researcher

and the participant. Additionally the researcher has immersed himself into the world of military life, through dozens of hours of documentaries, biographies and previous literature relating to killing in combat, which the researcher believes has enabled a more informed perspective to designing relevant questions.

The autobiographies analysed for this study are available in the public domain as published books, and as such ethical clearance was not required before analysis. The researcher represented the books responsibly, with each quote or extract accurately reproduced, including any spelling and punctuation mistakes.

## 4.10 Semi-structured Interview and Interview Questions

Using the interview questions outlined in Chapter 8, a semi-structured interview was carried out with one individual, who was recruited through word of mouth, using the means outlined within the Ethics Release checklist (see Appendix A). Smith and Osborn (2008), Smith (1999) and Smith and colleagues (2009) suggest that semi-structured interviews are the preferred means for collecting data in IPA, due to the fact they are easily managed, and allow a rapport to be developed, giving the participants the space to think, speak and be heard (Smith et al., 2009). Crucially for this project, was the flexibility the semi-structure format provided to allow an interaction between interviewer and interviewee (Smith et al., 2009), allowing ideas to emerge which were not previously considered, and provided unprompted information that can provide insight into the participant's sense making (Smith et al., 2009; Smith, 2004).

Semi-structured interviews in particular allow for the clarification of answers through the use of prompts. Furthermore, the way in which the participant speaks and phrases particular responses, whilst maintaining the freedom to elaborate, can lead to a greater understanding of the participants (Barriball & While, 1994; Smith & Osborn, 2008). A

strength of the semi-structured interview format is the freedom provided for the participant to be allowed to take lead and explore the way in which they create and think about their social world (Smith et al., 2009). Since the participant is the expert they can (and are encouraged to) tell their own story (Smith & Osborne, 2008).

Funnelling is a technique favoured for semi-structured interview question design, which favours beginning the interview more generally, and becoming increasingly more specific as the interview goes on. This technique can help limit the influence of preconceived notions of the research area, or where the participant might go with the interview, and allows the researcher to be naturally led by the participant (Smith & Osborne, 2008). In line with this, the funnelling technique also promotes a more organic, and less contrived interview, which also can help in creating trust and support so that the participant feels comfortable during disclosure (Smith & Osborne, 2008).

Like any methodology, there are advantages and disadvantages to conducting a semi-structured interview. On the one hand, semi-structured interviews promote greater exploration and flexibility, allowing pursuit into novel areas and thus often producing richer data (Smith & Osborne, 2008). On the other hand, semi-structured interviews are time-consuming, often taking longer than an hour (Smith & Osborne, 2008; Smith et al., 2009). Further, by sacrificing rigidity, there is a potential to lose control over the direction of the interview (Smith et al., 2009). Despite these limitations, a semi-structured interview appeared to be the more appropriate technique for this phase of the project, based on the significant pros afforded to the researcher using this format outlined within this chapter.

In summary, a semi-structured interview is the preferred means for collecting data in IPA, as it provides a structured, yet flexible platform for the participant to be heard, to tell their story, and for new ideas to emerge which may have not been previously considered by the researchers. This can lead to an in-depth exploration of the participant’s sense making, and

allow for the clarification of answers to fully explore the participant's sense making of self, and experiences.

*Designing Interview Questions*

Smith and colleagues (2009) suggest that a guideline of six to ten questions, along with prompts, is recommended for a semi-structured interview, which will likely take between 45- 90 minutes. The researcher chose to carry out an extended semi-structured interview, in order to contribute to the existing analysis. With the agreement of the participant, the researcher used an extended interview structure, which amassed to 20 questions (although not all were used), taking approximately 1hr 30 minutes (see Appendix B, C & D for consent form, debrief form and interview questions). As previously stated, the researcher has spent time in the Officer Training Corps, and also took part in the RAF elite combat selection process for six months. Therefore, the researcher has a small but useful understanding of military culture and life. As such the researcher was in a good position to design and carry out a semi-structured interview with an ex -soldier. This has been outlined under section 4.5 and within the ethics release checklist (Appendix A).

Furthermore, as agreed upon in the ethics release checklist, the researcher was able to adapt and modify the interview questions (outlined in Appendix D), based on information found in study one (autobiographies). The structure of the interview was therefore a product of information gathered from study one, rapport building, funnelling, insight based on experiences and research into the military, and evidence-based practise as described throughout section 4.10. The interview questions' structure was based on what the researcher believed would be the best way to break into the topic of killing in a manner which was both consistent with ethical considerations, would build trust with Jay, and allow him to elaborate or add anything which the researcher did not think to ask. As can been seen in Appendix D, the questions start broad, getting to know Jay and build some context around his experiences, before delving deeper into his sense making of combat,

and then finally killing in combat. A breakdown of the stages of the interview is also covered extensively in the second analysis, in order to explain Jay's answers in light of this schedule and structure. Within the Ethics form (Appendix E) the author of this thesis outlined how their research into the military informed the structure of the interview:

> The author feels it is of paramount importance, when beginning the interview, to establish rapport by gaining a sense of trust with the interviewee. As outlined within the ethics form (appendix G), ethical release checklist (Appendix A) and interview structure (Appendix D) , killing in combat is a sensitive topic, and soldiers are often very aware of how civilians view such a taboo topic. Thus at the beginning of the interview, the author establishes credentials, explains that there is no judgement involved, that I simply want to hear about their experiences so that the author could learn more about what it was like, for them in the military. As further stated in the ethics form (appendix G):
>
> At the beginning of the interview, the researcher will begin by ensuring that the participant fully understands the nature of the research, and is happy to continue. They will be asked if they are happy with the interview being recorded. They will be reminded of the following:
>
> - That they can suspend or withdraw from the interview at any time
> - That they can withdraw their data after having participated
> - That their data will remain confidential and that there will be no identifying characteristics in the research
> - That they should not disclose anything confidential that might pertain to legal action be taken against them by the military or appropriate government sectors.
> - They do not have to discuss the details of their kills.
> - The questions formed, and the structure of the interview was also based on the following (Appendix E):
> - Knowledge and understanding of the military and sensitive topics- e.g. detailed knowledge about military language and culture, including humour and ways of

dealing with death and killing. Time talking to soldiers both in person during military training and selection, and on forums, helped inform the author on how to break the ice with soldiers, when discussing sensitive topics.

- A knowledge of personality traits, which are important to the research themes- Type A personality, are frequently found in combat roles, which help shape the way individuals talk about themselves and their social world. However, this personality type will not be assumed preceding the interview, and thus not inform a stance taken by the author in carrying out the interview, instead it will serve as a guideline.
- Based on themes and findings explored by other research investigated in the literature -e.g. wording of questions required to extrapolate information successfully, based on previous research.
- General questions that funnel to become more specific. However questions will remain relatively generalised throughout interview, to allow both the flexibility for the interviewee to lead the discussion, as well as the augmentation of questions to remain relevant to the individual discussion. This is standard practice in qualitative data collection and often provides richer, versatile data. The flexible nature of the interview should not affect the ethical issues outlined for this research, as explained above.

The questions were altered in a way that built on from the knowledge gained in the first study, by exploring if Jay felt the same or differently about certain topics. An example of this is how Jay talked about the warrior self, which varied in a very real, substantial way, which if not for the first analysis, may not have been asked by the researcher. Indeed study two could be said to build upon study one adding depth and meaning to not only killing in combat, but a subtle, nuanced insight into the portrayal of the warrior and protector role, which came from a mix of both of Jay's natural dialogue in response to broader questions, and the researcher investigating further what was analysed in study one. A full detail of the

procedure for the interview to be carried out is included in appendix A, B and C. Throughout the process, the author always held in mind that the interviewer and interviewee are both active participants in the process, as such prompting and phrasing play a significant role in providing rich and valuable data (While & Barriball, 1993). A schedule, which can be found in appendix D was found to be useful for three reasons:

- It allows the interviewer to consider the important topics worth discussing during the interview reflect on these topics, and seek advice from supervisors, and academics consulted.
- It allows practice and planning of how to phrase particular questions, and the effect that could have on how those questions are interpreted or seen as leading. For example use or avoid the term killing?
- To make sure the questions are not seen as judgemental or biased and instead remain totally impartial.

## 4.11 Steps to Analysis Using IPA

Guidelines exist to help guide a researcher's analysis, which offer a structural template and a step by step process of conducting IPA (Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2008). It should be noted that IPA is not a prescriptive approach (Eatough & Smith, 2006) and provides flexible guideline (Smith, 2010; Eatough & Smith, 2006), which can be adapted in light of the research aims:

**Step 1: Immersion (reading, re-reading)**

After reading and re-reading the transcripts the researcher listed initial ideas in the left hand margin. As an example, for the autobiographies, the author of this thesis went through each page, listing ideas that seem to relate to the person's sense making of experiences, as well as any abstract terms/metaphors which seemed relevant. If any two

ideas seemed to connect from one page to another, these were recorded on a separate page and put together as a potential way to group the passages.

**Step 2: Annotate the transcript with comments**

Begin to consider how the psychological literature fits in with what the researcher is discovering in the transcripts.

An example is provided in Appendix F from Fick's (2009) autobiography One Bullet Away: The Making Of A Us Marine Officer by Nathaniel Fick:

> "I wanted something more transformative. Something that might kill me — or leave me better, stronger, more capable. I wanted to be a warrior."
>
> Early comment: Two things, the desire to prove himself, both to himself and to the world, to become what he wants to be, the thing he identifies himself as, a warrior. Born of the wrong time, yet this is the way to follow that path.

**Step 3: Emerging themes**

Begin to transform the left hand margin into meaningful statements, which can be transferred to the right hand margin. These are the emerging themes.

An example is provided in Appendix F from Fick's (2009) autobiography One Bullet Away: The Making Of A Us Marine Officer by Nathaniel Fick:

Possible Theme?

Early fascination with the military, with the identification of good and evil and those that fight for good. As the author notes, he wanted to be part of that he:" always wanted to be a soldier"

**Step 4: Clustering of themes**

Identify common links between themes and begin to cluster them accordingly into a separate table. This allows the researcher to re-check the themes.

An example is provided in Appendix F from Fick's (2009) autobiography One Bullet Away: The Making Of A Us Marine Officer by Nathaniel Fick:

Conflict of identity

- Desire to do good, as he thought was the reason for joining the army starting to break down, it plays a part in how he thinks of himself, and thus, his identity as a soldier, synonymous with him as a force for good. Past tense of really believing in, this suggests now he does not, and that inner conflict is dangerous.

- Author his aware how he needed to construct this reality of doing good to reinforce his soldier identity, but he is starting to show CogDis [cognitive dissonance]. He knows he is creating his own good and evil, black and white that he is comfortable with.

- The force of good, the role of helping these people is being challenged by the hatred they show him.

- Cog di is starting to take effect; they are protecting that which they consider evil, bad, unjust, the things they joined the army to prevent.

**Step 5: Super-ordinate themes**

Emerging themes that encompass or parent other themes were put into a super-ordinate table, with the sub themes also presented.

An example is provided in Appendix F from Fick's (2009) autobiography One Bullet Away: The Making Of A Us Marine Officer by Nathaniel Fick:

| Identifying as a soldier and warrior | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Sense making of a warrior* | *109* | *I wanted something more transformative. Something that might kill me — or leave me better, stronger, more capable. I wanted to be a warrior* |
| *Sense making of soldiering* | *700* | *I wanted the purity of a man with a weapon traveling great distances on foot, navigating, stalking, calculating, using personal skill.* |

**Step 6: Generate table(s) of themes**

A table of themes was generated, with super-ordinate and sub-themes labelled, and quotes from the transcripts provided as evidence for each sub theme. These can be found in the analysis section of the thesis, in Chapters 5- 8.

**Step 7: Interpretation of themes**

The researcher interpreted the significance of each theme, bringing in psychological literature into the interpretation, and noting the psychological implications of the themes. An example of this can be found throughout chapters 5-8 in any point within the analysis.

*Conducting High Quality IPA: rigour, reliability and validity*

Qualitative research is carried out to answer scientific questions that differ from those of quantitative research (Elliott, Fischer, Rennie, 1999). In an effort to better understand the perspective of participants and to define phenomena in terms of meaning making and experiences, including those based on observational data in the field, it is clear that qualitative and quantitative research methods differ in the way they approach answering scientific questions (Elliott, Fischer, Rennie, 1999). Indeed qualitative research emphasises the phenomenological, hermeneutic, pragmatic, critical, and post-modernist traditions (Elliott, Fischer, Rennie, 1999), which not only challenge the epistemological emphasis of quantitative research, but gives the researcher the tools to focus on the human experience,

taking into account history, context, and language. As such, it is important to have a separate set of guidelines for how to conduct high quality qualitative research. Indeed, separate guidelines can be used to legitimise qualitative research, and demonstrate rigour and quality (Elliott, Fischer & Rennie, 1999).

Qualitative research has a long history of over 25 years (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Packer & Addison, 1989; Stiles 1993; Elliott, Fischer & Rennie, 1999; Yardley, 2000) of guidelines set out by researchers in order to improve the quality of research published and its standing in the research community. Demonstrating the integrity and quality of qualitative research faces its own unique challenges in that it is seen as a set of methods unwilling to converge on an agreed set of principles, which can lead to confusion and by extension, scepticism over the validity and importance of conducting qualitative research (Yardley, 2000). However, this diversity is also qualitative researchers' greatest strength, in that adopting this research method is recognising that our knowledge and experience of the world cannot be measured exclusively from an objective perspective, but instead is profoundly based on our subjective, lived experiences and unique cultural context (Yardley, 2000; 1997). Broadly speaking, IPA shares common quality control measures developed by other qualitative researchers, in order to provide guidance for an early career researcher (Yardley, 2000; Elliott, Fischer & Rennie, 1999). In addressing matters of subjectivity, the researcher did not attempt to conduct an objective piece of research, but instead, acknowledge their subjectivity and own inherent bias when analysing the data. This was done in accordance with guidelines set out by Yardley, (2000) and Elliott, Fischer and Rennie, (1999), which can be broken down into the following areas:

**Setting coding limits**: Subjectivity in the interpretation of data cannot be avoided, nor is possible to avoid this subjectivity by having two or more people agree on the interpretation of data (Yardley, 2000). Instead of utilising a method which sets coding limits (Manning and Cullum-Swan 1994) - setting up the possibility of missing subtle, rich interpretation-

the researcher instead relied on transparency, referral back to text, and two supervisors' notes to help in seeing outside of one's subjective lived experience and bias. An example of this would be that the researcher's familiarity with the military culture led to taking colloquialisms, mannerisms and sense of masculinity for granted. It was through the aid of two of the researcher's supervisors that this brought to light, and the researcher attempted to look at the data in a different way. This was a learning and growing experience, which is elaborated upon in the reflexive statement in appendix (E).

**Transparency and coherence**: The researcher must be aware of the reason why the author is telling their narrative in the way that they are. The function of any story is not to describe, but to construct a version of reality (Bruner, 1991; Yardley, 2000), as such; a convincing account creates a reality which readers may recognise as meaningful (Yardley, 2000). Indeed Yardley (2000) argues that qualitative approaches take stories not as a statement of feelings, beliefs or opinions, but rather as an act of communication, to communicate a specific meaning for a specific listener (Leudar & Antaki, 1996). Although a phenomenological approach places more emphasis on cognition, thought, emotion and behaviour being accessible via the narrative, it is critical to be aware of the motivations of the narrative being told, and the way in which the author tells it, when conducting an analysis. Indeed, in line with McAdams (2011) this researcher argues that this telling of a story is also one that is meaningful to the author as, and the narrative will contain an agent rich, coherent and meaningful storyline that achieves consistency. The researcher discusses this further in the limitations section of the discussion, in which the nature of who writes and publishes an autobiography is discussed, and the implications this may have to the sample of soldiers used in study one. Further, the researcher stuck closely to the textual data, including in quote texts throughout to demonstrate transparency, so that the reader can decide whether the analysis has addressed the nuances weaving the narrative and constructing events based on coherency. Further, in order to be transparent, the researcher

attempted to disclose any relevant information about themselves, so that the reader can note their personal bias and life experiences, and what brought them to the research (Yardley, 2000; Elliott, Fischer, Rennie, 1999). To this end, the researcher has included a reflexive statement in appendix (E), and where appropriate, revealed personal information in the method section of this thesis.

**Flexibility and rigidity**: Although clear cut guidelines are useful within qualitative methods, and indeed was one of the reasons the researcher chose IPA (as outlined in section 4.5), there is a concern within qualitative research of delineating other qualitative research groups, which are less rigid and prescribed, and have alternative philosophical underpinnings. This would create the very issues qualitative research seeks to address within psychological science, and further, may risk qualitative analysis becoming too rigid in its approach, which could lead to missing out on exploring key issues within psychology, one of the key defining principles of qualitative analysis (Yardley, 2000; Elliott, Fischer & Rennie, 1999). This is not so much a guideline which directly affects this particular thesis, which is only one piece of research, but rather is an important part of qualitative analysis which should be noted when choosing one method of analysis. Although the research chose IPA, there is plenty of scope for other methods to be applied to this type of research, for example in Duncanson (2007), who used Discourse Analysis to study modern masculinity in the British military.

**Grounding in examples**: Elliott, Fischer and Rennie (1999), suggest that researchers should give examples of their data, to provide evidence of the analytic procedure, and how themes came to be developed, and possible alternatives the reader may discover which the researcher may have missed. This also serves as a credibility check of the accuracy and legitimacy of the themes as coming from the data. As such, the researcher has included a sample of the analytic procedure in Appendix (E), and further, has included quotes throughout the analysis to demonstrate the analysis is grounded within the data.

In addition to these guidelines, the researcher offers a guideline by Smith (2011) on how to specifically conduct and evaluate high quality IPA. This guideline was reviewed and used by the researcher, in conjunction with the guidelines set out by Yardley (2000), and Elliott, Fischer and Rennie (1999), as a guide when conducting the analysis for this thesis. Smith (2011, p.17) suggests the following table as an evaluation guide:

**Table 1. IPA quality evaluation guide, in Smith (2011, p. 17)**

Table 5. IPA quality evaluation guide.

**Acceptable**

The paper meets the following four criteria:

- Clearly subscribes to the theoretical principles of IPA: it is phenomenological, hermeneutic and idiographic.
- Sufficiently transparent so reader can see what was done.
- Coherent, plausible and interesting analysis.
- Sufficient sampling from corpus to show density of evidence for each theme:
  N1–3: extracts from every participant for each theme;
  N4–8: extracts from at least three participants for each theme; and
  N > 8: extracts from at least three participants for each theme + measure of prevalence of themes, *or* extracts from half the sample for each theme.

Overall the paper is judged sufficiently trustworthy to accept for publication and include in a systematic review.

*Caveats*

Compensation. Evidence base and interest factors considered together so that, e.g., a paper with particularly interesting data may gain compensation for a less than ideal evidence base.

Partial acceptability. A paper may be deemed acceptable if it has partial but discrete pockets of acceptable, e.g.,

1. Paper may present four themes, two of which are interesting and well evidenced while two of them are not. In this case, the paper can be considered acceptable as the two good themes make a sufficient contribution in their own right.
2. Paper may have number of themes but evidence each with data from the same single participant. This paper may be considered acceptable if the account of the individual is sufficiently coherent that it can be read as an interesting idiographic case-study.
3. Paper may present data from two participant groups, e.g., males and females and be deemed acceptable for one participant group but not the other.

Safe or borderline? A paper showing sufficient sampling as described above is deemed safe.

A paper with a sample over eight with extracts from enough participants to illustrate variation but without detail of prevalence or enough evidence of density of themes is deemed borderline. See text for more details.

**Unacceptable**

The paper fails on one of the four criteria for acceptable. It may be:

- not consistent with theoretical principles of IPA;
- insufficiently transparent for reader to see what was done;
- not of sufficient interest; and
- poorly evidenced.

Predominantly what lets a paper down is the poor evidence base. Typical ways this can occur:

- large number of descriptive/superficial themes from a large number of participants;
- each theme has short summary and one or two extracts without interpretation;
- insufficient extracts from participants to support the themes being illustrated;
- no explanation for how prevalence of the themes was determined; and
- analysis is crude, lacks nuance.

Overall the paper is not trustworthy and would not be judged acceptable for publication.

**Good**

Paper must clearly meet all the criteria for acceptable. It then offers these three extra things:

- well focused; offering an in-depth analysis of a specific topic;
- data and interpretation are strong; and
- reader is engaged and finds it particularly enlightening.

Overall the paper could be recommended to a novice as a good exemplar of IPA.

Smith goes further (Smith, 2011, p. 24) by suggesting the following criteria for what makes good IPA:

- The paper should have a strong focus
- The paper should have strong data
- The paper should be rigorous
- The paper should demonstrate prevalence of a theme
- The corpus should be well represented in the analysis.
- Sample size of 4-8 extracts should provide at least half the sample as evidence for each theme

## 4.12 Summary

An Interpretative Phenomenological analytical approach was adopted for this research because of its emphasis on exploring the sense making of the self, as the individual reflects on significant events that transpire in their lives. IPA assumes an individual to be a cognitive, linguistic, affective & physical being, and assumes a chain of connection between people's talk and their thinking and emotional states (Smith & Osborn, 2008). As such, IPA provides a method for examining in detail the personal lived experience of participants making sense of their experience (Smith, 2004). In conducting IPA, the researcher can both play the critical researcher and the supportive role, giving full and rich data, or as noted by Smith & Osborn (2008) 'a warts and all' approach. Further, the double hermeneutic approach adopted by IPA allows the researcher to simultaneously play a critical and empathic role during data analysis; on the one hand, the researcher can investigate the mind-set of the individual, whilst simultaneously not taking the information provided at face value (Aresti, Eatough & Brooks, 2010).

Based on these principles of IPA, the researcher outlined a rationale for conducting an analysis on 7 autobiographies, and 1 in depth semi-structured interview. The researcher was guided by the philosophical principles of IPA and qualitative analysis in general, and the guidelines set out by Smith and colleagues, as well as Yardley (2000), and Elliott, Fischer and Rennie (1999), on how to conduct a rigorous interpretative phenomenological analysis (Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2008).

# CHAPTER 5

# ANALYSIS

## 5.1 Overall analytic story

Throughout chapters 5-8 this analysis, comprised of study one, and study two, explored I) how selected authors, who have served in British and the United States combat roles in the military, understand their sense of self and II) how soldiers in the combat arms experience and make sense of killing in combat. Using an IPA approach, as outlined in Chapter 4, Chapter 5 begins by exploring how soldiers make sense of their self and their role of killing in combat. The selected authors' autobiographies themes clustered around two superordinate themes: The warrior self and negotiating killing in combat. In line with IPA, these themes were divided into sub themes for clarity during analysis; *Sense making of a warrior, Morale code of the warrior, Machismo of combat and Sense making of the role as a killer.*

Sense making of a warrior explored the way in which the authors highlighted joining the infantry as a type of warrior calling; a complex term encapsulating a way of life, rooted in a type of ultimate hegemonic masculinity based on proving oneself through heroic and violent deeds. Being a warrior was seen as a calling, to be part of something greater than their selves, steeped in history and glory, which would provide them with the ultimate challenge.

The sub theme: Morale code of the warrior, provided narratives of the complexity of what it meant to be an ethical warrior. To the authors the role was not just about killing, instead it was also a ‘force for good’, and governed their behaviour when faced with the emotional frustrations that come with being in a combat zone. Being a soldier in the combat arms was described as governed by morals and ethics, based both on the legal system and the honour of the actions of warriors of the past.

Within the sub theme of Machismo of combat, the authors highlighted the connection between masculinity, and serving in the combat arms. The role was described as requiring bravery, toughness and aggression. Indeed to be a man meant having the skill set to be a warrior; to be tested in battle was the ultimate masculine act.

Specifically addressing the research question, Sense making of the role as a killer demonstrates how the authors accepted their role of killing in combat. The authors described a type of balancing act between being sensitive to the value of life, and accepting the realities of killing, whilst accepting and embracing their role as a trained killer, without glossing over the realities of that role. In accepting this role, the authors do not deny the enemies the status of human being, but rather acknowledge it and accept each other’s role to engage in combat.

Finally, in Negotiating killing and death, the authors detail how they make sense of being surrounded by death, balancing the ethics of what was a just, or unjust kill, based on the sense making of their self as an ethical warrior within their military unit.

Chapter 5 introduced the authors’ sense making of their role as soldiers asked to kill in combat. Chapter 6 builds upon this, by exploring how group identity processes, and decompression and validation - a type of psychological unburdening between troops after combat - played a role in the soldiers’ sense making of killing in combat. Chapter 6 explores two superordinate themes: group identity processes, and decompression and valida-

tion to make sense of combat events. The first superordinate theme was separated into sub themes: Creating group identities, and killing for the group, with the second superordinate theme analysed without sub themes.

The sub theme, creating group identities, describes how the authors were immersed into the military culture through a type of solicitation process, which helped define their military values, and help them prepare for adversity in combat. This group allowed the soldiers to be part of something bigger than themselves, and to become part of something surrounded by an ethos of heroism.

In killing for the group, the bond between soldiers was described as a type of platonic love, a desire and willingness to protect each other as if they were protecting themselves, based on feelings of belonging to a 'brotherhood'.

The final theme, decompression and validation to make sense of combat, described the decompression soldiers went through after combat. This form of unburdening/release- and emotional events of sharing experiences of combat, served to help the soldiers make sense of their experiences, and validate these experiences. Those that were unable to decompress in this way described a sense of isolation and loneliness, and an inability to make sense of some of these combat experiences, until the opportunity arose for them to do so.

Throughout Chapter 6 there was a strong sense of complex, modern military masculinity related to the group dynamics, which were often based on proving oneself through acts of aggression, violence and honour, but which also allowed the discussion of complex feelings of love and fear.

Throughout Chapters 5 and 6 it became clear how deeply rooted the soldiers' sense making of self was wrapped up within a masculine, moral warrior identity. Chapter 7 explores what happens when this sense of self comes under threat, and how the soldiers negotiate changes in their lives during transitions of both post combat, and military. These were sep-

arated into two superordinate themes: Negotiating the self as a force for good and Making sense of the transitional self. The first theme was separated into two sub themes: negotiating the moral self and facing disillusion as a force for good.

Negotiating the moral self, explored how the authors integrated their experiences of combat with their moral self, which was informed by both civilian practises and their choice to be part of a 'force for good'. This often required validation from others or a reshuffling of their experiences within their life narrative to justify these experiences within a war zone. Disillusion as a force for good explored the conflict the authors were faced with when faced with being a good soldier, by following orders, and following their moral guidelines as a warrior, and everything that came with that concept. Finally, in making sense of the transitional self, the authors described how they made sense of transitioning out of the military, and how their experiences until this point informed their new life choices. Both positive and negative experiences of being in the military played a role in the authors reframing their life, by giving them positive attributes and life affirming experiences.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 presented an analysis of seven autobiographies, in order to explore the research question: How do soldiers make sense of themselves, and killing in combat? Within these chapters the authors expressed both how they made sense of their role within the combat arms, and how this role helped them negotiate not only killing in combat, but their sense making of their life narrative. Throughout these chapters, the authors touched upon the masculine and moral component of being a 'warrior', which was steeped in an ethos of honour, duty and courage. The authors often, but not always, expressed this in a typically hegemonic masculine way; the combat arms were a place to be 'tested' in battle, and to project aggression, power and protection. Themes of morality throughout the extracts guided the authors' behaviours and action in combat, and helped reframe their life narrative to make sense of their time in the combat arms.

Chapter 8 explores how Jay; I) made sense of his role as a combat soldier, II) makes sense of killing in combat, and III) how his perception of others, and his own identity, shape his feelings towards combat, and killing in combat.

Throughout his narrative, Jay describes how he attempts to make sense of not only his own identity, but the identities of those he is willing to kill in combat. For Jay, being in the combat arms was a highly professional, arduous role, which was more about 'boots on the ground', (a military colloquialism to describe the concrete act of soldiers being in a warzone, carrying out duties such as patrolling and engaging the enemy) than the 'modern' and 'risky' concept of being a warrior- a term Jay feels is more akin to a gladiator or superhero. Indeed, to Jay, a warrior was a romanticised view, which associated with an unacceptable level of risk, instead of the reality of being a soldier. For Jay, killing in combat was fundamentally about survival and protection. In his narrative Jay also explored his identity as a European, and how that also affected his view of killing in combat, and what it would be like to have to kill other Europeans. Finally, Jay explores the mechanisms behind killing in combat and offers his view on why individuals are reluctant to not only kill in combat, but why they can accept doing so.

## 5.1 Introduction to the Analysis

This chapter will explore how soldiers make sense of their self and their role of killing in combat. The soldiers' accounts clustered around two superordinate themes: the warrior self and negotiating killing in combat. These themes represent an in-depth exploration as to how soldiers made sense of their role of killing in combat, as well as how soldiers negotiate the act of killing in combat. The exploration of these two superordinate themes provides a foundation for the subsequent chapter - Chapter 6, which explores how group identity processes and the validation of life paths, are established in soldiers' accounts of mak-

ing sense of killing in combat. Finally in Chapter 7, the researcher explores how soldiers deal with a conflict to the self, presenting an analysis of soldiers' sense-making of their life during periods of transition following service in the combat arms.

This chapter, presents two superordinate themes: The warrior self, and negotiating killing and death, which were used to explore how selected authors, who have served in British and the United States combat roles in the military, understand their sense of self, and how they make sense of killing in combat. First, the superordinate theme: the warrior self, explored the ways in which the authors made sense of their role in the combat arms and identified themselves as a 'warrior'. It was established that the idea of being a 'warrior' was complex, and constitutes a strong sense of morality, masculinity and a belonging to a historically rich 'brotherhood in arms'. This concept of a moral, masculine warrior underlies the way in which they negotiate killing in combat. The second superordinate theme: Negotiating killing and death, explored how soldiers in the combat arms experience and make sense of killing in combat. This theme identified the different ways in which the selected authors understood the meaning of killing and death, and how they made sense of the actions of not only themselves, but those around them during and after combat. This sense-making was dependent on the strong sense of self as a 'warrior'.

**Table 5.1**

***Themes and sub themes***

| Superordinate themes | Subthemes | |
|---|---|---|
| **The warrior self** | I) | Sense making of a warrior |
| | II) | Morale code of the warrior |
| | III) | Machismo of combat |
| | IV) | Sense making of the role as a killer |
| **Negotiating killing and death** | | |
| **Group identity processes** | I) | Creating group identities |
| | II) | Killing for the group |
| **Decompression and validation to make sense of combat** | | |
| **Conflict to the self** | I) | Threat to the sense of self as a force for good |
| | II) | II) Making sense of the chaos |
| | III) | Decline into fear, frustration and anger |
| | IV) | Sense making of the self during life transition |

**Table 5.2**

*Chapter 5- Master table of superordinate and subordinate themes*

| Superordinate themes | Page.No & location |
|---|---|
| **The warrior self** | |
| *Sense making of a warrior* | |
| Bury: The heroes with their citations and medals were almost other worldly | P.20 |
| Fick: I wanted something more transformative...I wanted to be a warrior | P.4 |
| *Morale code of the warrior* | |
| Wasdin: So we decided to teach them a life lesson, not to prey on the apparent weakness of others. | P.153 |
| Bury: The high-profile force for Good | P. 20 |
| *Machismo of combat* | |
| Bury: Feeling cool, tough, powerful. Manly | P. 81 |
| Blakeley: and they were the ultimate genuine tough guys. | p. 34 |
| *Sense making of the role as a killer* | |
| Denver: Like so much else in the lives of SEALs, my preparation as a killer built up gradually over the years | P. 208 |
| McNab: It was the first time I'd ever killed somebody. I was 19 years old and I couldn't have cared less. | P.57 |
| **Negotiating killing and death** | |
| Wasdin: They were human beings just like me. | P.143 |
| Lewis: Life is cheap round these parts, but it still has a price | P.328 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Bury: And I was glad he was dead. It was funny. He had tried to blow us up, and the stupid fucker had blown himself up. | P. 218 |
| Denver: Most people never act on those feelings and rightfully so. It's a real thing, taking somebody's life. | P.213 |

## 5.2 Analysis

### The warrior self

**Sense-making of a warrior.** *Sense making of a warrior* highlights the significance of life experiences to the authors and how the authors made sense of what it means to be a warrior. Warriors not only appeared to symbolise masculinity, morality and the elite, but also represent heroes' ability to overcome any life obstacle. A warrior was more than just a role; it seemed to be a way of life. Lewis begins by delving into the warrior self, and what it means to him to be a warrior, and how that differs from being a soldier:

> I have spent a long time preparing myself both mentally and physically to go into combat. I believe a warrior has a passion. He accepts that this is his calling and strives to be strong. He is analytical, courageous and – most importantly – he wants to lead. There is no greater honour than leading men in battle. He is committed and takes pride. He has a code, one that the knights of old would recognise. He strives, always, for self-mastery. The word warrior does not sit as comfortably with the British as it does with other countries but I feel it offers more of an explanation as to who we are than the word 'soldier'.
>
> As the samurai knew, the professional warrior tries to develop himself every day. Having engaged with the enemy I am keen to continue to develop myself both mentally and physically. I feel we can call ourselves warriors because of the experiences we have been through but it is an edge that needs continual sharpening. - British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p.167

Lewis begins this section of the narrative by describing his view of both himself and the parachute regiment as warriors, and what exactly it means to Lewis to be a warrior. To

Lewis, being a warrior is about being in and preparing oneself to go into combat: something Lewis has spent his life preparing for. More than this, being warrior is a 'calling' and 'passion', for an individual who possesses traits of strength, courage, and a desire to be a leader of people. This important distinction made by Lewis to describe the role as a calling and something of a passion over titles such as 'job', 'work' or 'career' sets the scene for how Lewis experiences his chosen path, and subsequent way of dealing with challenges and experiences presented to him.

The warrior life, suggests Lewis, is based on a 'code' steeped in pride and mastery of the warrior traits. Like Fick, who will be discussed in the following section, Lewis describes feeling an affinity with warriors from the old world who shared a similar code, such as knights and samurai. In this way, Lewis, is making sense of the self through the deeds and the lifestyle of warriors of past generations, by immersing himself in the ethos of historical warriors. As such, Lewis is putting himself into the same group as these past 'warriors', sharing common traits, and a 'code' of conducting oneself, which perhaps helps Lewis to navigate his own life choices.

Lewis describes the warrior as a violent, penetrating force through his use of the description '[an] edge that needs continual sharpening'. By discussing the importance for a warrior to 'be in' combat in order to keep the 'edge' sharp, speaks to how Lewis recognises the bloody, and violent aspect of his warrior self. This metaphor for their role as warriors will be discussed in detail when exploring Bury's narrative, who expands upon this lethal edge metaphor in more detail. Lewis' understanding of what it means to be a warrior seems to move beyond a person who lives a life of violence; his views of a warrior are romanticised by not only comparing them to Samurais and Knights, but also by describing them as having very positive traits, such as courage, strength, leadership quality and the desire to obtain self-mastery. These traits are noted within the masculinity literature as a type of officer military-masculinity, which goes beyond violence and brutality, to include attributes per-

taining to a natural leader and thus masculinity (Duncanson, 2007; Hooper, 2000). In addition, Lewis is painting a picture of his view of a warrior as steeped in a mythical-like status; a calling for a person who is strong and courageous, and who wishes to obtain self-mastery.

It should also be noted that there are other strong elements of masculinity within how Lewis describes a warrior; such as 'strength', a 'sharp edge', 'courage' and to 'do battle', which are all typically associated with masculinity, and will be explored within the sub-theme of Machismo of Combat.

Crucially, Lewis explains both how he identifies himself, and the parachute regiment are better understood as 'warriors' instead of 'soldiers'. To Lewis, this is an important enough distinction to make early on in his narrative to explain how he makes sense of his role in the military, and perhaps distinguishes himself from other military unit 'soldiers', which will be explored in later detail within Lewis' transcripts. Within the next extract Lewis demonstrates holding an affinity for the warrior lifestyle at a young age:

> I HAD WANTED to join the army from a very early age. My grandparents took me to the Royal Tournament when I was four and from that point I was hooked. By the age of 13 I was obsessed and, by headmaster's decree, was allowed to join my school's cadet force a year early. When I was 14 I read an incredible book called 2 PARA Falklands by John Frost. I remember thinking what incredible men these were. Outnumbered, poorly resourced and in horrendous conditions, these men fought not one, but two battles. I never believed, in my wildest imagination, that I would end up commanding, in battle, men like these. At the age of 19 my dream came true when I passed the selection board to become a British Army officer. It was while at Sandhurst I decided I wanted to join the Parachute Regiment. They appeared to be the best regiment in the infantry. They had to be – they are the only ones with their own physical selection.
> The physical selection for the Airborne forces – P Company – was as brutal as I expected it to be. After parachute training I joined 2 PARA in Northern Ireland. I found it incredible to be joining the organisation that I had read about in John Frost's book. - British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p.1

Lewis describes his early fascination not just with the military, but specifically the infantry group which he would later join: The Parachute regiment. Lewis describes his exposure to

the Parachute regiment at an early age from a book by John Frost, which details an infamous battle of British troops. Lewis demonstrates obvious reverence and admiration for the deeds of the parachute regiment described in the book. Indeed to Lewis these men were 'incredible', demonstrating their warrior self through the ability to fight 'not one, but two battles' against substantial odds. Joining the men he holds in such high praise was a dream for Lewis, who belonged to 'the best regiment in the infantry' facing 'brutal' training requirements in order to gain membership. In describing the entry requirements as 'brutal', elite: 'they are the only ones with their own physical selection', and generally an ethos of fighting against overwhelming odds, Lewis is weaving a version of masculinity into his sense-making of the 'warrior' group he wished to join. In this way, Lewis is describing a form of definitive hegemonic masculinity, often associated with bravery, aggression and toughness (Duncanson, 2007). Indeed, Enloe (1993) suggests that masculinity is traditionally connected to war and combat, and indeed being manly can be seen as possessing the attributes to being a potential warrior. The term warrior is used throughout the military-masculinity literature as a key symbol of masculinity, seemingly immortalised as this status in films, heroic paintings and comic books (Morgan, 1994). A soldier often links themselves to this idealised warrior (Bourke, 1999) who fulfils the role of fighting to protect and defend (Elshtain, 1987). Indeed, to be an infantryman is seen as the epitome of the heroic warrior (Hockey, 2003). Duncanson (2007) argues that the infantryman's proximity to combat makes his masculinity closely linked to the ideal notion of being a warrior. Lewis has established that to him, a warrior is someone able to overcome great odds, has courage and strength, and is clearly illustrated by stereotypical ancient warriors, such as the samurai or Knight. As such, a strong sense of typical masculine traits can be said to be an integral part of how Lewis views what it means to be a warrior. Bury continues this line of thought:

> Citations and medals were almost other-worldly, untouchable. I relished any stories of heroism as most children relish bedtime tales. I was in awe of their actions, their courage...
>
> ...And I was attracted to the glory of war. The fantasy. The heroes with their courage and bravery. And I was aware of the deep bonds of comradeship that drove them to commit such acts. As a lonely child I yearned for that emotional connection. Later, such emotions would come to represent to me the essence of what being a man was, and I would deeply seek war's experience to prove myself I was a man. - British Army, Call Sign Hades, Patrick Bury, 2011, p.20

Bury interweaves five important facets of a warrior: glory, heroism, courage, comradeship and masculinity. Combined, these attributes form the basis of what Bury saw as a warrior; solidified to his adolescent self by the connection of receiving token rewards (medals) for their 'heroism'. The sense-making of the warrior had a profound effect on Bury, who describes these individuals with a great sense of admiration and longing to be part of this group. Based on a lonely childhood, Bury 'yearn[ed] for that emotional connection' that he felt joining a combat arms could provide. To Bury the 'deep bonds of comradeship' could offer him an emotional connection with men who commit acts of 'bravery' and 'courage', traits which Bury consider to represent what it means to be a man.

As he develops from an adolescent to a young adult, these thoughts turn from fulfilling his fantasies, to forming the very way in which he views the idea of what it is to be a man. Being a man, to Bury, is being a warrior, which in on itself is a complex tapestry of heroism, comradeship and courage; all of which are held together by the seeking out of an emotional connection with other 'heroic' men. Further from this, Bury determines the need to seek out war to validate himself as a man. Engaging in war-related activities is a 'manly' thing to do, encompassing acts of heroism and courage. Bury's narrative is in line with masculinity research, which proposes that young men, such as Bury, are socialised into ideas of masculinity being linked with being a warrior, through role models usually derived from cultural norms (Cooke & Woolacott, 1993; Whitworth, 2004). In this way, Bury is describing a typically masculine concept of what it means for him to be a man, which is

closely tied with being a soldier (Duncanson, 2007), experiencing combat and having the qualities required to being a warrior (Enloe, 1993). This calling to be a warrior is a notion Denver elaborates upon:

> ... if I hadn't had that opportunity to be the warrior I knew I could, I know deep inside me how unsettled I would have felt. I would have been itching for the next adventure. And now I know. The potential and ability to perform the ultimate act of a warrior lives inside of me. I know because I have let it out. And that's given me a higher sense of responsibility and a stronger appreciation for all that life offers. – US Navy, Damn few: making the modern SEAL warrior, Rorke Denver, 2013, p.215

Denver describes this warrior calling as an almost animalistic part of himself, which lives inside him 'itching' for the next adventure, and if not released would have been 'unsettled'. By 'letting it out' Denver allowed himself to pursue a life that has given him a sense of responsibility. As such, Denver describes this warrior self as guiding his sense of morality, which means his role as a warrior is also that of a morally responsible individual. To this end Denver describes joining Navy SEALS as the ultimate act of being a warrior. The way in which Denver makes sense of his role as a warrior, however, goes beyond outlining his morale code:

> People look at me strangely. I can tell they are thinking, I bet that dude killed some people. I'm not going to pretend I don't like being looked at as special in that way. It wasn't my motivation for joining. It wasn't what kept me in. But it is part of who I am forever – US Navy, Damn few: making the modern SEAL warrior, Rorke Denver, 2013, p.216

This extract, combined with the above extract of what it means to Denver to be a warrior, speaks a great deal about how Denver integrates the role of killing within his role as warrior. Denver as articulated how joining the Navy SEALS, an advanced infantry unit designed to engage and kill the enemy, was the ultimate expression of being a warrior. In contrast to avoiding discussing the topic, as suggested in previous research (Grossman, 2009), in this extract, Denver actually sees being viewed as a killer as 'special'. However, despite this

acceptance, Denver feels the need to articulate that although he understands killing as part of being in the SEALS, and thus, the 'warrior he knew he could be', killing was not his motivation for joining the military. This is important, as Denver is demonstrating both his awareness for how the public views people who want to kill- as opposed to people who are required to kill- as well as constructing how he views himself and his motivations for staying a warrior. Fick further expands upon these desires to fulfil the warrior calling:

> None of it [civilian jobs] appealed to me. I wanted to go on a great adventure, to prove myself, to serve my country. I wanted to do something so hard that no one could ever talk shit to me. In Athens or Sparta, my decision would have been easy. I felt as if I had been born too late…
>
> …I wanted something more transformative. Something that might kill me — or leave me better, stronger, more capable. I wanted to be a warrior- US Marines, One Bullet Away, Nathaniel Fick, 2009, p.4

Fick gives an intriguing account of not only how he viewed the role of a warrior, but also how he desired the warrior status. A warrior, as outlined by Fick, was something that could offer a transformation into something 'stronger', something 'hard'; desires that make him proposing that he had been born in the wrong era. By suggesting that such training would alleviate him above 'taking shit' from others, and with the clear connection in Fick's mind between the Spartan lifestyle of the ancient Greeks and the modern warrior path, Fick provides insight into how he will both be *seen* in the future, and how he will *see* himself.

In sharing a common thread with Bury and Lewis, Fick gives a traditional view of hegemonic masculinity and the warrior calling. To Fick, being a warrior meant being 'tested' to the point of possibly death, something that would leave him 'stronger'. This transformation is seen by Fick to occur when being tested, as was the case in 'Athens' or 'Sparta' in a typically hegemonic masculine way. Dawson (1994) notes how this soldier-hero concept of manhood, being tested only through battle, stems back to the Ancient Greeks. This type of idealised masculinity within western cultural tradition is defined by having inherent qualities such aggression and strength. Indeed through acts of toughness, aggression and endur-

ance- typically masculine qualities (DeVisser & Smith, 2007), Fick would become 'better' and more 'capable'. Further from this, such a transformation would move him away from typically feminine traits, such as weakness (Hooper, 2000) to a typically masculine position of strength, where nobody could 'talk shit to him'. Fick continues:

> I nodded but knew that only one thing would satisfy me: infantry officer. I wanted the purity of a man with a weapon traveling great distances on foot, navigating, stalking, calculating, using personal skill. I couldn't let a jet or a tank get in the way, and I certainly wasn't going to sit behind a desk. I wanted to be tested, to see if I had what it takes- US Marines, One Bullet Away, Nathaniel Fick, 2009, p.33

To Fick, being a soldier and being a true warrior means being in the infantry. His notion of soldiering means to be 'tested' without high technology such as a 'jet' or a 'tank'. From this we can gather that simply being part of the Marines, with their history and war record was not enough to fully encompass his understanding of what it means to be a tested warrior. Fick suggests that he had to prove himself in his own eyes, by his own personal standards of achievement, by pursuing what he would consider to be the ultimate challenge: The infantry, a combat ready unit trained for the sole purpose of seeking and destroying the targeted enemy. Fick describes that a man, who is armed with a weapon and intending to live by his wits (stalking, navigating), is something that is pure and a desirable goal within his life. Fick is describing the desire to be tested in a typically military-masculine way, relying on toughness, bravery and typically objective skills (problem solving, calculating) void of emotions (Connell & Connell, 2005; Duncanson, 2007). Thus for Fick, the 'tests' also take on a very personal dimension: assessing how 'pure' he was as a 'man'.

Lewis, Fick and Bury describe a common theme of how being a warrior was connected to being a man, through hegemonic descriptions of the role, and the sense of fulfilment it provided each of them. Lewis and Fick share similarities in the way in which they feel the warrior calling is intimately connected to the deeds of ancient warriors often idealised in

society, such as Japanese Samurai and Greek Spartans. It gave them both a sense of purpose, and belonging to a group that had done heroic or great deeds. This drove both Lewis and Fick to push themselves, to be on equal footing with regards to past warriors, by challenging themselves the hardest way they could. Combined, they both felt that if they had not achieved this goal, there would have been something missing in their life, something profound not offered to a civilian. This drove them to seek out the infantry role. Bury on the other hand described these soldiers in a more abstract way by placing them on a pedestal as a romanticised concept. Bury looked up to these soldiers, and was in awe of them. Bury also described his desire to join in more abstract way than Fick and Lewis. Joining served as a way to fulfil a need to belong to something to make him feel significant and connected in a way he did not currently feel in his life. Thus Bury described his reasons for joining in a more emotional way than Fick of Lewis; he wanted to belong to something that connected people, whereas Lewis and Fick wanted to achieve something great, and to have a sense of purpose in their life. McNab further builds upon this feeling of purpose associated with the role of a warrior:

> They'd pick it up again and off we'd go. It was exciting stuff, like hare and hounds. It brought out a really basic human instinct. It was exciting to be part of something so much bigger than my own little rifle company. There were two helicopters going around on Night Sun, a fearsome big floodlight, with people on the ground directing them by radio. The effort put in to get these two people was massive, and I was a part of that: I was one of the two who instigated it, and it felt really good. We were out all night and came back well into first light, empty-handed. Our trousers had been shredded by barbed wire fences. I was soaking wet, cold and hungry, and totally knackered. We still had to carry on work the next day; there were still stags to do, patrols to go out. But it didn't worry me at all because I felt so excited; at last, I had done what I was there to do. Two days later, a character turned up at a hospital in the south with a 7.62 wound in his leg. – British Army, Immediate Action, Andy McNab, 2008, p. 40

As a soldier, McNab had been on patrols and experienced life in uniform in general. However he describes the day he actively went out to hunt an enemy soldier as "at last, I had done what I was there to do". There are only positive comments associated with this act,

bringing out the ‘basic human instinct’ and having a sense of purpose that is ‘bigger than my own rifle company’. In this way, McNab is describing his excitement and pride in the hunt for the soldier as fulfilling a role, which appears to be linked to a personal toughness, tested through suffering and personal discomfort. In this way, McNab is echoing similar sentiments to Lewis and Fick, of how suffering and personal discomfort are seen as not only a positive, but a requirement to do something they were ‘meant to do’. Further from this, McNab is describing how hunting a person brought out a ‘basic instinct’, which shares similar themes with Fick’s description of hunting with a weapon as something ‘pure’. It could be suggested that such activities are almost seen as a release of something within themselves that desires to act in this way, which again is echoed by Denver’s description of the ‘warrior’ calling as something ‘inside’ of him that he needed to let out.

Although in this extract McNab does not explicitly describe his role as a ‘warrior’, In having the opportunity to achieve this role he has trained for, McNab begins to see himself as more than a soldier simply on guard duty. McNab felt like he was doing what he had signed up to do when asked to kill another soldier, more so than the other roles and responsibilities he had before the hunt. From the excitement, thrill and sense of self as part of something ‘bigger’ after performing combat; it clearly indicates that McNab shares similar feelings of what his role is, and how it felt when he realised this aspect of the role. Fick further explores this warrior calling:

> The grunt life was untainted. I sensed a continuity with other infantrymen stretching back to Thermopylae…
>
> …In a time of satellites and missile strikes, the part of me that felt I’d been born too late was drawn to the infantry, where courage still counts…it was a rite of passage in a society becoming so soft and homogenized that the very concept was often sneered - US Marines, One Bullet Away, Nathaniel Fick, 2009, p.33.

Fick elaborates on this sense of continuity between the stories of ancient warriors from Greece, and how he makes sense of the warrior calling in his life. In this way he shares a type of collective warrior identity, which is bigger than both him, and the present day military. This offers Fick a way to prove himself in a 'rite of passage', almost irrespective of time and space, allowing him a viable way to demonstrate 'courage' in today's 'soft' society. Lewis continues to elaborate upon this warrior calling:

> It dawns on me that this is the first time since the Falklands War that B Company, 2 PARA, has been in a proper 'contact' battle. As paratroopers we put the 'Crew of '82' – as the Falklands veterans are known – on a pedestal. They are a true generation of warriors. They went down to the Falklands and, with minimal support, achieved incredible results. I think that we are now some way to joining those hallowed ranks. - British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p.137
>
> …I am incredibly proud of the lads. They have taken everything that has been thrown at them – loss of life, injury, D&V, punishing workload – in incredibly good spirits. They bounce back very quickly and prove themselves to be a tough warrior breed. - British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p.228
> …Sitting, reflecting, is a nice experience. I consider myself a 'warrior' now. I have been in combat and experienced the highs and lows. - British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p. 225

By achieving his dream of being involved in combat, Lewis feels he has rightfully obtained membership to a warrior clan, within the parachute regimental history, of 'a true generation of warriors'. To Lewis being involved in a 'real' battle meant having contact and engaging the enemy, which allowed him to join those he puts on a 'pedestal'. Such tough battles, as noted by Lewis, are marked with loss of life, 'punishing' workload, and the ability to 'bounce back' and remain in 'high spirits'. A theme throughout Lewis' extracts is one of gaining membership into the 'warrior' group by being tested through arduous, dangerous and physically demanding tasks, all of which can be completed by individuals who are 'tough' and a 'true warrior breed'. To Lewis, this 'breed' of person is very closely with the very epitome of hegemonic masculinity. Such an individual is willing to 'endure' violence

in combat, and to ‘bounce back’ from such difficult environments despite and remain in ‘good spirits’. Further, by describing it as ‘warrior breed’ Lewis is perhaps suggesting that such individuals are naturally predisposed with these traits and qualities required to be successful as a warrior. This speaks to the way in which Lewis makes sense of his warrior calling and membership into the warrior clan, defining the scope of what it means to be a warrior.

Within the analysis, the infantry role has been explored by authors as something of a calling, closely linked with warrior traits that can be seen to connect the authors with the ancient world of combat. As demonstrated by Bury, Blakeley and Lewis, this strong sense of self as a warrior and as a combat unit can create a division between soldiers:

> Bastion was starting to grind them down, with all its rules and regulations. There is a definite ‘us and them’ feel between those in Bastion and those that have to go out and do the fighting. - British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p. 41
>
> Who the fuck are the rest of the army? What the fuck do they do? We fight. We kill-- British Army, Call Sign Hades, Patrick Bury, 2011, p44
>
> The school has an edge to it Sandhurst does not. A serious edge. A hard edge. A killing edge. The instructors are not the polished career-orientated colour sergeants of Sandhurst, but tough, aggressive and rough men who ooze bloody combat experience. - British Army, Call Sign Hades, Patrick Bury, 2011, p43
>
> This is not Sandhurst. It is extreme violence. It is killing those who excel are straightforward, common-sense young officers compared with more reflective, analytical mind that did well in Sandhurst. - British Army, Call Sign Hades, Patrick Bury, 2011, p44
>
> Army officers – that they are posh, they don’t tend to get their hands dirty and they drink champers in the Officers’ Mess with their little fingers raised to balance the glass. I was now going to see a good deal of that with my own eyes. There were a good number at Sandhurst who were simply buffoons. They were far more interested in the status of being an Army officer than the reality of soldiering. They liked nothing more than to play up to the posh officer stereotype.
>
> I felt out of my depth and pretty much all at sea. This was my steppingstone into the ultimate military unit in my eyes – the PARAs – and I didn’t have a clue about what many of these tossers were here for, not a Scooby Doo.

> I replied with barely a pause. 'Sir, I accept the charge, sir.' But inside I was boiling. I had a quiet suspicion as to why he was shitting on me. The rumour had got out that I was going for the PARAs, and blokes like him despised the Parachute Regiment. It represented everything that they were not, and it shamed them. And so they hated the PARAs, and those who wanted to join them –British special forces: Pathfinders, Maverick One, Blakeley, 2013, p.110

Bastion is an operating base in Afghanistan that Lewis and his men briefly return to from the forward operating base. On this base, Lewis communicates with individuals who are not facing combat or doing the 'fighting'. Instead, he feels they follow 'all its rules and regulations', which seem applicable only to individuals who are able to indulge in such attention. These can perhaps be seen as trivial matters to Lewis, who faces the possibility of death on a frequent basis. This difference in mentality based on day-to-day experiences of the infantry vs 'them', causes an obvious divide between the troops, in Lewis' mind. Likewise, individuals like Blakeley see soldiering in the traditional sense of being in the infantry. Naturally, Blakeley views those who, like him, get the calling to be in the infantry as the in-group, compared to those who 'don't tend to get their hands dirty' (the perceived out-group). Blakeley describes how he views the group he wishes to be a part of positively 'the ultimate military unit' and 'represented everything that they were not' whilst the out-group is described disparagingly 'it shamed them' 'simply buffoons' and 'tossers'. Blakeley's dialogue offers a glimpse into not only the view of himself as someone who is not 'posh' and further, genuinely disinterested in the social status that comes with being an officer, but also into how he views those he perceives to be more interested in status than 'real soldiering'. It is important for Blakeley to separate himself from these officers, who have, in their own right, passed through a challenging training programme in Sandhurst to become officers. Yet despite this 'test' which has allowed these individuals to be privileged within a social hierarchy, he perceives them to be merely acting the part of the soldier. Additionally, Blakeley is going some way to emasculating the 'posh' officers. By describing them as unwilling to 'get their hands dirty' Blakeley is drawing a strong contrast

to the ‘tough’ nature of the infantry officer category he is a part of. Toughness is a typical association with hegemonic and military masculinity (Connell, 2005; Duncanson, 2007), and indeed a trait to be a potential warrior (Enloe, 1993). Further, DeVisser, and McDonnell (2013) suggest that modern masculinities can be complex, whereby men acquire ‘masculine capital’ by engaging in masculine behaviours, which also allows them to engage in less typically masculine behaviours. By taking away this representative masculine trait, and not replacing it with an equally stereotypical masculine trait, such as aggression or objectivity (DeVisser & Smith, 2007), Blakeley appears not to be compensating, or to put it another way, balancing the scales of masculine vs feminine traits of the ‘others’ and thus Blakeley is defining them as less masculine than himself. This positive perception of masculinity is important for individuals who place an emphasis on gender role stereotypes on their own gender identity (De Visser & McDonnell, 2013). In Blakeley’s case, such perceptions of masculine behaviours are a way in which he separates those he respected as soldiers, and those he did not. Bury’s description of the difference between infantry and initial officers training school is very graphic, using words closely associated with violence and death. By comparing the training at infantry school to the blade of a combat knife - which is used to kill- gives us insight into the mentality Bury adopts for his chosen role as an infantry soldier. Further, by describing men that train him as ‘oozing bloody combat experience’, Bury is drawing a strong contrast to the ‘career orientated’ and ‘polished’ officers at Sandhurst. Based on this extract alone, it appears as though Bury’s use of positive terms to describe the ‘other’ officers demonstrates an understanding of the differences between the two roles, and the people that are drawn to them, perhaps without bias either way. However, when comparing the terms used to describe ‘them’ to his unit, which consist of ‘straightforward, common-sense young officers’ and taking into account Bury’s dialogue up until now, we begin to see a hint of preference, or bias to what he considers more useful in the field of battle. Describing one group as having common sense, and the other to be more reflective, could be an indicator of how Bury views the others as having

*less* common sense, as they spend more time on more abstract problems that require reflection. This distinction is important in understanding how Bury defines the parameters and sense-making of the self, his group, and others in the military. As noted previously in this analysis, and as can be seen in this narrative, Lewis and Bury use terms closely associated with violence and aggression to describe their role: A 'hard edge… a killing edge' which to Lewis is part of what being a warrior is about:

> Rab [patrol dog] is clearly still aggressive; he has started biting Toms in the FOB, which the lads all thought was a good effort. As aggressive 'dogs' they like a fellow aggressive dog. - British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p.132

Rab was initially an attack dog, but lacked the aggression for such a role and was re trained as a patrol dog. When Rab defaults to his original training, and starts to attack the soldiers, Lewis and his men view this in a positive light that endeared the dog to the men. It is this quality of tenacity, and willing to engage a threat with 'biting', which can be seen as once again the 'sharp end' of an attack, which Lewis finds impressive. In this way, Rab is a good symbol of his he views his men, and his role in the military. It is noteworthy how Lewis describes himself and the other parachute regiments soldiers as 'fellow aggressive dogs', implying a breed trained to work hard, even under extreme conditions, and engage in aggression when required. It also could imply a level of loyalty, pack mentality and hierarchy, and a strong bond between the men, which is apparent in dog teams and dogs in general. Wasdin offers an additional perspective, which adds to the complexity of sense making as a warrior:

> Some people have this concept of SEALs just being mindless, wind me-up killing machines. "Oh you're an assassin" I don't like that. I don't adhere to it. Most SEALs know that if you can do an op without any loss of life, it's a great op... –US Navy, SEAL team Six, Howard Wasdin, 2011, p. 143

In this significant part of the transcript Wasdin moves away from the mystique of being a warrior and the warrior calling, to the professional, serious nature of his role to kill in combat. Wasdin articulates a clear distinction between how he views himself as warrior self and a 'mindless killing machine'. Potentially Wasdin feels a need to distance himself from this idea of an 'assassin' because to him being a SEAL, is far more complex than simply having the ability to kill another person. By demonstrating that a 'great op' is one without killing, Wasdin is highlighting that the typical terms associated with being a soldier (aggressive, tough, etc) are not based solely on killing another person. Crucially, the term assassin, or derivatives of this, does not conform to the traits Wasdin and the other authors have expressed within his narrative required for a warrior. An assassin or 'wind me up killing machine' neglects the complexities of kinship, loyalty, honour, heroism and dedication to preserving a moral code, which is an important component within the authors sense making of their role, and will be explored in the next theme.

**The moral code of the warrior**. *In sense making of a warrior*, Denver and Wasdin briefly touch upon the moral component; a seemingly crucial aspect of viewing oneself as a warrior. In this subtheme, the authors describe the way in which they make sense of their moral self. This was expressed in the way in which ideals, societal or familial, shaped the way the authors understood their sense of self and role within the military. Other times it was the authors' sense making of good and evil, and how they enforced their moral code on others, which gave a glimpse into their sense making of good and evil. Bury begins:

> Tony Blair also influenced my decision to join. The high-profile force for Good interventions in Kosovo and Sierra Leone showed the British army as a robust peacekeepers who had learned the lessons of Northern Ireland and applied them globally. They also encourage my more altruistic ideals of military service. Blair's small, successful crusades for justice, democracy and equality were exactly what I wanted to be involved in. - British Army, Call Sign Hades, Patrick Bury, 2011, p.20

In seeing oneself as belonging to a group that is a 'force for good' Bury is extending his view of the traits he has associated with being a warrior to include protecting broad, ab-

stract freedoms such as ‘democracy’ and ‘justice’. By belonging to this group, he was not only making sense of his role as a force for good, but also as a protector of liberties; similar to the heroes in the stories Bury read as a child:

> From an early age I was fascinated by all things military; by guns by tanks, but most especially by the Second World War. For me it captured everything that was interesting about the war: The clash of good and evil, the power of the Nazis’ black uniforms and swastikas, the importance of Generals personal ability, the technological advances that still required a high level of individual skill by their controllers. In short, it had it all, and I dedicated much of my time as a seven year old to reading and watching, exploring, what I could. I collected magazines about Vietnam, about weapons of the SAS, and paid my full pocket money every fortnight to subscribe to a Second World War magazine that ran to sixty volumes by the time it finished three years later. To me it was alive. So not only did I study war; I started to live it. -British Army, Call Sign Hades, Patrick Bury, 2011, p19

Bury had an early fascination with ‘all things military’, which can be seen within this extract, and throughout his autobiography as a romanticised view of the ‘clash of good and evil’ and of ‘heroes’ doing great deeds in war. This view from a very young age, although simplified from a seven year olds perspective, nevertheless has appeared to solidify his view on the military in a very real, and very fundamental way. Bury makes this point quite salient by talking about a basic moral comprehension of warfare (good vs evil and heroes) as not just being an academic historical interest, it was something that was ‘alive’ to Bury, and further, he started to ‘live it’. By becoming alive, Bury was immersing himself into this reality of what it meant for him to be in warfare. These adolescent experiences are explored further by Bury and Wasdin:

> Soldiers have set themselves kill targets, and tally lists of weapons fired were discussed like professional advancement, a path to enlightenment, even manhood. A small minority of others who weren’t in our company, or even Sangin, had a real desire to drop bombs or fire missiles, the kind of addiction that after training for so long with these weapons probably made them, in the ‘hearts and minds’ context, the very people who shouldn’t have been allowed near them. Luckily most of ranger Company had been brought up on the streets of Northern Ireland and understood acutely the impact that heavily armed soldiers can have on a native population. Even so, soldiers bent on killing for revenge, experience or enjoyment were more common than I had imaged, but less common than you’d think in such a twisted,

> dangerous world. But not in 7 platoon; that was not part of our collective identity. And, luckily, we didn't have any psychopaths either. - British Army, Call Sign Hades, Patrick Bury, 2011, p.90

Bury explicitly describes how he and his group are different to other soldiers in that they do not partake in 'killing for revenge' actions which, based on how Bury views himself, he would have great difficulty justifying. By obtaining membership to a group that has shaped itself and been shaped by the principles of the military as 'a force for good' 'freedom' and democracy' Bury's in-group has fulfilled and built upon his self as a warrior with a purpose. This purpose and calling, along with Bury's experiences of growing up in Northern Ireland drives Bury to treat the out-group members with a level of respect afforded to them as human beings. Wasdin's childhood experiences of what it means to be in a family unit also shaped the type of group he sought out:

> I went through the roof. Now I was a bull seeing red. I ran out of the house, off the porch, vaulted the chain link, and ran down the road one block to the first Baptist church. Kids and parents were coming out of church from summer Bible school. Deacons stood out front. I spotted Timmy, a boy my age- the boy who hurt my sister.
>
> He turned around just in time to see me coming.
>
> "Howard, we need to talk."
>
> "Oh no we don't, you son of a bitch." I nailed him right in the face., plowing him. I got on top of the boy, straddled his upper body, and pummelled him half to death, cussing up a storm.
>
> A deacon tried to pull me off, but I was seventeen years old and had worked like a dog every day of my life. It took several more deacons to separate me from the boy.
>
> Dad said, "You know, I'd have done the same exact thing."
>
> I wore that like a badge of honor. In spite of my dad's faults, protecting his family was important to him, and I respect his desire to protect me. –US Navy, SEAL team Six, Howard Wasdin, 2011, p.36

Throughout his life narrative, Wasdin talks about how important his adolescent experiences were in preparing him for the military. In this particular segment Wasdin describes an

event where he takes revenge on an individual who hurt his sister. In an effort to protect his family, Wasdin beats up another adolescent of the same age. This behaviour was rewarded by his father, who reinforced this notion of protecting the family, and even suggested he would have taken a similar course of action to do so. This value of using violence to protect the family could be later transferred to the teams he joins within the military. In Wasdin's narrative (Wasdin, 2011), the author has noted that he is fiercely loyal to the teams, above his marriage, even. They were everything to him, and they were family. Thus from a young age Wasdin had learned what it means to protect the in-group, the family, and the teams. In the military one is rewarded for protecting their teams, it can be the difference between life and death, and being fiercely loyal is thus adaptive behaviour, which will, in turn, be reciprocated. Protecting his family was something he saw his father do, and for which he respected him for. In this way, Wasdin is demonstrating the connection between the protector, and honourable behaviour, which Wasdin has already linked to being crucial to his sense of self as a moral warrior.

Further, there are clear signs of the reinforcement of traditionally hegemonic masculine behaviour within this element of the transcript. Wasdin was praised for protecting his family and committing physical violence to do so, which he 'wore like a badge of honour'. In this way Wasdin has learned that being a protector, a typically masculine and warrior role in its own right (Elshtain, 1987; Enloe, 1993), is rewarded when displayed through the use of violent behaviour and aggression. This association of violence, aggression and fulfilment of the protectorate role is portrayed as the ultimate masculine role within the military, and is intimately connected to combat and war (Duncanson, 2007; Higate & Henry, 2004). This understanding of the moral self - someone literally willing to fight for what they believe in - is demonstrated by Wasdin to guide life actions even beyond the remit of his duty as a soldier. The following extract is about what happens in response to a group of adult males engaged in verbal abuse at a traffic light stop, to a slight built, glasses wearing driv-

er, who was transporting Wasdin and a handful of his colleagues in the back of a van. The adult males had not seen Wasdin and his colleagues at this time, and believed they were shouting abuse at one driver:

> So we decided to teach them a life lesson, not to prey on the apparent weakness of others. Basically we stomped a mud hole in their asses. To drive the lesson home, one of us told them, You guys take your pants off."
>
> They looked at us strangely for a moment, but they didn't want another beating, so they stripped down to their underwear.
>
> We took their keys, locked their trucks doors, threw their keys into the bushes, and took their shoes and trousers. "Go down to the next exit, stop at the first 7-eleven on the right, and you'll find your stuff inside the bathroom."–US Navy, SEAL team Six, Howard Wasdin, 2011, p.153

Wasdin has clearly demonstrated that his actions are guided by his sense of morality, which once again stems from dealing with individuals who 'prey on the weak' through aggression, intimidation and violence. As such, even off duty, and outside of his jurisdiction as a 'warrior', he asserts his understanding of what was 'right' behaviour, by punishing those that he perceives have acted wrongly. This is quite significant in demonstrating how being a moral person is a lifestyle for Wasdin and encapsulates his entire sense of self, and not simply when he is engaged in soldiering related duties.

**Machismo of combat.**

Throughout the extracts, the authors seemed to indicate a strong sense of masculinity as integral to their concept of being in the combat arms and to some of the authors, being a warrior. These concepts of masculinity seemed to be clearly fitting with hegemonic masculinity; which masculinity researchers (for e.g. Duncanson, 2007; Connell, 2002) note as a dominant western cultural ideal of masculinity, influencing how men negotiate their masculinities. In western language, adjectives associated with this type of masculinity include: strong, rational, prudent, and objective (Duncanson, 2007; Hooper, 2000) which influence

the way in which individuals make sense of heavily masculine institutions, such as the military. In this subtheme the authors' extracts highlight how being in the combat arms was an expression of masculinity. In the following extract, Wasdin suggests that being a good warrior is foremost about a mind-set, which has undertones of masculinity:

> A number of the racehorses were the biggest crybabies. They'd probably been number one much of their lives, and now when they had their first taste of adversity-BUD/S style-they couldn't handle it...
>
> ...What the hell is wrong with these prima donnas? –US Navy, SEAL team Six, Howard Wasdin, 2011, p.62

In contemporary discourse the term 'prima donna', is derogatorily feminine and is used to signify someone being temperamental, demanding and is perhaps Wasdin's way of emasculating the unsuccessful candidates by giving them traits that are often seen as contrary to a successful warrior and archetypal male. Throughout the narratives, masculinity has been emphasised to be an important component of being a warrior; as such, emasculating the other candidates is a way of giving them traits contrary to what a warrior should possess. Bury elaborates on the connection of masculinity and being a warrior:

> So there it was. The cool element of war. Feeling cool, tough, powerful. Manly, really. It attracted all of us at some level. - British Army, Call Sign Hades, Patrick Bury, 2011, p.81

Killing, and more broadly, being in combat is described by Bury as bringing about feelings of empowerment. This feeling of power as described by Bury is one of 'strength', 'toughness' and 'manli[ness]', which are considered typically hegemonic masculine traits (Duncanson, 2007; Connell, 1995). Thus Bury is suggesting that being 'manly' is intimately connected to being in combat. This gives insight into how Bury negotiates his masculinity; being a man is about feelings of power, toughness and being within the combat arms. This concept of masculinity being connected with soldiering, and being a warrior is noted with-

in masculinity literature, and is suggested as being socialised through family norms, role models and movies (Cooke & Woolacott, 1993; Whitworth, 2004).

As has been described throughout the authors' narratives, killing and combat are simply a part of this 'warrior' calling of being within a combat arms, reinforcing feelings of masculinity, which the authors have shown to 'crave' throughout adolescence, selection and training for the military. Blakeley demonstrates how the connection between masculinity and a warrior can be influenced by childhood memories and significant others:

> My dad's favourite film was Once Upon a Time in the West – the ultimate cowboy movie, which dad and I had watched countless times. The men were hard as nails. Henry Fonda played the baddie, with his steel-blue eyes, Charles Bronson the avenging good guy. The women in it were real women and they fell in love with these all-male heroes. Dad explained to me why that movie was such a classic. The characters were real and battle-worn, and they were the ultimate genuine tough guys. They went out as small, maverick teams of blokes into the wilderness, and were up against the harsh, unforgiving elements plus their –British special forces: Pathfinders, Maverick One, Blakeley, 2013, p.34

This early memory Blakeley shares about his father is an important one that shaped his view of not only the 'tough guy', but also men in general. Blakeley's father had an influence and impact on his son not only by virtue of being his parent, but also by the close relationship, exhibited throughout Blakeley's autobiography. As such, by describing the film *Once Upon a Time in the West* as his favourite film, because of the battle-worn characters and genuine tough guys, he would have no doubt left a print on Blakeley as to what kind of 'man' is a 'hero'. Blakeley describes the good guys in the films as 'hard as nails,' characters which his father admired, and as such, demonstrated a positive association between a good guy, and a tough guy. It is of interest how Blakeley describes the heroes as a 'Maverick team of blokes', Maverick referring to unorthodox or independent minded person, perfect for the Special Forces unit Maverick seeks out later in his career. The Pathfinders are a small, highly elite specialised unit comprised of creative thinkers and unlike the standard Army unit, expects a certain level of individuality to make the unit successful. It is unsur-

prising then, that Blakeley's understanding of the archetype hero (masculine, tough, maverick) is the type of role he seeks throughout his career. Lewis shares a similar element in his narrative:

> … I haven't been watching many films and I like the idea of getting into a series. Deadwood seems perfect for my viewing tastes
> …It's an easy series to get into and paints a tough, gritty picture of frontier life. Hard men, doing a tough job, in challenging conditions. Sounds familiar. - British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p.206

Deadwood is a show about life for individuals trying to make a living in the barren landscape of America, before it was fully populated and integrated into a united country of federally controlled states. The show explores the life of people not under any particular universally agreed upon law, where violence and murder were commonplace, with few creature comforts and a hard life from all but the wealthiest of individuals, by today's standards. The people portrayed in the show survive through being 'tough' accepting of the difficult life they have become involved in, and willing to take extreme measure to secure their safety and prosperity. Although the show is equally about the lives of men and women, Lewis focus on the 'hard men' for his narrative, to demonstrate how he feels it represents a level of familiarity with his situation. By describing a similarity of the men in the show with himself, Lewis is displaying masculine traits of the warrior as 'gritty', 'tough' 'hard' who can overcome 'challenging' conditions, but more importantly are willing to seek out and venture into this 'gritty,' 'hard' world. Lewis continues the link between masculinity and his warrior calling by explaining how he behaves after an emotional situation:

> …Then the time came. Andrea dropped me off around the corner in camp so that I could get myself together before seeing the lads. Perception is everything…
>
> …We said goodbye and I watched as they drove off, Rufus's (dog) little face in the back window. It broke my heart. I had to get my 'game face' on...- British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p.16

Lewis faced an emotional scene of saying goodbye to his wife and dog for a tour of duty, one in which he found emotionally overwhelming. However displaying emotional vulnerability and sadness over leaving his wife and dog is not something he is willing to do in front of his men as a leader. Lewis feels that in front of his soldiers he must uphold a certain stoic front, void of the emotion because to his perception of being 'tough' and 'hard'; both typically masculine traits he views vital to being a warrior. DeVisser and McDonell (2013) suggest that men can engage in 'less' masculine behaviours, once they have built up enough 'masculine capital,' by doing typically masculine activities. Interestingly in Lewis' case, despite engaging in perceived masculine behaviour, such as fighting in an elite combat ready unit, passing what he defined as 'brutal' training to become a 'warrior' and thus an archetypal male, Lewis does not feel that he can engage in less 'masculine' behaviours, such as showing his emotional state of vulnerability to the men under his command. Lewis does not explain why this might be, other than suggesting that 'perception is everything', which only demonstrates the importance of putting on a front of typically masculine traits, such as stoicism, rationality, leadership and objectivity, when in the company of his unit. Duncanson (2007) details occasions where soldiers in combat allowed themselves not only to cry, but to display emotional vulnerability to one another, however these occasions seemed to be a contextually 'appropriate' time, such as just after combat, when emotions are running high. Perhaps Lewis sees the departure from his family as a context inappropriate for emotional display, or perhaps it is the fact that he is in a position of authority that prevents him from displaying vulnerability. A leadership role in the military can be considered one of almost hyper hegemonic masculinity; not only must Lewis act in a typically militarised masculine way, he must display characteristics of natural leadership, toughness, and a dominating presence to be taken seriously and followed into a combat environment.

**Sense-making of the role as a killer.** In sense-making of the role as a killer, did not present itself as downplaying the nature of killing in combat; on the contrary, every author articulated a sensitivity toward the nature of taking a life, and perhaps more importantly the consequences of that action. . This was particularly important to the research, as the literature proposes that whilst perhaps not a universal phenomenon, there seems to be varying degrees of resistance to killing. Thus the question is, what particular factors are involved for a soldier to successfully negotiate killing in combat? This alludes to the research questions of investigating how soldiers understand their sense of self, and how they experience and make sense of killing in combat. This subtheme serves as a crucial exploration as to how soldiers negotiated their sense of self, as someone whose role it is to kill in combat. To Lewis being in combat is integral to his sense of self as a warrior:

> I have done three tours in Northern Ireland and been to Kosovo and Iraq; but this feels very different. This feels like it will test us more than ever before and allow us to join the ranks of the warriors. We want to be practitioners, rather than just study the theory. I realise that this may sound odd to most people. Why would you want to get into a gunfight? The easiest way I can describe it is to use a sports analogy. Imagine going to every training session but never playing a game. You understand all of the theory, but you aren't really sure how it will work on the day. We want to get on the pitch and play the game. - British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p.15

Going to Afghanistan and experiencing 'real combat', which Lewis defines as being involved in a gun fight, is what Lewis believes in an integral part of being a warrior. In being involved in combat, Lewis felt he could join the 'ranks' of fellow Parachute regiments gone by, who were in his mind warriors who fought tough battles, as portrayed in the book he was exposed to as a teenager. He goes further by explaining why he would seemingly want to get involved in a potentially dangerous and life threatening event, such as a gun fight, which Lewis explains as putting theory into practice. As a parachute regiment officer Lewis has gone through one of the toughest and most arduous training processes in the British Military, which has prepared him to engage in combat. This training leaves Lewis

eager to apply his skills, and be taken off the metaphorical sports bench, to 'pitch and play the game'. Wasdin uses a real world scenario to demonstrate how he assimilates his role of killing in combat into the warrior self:

> Each time I made a shot I immediately forgot about the target and scanned for another.
>
> This wasn't the first time I'd killed for my country. It wouldn't be the last. – US Navy, SEAL team Six, Howard Wasdin, 2011, p.8

Wasdin accepts his role of killing an enemy combatant not as an exclusive event, but as a component of his job. He understands that this is what he does, and during the affair, does not seem to dwell on the negative connotations of such an action. In this example Wasdin is describing killing multiple enemies with his sniper rifle, which seems to have no effect on Wasdin in the context of combat. Further, Wasdin legitimises his actions by describing it as 'killing for his country'. Being a warrior means training to kill the enemy, and Denver has no trouble expressing this:

> When I meet people and they hear what I do, they sometimes say to me, "You're a killer." Yes, I am. I do not shy away from that at all. To me, that is in no way an insult. Warriors exist and train for that eventuality. That's the business I have chosen. It's an important one. My duty is to be guided by just principles and to do it well.-US Navy, Damn few: making the modern SEAL warrior, Rorke Denver, 2013, p. 208

Denver embraces not only his role to kill, but also his image as a killer (in context of a legal scenario). By suggesting that his business is 'an important one' and that he is guided by 'just' principles that he does well, Denver is demonstrating pride in his role and highlighting the moral component to his warrior self. In a sense, this seems to help Denver remain robust in his sense making of the self, even when social validation is not present. Bury describes this role of killing in combat in graphic detail whilst receiving instruction:

> We need to be quiet to maintain surprise. Don't make any noise. Don't shout out commands. 'You wouldn't walk up to an old granny in the street and say, "Excuse me, but I'm going to mug you in a minute." Would you? No you fucking wouldn't. You'd walk up and kick her fucking head in and take her purse and fuck off. That's what you'd fucking do'. British Army, Call Sign Hades, Patrick Bury, 2011, p44
>
> 'At any point in the attack you should be able to know what stage it is at by the rate of fire. The final assault must be conducted in a deafening crescendo of violence.' We like the analogy. British Army, Call Sign Hades, Patrick Bury, 2011, p45

This dialogue, as reported by Bury, may seem surprising and shocking to the everyday civilian unfamiliar with military training techniques. This technique, as with many others, is a form of desensitisation to violence. In speaking about what most individuals would find morally repulsive; assaulting and stealing from an elderly lady, Bury is giving a glimpse into his world of killing in combat. Killing another person who is trying to do the same, is not done in an honourable way, instead the objective is to tip the balance in one's favour, in order to increase your chances of success and decrease their chances of damage being inflicted upon the self. Contextualised to Bury's sense making of the self and what it means to be in the infantry, this link seems unsurprising, particularly in light of his acknowledgement of the realities of war, and the introspection he exhibits in his extracts. Throughout the analysis, Bury demonstrates a balancing act between both the romanticism of being a warrior, as well as an acceptance of the realities of being involved in combat.

Of perhaps equal importance to note, is how the military are not attempting to glamorise or cover up the nature of killing in combat. Previous research suggests that in order to get an individual to kill, the military must do everything it can to hide the fact they are in fact killing another human being (Grossman, 2007; 2009). Throughout Bury's text he has not described a single time where this appears to be the case, or even a time where an individual is not being happy to accept the gritty nature of their role as someone who kills in combat. To seal this point, Bury notes how he likes the analogy of their role being conducted in a

‘deafening crescendo of violence’. Fick expands upon this understanding of what it means to shoot and kill another person:

> I had loaded thousands of live rounds in training but had never really examined them. They looked dangerous. I wondered whether any of mine would end up inside another human being before the night was over. A feeling of profound gratitude that I was in a position to get revenge for 9/11 surged through me. Its intensity was startling. It wasn’t just a professional interest in finally doing what I’d trained so long to do. It was personal. - US Marines, One Bullet Away, Nathaniel Fick, 2009, p.106

In this dialogue Fick describes not only his inner processes of dealing with the act he is about to commit (i.e. firing at another human being) and the repercussions of that act (possibly killing an enemy soldier), but also the feeling of ‘profound gratitude’ he feels for being allowed to take revenge for America. The ‘intensity’ of the feelings of gratitude displayed by Fick is a reflection of how personal the mission is to him. Fick demonstrates that like Wasdin, he is an introspective individual that neither denies nor ignores his role as a killer. Within the research surrounding Killing in Combat Grossman (2009) has suggested that specific terminology is used to hide the true nature and intimacy of killing, but here Fick faces the act front on. Indeed killing is not something that seems to be cloaked or hidden for Fick, as suggested in the literature. This becomes apparent when Fick postulates the very graphic concept of killing in combat of ‘whether any of mine [bullets] would end up inside another human’. Fick explains further:

> Foxes dig holes to hide in. Marines dig fighting holes to kill the enemy from. Are you planning to hide in your hole or to use it as a weapon to kill the enemy?” In the Marines, anything can be a weapon; it’s a whole new way of thinking. My plastic MRE (Meal, Ready-to-Eat) spoon was a weapon if I used it as an insulator on a radio antenna so that I could talk to jets and call in air strikes. - US Marines, One Bullet Away, Nathaniel Fick, 2009, p.28

Fick describes the Marine mentality as one that does not shy away from the killing aspect of their role. A Marine’s role is to seek and destroy the enemy and Fick describes how he

is being immersed into this way of thinking. McNab further emphasises this role as a killer in legally sanctioned combat, as he describes his thoughts after killing the enemy for the first time:

> It was the first time I'd ever killed somebody. I was 19 years old and I couldn't have cared less. They were firing at me, and I was doing my job by firing back. I did what I was taught. No matter what a person does in the infantry – he can be a signaller, driver, whatever – what he's basically doing is getting himself or someone else into a position where he can put the butt of a weapon into the shoulder, aim, and kill somebody. I'd spent months and months training for this sort of situation. I'd learned the drills, I was proficient. But when the shit hit the fan, all I could think about was that the other character was trying to kill me. I just knew there were a lot of people firing, and I knew I had to get fire back, and that was about it. – British Army, Immediate Action, Andy McNab, 2008, p. 57

McNab clearly illustrates how he felt about his role of killing in combat. In describing this event, McNab is quite of matter of fact about his actions and his acceptance of them. Although McNab spent time explaining that he was doing his job as a soldier, based on the tone of his narrative, this feels less like a justification, and more of an explanation as to why he 'couldn't have cared less' to perform and action. This is perhaps further reinforced when McNab makes it clear that all he could think about, when engaging the enemy, was that the 'other character was trying to kill me', a scenario that arguably most civilians could understand as an act of self-defence. Bury further explores this role as a killer in combat:

> The infantry mission becomes our mantra: 'To close with and kill the enemy, in all weather conditions, in all terrain by day or by night.' We relish that word, kill. Kill. We are the sharp end. The bayonet. We are the warriors. We are proud of our role... We fight. We kill. We are the Infantry. The warriors. The God of fucking war. - British Army, Call Sign Hades, Patrick Bury, 2011, p.44

Bury, much like Fick makes no attempt to shy away killing, and in fact uses the word "*Kill"* on more than one occasion, even going as far as to say it forms a part of his mantra.

But Bury goes further than this, metaphorically describing the infantry as the bayonet part of the rifle. This is noteworthy, as it would have been just as effective to describe the infantry as the bullets, or the rifles of the army. But Bury chooses the 'sharp end' of the weapon to demonstrate their role. The bayonet requires proximity to the enemy to use, it is a brutal killing tool that will result in a bloody battle and getting close enough to the enemy to see their fear and anger as well as feel their sweat and breath. This type of description is similar to the one given by Grossman (2009) as the most traumatic and difficult types of killing to get an individual to do, yet alone consider doing. Yet Bury uses this analogy to understand his role in combat. Like Lewis, this description of their warrior calling as a penetrating, lethal tool that requires proximity further sheds light onto how they experience their role as warriors, but on their sense making of killing in combat. Moreover, Bury embodies his role in the military by embracing the unparalleled killing aspect and abilities of the infantry in combat, making them "the god of fucking war". Further, in drawing parallels between his unit and gods of war in popular mythology, Bury sees himself sharing similar traits to Greco-Roman deities which commonly represent the violent, untamed aspects of warfare. In once again highlighting the moral component of the warrior self, but going further by highlighting the complexity of the killing aspect of the warrior role, Wasdin acknowledges the humanity of the enemy:

> ...They were human beings just like me. I discovered my humanity and the humanity in others. It was a turning point for me- it was when I matured. My standards of right and wrong in combat became clearer, defined by what I did and didn't do. I did give the fourteen Iraqi soldiers food and take them to a safer place. I didn't kill them. Whether you're winning or losing, war is hell...
>
> ...Moreover, I realized it's important to understand that our enemies are human. –US Navy, SEAL team Six, Howard Wasdin, 2011, p. 143

By describing the enemy as 'humans beings', Wasdin is demonstrating that killing is not about ignoring the enemy's humanity, but rather acknowledging it. This element of transcript serves to illustrate the ability to kill in combat, without dehumanising the enemy, and

is something echoed by the authors throughout this analysis, and will be explored within the theme *Negotiating Killing and death.*

Lewis and Bury examine in quite some detail the role of the warrior as a killing tool. They both continually draw parallels to their role as a sharp stabbing tool, something used to penetrate and cause damage, and even to the aggression of a dog using its serrated teeth to cause damage. These share similarities in that they are all simply weapons. Weapons lack agency, and are simply used, they have no control over their actions; even the parallels by made by Lewis to a dog is significant in that a dog is simply trained to point and attack, and to be aggressive, without question or thought. Wasdin, on the other hand, fleshes out this role as somewhat the opposite, not just a killing machine, but something more than this, something which understand the importance of life, and that has the power and agency to think through actions, to make an assessment on who lives, or dies.

Directly relevant to this is Bury, Fick , Denver and Lewis's description of how being a warrior was intimately connected to killing. Lewis used a sports analogy, and Fick described the role through revenge, but Wasdin summarised their thoughts quite directly when he suggested that no matter how one looks at it, being in the infantry means spending hours training to kill another human being. It can be dressed up as 'being in combat' or 'firing at the enemy' as McNab describes it, but they all mean the same thing, to kill the enemy. Wasdin fleshes out the role of the warrior by defining that a good operation (when a unit is sent to complete a task) is when no one is killed. It is this testimony, combined with Wasdin's lengthy prose on humanising the enemy, and knowing when, and when not to kill, that demonstrate a different way of talking about the role, in light to the complex nature of combat.

**Negotiating killing and death**

Authors engage in sense-making of the warrior self, by highlighting the moral, masculinity and killing aspect of their role. But perhaps the most important part of the narrative for this analysis, is seeing how soldiers negotiate the act of killing and being surrounded by death. The authors faced killing and death on a frequent basis, but how they understood the meaning of killing and death was often based on how they viewed the actions that preceded the combat event, which often came down to whether they believed their actions were right, or wrong. In negotiating the act of killing, Lewis begins by demonstrating how he does not shy away from killing in combat:

> I decide that we need to start locking the enemy down. We need to advance to contact, fix him, then destroy him. If we don't kill him today we are going to have to do it…. - British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p.230

Lewis describes his role, not dissimilar to a hunting role, of advancing to make 'contact' with the enemy, then 'destroying' them. The task to engage the enemy is such a pivotal part of his role, that if they don't succeed today, all they would have to do is go out and 'kill' the enemy another day. By advancing, instead of waiting for the enemy to come to them, he is drawing similar ties with a hunter, who actively seeks out or stalks their prey. Lewis makes it clear that he wishes to totally eliminate the enemy by 'destroying' them. Beyond engaging and killing the enemy, which Lewis describes with clarity, and without hesitation, he wishes to totally eliminate them from the battlefield; such is his role as a warrior in the parachute regiment. Lewis continues:

> He is the point man, the very tip of the spear. He has 70 paratroopers behind him with enough weaponry to start a third world war: rifles, machine guns, rocket launchers and hand grenades. Artillery, mortars, Apache helicopters and fighter jets are all a radio call away. But that lone soldier might as well be on his own. - British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p.10

Lewis uses violent terms to describe their role, such as ‘tip of the spear’, which is not dissimilar to Bury’s ‘knife edge’. Undoubtedly, the ‘tip of the spear’ is a lethal component of a close range weapon that causes extreme damage to the human body. There are two components to this to explore; the connection to warriors gone by, and violence associated with such a weapon.

It is clear with Lewis narrative, as it was with Bury, that they feel they are part of a warrior clan, a type of calling that connects them to ancient warriors of the past who fought battles in much closer proximity. Lewis uses Knights and Samurai in his narrative, which are commonly thought of ‘elite’ warriors, who dealt with killing as part of their role, usually with a close proximity weapon with a sharp edge, designed to penetrate.

By referring to the ‘spears tip’ Lewis is using a metaphor of an ancient stabbing weapon to explain the parachute regiments role within the war. Their role is to clear a path for the rest of the military, causing focused damage along the way, which disrupts and confuses the enemy. In describing their role, and their affinity with warriors gone by, Lewis is making the role of the parachute regiment to kill the enemy very clear. Despite this clarity and sense of belonging, Lewis emphasises the harsh realities of being the ‘very tip of the spear’, which comes at a cost of extreme vulnerability and being ‘on his own’, in spite of the massive firepower the Marines have at their disposal. This is again speaking to the nature of how Lewis makes sense of an individual who wishes to join the combat arms; as someone who is willing to take extreme risks by being the ‘tip of the spear’, as well as acknowledging the vulnerability to their self of being in severe danger. As such Lewis thickens the narrative of the warrior, by going beyond describing a type of two dimensional superhuman soldiers. It appears, therefore, that Lewis is negotiating being a part of the power of the military as a killing force and his vulnerability as a human being. In focusing more

on the human side of warfare, McNab talks about how he views life, and how he fits this understanding into his role to kill in combat:

> Everybody took a job like this extremely seriously. We were talking about people's lives, and we all knew the value of life because we'd all had our Nicky Smiths. True, we might make light of it and have a laugh at the dead man's auction, when all the man's kit was sold off and the proceeds sent to the next of kin. But bravery didn't come into it; if anyone was doing it for heroics, they'd soon get kicked out. The Regiment didn't want heroes; heroic blokes do things that are unpredictable and put other lives in danger. The idea was always to let the enemy die for his country, not you for yours.
>
> …That we have détente?' Members of the Regiment hold life as dear as anybody else. During one operation, a team had been off somewhere doing their stuff. They stopped after a firefight and were clearing the area when they came across a young member of the opposition. He was shot in the legs and in a bad way. Rather than bugging out, they stopped, used their own medical equipment, which they might be needing themselves the next day.. – British Army, Immediate Action, Andy McNab, 2008, p. 222

Initially, this dialogue might appear contradictory. On one hand, McNab is discussing the sensitivity he has towards life. McNab acknowledges the humanity of the enemy soldiers, not only in his actions to help the enemy, perhaps at the cost of his own men, but by talking about the value of life. He does not attempt to deny the humanity of the enemy, which is generally considered the way soldiers deal with killing in combat (Grossman, 2009; Dyer, 2006). On the other hand, McNab demonstrates little remorse or issue with killing the enemy. His perception of this is critical in understanding how he views himself and his role within the military. The SAS can be thought of as a killing unit, and McNab takes no issue with 'let[ting] the enemy die for his country, not you for yours'. It is thus important to note how McNab can value life, whilst accepting that death and killing are acceptable, under the right conditions. To be able to kill does not mean one has to devalue life, according to McNab, but simply be able to integrate the morality of killing in how the soldier views themselves. Bury further explains when killing is accepted without reporting psychological distress:

> Pain is a universal language.
>
> The guns stop. Silence.
>
> Oily smokes wafts out of the barrels. The gunners smile contently as they scrape, click, click, make safe their weapons. The missile firer beams.
>
> Boss, 'you see that? We got' em! We got the bastards!' - British Army, Call Sign Hades, Patrick Bury, 2011, p.77-78
>
> 'Hoofing! WHOOOHOOO!'
>
> "YESSS! HOOFIN'! DON'T MESS WITH THE BULL-DOGS YOU BASTARDS!'
>
> Seven Taliban lie dead, strewn around their destroyed launcher. Back in the ops room the planners punch the air. The relief, the excitement, these Marines feel is tangible, even a week later when we first meet them. There is nothing sweeter, purer, more self-affirming than knowing you have killed someone who was trying to kill you. You call it pure murder, but they had triumphed, and they had also escaped- British Army, Call Sign Hades, Patrick Bury, 2011, p.77-78

The elation Bury is demonstrating in these quotes from his teammates is not unusual and Grossman (2009) describes in some detail the extreme joy soldiers feel from killing in combat; a combination of a rush from the adrenaline, and from surviving. But going further than this, Bury is not riddled with guilt or remorse, instead we see that he describes it as "relief" and "excitement", even a week after the event. More than that, Bury describes that killing the enemy brings about a feeling that is "self-affirming," pure and sweet, matched by nothing else. Transcripts like this one leave very little room for ambiguity in analysing how killing in combat affects Bury and his comrades, when they feel the kill was 'just', as in line with the moral component of their warrior self. Lewis describes his and his soldiers' feelings when contact is made:

> …but 6 Platoon have moved a gun group to their flank to cover this threat. They have just got themselves set up when two enemy walk straight in to Lance Corporal Jenks and his gun group. They are cut down with a burst of fire from the GPMG firing has stopped and 6 Platoon is in a good position of all-round cover. As I begin to push forward I come across some of the lads and the further I push forward the bigger their grins get. The lads are beaming. Each one is stoked and you can see the confidence oozing out of them. They are justifiably pleased with themselves. Each one I pass I give a

> congratulatory comment. Just the atmosphere amongst the lads is electric, a confident excitement that comes from a job well done; all of the tension and frustration instantly flushed away. . - British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p.135

> …the local informant, arrives and tells us that we killed three enemy and injured two. The enemy wounded tallies with the enemy in wheelbarrows the FSG saw. We are pretty pleased with this. It is an interesting area with a lot of enemy in it. Despite Corporal Philip getting injured, the lads feel it was a good patrol today. I have to agree. . - British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p.203

Being on tour, has demonstrated within the collective authors' narratives as a very emotional and gruelling event that inevitably leads to frustration and heightened emotional responses. Combined with knowing the enemy is 'out there' whilst you are on patrol, and having gone through a 'punishing' training and selection period to be in the parachute regiment to kill the enemy, it becomes clear why there is a sense of relief in engaging with the enemy. Lewis has described that the desire to be in combat, although seemingly odd to a civilian, is putting into practice what they have trained to do and thus is something they are eager to perform. This extract was chosen to further show the positive experiences soldiers such as Lewis gain from being involved in combat whereby the enemy is killed. In this narrative, the soldiers show elation from engaging and killing the enemy, whilst they themselves suffered no injuries. Lewis uses quite descriptive language to demonstrate the emotional highs from the contact; 'Electric' 'excitement' and 'oozing confidence' from being successful, to show how significant the event was to the troops. Lewis makes no attempt to conceal the role of his troops, the actions they took part in: 'They [were] cut down with a burst of fire', or the experiences of performing that action. In fact, Lewis describes the feelings of satisfaction and excitement as almost contagious that spread across the troops: 'The atmosphere amongst the lads is electric'. However, the way in which Bury 'talks' about killing alters dramatically when the context changes:

> I knew soldiers in Musa Qaleh who were haunted by the machine-gunning of a family in a car, even though they had been ordered to open fire on the suspected suicide bomber. The officer who ordered it felt as bad as the gunner, for he lived with the decision, knowing that his order killed a family and caused great anguish to one of his own soldiers. But what could you do? It was the situation's fault. Afghanistan's fault. Anyone's but your fault. - British Army, Call Sign Hades, Patrick Bury, 2011, p. 90

In contrast to the above passages, Bury now describes the feelings of what he perceives as a wrongful killing in combat, which does not fit with how Bury views the moral component of his warrior self. In killing a family who refused to stop and had been suspected of illegal activity, even when ordered to do so (legitimising the target) and in threat to their safety (self-defence), the guilt still seeps through and causes anguish amongst the soldiers who opened fire, and indeed the ones who gave that order to kill. This is a very important passage as it demonstrates that even when given legitimacy as a target, modern professional soldiers will suffer if the killing does not seem to fit with how they view their self. This narrative is significant, as it runs contrary to current research, which suggests that legitimising targets can minimise these types of feelings (Grossman, 2009). Another recurring theme in the research (Grossman, 2009) is the need for an angry, emotional response toward the enemy during combat, in order to induce killing. Denver touches upon this in his transcript:

> I felt no hatred for them, any more than a hunter hates his prey. I always respected my enemy and what they were capable of. – US Navy, Damn few: making the modern SEAL warrior, Rorke Denver, 2013, p. 210

Denver describes the relationship between him and the enemy as akin to the relationship between hunter and prey. This could be seen as a dehumanising process, a mechanism used in order to downgrade the enemy to sub human status. However this metaphor could equally serve to demonstrate how Denver feels no anger toward his enemy, it is simply an act he must perform which demands a level of respect for their capability as a fighting unit. By

noting his respect for the enemy's capabilities, Denver is demonstrating his sensitivity to the dangers presented in hunting an enemy that has the potential to retaliate, or do significant damage to the hunter. In this way Denver's narrative is less about dehumanising the enemy, (though that may be an aspect of it) and instead, it's about respecting their capabilities to fight back. Lewis continues to describe his feelings toward killing in combat in relation to 'hunting':

> I then head over to see what the snipers are up to. I have a real affinity with the snipers and have always been a huge fan. They are very good soldiers and incredibly dedicated to their job. They are, effectively, professional hunters and as a hunter myself I enjoy their company. - British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p.70
> They are quiet, methodical and focused. They are on the roof to catch that fleeting opportunity. The opportunity to get a 'confirmed kill'. . - British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p.70

Lewis demonstrates his 'affinity' with snipers as 'professional hunters' which share a similar ethos to himself. Seeing himself as a professional hunter places a level of clarity on how he feels about killing in combat. As suggested by Denver, who also used a similar term to 'hunt' the enemy, Lewis shows his acceptance of killing in combat, but not only as a passive recipient to combat, but also the willingness to actively 'hunt' and 'kill' the enemy. Despite this, Lewis' narrative demonstrates that this is more complex than a black and white view of the enemy and their lives:

> The man tells me that the child [who was killed during an engagement] was his nephew and an orphan; he looked after him. I pass on my condolences through an interpreter and ask him if he would like to take the body. His response stuns me. He tells me that he would rather not. If he takes the body, he will have to pay for the funeral. I offer to pay for the funeral. He is happy with this so I get some dollars from my fund. The local's attitude changes once he has the dollars and he hefts the wrapped body on to his shoulders and heads off to get a taxi.
> Unfortunately, it has taken these events to show the locals the quality they respect the most – strength. Life is cheap round these parts,

> but it still has a price. - British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p.328

Lewis pays for the funeral of a local Afghan in order to see that he is properly buried, because to Lewis life still 'has a price'. In this way Lewis is demonstrating some degree of sensitivity to the value of life and the right to a proper burial. Further, although Lewis' priority, as a commander, is his own men's lives, he demonstrates a sensitivity toward taking the life of civilians, and as can be seen from his narrative, and other authors narratives analysed within this analysis, the men who engage the civilians suffer the most in combat. This process of understanding one's target is further illustrated by Denver:

> "I can't do this," he said. "What do you mean?" I asked him. "That target looks like my little brother with a gun," he said. "This isn't for me." I tried to ease his concern. "Based on the enemies we've been fighting lately," I told him, "I don't think we'll be facing anyone who looks much like your brother." "Yeah," he said. "But it'll be someone else's brother." It will be. And that's an emotional issue all of us need to come to terms with. This job involves killing people—for good purposes, yes, but killing people nonetheless. What the recruit said to me that day was honest and, I'm sure, difficult to admit, surrounded as he was by SEAL recruits. – US Navy, Damn few: making the modern SEAL warrior, Rorke Denver, 2013, p.209

This component of the transcript describes a soldier who is unwilling to kill in combat. The soldier Denver is describing makes an emotional connection between the paper targets and his brother, due to vaguely similar appearances. Further, the soldier understands that killing will be taking a life from someone else's family, which makes it too difficult for him to kill in combat. Denver acknowledges this issue; some people can rationalise that the killing is 'for good purposes', in line with the moral component to their warrior self. For others, this rationalising process is not enough.

By focusing on modern, professional warriors, who have integrated the notion of killing in combat within how they view themselves. This sense making is highlighted by Denver:

> That first time didn't feel traumatic at all. It didn't even feel like the first time. I had shot so many weapons. I had aimed at so many targets. I had spent so long perfecting my technique. I had probably killed people in battle before, even though I couldn't precisely identify them. Crossing that line was not such a giant leap for me. When it finally happened and the results were clear, I felt something almost like relief. I had finally done something I'd trained for. I did it well. We won the fight. Everyone on my team returned home safely. We'd removed some dangerous characters from the battlefield. We'd been looking for that crew or some of their associates for a long time. This was definitely going in the win column. Winning beats losing every time – US Navy, Damn few: Making the Modern SEAL Warrior, Rorke Denver, 2013, p.212

Denver echoes the thoughts of Bury when describing the 'relief' he felt from getting his first confirmed kill. Killing in combat was acceptable to Denver, as it accomplished the mission, got his men home safely and 'removed some dangerous characters from the battlefield'. Denver does not place a great deal of emphasis on his first kill, which appears not to have left a residual mark on him or the way he views his sense of self. In fact, Denver is unsure when his first kill took place, which demonstrates how little importance he places on the event itself. The only significant element relating to the first official kill Denver describes is that it symbolised the ethos of the SEALS: winning, which 'beats losing every time'. Fick continues this train of thought:

> Gritting my teeth, I'd cut off its (injured animal) head with a shovel. Even this mercy killing had bothered me. I'd never been hunting and had no desire to go. Now, shooting grenades at strangers in an unnamed town, I was kind of enjoying myself…
>
> … He held an AK-47 and sighted down its barrel as he fired at us. The rifle jumped in his hands, and little spurts of flame flashed from the muzzle. He seemed very small to me, although he could not have been more than thirty meters away. I lobbed a grenade at him and the round exploded against the wall just above his head. I watched him fall over the rifle. We flashed past the alley, and I reloaded, firing more grenades into windows and open doors. - US Marines, One Bullet Away, Nathaniel Fick, 2009, p.216

Fick describes himself as a man who had no interest in killing for sport, and even had trouble with killing an injured animal to relieve its suffering. However, this desire not to kill

seems to be insufficient as a predictor for how Fick makes sense of killing during combat. This further demonstrates how, at least for Fick, it is not the act of killing, but the way in which the killing is rationalised and made sense of by the soldier, which is important in making sense of killing in combat. This sentiment seems to also echo the mental processing of the other authors within this analysis who have demonstrated similar sense making requirements of killing in combat. Fick explains this awareness of oneself, and sense making of killing further:

> I saw in the platoon a glimmer of something I was starting to feel in myself: excitement. The adrenaline rush of combat and the heady thrill of being the law were addicting us. This was becoming a game. I was starting to look forward to missions and firefights in the way I might savour pickup football or playing baseball. There was excitement, teamwork, common purpose, and the chance to demonstrate skill. I didn't have the luxury of much time for reflection, but I was aware enough to be concerned that I was starting to enjoy it- US Marines, One Bullet Away, Nathaniel Fick, 2009, p.261.

Throughout Fick's narrative, and highlighted once again in this extract, there is a running thread of the desire to be in the combat arms to test himself, demonstrate skill, and to belong to a group with a 'common purpose', which Fick has explicitly expressed as being in combat.

In this extract, Fick goes one step further by pointing out the dangers of the excitement from being in a combat situation. Seeing combat as a sport that is exciting and addictive is known as a combat high, and is something that has been noted in documentaries such as the BBC Our War (2011). On the one hand there is the excitement of working with his team mates and demonstrating skill, but on the other is the 'adrenaline rush' of being involved in combat. Fick states that he began looking forward to firefights; an exchange of live ammunition fired between the enemy and yourself with the intention of killing that person. Further he notes that in a hostile war torn country like Afghanistan there is an 'addiction' to being the law, whereby one's actions are not always overseen by a greater authority.

By noting his concern over enjoying combat, which encompasses the elements of control, the adrenaline rush, and teamwork and demonstration of skills, Fick is providing a glimpse into how he makes sense of his self in the combat arms. Fick questions and takes note of the effect combat has on him, becoming concerned with how he begins to view it as a 'game' like 'playing baseball'. Perhaps Fick is showing concern over treating something as serious as combat; a life and death situation, as a game, which has implications of glossing over the dangers, complexities and seriousness involved of combat. Fick has demonstrated sensitivity towards life throughout his narrative, and recognition of what it means to take the life of another person, in this extract perhaps Fick is further demonstrating how he recognises the serious nature of combat, and by extension the loss of life.

Additionally, Fick's feeling of excitement at the idea of being involved in combat and specifically enjoying a 'firefight' can be seen as statements which run contrary to an innate, phobia-like resistance to killing in combat literature (Grossman, 2007; Dyer, 2006). Which suggests that much like a phobia, soldiers would try to avoid a combat environment where they may potentially kill someone. McNab and Fick echo the way they make sense of, and talk about killing in combat:

> My own ideas about killing had changed a lot since I was young. I killed my first man when I was nineteen. There was a big celebration, purely because I'd done what I'd joined the army to do. But now, I got a kick from stopping death, not causing it. It certainly didn't worry me when enemy were killed in contacts. I didn't celebrate the fact, but there again I didn't lose any sleep about it. I understood that they had sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, but they were big boys like all of us and they knew what was going on. They knew that they stood a chance of being killed, the same as we did. I'd never met anybody who kept a running total or said, 'Yeah, good stuff, I've killed so-and-so.' If it had to be done, I didn't know anybody who wouldn't try to make it as quick as possible – not so much to make it a nice clean way of dying for them, but to make it safer for himself. The quicker they were dead, the less of a threat they were; it's no picnic getting shot. In the films, it's all rather nice – the guy takes a round in the shoulder and is still running around shouting good one-liners. Load of shit: you get hit by a 7.62 round and it's going to take half your shoulder off. – British Army, Immediate Action, Andy Mcnab, 2008, p.493

> I found no joy in looking at the men we'd killed, no satisfaction, no sense of victory or accomplishment. But I wasn't disturbed either. I fell back on an almost clinical detachment. The men were adults who chose to be here. I was an adult who chose to be here. They shot at us and missed. We shot at them and didn't miss. The fight was fair. All the same, I was happy my platoon wasn't here to see what they'd wrought. Sometimes it's better not knowing. - US Marines, One Bullet Away, Nathaniel Fick, 2009, p. 273

McNab and Fick clearly state that they had no issue killing the enemy when that was required of him, however they simply did not take any type of pleasure from doing so. Any action they took, which was designed to improve the efficiency of the act of killing, was done in order to increase his chances of survival, and nothing else. By demonstrating that he "loses no sleep over it" McNab is showing that as a soldier, he understood that killing was part of his role and far from dehumanising them, he is keenly aware that they were human beings who had "sons and daughters, mothers and fathers" but in his own words the enemy are "big boys like all of us and they knew what was going on." Fick echoes similar thoughts, further emphasising this rationalising process, as consenting adults choosing to fight against them. Wasdin discusses the implications of dehumanisation in great detail:

> In BUD/S and up until that point, I had been in the mindset *[sic]* that everyone I went up against was a bad guy. We were morally superior to them. I used language to make killing more respectable: "Waste," "eliminate," "remove," "dispatch," "dispose" In the military, bombings are "clean surgical strikes" and civilian deaths are "collateral damage." Following orders takes the responsibility of killing off my shoulders and places it on a higher authority. When I bombed the compound, I further diffused personal responsibility by sharing the task: I painted the target, DJ radioed the ship, and someone else pressed the button that launched the missile. It's not uncommon for combat soldiers to dehumanize the enemy-Iraqis become "ragheads" and "camel jockeys". In the culture of war, the line between victim and aggressor can become blurred. All these things helped me to my job, but they also threatened to blind me to the humanity in my enemy. .
>
> Of course, SEALs train to match the appropriate level of violence required by the situation, turning it up and down like a dimmer on a light switch. You don't always want the chandeliers on bright. Sometimes you do. That switch is inside me still. I don't want to, but I can turn it on if needed. However, the training didn't prepare me for seeing the humanity in those fourteen men.
>
> They were human beings just like me. I discovered my humanity and the humanity in others. It was a turning point for me- it was when I matured.

> My standards of right and wrong in combat became clearer, defined by what I did and didn't do. I did give the fourteen Iraqi soldiers food and take them to a safer place. I didn't kill them. Whether you're winning or losing, war is hell… Moreover, I realized it's important to understand that our enemies are human–US Navy, SEAL team Six, Howard Wasdin, 2011, p.143

Wasdin demonstrates a clear evolution within his narrative from how he went from dehumanising techniques such as using 'respectable language' to talking about killing, to 'understand[ing] that our enemies are human'. However, what is unique about this element of his transcript is the way in which Wasdin describes dealing with the act of killing. Dehumanisation is a technique that has been used by the military since (at least) the great world war (Grossman, 2009). Wasdin describes how he used this technique to see the world in a very black and white way, it allowed him to 'do his job' and see everyone he went up against as the 'bad guy'. When Wasdin makes the conscious choice to change his view of the enemy and to accept the humanity in his opponent, it helps him make choices that may save the lives by being more selective with whom he kills. By humanising the enemy Wasdin is demonstrating his sensitivity to the life of others and not taking it for granted. Yet this does not prevent him from doing his job of killing, when it is required, as recorded throughout Wasdin's narrative. The enemies are human beings, but they are still, as Wasdin describes them 'the enemy'. He explores this further:

> I didn't have flashbacks, nightmares, trouble sleeping, impaired concentration, depression, or self-devaluation about having killed for the first time-seeing the soldier blasted out of the PLO guard tower and landing lifeless on the ground. Those kinds of feelings seem less common among special ops guys. Maybe most of the people susceptible to the stress were already weeded out during BUD/S, and maybe the high stress in our training prepares us for high levels of stress in war.
>
> I have endured the trauma of my dad's harshness, Hell Week, and other experiences, and I endured war. –US Navy, SEAL team Six, Howard Wasdin, 2011, p.144

Wasdin is clearly stating that he experienced no trauma or guilt associated with killing in combat, which he tries to make sense of by focusing on: I) comparing himself to other

soldiers, II) the training and selection process as a type of screening for people who are more susceptible to killing in combat, and III) his childhood experiences. Wasdin does not internalise the discourse about killing, which typically involves feelings of remorse and guilt (Grossman, 2007; Dyer, 2006), and as such does not allow it to concern him about his own feelings. However this discourse does exist and its effects on Wasdin's narrative seem to be evident by the way in which Wasdin metaphorically steps back and reflects on the situation, and speculates as to why he has no problem killing in combat. Wasdin continues to elaborate on his sense making of killing in combat, and touches upon some information contrary to the research:

> Shooting can make a person feel powerful. Obviously, a good sniper must not give in to such impulses. On the other hand, if a sniper allows himself to be overcome by Stockholm syndrome, he cannot perform his job. Through his scope, the sniper becomes intimately familiar with his target, often over a period of time, learning his lifestyle and habits. The target probably has done nothing to directly hurt the sniper–US Navy, SEAL team Six, Howard Wasdin, 2011, p.193

According to the literature (Grossman 2009; Dyer, 2006), there are three main mechanisms used for overcoming the resistance to kill, which are: dehumanising the enemy, mechanical and physical distance, and team pressure to conform. However, as Wasdin demonstrates within this narrative, a sniper, whose role often includes seeking out and killing the enemy, sees every part of their target that makes them human; in effect undergoing a *humanisation* process, which allows the soldier to become 'intimately familiar' with his target. Rather than cause the soldier to be unable to kill, this mix of total power over life and death, as well as the immersion or close up view of the enemy, leads to balancing act that must be obtained between giving into impulses, and empathising with the enemy.

Elaborating further on Wasdin's narrative, the authors offer an insight into how taking a life is not something they take lightly, and indeed under the wrong circumstances, killing and death can have a negative effect on soldiers. Denver begins:

> There is something in the human psyche that just sends us there. At some time or another, almost everyone has said or thought, "I wish I could kill that person." Most people never act on those feelings, and rightfully so. It's a real thing, taking somebody's life. We operate under the U.S. Forces Rules of Engagement. We take those rules seriously. In their most basic terms, they require us never to target non-combatants. But we have the right and the duty to defend ourselves or our unit from attack or threat of attack. And we may use deadly force against hostile combatants to further the legitimate aims of the war. Nevertheless, I am cognizant of the fact that the people we took off the battlefield had families, too. I know that I have changed a family, that this is a son, a brother, a father, or a husband whose life is now over while mine continues. It is not something I dwell on. Nor is it something I can deny. But I feel like I've been lucky. I didn't see anyone we shot at who wasn't prepared to shoot at us—or wasn't already shooting. I've never shot at a target or an individual I didn't believe was absolutely the enemy. I have never had a moment where I wondered, Was that a good shot or not? A lot of guys have experienced that. For any decent person, that's a real challenge– US Navy, Damn few: making the modern SEAL warrior, Rorke Denver, 2013, p.213

Denver does not actively dehumanise the enemy; on the contrary he acknowledges and understands that when he kills another person, he is taking someone's father, son, uncle etc. Denver justifies and balances this seemingly paradoxical state by recognising that he considers the opponent an enemy who was trying to kill him, or his team, thus making the kill 'legitimate'. Denver does not make the act of killing abstract, indeed Denver highlights that 'It's a real thing, taking somebody's life'. This demonstrates Denver's ability to take another life, whilst remaining 'cognisant' of the human aspects of that individual. Together, this is seemingly done by coming to terms with his role as someone who kills in combat, the opponent's role as trying to kill him, and moreover, making sense of his role as being 'legitimate'. In Denver's case, a legitimate target is someone who was trying to kill him, and under law, he was obligated to protect himself from harm and to further the 'aims of the war'. Denver strikes a balancing act of seemingly accepting the taking of life, and the consequences of that action on others: 'nor is it something I can deny', whilst being able to move on afterward without dwelling on the consequences of his action. In following on the themes highlighted by other authors within this analysis, Denver describes how

this thought pattern would be very different had he shot someone who he 'didn't believe was the enemy'. Denver acknowledges the challenge this would bring, which he is clearly basing on others experiences of facing that challenge in combat: 'A lot of guys have experienced that'. Bury continues by demonstrating his sensitivity toward life:

> A young man in his twenties has tried to lay an IED on the 611. It went off as he was doing so. His arms are sheared off, his face blown away to reveal a mat of bloody flesh, pebbles, white eyeballs with pupils gone, his scalp torn off. I watch as the mutilated body is dumped outside the ops room by the ANA, another body for the sergeant major to deal with.
>
> And I was glad he was dead. It was funny. He had tried to blow us up, and the stupid fucker had blown himself up. That was gratifying, warming, pleasant. But later I see photos of his body and I feel sick. Somewhere within me, under the hardening crust, compassion still pervades my thoughts. *What about his mother, his family? What a waste of a life.* -Patrick Bury, British Army, Call Sign Hades, P. 218

Within this transcript Bury describes how he balances the demand the situation is having on not only his sense of self as a moral warrior; a good person that strives to be a 'force for good', but on the self as a passionate human being. Throughout his narrative Bury has demonstrated that killing an individual in the line of duty is something he can live with, and even an enemy trying to kill him-that ends up killing themselves- is something he can integrate into the way he sees the world. However this does not stop Bury from being a compassionate human being. Bury sees the death of the bomber (who died trying to blow Bury's unit up) as 'a waste of life', and because of this, he feels compassion for the individuals family for their loss. Bury feels relief, anger and sadness about the death of this person. Naturally he is relieved that the bomber did not succeed in his mission, and is angry at the person for trying to kill him. However this does not prevent him for being profoundly affected by the loss of life, which he considers 'pointless'. Bury thus demonstrates passion and sensitivity towards life, even an enemy life.

Within this extract Bury demonstrates how both self-reflection and the timing involved in reporting an incident can have a profound effect on how the emotions, sense making and cognitive state of the author can be viewed. Initially, Bury describes witnessing the horrific

and tragic ending of a life as ‘warming’ and ‘pleasant’, due to the fact that the person who tried to end his life, ended up dying instead. In this way his ‘hot’, current cognitive state can be said to be based around feelings of joy at seeing someone killed, even if that kill is brutal. Which, taken out of context, and without the reflective second paragraph, could show Bury as someone who is insensitive to the taking of life, and worse, perhaps took pleasure out of such an event. However, when Bury later reflects on the incident, sometime after being nearly killed, his ‘cooler’ reflective cognitive state has altered. Bury now feels a sense of sadness for the individual’s family, and the waste of a life, even to the point of having a reaction, which would be considered typical by most people’s standards, of feeling sick at seeing the gruesome images of enemy. Denver further elaborates upon this sensitivity to life, and how it is balanced with the role of killing in combat:

> What he said—and how he followed through by leaving [a recruit which found that the targets during reminded him of his brother]—made me respect him as much as anyone I’ve worked with. Despite the level of training he’d received, he recognized this wasn’t for him. Those SEALs who get through the training and become members of a team have an emotional maturity and balance about this part of our job. In our unit we don’t spend much time talking about killing people. We just don’t. Our guys have come to terms with killing or they wouldn’t be here. When required, we will bring lethal force to an identified threat. From the range to the field to eerily authentic combat re-creations, SEALs learn to choose our targets carefully before the trigger is pulled. – US Navy, Damn few: making the modern SEAL warrior, Rorke Denver, 2013, p.209

Denver’s understanding of how soldiers make sense of killing is not described by him as a biological, innate mechanism that the soldiers have switched on or off through training, but instead he explains it is as part of how they make sense of their role as a warrior. The unnamed soldier in training described by Denver has-despite intense training-not successfully integrated this aspect of the job into their role. Denver suggests that some people discover this about themselves whilst in selection, when they are put up against the targets that resemble human form. This technique is used with a range of military units to prepare soldiers by having them attack life like targets and in simulated combat settings soldiers, of-

tentimes charging with a bayonet into the targets to thrust a blade into the 'enemy' (Commando- On the front line, 2007; Sandhurst, 2011). Sensitivity toward life is demonstrated in the way Lewis' soldier's deal with death of a fellow soldier:

> He is dealing with this incredibly well. The only thing he can't get his head around is the fact that he will never see his best friend again. I try to help but what do you say to a man who has lost his best friend? Another terrible blow for 2 PARA. . - British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p.215

Within Lewis' narrative the only element of combat described as he 'can't get his head around' or a 'terrible blow' is that of losing a fellow soldier. At no point does he describes feelings like this, or similar to this about taking a life, but only of losing a life of his soldiers that he commands. This extract presented by Lewis encapsulates the running theme of *Negotiating killing and death,* which throughout has explored the way in which soldiers in the combat arms have made sense of their role as not only killing in combat, but being surrounded by death during a tour of duty. Within this extract by Lewis, and throughout this theme, the authors have explored negotiating killing in combat as a part of their job in the combat arms, but struggled to accept the killing of innocents, and the loss of life of their own men.

## 5.3 Summary of Findings

This chapter explored how soldiers make sense of their self and their role of killing in combat. The selected authors' autobiographies themes clustered around two superordinate themes: The warrior self, and negotiating killing in combat. Each of these themes was divided into sub themes, which will now be summarised.

Sense making of a warrior highlighted the significance of both life experiences and sense making of what it meant to be in the infantry upon the authors narratives. Joining an infantry unit was seen as a type of warrior calling by the authors, which seemed to be more than just a role, but a way of life. The authors' extracts painted a picture of a warrior as complex, symbolising a type of ultimate hegemonic masculinity; which is to say a way to prove oneself as a 'man' through 'extreme' and 'tough' tasks, to participate in 'violent' and 'heroic' deeds against 'overwhelming' odds. For the authors being a warrior meant testing one's skills, and unleashing an inner desire to be almost more primitive, which was referred to as 'pure' and 'self-affirming'. In this way being in the combat arms was the 'ultimate' expression of being a warrior. Being a warrior meant being part of a culture of warriors, which to the authors could be found in the history of their respective infantry unit, and sometimes sharing an affinity with ancient 'warriors', such as knights, and Greek Spartans, who felt a shared similar life ethos. Lewis for example describes his own infantry unit, as better understood as warriors over soldiers. The warrior follows a 'code' and is a 'calling and passion' and differs from a typical job or career. A warrior is also described in very violent terms, using metaphors of sharp-edged weapons, designed to kill in close quarter combat and shed blood. In this way, the authors managed to balance the romanticism of being a warrior, and the history and trappings that come with belonging to a group applauded for heroic deeds in the past, with that brutal reality of killing another human being. In fitting with the literature on masculinities (Enloe, 1993; Whitworth, 2004) Engaging in war-related activates was seen as the 'manly' thing to do, and the ideas of masculinity and the connection to being a warrior were seen with authors like Blakeley as stemming from role models and T.V heroes. This strength and toughness afforded to them by being within a combat unit set them apart from other 'posh' military units, who were often described in less masculine ways than themselves, who were willing to fight on the front line. In this way the authors described positive associations with typically masculine stereotype, people who conform to this view are given more respect.

Within the sub theme of Morale code of the warrior, the authors demonstrated that their role is not just about killing. Terms like ‘assassin’ neglect the complexities of being a warrior, which had a moral code, shaped by familial, societal and individual ideals, based on sense making of what it means to be in a combat arms. Bury describes this as a ‘force for good’, based on political rhetoric and childhood stories of ‘heroes’ in WWII. These influences shaped the authors’ behaviour, and what they perceived as correct behaviour during a time of war, such as condemning revenge killing and being sensitive to the civilians who were casualties of war

Within the sub theme of Machismo of combat, beginning with Wasdin’s view of men that were not cut out to be in the elite combat unit as less conventionally masculine, the authors indicated a strong sense of masculinity as integral to their concept of being in the combat arms, and by extension, a warrior. This was typically expressed in a way that conforms to hegemonic masculinity, and typically militarised masculinities, often associated with bravery, aggression and toughness (Duncanson, 2007). Indeed, Enloe (1993) suggests that masculinity is traditionally connected to war and combat, and indeed being manly can be seen as possessing the attributes to being a potential warrior. A warrior was described as someone able to overcome great odds, has courage and strength, and is clearly illustrated by stereotypical ancient warriors. Killing in combat was described as empowering in a typically hegemonic masculine sense, bringing about feelings of ‘strength’ and ‘toughness’. In this way being tested in battle was the way in which the authors expressed their masculinity.

In explicitly exploring the research question, the sub theme: Sense making of the role as a killer, demonstrates how the authors accepted their role as individuals asked to kill in combat, which they demonstrated as a balancing act between sensitivity towards life and the consequences of their actions to kill someone, whilst accepting their role as a trained killer and not down playing the nature of combat. The authors describe how being in ‘real combat’ was integral part of being a warrior. By putting theory into practice and ‘coming off

the bench' engaging in combat allows them to join the ranks of those the authors revere as heroes. Whether it was 'killing for country' or 'the business I have chosen' based on 'just' principles, the authors accepted the role of killing in combat as simply something they had signed up to do. Far from denying the reality of killing in combat, the authors described the act in graphic detail, even embracing their role as part of their sense making of their unit. However, in accepting this role, the authors do not deny the enemies as human beings, but rather acknowledging it and accepting each other's role to engage in combat.

In the final main theme: Negotiating killing and death, the authors each describe a narrative in which they are surrounded by killing and death as part of their role in the combat arms. In this theme, the authors described how they made sense of killing and death, based on a large part on whether they believed the kill was 'legitimate' and whether their actions were 'right'.

By being the 'very tip of the spear' Lewis articulates the dangers and vulnerabilities of being a warrior, which touches on the harsh realities of vulnerability of the role, that in many ways run contrary to the theme of almost supernatural abilities and the ultimate masculinity associated with 'heroes' and 'warriors' of the past.

However, when the author perceives the kill as wrong, and not fitting with the sense making of the self, they struggle to negotiate killing in combat. Bury notes that even during a legally sanctioned, perceived self-defence situation, the soldiers who accidentally killed civilians struggled with the act. Ultimately the authors found a balancing act between holding a sensitivity toward life of the enemy, whilst accepting the role of a combat soldier.

As such killing in combat is not universally accepted simply because that is the job they are required to do. Killing in combat is based on how the soldiers make sense of their selves, based on morality, masculinity, and perceived right or wrong of the situation. Far from being a 'wind me up killing machine', the authors describe a complex understanding of what it meant to them to be a warrior, and what was acceptable and unacceptable in

combat. In this way the authors found a way to enjoy combat, without losing the serious reality of taking life or having a fellow soldier lose their life. In this way the authors demonstrated their struggles with accepting when things went bad and civilians or their fellow soldiers died in combat, and accepted killing the enemy in combat. The process had little to do with dehumanisation the enemy, and more to do with relying on the sense making of the self.

Beginning with Chapter 6, the following chapters will build on the way in which soldiers made sense of their selves and killing in combat by exploring how group identity processes and the validation of life paths, are established within the authors' narratives, and how in turn these tools are used by the authors to make sense of their life paths and actions during combat.

# Chapter 6

# Killing in Combat

## 6.1 Introduction to Chapter

Chapter 5 set the scene for the analysis by exploring how soldiers make sense of their self and their role of killing in combat. This chapter will build upon this, by exploring how group identity processes, and decompression and validation - a type of psychological un-burdening between troops after combat - played a role in the soldiers' sense making of killing in combat. In the previous chapter, soldiers negotiated killing in combat by seeing their role as a way of life, and a calling. This was presented as a 'warrior' calling; a complex sense of self symbolising the ultimate expression of masculinity, by proving oneself through violent and heroic deeds. Identifying the self in combat in this way demonstrates negotiating the warrior identity as having a strong sense of morality and masculinity, and was in some part a socialising process; based on exposure to archetype masculinity and the historically rich 'brotherhood in arms' ethos of their combat unit. Further from this, soldiers explored their meaning of life and death, as well as acceptance of their role to kill in combat. This was based in no small part on this strong sense of self as a warrior in the combat arms. Chapter 6 explores two superordinate themes: group identity processes, and decompression and validation to make sense of combat. The first superordinate theme: group identity processes, explores how the authors created group identities during military socialisation to prepare soldiers to engage in combat. In immersing the soldiers into the military culture of heroism, acts of valor and teamwork, the men form a bond which is 'nothing short of love' and a 'true brotherhood', enabling them to carry out daunting tasks

such as killing in combat. This bond was described as a type of unity, as such protecting each other in combat was almost like protecting oneself from harm.

The second superordinate theme: Validation and ‘Decompression’- a word used by one of the authors, aptly describes the unofficial act of soldiers discussing combat experiences to make sense of the events. In this way the authors could validate their experiences with how they made sense of their selves and undergo a type of ‘psychological unburdening’. This theme also explores what happens when officers, due to their position of authority, don’t get the opportunity to decompress after a difficult experience.

**Table 6.1**

***Chapter 6 - Master table of superordinate and subordinate themes***

| Superordinate themes | Page. No & location |
|---|---|
| **Group Identity Processes** | |
| *Creating group identities* | |
| Bury: Sandhurst started its programme of 'socialization' | P.26 |
| Fick: History is the Marine Corps's religion | P.72 |
| *Killing for the group* | |
| Bury: For love melts fear like butter on a furnace | P.136 |
| Wasdin: My buddies' not bleeding in war was every bit as important as my not bleeding | P. 5 |
| **'Decompression' and validation to make sense of combat.** | |
| Fick: because combat command is the loneliest job in the world | P. 90 |
| Lewis: It keeps everyone together in a very relaxed environment to allow them to start to share and process their experiences. | P.383 |

## 6.2 Analysis

### Group Identity Processes

**Creating Group Identities.** Initially, throughout the collective narratives the authors considered how the military *created the group identity* during socialisation. These sometimes harsh, archaic and at times seemingly futile exercises will be revealed in the analysis by the authors as amongst the most important ways the military have in creating a type of social identity amongst soldiers. This sub theme will explore how the authors made sense of these mechanics, which sets up the scene for understanding *killing for the group.* Bury begins:

> Drill was the perfect method with which Sandhurst started its programme of 'socialization'. Throw the new platoon together in an alien environment. Deny them sleep. Change their terms of reference and benchmarks of self-worth. Replace societal and language norms with an alien culture and vocabulary. Deny them wrist-watches. Put them together and dress them identically. Scream commands at them and watch as they respond without question, without thought, moving as one body, united. - British Army, Call Sign Hades, Patrick Bury, 2011, p.26

By being 'thrown' together Bury is acknowledging how the new in-group is essentially a created construct by the military in which an accelerated, extreme transition occurs to form group bonds. Bury's experiences suggest that in order to achieve this transition, the military used techniques such as altering the individual's measure of 'self-worth', and by altering the individual's societal norms, such as language and 'benchmarks', with a new type of 'culture'. Dyer (2006) notes how the military can, and have, converted young men into soldiers in only a few weeks in preparation for war-time. Elite training for certain infantry units spans only 12 weeks, in that time the military must override 18-20 years of civilian attitudes and beliefs (Dyer, 2006). Taking this into account, the military have a relatively short amount of time to take individuals from a democratic and individualistic society, and change them into a team orientated dictatorship, which goes some way to explaining the extreme nature of this process outlined by Bury. The author further suggests that as a group

they begin to respond ‘without question, without thought’, and as ‘one body’. In this way Bury is describing a shift away from the focus of sense of self as an individual, to a type of collective self, which responds as one entity. Thus Bury is likening this shift from an individual to a collective state of mind as a body, which functions automatically, such as by breathing and blinking, without hesitation or thought. As such Bury can be said to be describing a type of surrender by the individual members of the group as an independent sense of self, and their respective pre military lives, to form a new type of identity as a military unit, which functions as ‘one body’.

Within Chapter 5, Bury, and the other authors described their desire to be soldiers in the combat arms in typically hegemonic masculine ways of being ‘tested’ ‘feeling manly, strong’ and facing tough challenges to prove themselves. Yet this extract paints a picture of a much more submissive Bury, which in western society is typically considered a more ‘feminine’ trait (Hooper, 2000). Indeed this extract by Bury consists of not only submissiveness: ‘watch as they respond without question’ but also a lack of independence: ‘without question’ and without logic: ‘without thought’. In making sense of these seemingly contradictory traits, Duncanson (2007) suggests that military masculinities can be complex, and not simply understood in terms of straightforward, hegemonic masculinity. Further, DeVisser, and McDonnell (2013) suggest that men acquire ‘masculine capital’ by engaging in masculine behaviours, which also allows them to also engage in less typical masculine behaviour. In this way perhaps Bury and his men are allowing themselves to be submissive, and lack independence because they are compensating by doing what is considered the ultimate in masculinity; becoming a warrior (Enloe, 1993). This would make sense in light of the fact that although being a soldier is the ultimate test of being a man to Bury, to be a soldier also means to be subservient, obedient and almost totally dependent (Enloe, 1983). Bury continues to talk about his powerful construction of the group:

> The late nights stretched us to the limit. Once lessons finished at about nine, we were free to conduct our own ‘administration’. Maps had to be marked

> and laminated. Uniforms had to be tailored, boots bulled. This was the time for ironing, for folding, for stacking, for polishing, leaning, sweeping. Communal jobs in our block kept us busy until midnight before the next morning's daily inspection. Then it was into our rooms to measure the gaps between stacks of regulatory folded T-shirts and the cupboard, to check that all our socks were in the correct drawer and folded the correct way, showing an inch of ankle material front. Sometimes we slept on the floor for fear of creasing our beds. It was endless, it was pedantic and it was stupid. But together we laughed through it. And because we laughed, as a team, it was very important. We became a platoon. - British Army, Call Sign Hades, Patrick Bury, 2011, p.29

In this dialogue Bury touches upon a technique utilised by the military of using an out-group, (the personal trainers and staff) to punish unnecessarily, and set meaningless and banal tasks, in order to help solidify bonds within the in-group (Bury and his fellow trainees). The idea of creating an in-group out-group, through means of punishment is not new and has been noted in other areas of Psychology, such as crowd psychology and collective action. For example, Drury & Stott (2013), note how during protests the police can use tactics such as 'kettling' to force a group of protestors and civilians together, holding them against their will for an unknown period of time, regardless of wrongdoing or not. This creates an in-group of the protestors and as a consequence, made the police a perceived out-group. In short, even if the protestors had nothing in common before, they now form a new social identity or collective identity, as one group, in response to the situation. In this part of the narrative Bury is demonstrating how in forcing individuals to do seemingly pedantic exercises, and punishing them accordingly, causes the group to band together. Bury uses terms such as 'stupid' and 'pointless' in reference to tasks they are asked to perform, demonstrating frustration toward the tasks required, and thus those that set the tasks. Further, Bury clarifies the importance of such techniques by specifically stating that by 'laughing together' through the 'menial' tasks, made them 'into a platoon'. This clearly demonstrates how the punishment and 'menial' tasks set by the training staff help solidify the soldiers into a group. Sometimes however, the process utilised by the military is passive, and less intrusive, as outlined by Fick:

> History is the Marine Corps's religion. I'd seen it throughout my training and felt it at the Marine Corps War Memorial, as I read the list of battles outside 1/1's headquarters at Camp Pendleton, and even when I saw the name of the lone lieutenant killed aboard the Arizona. Past deeds are a young Marine's source of pride, inspiration to face danger, and reassurance that death in battle isn't consignment to oblivion.
>
> …His buddies and all future Marines will keep the faith. Some people in my life would call that naiveté, but I was coming to know it as esprit de corps. My platoon lingered at the rail that evening, talking softly and watching Guadalcanal fade in the gathering darkness US Marines, One Bullet Away, Nathaniel Fick, 2009, p.72

By suggesting that the Marine's history is the 'corps religion' and that membership within the Marine Corps means that death in battle is not 'consignment to oblivion', Fick draws parallels between being a member of the Marine Corps and being part of a religion. Like religion, the in-group of the Marine Corps is based upon a set of principles, guidelines and beliefs, bringing people together with a single unifying mode of thought. Further, like religion, these beliefs and principles guide behaviour, thought and action, as Fick says, it gives him pride, and reassurance to know he is part of something bigger than any one person. By using words such as 'faith' Fick is describing a belief in the Marines corps that almost transcends the need for proof or evidence. As such, Fick is suggesting that he trusts the Marine Corps almost explicitly, which is highlighted by explaining how he 'felt' the impact of the history-religion; an emotional connection that is not based on logic. Fick continues:

> President Harry Truman once said that the Marines had a propaganda machine second only to Stalin's. He was right. My impression of the Corps, even as a newly commissioned officer, was one of a lean, mean fighting force, all teeth and no tail. - US Marines, One Bullet Away, Nathaniel Fick, 2009, p.33

Propaganda is, by default, usually associated with negative connotations by virtue of representing only one side of the argument. Within his transcripts it is possible to elude that Fick is an educated man, who attended an Ivy-League school and passed officer selection.

Such accomplishments suggest an ability to reason, and think critically about cultural and society. Yet in describing the propaganda as 'second to none' it appears as if Fick does not view this use of propaganda with disdain. In going hand in hand with the previous transcript, Fick is demonstrating how he is becoming a part of the Marine Corps by allowing himself to be immersed into their culture of 'All teeth and no tail'- in direct accord with how he views himself as a warrior in the combat arms. In this context, 'all teeth' can be seen as metaphorical for the violent, aggressive and destructive role he is immersing himself into. Whereas 'no tail', symbolises the almost polar opposite: submission and retreat. Once again this immersion into the warrior culture is one heavily based on hegemonic masculine principles associated with being a warrior, based on aggression, violence and toughness. Perhaps critically, Fick is also using the more 'feminine' 'no tail' metaphor, lined with submission and weakness, as a contrast to what his unit is. Lewis continues this line of thought:

> September marks our most famous battle honour, Arnhem. It was during the battle of Arnhem that the Parachute Regiment's ethos and culture were formed – tenacity, courage and a determination to fight until the bitter end. I feel it right that we should mark this day in some way- British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p.340
>
> The very first man in this whole snake that will weave its way out into the green zone and actively hunt out the enemy. I can't see his face but I know him. A young nineteen-year-old private. He has probably been out of basic training less than a year, yet already he is in the middle of a war. He joined the Parachute Regiment because he believes they are the best and the hardest regiment in the British Army. Since serving in the battalion he believes this more than ever. - British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p.8
>
> …The indoctrination and the tribal rituals have worked. He is a paratrooper. He feels fear, but he isn't going to show it. He is scared. He is scared because he is at the very front and, statistically, the most likely to walk in to the enemy. He has seen the horrors of war. He has seen mates injured and some killed. He knows exactly what a bad day looks like. - British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p.8

The Battle of Arnhem is an infamous World War II battle, an aspect of which is commonly known as 'operation market garden' in which Airborne troops were to land in Arnhem and

hold bridges to secure advance by allied troops. The hard fought battle saw a significant loss of life and resistance from the German military. With reinforcements unable to make the scheduled rendezvous, the Airborne unit fought for over nine days under heavy resistance, taking heavy casualties. To Lewis this battle signifies the ethos of the regiment; tenacity, courage determination and willingness to fight to the end. By focusing on the 'proud' history of his regiment, and the deeds of 'warriors gone by', Lewis is assimilating these traits of the group he wishes to be a part of, into his sense of self. Lewis goes further by describing how events such as these have paved way for a type of indoctrination into the regiment as 'the best' and 'hardest' of the infantry units. Going through the indoctrination has given the young 19 year old trooper, as well as Lewis, a sense of belonging to that group. By describing him as 'he is a paratrooper, he feels fear, but he isn't going to show it' Lewis is describing how the group are brought together by an ethos surrounding their regiment, firmly rooted in historical deeds of the paratroopers. There is also a significant element of perception of masculinity within these transcripts. Lewis describes the paratrooper regiment as the 'hardest' in the British army, a quality that is desirable to obtain and can be done by joining the regiment to be the 'best'. As such Lewis is suggesting that being the hardest is equal to the best, and thus having a 'masculine' ethos leads to the best the army has to offer as a combat arm. This may explain why the 19 year old trooper being described is 'scared' yet 'doesn't show it', as being part of a highly masculine organisation means supressing those emotions of vulnerability (Duncanson, 2007).Lewis continues to explain how the history of the regiment also dictates behaviour during combat:

> This will be the best soldiering opportunity of our careers. But, it's not all about 'smashing' the enemy. We have to pace ourselves and we have to be ready for setbacks. 13. Remember who we are. We are B Company. Remember our heritage and remember those that have gone before. Maintain the traditions set by the Falklands veterans. Be professional; do your best. - British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p.47

By belonging to the regiment Lewis feels a certain code of how to conduct himself and his men on a tour of duty. Lewis uses the heritage of a 'battle hardened' regiment that has, as he suggested elsewhere in his narrative, proven themselves in battle during WWII and the Falklands, something he wishes to live up to. Indeed in this way there is an element of professionalism that goes beyond just 'smashing' the enemy in battle, it is a way of conducting oneself professionally in the face of adversity. Therefore to Lewis, being a warrior also contains an element of professionalism, in line with the ethos set out by the individuals who served in the regiment before him. By 'remembering who we are' Lewis is providing a glimpse into how his sense making of the self is influenced through the heritage of the group he has joined. However, as demonstrated in previous extracts, Lewis did not simply join the paratroopers, it was something he was 'indoctrinated' into, during a rigorous and tough selection and training program. This tough selection and training into the paratroopers meant Lewis had to invest and immerse himself into the culture. As such it stands to reason that Lewis has high stakes in maintaining a sense of his self and the group as living up to previous deeds of his group, which includes honourable, tough, and heroic acts.

**Killing For the Group**. The process of 'socialisation', or creating groups, is described by the authors as being vital in preparing soldiers to *kill for the group*. The authors describe a sense of bond between each other that sets as a reminder that being within their combat arms gives them a sense of being more than the sum of their parts. As individuals fighting for 'each other' the authors describe the ways in which group bonds play a role in killing in combat. Bury explains:

> It is not often that a man tells another he loves him. Especially in front of other men. I think of the bust-ups we've had, think of the effort I have made to repair things, to be myself, to respect and protect the boys, to build this team. To earn their trust and respect. And we call it respect because it's easy to say. It's not soft and it's not embarrassing. But Matt [A soldier working underneath Bury] has called it by is true name, love. Simple platonic love. This love that motivates men to do the most touching, brave, selfless things

> for their brothers. A love so deep it burns and tingles in you when it flickers, reminding you there are things greater than you, more important than you, things that last longer than you. …….
>
> ..You understand why soldiers charge machine guns or hold out to the death while others escape. Love. For love melts fear like butter on a furnace; it transcends it. - British Army, Call Sign Hades, Patrick Bury, 2011, p.136

What Bury describes has been suggested many times by other soldiers: the bond that joins soldiers together is nothing short of love. Bury describes it as the simplest form of love, which motivates the soldiers' actions in a very real, very direct way. As Bury notes, this bond explains why men willingly charge machine gun nests, an action that causes both death for the enemy and likely high causality rates for the team charging. Beyond just describing the act of killing for the group as a product of love, Bury explains how this process works; love 'melts fear like butter on a furnace'. This action of love simply melting away fear, which in itself is a hard-wired, instinctive and thus strong reaction to a perceived dangerous situation, is an apt metaphor to give a sense of the profound effects of this bond in dictating behaviour. For Bury love for his fellow soldiers puts into perspective his actions during war, and by describing love as a reminder that there are things 'greater' 'more important' and 'that last longer than you', he is demonstrating how the emotion can override instinctive responses to protect the self. Further, Bury notes how this feeling of love is so profound; it gives him a sense of belonging similar to how Fick describes the sense of belonging he feels from the rich history of the Marines. As explored throughout this analysis, the themes of military masculinity within this extract takes on a level of complexity, which seems to go beyond basic descriptions of hegemonic masculinity. When attempting to articulate the connection between the soldiers Bury describes it as 'respect'. Respect is used because it fits with typically hegemonic masculine traits of rationality, strength and as suggested by Bury, it is not 'soft'. Soft is 'embarrassing' because soft is a typically western 'feminine' trait, not associated with how these soldiers view their selves, and their role in the combat arms. However Bury then goes on to describe it by its true

name, as revealed by one of his men: ‘love’. The way in which Bury makes sense of this love between them does contain elements of hegemonic masculinity: motivating the men to be ‘brave’ and ‘heroic’. However, it also incorporates a more complex masculinity involving less ‘masculine’ traits: emotionally it ‘burns and tingles in you when it flickers’.

This bond of love reminds Bury that they as a unit are bigger than their individual selves and as Wasdin notes, they bleed as one:

> I was charged with making sure none of my Delta Fore buddies sprang a leak as I covered their insertion into the garage. My buddies’ not bleeding in war was every bit as important as my not bleeding. –US Navy, SEAL team Six, Howard Wasdin, 2011, p5

Kill or be killed. Logically it is commonly perceived as one of the most instinctive responses to explain and describe why one person would kill another (Grossman, 2009). However, what Wasdin demonstrates is that this mentality can be expanded to include his teammates, which for purpose of analysis, is his in-group. Bury mentioned the profound effect that love of each other has on guiding actions, and this goes someway to understanding why in Wasdin’s case, seeing why ‘my buddies not bleeding in war’ was every bit as important to Wasdin as he himself not getting shot or killed. Based on both narratives, it could be said that the group is the individual, and the individual is the group. Thus a threat to one’s life is a threat to everyone’s life. This can be said to be true both literally and figuratively. The group relies on each other for safety and like a machine, if one falls, the whole team could fall. This part of the narrative echoes, and further builds upon the in-group socialisation techniques described by Bury, which helped transform him and his fellow soldiers into a metaphorical collective who behave as a single entity. Neither author described whether their training to solidify this collective self was intentional to promote a sense of protecting one another in combat, yet the result is the same. In having a collective self, and describing the whole as the individual, and the individual as the whole, soldiers will engage the enemy to protect both themselves, and the group, for they are one and the

same. Further, by adding the profound emotion of platonic love, or respect as described by Bury, into the mix, the soldiers have additional incentive to kill for the group. Another benefit of this 'socialisation' process is best described by Denver:

> It makes winning second nature to them. It creates a default mental attitude that says, "I can do this. No challenge is too big. Nothing will defeat me. I am part of a seriously elite unit." That sense of being a part of something so special—a true brotherhood—is what allows a man to get up every day, ready to put his life on the line- US Navy, Damn few: making the modern SEAL warrior, Rorke Denver, 2013, p.30

Denver describes how both him, and his group members' perception of the group as 'elite', and 'special' help them feel like a 'true brotherhood'. This sense of belonging to a group that is joined through their desire to engage in combat together is emphasised by Denver as making their bond 'true'. Further mirroring Bury's transcript, Denver investigates how this group bond is significant enough to allow the men to risk their lives in battle. Bury explains it as a platonic love, Denver describes it as a 'true brotherhood', yet despite the different terms used, both result in a sense of belonging and the willingness to engage in potentially fatal actions for one another, and as a team. These traits and feelings of belonging allow Denver to act in a way that he considers conforming to the role of a warrior; which is to say, engaging in combat, by performing heroic and brave deeds, by engaging an enemy in a dangerous environment, at a potential cost of one's own life. Denver describes these traits of 'winning' and being undefeatable, as core to what makes a 'man' risk his life. As such traditionally hegemonic 'masculine' qualities related to war are what make the unit 'special' and thus, worthy of dying for. In this way masculinity is crucial to Denver's sense making of his group.

**'Decompression' and validation to make sense of combat.**

As previously noted in other research, the act of killing in combat has to fall in line with how the soldiers view their sense of self, which could be thought of as a 'warrior'. The term warrior is described by the authors as a hyper masculine, moral compass, guided by values and the ethos of the combat arms they have joined. However, this sense making is also affected by casual debriefing (described by one of the authors as 'decompression'), and the subsequent validation on behalf of other soldiers. Within this analysis, decompression, or casual debriefing, is a colloquial term used by the soldiers to describe the act of discussing the events within their group, or to others they view as significant to help they make sense of their experiences. Validation is used to describe a more psychological process in which the authors seek to make sense of their actions by sharing these experiences with fellow soldiers, who have shared similar experiences or view of warfare and validate these experiences as acceptable, just, and required. This act of validation comes in unique forms, depending on the author, but generally comprises of seeking out information which reinforces their actions in combat, and their sense of self as a warrior:

> When the Marines went back to their places on the line, they walked in groups of two or three. They would stand watch together, eat together, and joke together. But I was alone. I sat in the cab of the Humvee and watched them go. In Afghanistan, I had had Jim and Patrick, my fellow lieutenants. Recon was different, more independent, and combat forged bonds within platoons, not across them. Gunny Wynn and I had passed the stage of purely professional teamwork and become friends. I confided in him my doubts about the war, the company, and members of the platoon. But never about myself. The events of the day overcame me all at once, and I struggled to breathe without crying.
>
> …As darkness fell over Qalat Sukkar, I sat alone in the dim green light of the radios. I felt sick for the shepherd boys, for the girl in the blue dress, and for all the innocent people who surely lived in Nasiriyah, Ar Rifa, and the other towns this war would consume. I hurt for my Marines, goodhearted American guys who'd bear these burdens for the rest of their lives. And I mourned for myself. Not in self-pity, but for the kid who'd come to Iraq. He was gone. I did all this in the dark, away from the platoon, because combat command is the loneliest job in the world. US Marines, One Bullet Away, Nathaniel Fick, 2009, p.243

Fick is describing the aftermath of potentially causing death and destruction to 'innocent people'. The pain Fick described in this extract speaks toward how he views his sense of

self as a warrior within the Marines. Fick kills the enemy and accepts this act; however when killing does not fit into how he views his role, Fick struggles to integrate the act of killing and begins to show signs of psychological suffering. Within this transcript the researcher noticed two things; firstly, how Fick describes how it affected *him* and his men, and secondly, the effects to him when not having had an opportunity to debrief; both of which seem to have had an effect on his ability to move on from such unfortunate events. Fick describes how his soldiers got to 'stand watch together, eat together, and joke together' whilst Fick had to 'stand-alone', and struggles to come to terms with those experiences. This process of talking with fellow soldiers is a form of casual 'debriefing' and as is demonstrated by Fick, seems to be crucial in the process of soldiers' sense making. By being alone after having been involved in actions that Fick is having difficulty assimilating, Fick is experiencing a profound sense of loneliness, so severe that he 'struggled to breathe without crying'. Fick's responsibilities as an officer leave him isolated from his unit, and make his role 'the loneliest job in the world'. Thus, in not being able to share his grief, and validate his experiences, Fick seems to have trouble coming to terms with the unfortunate events that transpired. Lewis continues to describe the unique dynamics that come with being in command, as echoed by Fick:

> The 'loneliness' of command is starting to hit me. There is only one OC and everything rests on my shoulders. It is hard at times and I can feel myself compartmentalising more and more emotion. - British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p.236
>
> I realise the truism about the loneliness of command. I am close to my CSM and 2IC but I am conscious that I am the company commander. Sometimes I have to bottle things up as it wouldn't be appropriate to say them out loud. It was nice to be able to talk to a fellow major who is going through a similar experience. I drift off to bed….feeling quite lonely. - British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p.167

Much like Fick, Lewis feels the 'loneliness' that comes with being in command of a combat unit. Like Fick, Lewis has joined a combat group that share the same ethos of a desire to be 'tested in

battle'. Yet despite these similarities, Lewis is unable to vent or explore his feelings with the troops, due to the responsibility of his position of authority. In having to supress his emotions, Lewis begins to 'compartmentalise'. However, by having someone of a similar level to 'decompress' with, Lewis explores a different reaction:

> I spend the morning briefing Matt Cansdale (A Company, 3 PARA Company Commander) and his team. It is nice having Matt here. We have spent a long time just chatting and this really keeps the spirits up. It is just good having someone at the same level to talk to. - British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p.280
>
> It's nice to be able to have a brew and a chat with a friend. It gives me an opportunity to air some of my feelings, especially those that I have kept bottled up after the loss of my three lads and Lance Corporal Rowe - British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p. 294

Within these extracts, Lewis gets to share his experiences and his grief over losing troops to someone of a similar level of authority to himself. Instead of describing a sense of loneliness, as described by Fick and Lewis, this simple act of talking allows him to 'air some of [his] feelings' and Keep his 'spirits' up. There is an additional masculinity component to these extracts worth considering in the context of loneliness and debriefing. Indeed, in a previous extract Lewis describes supressing his grief of leaving behind his wife and dog, in front of his troops. Once again in the above extracts, Lewis explains how and why he must 'bottle up' his emotions in front of his unit. Feelings of loneliness and grief are viewed as emotional reactions, which are more in line with traditional concepts of femininity than masculinity in western culture (Duncanson, 2007). It could be suggested that in front of his men, Lewis must maintain the façade of a stoic officer, despite his emotional turmoil. This is speculated to be the case judging how Lewis has previously described his position of being in the paras in a way that could be considered the ultimate expression of hegemonic masculinity. However, being an officer means having all these characteristics, such as aggression, toughness, and a desire to be tested, but with the additional requirement of being a natural leader and being able to supress emotions. In this way, being an officer in the paras is, to Lewis, perhaps the epitome of masculinity, and thus leaves little room for

emotions of ‘weakness’. However, this extract demonstrates that Lewis is willing to display his feelings and emotions, and in a sense allow himself to become vulnerable, with someone of a similar status. In this sense Lewis is adding complexity to the military masculinity he is portraying, by expressing emotions whilst still maintaining the traditional hegemonic masculine appearance to his unit, but only in front of someone he does not need to command. The next extract by Lewis takes place after his unit attacked an enemy position, in which civilians are caught up in the attack and get killed:

> None of us wants to hurt the locals. I am really beating myself up over it. Predominantly I blame the enemy, though, for setting up in an area and not getting the locals to leave.
> Fortunately Mitch comes round for a chat. After a good honest chat with him I realise that I had very little option. As unpalatable as it was, I still managed to bring all of my soldiers back in. - British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p.287

Whilst in a position of command, Lewis does not have the luxury of questioning his actions in front of his own unit, who do not have the pressures Lewis faces, as well as the responsibilities to make decisions that literally can mean life or death. As such, Lewis, much like Fick, is unable to validate his experiences of combat with others and as a consequence is ‘beating’ himself up over possible civilian casualties. However, when Lewis finally has the opportunity to discuss the matter with a fellow officer in charge, he was able to describe his experiences, and have them validated. The other officer in charge was similarly in a position of responsibility and as such was in a unique position to confirm Lewis’ actions, and confirm them to be the correct course of action. Lewis takes this opportunity of validation to accept the possibility of collateral damage, if it means keeping his unit alive. To Lewis, as a leader, this is of paramount importance, and is a strategy he employs in order to make sense of his actions, as well as accept them into his life narrative. . Fick elaborates on the merits on a casual de-briefing tool:

> …And storytelling. Every fight is refought afterward. Sometimes quietly, sometimes boisterously; sometimes with laughs, sometimes with tears. The

> telling and retelling are important. Platoons have institutional memory. They learn, and they change. Most of that learning happens after a firefight. Some officers squelched the stories, considering them unprofessional and distracting. I encouraged them, as psychological unburdening and as improvised classrooms where we sharpened our blades for the next fight- US Marines, One Bullet Away, Nathaniel Fick, 2009, p.219

Fick describes this debriefing tool as a 'psychological unburdening' for soldiers. It allows the soldiers to confirm how the group feels about their actions both as a group, and as individuals. In sharing these stories the soldiers are confirming their collective identity, which in turn helps the individuals make sense of their experiences. This extract by Fick helps build a picture of the maintenance and sense making conducted by soldiers whilst on operations. Further, this critical role debriefing played for Fick supports the role casual debriefing has for individuals killing in combat, as outlined by Grossman (2009).

Of note is how this process is described as an emotional event. Far from an official military debriefing, whereby soldiers are sharing information about the events that occurred, Fick describes this 'unburdening' as more of an emotional narrative, sometimes even with 'laughter' and 'tears'. However, at the same time Fick describes the event as a learning process, to improve their fighting abilities: 'Sharpening our blades for the next fight'. In this way Fick is allowing himself to be involved in an emotional re-telling of events, a typically less military-masculine activity, which is almost subsidised by the more aggressive, masculine task of learning to be better at combat. Much like Bury, Fick is likening their role in combat to brutal sharp edged instruments: 'blades'. This suggestion of close proximity implies their role in combat as one of extreme violence and aggression. It is worth noting that Fick suggested that some officers deny the soldiers this narrative telling, due to it being 'unprofessional'. Although not elaborated upon by Fick, based on the transcripts from the authors thus far, it is worth considering that the terms less 'professional', is linked to the emotional aspect of re-living the events that transpired. In this way the officers may be uncomfortable with not only the display of emotions, but the sharing of feelings, which

is once more not a traditionally hegemonic masculine trait, and thus perhaps not a trait they consider part of being a warrior. Fick however does not seem to share this view, demonstrating a sensitivity toward the importance of soldiers in combat validating their experiences. Lewis explicitly highlights the critical role that 'decompression' has on him and his men following combat:

> At 2000hrs we have a brief from the RAF and we are told that we will be leaving for decompression tonight. Decompression is two days spent in Cyprus during your return journey where you get to relax on a beach, have a few beers and 'blow off steam' if necessary. It keeps everyone together in a very relaxed environment to allow them to start to share and process their experiences. It also helps with the transition back to normal life. We have been in a very abnormal and very violent environment and there are bound to be implications from that.- British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p. 383

Lewis touches on an important technique seemingly adopted by the military which allows the men to 'share and process their experiences'. In line with the current research by Grossman (2007) and Kilnger (2004), Lewis confirms the benefit this form of casual debriefing has on his unit before returning back to 'normal life'. Decompression allows the men to share their experiences of being in war, a 'very violent' and 'abnormal' environment. Lewis's extract is providing a glimpse into how decompression helps the soldiers to make sense of their life experiences, and how the act of sharing these experiences allows them to negotiate and 'process' their actions and experiences of combat. It is important to note how this event aids in transitioning back to civilian life, whereby the soldier will no longer be in a war zone and hence, surrounded by danger and violence. This suggests that the soldiers have a way of behaving and dealing with their life as two separate components, the civilian life and life in combat. One is filled with violence and danger, and the other is 'normal'. In this way Lewis acknowledges the extreme abnormality of combat, and how this environment needs to be processed with individual who have experienced similar events, before going home and being immersed back into family and civilian life.

The above extract serves as a conclusion to this chapter, which highlights the important role that ‘psychological unburdening’, has on soldiers sense making of combat. Further, in performing in combat together, the authors described how the group identity, within their combat arms, aided in their sense making of combat. Combat is an abnormal experience, that typically involves death, killing and living fear of not only one’s own individual safety, but that of fellow soldiers, that have become a ‘true brotherhood’. This bond is described as nothing short of ‘respect’ and sometimes even ‘love’.

## 6.3 Summary

Chapter 6 continued to explore how soldiers make sense of their self and their role of killing in combat. In further exploring the posed research question: How selected authors, who have served in British and the United States combat roles in the military, understand their sense of self, this chapter explored group identity processes and decompression and validation. This was separated into two superordinate themes: Group Identity Processes, and Decompression and Validation to make sense of combat, which will now be summarised.

Within the first sub theme: Creating group identities, the authors described how the group identity amongst soldiers was created by the military during a socialisation process, designed to bond the men together and change the way they experience and make sense of their values, expectations and goals. By immersing the soldiers into a military culture, the combat arms prepared the soldiers to work in teams to overcome adversity, such as that experienced by being in combat. Being immersed into the military meant being immersed into what Fick described as a ‘religion’. In belonging to this group, soldiers avoided individual ‘oblivion’, by being part of something bigger than one individual. In this way the soldiers became part of a group surrounded by an ethos of heroism performed by warriors in battle within the history of their combat arms.

In the sub theme, killing for the group, the bond between soldiers was described as nothing short of platonic love, or a ‘true brotherhood’. These emotions motivated the soldiers to protect one another, and thus kill for one another. The mutual feelings of ‘respect’ or ‘love’ ‘melted fear like butter on a hot furnace’, and made the idea of protecting each other akin to them protecting themselves. Thus in seeing themselves as a collective machine working as one, protecting the group was the same as protecting oneself from harm.

The final main theme: Decompression and Validation to make sense of combat, described how the authors underwent a type of ‘psychological unburdening’ after combat. Decompression- a term used by Lewis to describe an emotional event of sharing experiences in combat, served to help the soldiers make sense of their experiences of combat, and move from the role and environment of the soldier in combat, to that of a civilian at home. In a sense the soldiers used these events to validate their own experiences and actions during combat. The effects of not being able to debrief in this way, as was the case for authors who held positions of authority, led to a sense of profound loneliness and inner turmoil. However when the authors were able to share and validate their experiences, it allowed them to negotiate their actions in combat, and make sense of their selves and life choices during war time.

Throughout these themes there was a strong sense of military masculinity, which was critical to group dynamics within each of the combat arms. Indeed the history and ethos of the units were based on aggression, violence, and honor, and thus to have these attributes was to be a warrior. Although these descriptions were often hegemonic in nature, occasionally authors described a more complex masculinity within their groups, involving the sharing of emotions, and expression of a platonic love for one another.

Overall, the themes in this chapter explored the way in which group dynamics within the combat arms reinforced the authors' sense of self as a warrior; someone willing to engage and kill the enemy in 'battle'. The soldiers described a sense of belonging to a group, whereby they were the 'best' because of their ability to engage in combat, be honorable and heroic, and thus, masculine. The group aided in negotiating the authors' actions during combat, and aid in sense making of life choices. Each member described an intense emotional bond with their fellow soldiers, which made protecting one another paramount in combat and in part explained why soldiers 'willingly charge gun nests'.

Continuing to explore soldiers' sense making of killing in combat, Chapter 7 explores what happens when the sense of being a masculine moral, warrior comes under threat, and how the soldiers negotiate changes in their lives during transitions of both post combat, and military. The theme: Conflict Within the Self, explores how soldiers deals with these changes in life circumstances, and how ultimately this sense making of their 'narrative' aids in negotiating past life events, such as combat, and life beyond the military.

# Chapter 7

# A Force for Good: Negotiating the Moral and Transitional Self

## 7.1 Introduction

Chapter 6 of the analysis continued to explore how soldiers made sense of group dynamics within their combat arms, and the effects these had on negotiating killing in combat. Further, the analysis presented how the authors utilised psychological unburdening techniques, in order to validate their experiences of combat. Chapter 7 serves as the final chapter of analysis for these autobiographies, by exploring how the authors negotiate a threat to their sense of self as a force for good, as well as negotiating life transitions out of the military. In this way the analysis further explores the research question of how soldiers in the combat arms understand their sense of self, especially in relation to how their experiences of combat play a role in the sense making of their lives.

In Chapter 6 the authors described how their role within the combat arms was reinforced by a sense of belonging to a group, which was steeped in a history of bravery, heroism, masculinity and combat. The authors described forming an intense bond with their fellow soldiers, which helped explain their willingness to kill in combat to protect one another, as if they were protecting their own. It is with these fellow soldiers that the authors were able to talk to about their experiences, and together they reinforced each other's actions during combat as fitting with how they made sense of their self as a moral warrior: doing what was asked of them during combat.

Chapter 7 follows on from Chapter 6, by exploring both what happens when the sense of self comes under threat, and how the authors negotiated transitioning into a new chapter in their lives. The first superordinate theme, negotiating the self as a force for good, explores how the authors make sense of their selves as a moral combat soldier, when they perceive or experience events that run contrary to their concept of morality. This was explored in a variety of techniques, from legitimising the role the author played in the war, to seeking moral validation for their actions in combat. Some of the authors described feelings of extreme anger when presented with immoral orders that placed little value on human life. This conflict between moral self and direct orders caused a friction between being a 'good soldier', and a moral individual.

In the final superordinate theme, making sense of the transitional self, the authors describe a reframing of their life, in relation to past experiences and new life paths. Sometimes expressed as a loss of identity, or being 'cut off' from the group, the soldiers sought out a sense of purpose for their new life based on similar experiences to being a soldier. This theme specifically addresses how attributes associated with being a combat soldier were used to negotiate the transition to civilian life.

**Table 7.1**

***Chapter 7 - Master table of superordinate and sub-ordinate themes***

| Superordinate themes | Page .No & location |
|---|---|
| **Negotiating the self as a force for good** | |
| *Negotiating the moral self* | |
| Bury: It had to be for something, worth something | P.85 |
| Lewis: None of us wants to hurt the locals. I am really beating myself up over it. | P.287 |
| *Facing disillusion as a force for good* | |
| Fick: I watched in disbelief as camera flashes popped in the dim light and senior officers laughed and strutted around | P. 272 |
| Bury: My compassion lasts less than twenty-four hours | P. 218 |
| **Making sense of the transitional self** | |
| Wasdin: Out of the seal team six loop and with no Team guys around, I suffered the withdrawal symptoms of being cut off from the camaraderie | P.272 |
| Fick: They knew that I had joined the Marines to hold a sword, not a pencil. | P. 364 |

## 7.2 Analysis

### Negotiating the self as a force for good

**Negotiating the moral self.** This subtheme explores how the authors made sense of their selves and experiences of combat, in relation to their moral guidelines of being a combat soldier. The authors discuss techniques such as legitimising their role within the war, finding a moral purpose to their sacrifices, and the need to validate their combat experiences and actions with others, in order to make sense of their self. This moral self guided behaviour during combat events, even if such behaviour included disobeying orders in a time of war. Bury begins by describing the need to 'create' a 'moral component' to the war he was not only involved with, but sacrificed so much for:

> At the time I truly believed it. Afghanistan *was* a better fight than Iraq. It was legitimate, morally cleaner and less sneaky. Less IED's. Twenty-seven, keen and naïve, I really thought we could make a difference, that we could help the Afghan people while protecting British and European streets from the small percentage of disenchanted young men intoxicated on Islamic fundamentalism.
>
> I hoped we could do something about the heroin, but I wasn't as sure. But we had to do something. We had to have something worthwhile that we were risking our limbs and lives for every time we stepped out the gate. It had to be for something, worth something. The military called it the moral component. A purpose, a noble effort. And so I created that, for myself anyway. I wasn't sure about the platoon. - British Army, Call Sign Hades, Patrick Bury, 201, p.85

Bury begins by describing his desperate attempts: 'it *had* to be for something' [emphasis added], to justify not only the war, but his involvement within it. Looking back with hind-

sight, Bury feels he actually created a 'moral component' for his 'twenty-seven' year old 'naïve' self. As such, Bury's involvement and experiences of war (killing the enemy, putting his life at risk, seeing civilians and friendly soldiers) needed to have some kind of meaningful impact.

Bury legitimises his involvement as being 'morally cleaner' and a 'better fight'. It seems the combat he was involved in was 'better' because it more closely conformed to how he views his role in the combat arms. This can be extrapolated by Bury describing Afghanistan as less 'sneaky', involving fewer IEDs (improvised explosive device), and thus 'legitimate.' Previously, Bury describes combat in a more traditional sense like what was seen in WWII, which Bury romanticised as heroic deeds of valour in combat, but also later demonstrated an understanding of the gritty, bloody, violent side of combat. However, the use of sneaking techniques and IED's used in Iraq, do not conform to this traditional role of war-fighting, as such Afghanistan offered Bury a way to express his sense of self as a 'warrior' in the combat arms.

Another concept employed by Bury is the need to find the moral component to justify the sacrifices he has made, i.e. 'risking our limbs and lives'. Bury searches for things his effort in the war could contribute to (the drug issues in Afghanistan, fundamental extremism). Bury did this because he had to have a 'purpose', one that fit his view as being 'noble' whereby he 'protected' and 'helped' people.

Wasdin describes what happens when his sense making of the self as a good person is confronted by his spiritual identity. In this extract, Wasdin is seeking advice from a Christian Priest, Brother Ron, who Wasdin describes as 'the glue that held the community together', and the 'community helped shape who I [Wasdin] was' (Wasdin, 2011 p. 36).

> I did have a moral concern about having killed for the first time, though. I was worried whether I'd done the right thing. On TV and video games, it may seem like killing is no big deal. However, I had made the decision to end someone's life. The people I killed will never see their families again. Will never eat or use the restroom again. Never breathe again. I took every-

> thing that they had or ever will have. To me, that was a big deal. Something I didn't take lightly. Even now, I still don't take it lightly. During a visit home, I talked to Brother Ron [A priest who is in servitude to Wasdin's brand of Christianity]."I killed in combat for the first time. Did I do the right thing?"
>
> "You lawfully served your country."
>
> "How is this going to affect me as far as eternity goes?"
>
> "It won't have a negative affect *[sic]* on your eternity."
>
> His words comforted me. My youngest sister, Sue Anne, who is a therapist, is convinced that I've got to have something wrong with me. There's no way I'm functioning as normally as I am without repressing something. She just doesn't get the fact that I really am OK with my decisions and mental peace. –US Navy, SEAL team Six, Howard Wasdin, 2011, p. 144

In this extract, Wasdin demonstrates how important his spiritual identity is to him. Within the extract, Wasdin details his attempts to assimilate both his identity as a spiritual individual, and as someone who fought and legally killed in the combat arms.

Wasdin begins by describing his acceptance of killing another person in combat, indeed he describes in detail the ramification of killing: 'people I killed will never see their families again'. Wasdin does not 'take it lightly', and in fact seeks guidance from a priest to verify that his actions were in accord with his dogmatic beliefs as a spiritual person.

As such Wasdin notes that the concern from killing was very much a moral one, based on two notions; an empathic response over the assumed grief of the family of the person he killed, and his concerns about the after-life, based on Wasdin's specific dogmatic belief. He sought outside confirmation that his actions were in accord with his dogma, thereby settling the conflict between being a good Christian and a warrior. Wasdin combines the two parts of himself to remove any threat to the self, thereby allowing himself to find 'mental peace' and maintaining his Christian self. To confirm how this state of mind has led to accepting his decisions to kill, Wasdin emphasises that despite his sister feeling otherwise, he is not wrestling with an internal struggle and in fact is free from any such dilemma. It is interesting to note how Wasdin filters out outside information to suit his un-

derstanding of himself. Despite his sister being an important part of his life, Wasdin chose to ignore her concerns, and readily assimilate the priest's guidance, an individual who is of a position of authority in Wasdin's religion, and therefore has a significant impact on helping Wasdin maintain his Christian self. In line with research by Webber and colleagues (2013), Wasdin demonstrates the need for social validation from external sources to confirm one's actions in combat as 'right' or 'just'. In the next extract, Lewis attempts to make sense of a combat experience between his men and the enemy, whereby local civilians were caught in the collateral damage of a military operation:

> None of us wants to hurt the locals. I am really beating myself up over it. Predominantly I blame the enemy, though, for setting up in an area and not getting the locals to leave.
> Fortunately Mitch [another commanding officer] comes round for a chat. After a good honest chat with him I realise that I had very little option. As unpalatable as it was, I still managed to bring all of my soldiers back in. - British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p.287

Whilst in a position of command, Lewis does not have the luxury of questioning his actions in front of his own unit, who do not have the pressures Lewis faces, as well as the responsibilities to make decisions that literally can mean life or death. As such, Lewis, much like Fick, is unable to validate his experiences of combat with others and as a consequence is 'beating' himself up over possible civilian casualties. However, when Lewis finally has the opportunity to discuss the matter with a fellow officer in charge, he was able to describe his experiences, and have them validated. The other officer in charge was in a position of similar responsibility and as such is in a unique position to confirm Lewis' engagements to be the correct course of action. Lewis takes this opportunity of validation to accept the possibility of collateral damage, if it means keeping his unit alive. To Lewis, as a leader, this is of paramount importance, and is a strategy he employs in order to make sense of his actions, as well as accept them into the life narrative.

In the next extract, Lewis explains his feeling of anger, when he is denied by his superiors the opportunity to dismantle an explosive projectile-based weapon, which he is concerned can be used to endanger lives:

> I tell Brett all these details by radio and ask him to get permission from HQ to blow up the warhead. There are certain rules about who can blow up what. The engineers are allowed to blow up enemy ordnance. If there is the remotest suspicion it is a booby trap then we have to get in an ammunition technical officer (ATO); the bomb disposal expert and his team. This doesn't look booby-trapped. It is lying on a hard earth floor. In fact, it looks like it is going to be used soon. Strangely, HQ say that permission is denied. We are to make a note of its location and then leave it. Once a bomb disposal team is available they will be sent to the FOB for us to escort out and they will deal with it. This is utter madness and I am furious. I can't in all conscience leave an RPG warhead. What if it is fired at the FOB or a helicopter? What if it injured one of my soldiers? I understand the reasoning but this clearly isn't booby-trapped. When I speak to 6 Platoon they tell me that a local pointed out the warhead to them and that he said he had just moved it – he was worried that his kids were playing near it. - British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p.103
>
> I pass on all of this to Brett and get him to try again, but to no avail. I am no rebel but I realise I can't leave it. I have a chat with Sergeant Dale and he says that he can get rid it with a liberal amount of explosive. I give him the go ahead. - British Army, Company Commander, Russell Lewis, 2013, p.103

As a Platoon Commander on the ground it appears Lewis has a high degree of autonomy to carry out the orders passed down to him by his superiors. Although a level of flexibility is awarded, the refusal or contradicting actions of one's orders is a serious offence in a time of war[2]. Despite this, Lewis chooses to countermand an order to leave the weapon, due to the concern it may kill his men or be launched at incoming helicopters. In describing his reaction as 'furious' about the command's decision, Lewis provides insight into how his sense making of the self, made it difficult to follow orders that contradicted what he considered the moral thing to do. As such Lewis takes what could be a potentially damaging career move by ordering the controlled explosion of the weapon. In this way, Lewis demonstrates within this extract that he is willing to disobey a strict chain of hierarchy, in

[2] Section 892, article 92 of the United States Military Code "Failure to obey order or regulation": "Any person subject to this chapter who (1) violates or fails to obey any lawful general order or regulation…shall be punished as a court-martial may direct"

order to follow his moral compass, which compels Lewis to act in a way that might prevent further risk of death to his fellow soldiers.

In a sense, both Lewis and Wasdin share a similar technique of sense making of a morally difficult experience, by relying on external influences to aid any contradiction held by the authors over their actions, and their moral beliefs. Lewis sought out spiritual confirmation that what he did was just, and ignored information that might be to the contrary, by his sister, whereas Lewis blamed the enemies for the actions he took, and removed himself of much of the blame by putting stock in his fellow officer's opinion that he had very little choice in the matter. In a sense both authors are removing a sense of agency, by seeking external validation; Lewis feels the choice was removed from his control, thereby he cannot be held accountable, and Wasdin seeks to have his life choices and decisions to be judged not by himself, but by a higher power.

Bury, on the other hand, choses to create the moral component of his actions by interpreting his behaviour in a way that conforms to the sense making of his reality. Bury demonstrates more agency than either Lewis or Wasdin in this particular segment of the narrative. Bury focused on a very agency rich narrative of sacrifice: making a difference to the community and to the war effort at large by using 'cleaner' tactics he agreed with, that suited his reality of the British military.

**Disillusion as a force for good.** Building on the sub theme: negotiating the moral self, this sub theme explores the consequences of when the sense of moral self comes under threat. The conflict can arise from fellow soldiers within the combat arms, whose behaviour runs contrary to the authors' sense making of what it means to be a soldier in the infantry. Other times this conflict comes between perceived morally correct actions, and a sense of duty to follow orders that run contrary to this perception. The effects of prolonged combat and the realities of modern war against extremists can also change the way in which the authors

talk about morality. Within Fick's narrative it becomes apparent that sometimes not every Marine holds this set of principles that guide Fick's actions and behaviour:

> Clustered around the men we'd killed. I watched in disbelief as camera flashes popped in the dim light and senior officers laughed and strutted around.
>
> I had kept my cool through almost seven hours of nonstop combat, through killing men so close I could hear them breathe, through evacuating my wounded brothers, through thinking I wouldn't live to see the sunrise. Finally, I lost control. Running up the road, I was in a rage. "What the hell are you doing?"
>
> I shouted. "You stupid motherfuckers. Taking pictures? You make me sick."
>
> A headquarters captain grabbed my shoulder and told me to calm down. I shook free. Major Benelli looked at me with disdain, as if it were in poor taste for me to ruin the victory celebration. Headquarters began to trickle away; my explosion had not been entirely without effect. I looked at the dead bodies sprawled in the trees. Six or seven of them, young men like us, clean-shaven and dressed meticulously in pleated trousers, button-down shirts, and brown loafers. Their silver belt buckles gleamed. They looked more like computer programmers than Islamic fighters. AK-47s surrounded the bodies, along with RPG launchers and piles of grenades. Clutched in the death grip of one of the men were two hand grenades, seconds from being thrown. Another corpse stood almost upright, stapled to a tree trunk by .50-caliber machine gun rounds… US Marines, One Bullet Away, Nathaniel Fick, 2009, p.272

Within this extract Fick is describing an emotionally charged event, post combat, in which fellow Marines are not acting in accord to what he deems acceptable behaviour in the Marine Corps: "You stupid motherfuckers. Taking pictures? You make me sick." Throughout Fick, and indeed the other authors' narratives, the role in the combat arms had been described as steeped in an ethos of honour, courage, sacrifice and battle. Therefore, soldiers celebrating the death of Islamic fighters, and taking photos of those young men that looked 'more like computer programmers'- and thus looked nothing like a threatening enemy, ran contrary to Fick's sense making of how soldiers in the combat arms should behave.

Previous to this scene, Fick described having undergone a highly dramatic and emotional process of being in combat for over a half a dozen hours, whereby he killed men in such close proximity he could 'hear them breathe', as well as seeing fellow soldiers wounded,

with the very real possibility he ‘wouldn’t live to see the sunrise’. By suggesting that he ‘finally lost control’, it can be surmised that the cumulative effect of experiencing the extreme nature of combat, as well as seeing soldiers behave in a way that Fick does not morally adhere too, caused such an emotional reaction, that Fick was even willing to treat Major Benelli, a superior officer, with contempt by shaking free of his superiors grip, without the courtesy usually afforded a superior officer, during a time of war.

This section of the narrative also provides a glimpse into the complex and cumulative mechanisms involved in combat that can lead soldiers to experiencing negative psychological effects, which make it difficult to tease apart from one another. Grossman (2009) suggests that killing in combat, especially at close proximity, would be the cause of psychological trauma. Fick does not especially highlight this aspect of combat as causing him to ‘lose control’. Instead it is the combination of killing, seeing people he cared about dying, nearly dying himself, and seeing fellow Marines act in a way which is not fitting with his sense making of a combat arms soldier, which seems to have tipped Fick over the edge. Fick continues to express how behaviour from his superior officers causes him to feel extreme hatred and anger:

> “Sir, I have two wounded children in my lines. We shot them during the assault this morning. My corpsman’s doing what he can, but one of them’s urgent surgical.” He shrugged. “So?” I explained again that we had led the attack just after the call that all personnel on the field were declared hostile. We had seen people, flashes, maybe rifles, and had fired. But they weren’t soldiers. We had shot two kids, and now at least one of them was bleeding to death in front of my platoon. “The colonel’s asleep. Just tell them to go back to their house. We can’t help them.” He went back to his food, dismissing me. My vision narrowed to a tunnel. There was no clean, clinical explanation for what I felt and what I wanted to do. I wanted to tell the major that we were Americans that Americans don’t shoot kids and let them die, that the men in my platoon had to be able to look themselves in the mirror for the rest of their lives. I wanted him to get out there and put his hands in the kid’s chest to stop the blood that flowed in rhythmic spurts from the holes. I wanted to cradle the major’s head between my arms and twist. But there wasn’t time. I was still conditioned to accept senior officers’ decisions, regardless of their stupidity, criminality, or inhumanity - US Marines, One Bullet Away, Nathaniel Fick, 2009, p.240

Initially, Fick is describing the consequences of killing in combat, when the actions do not conform to his sense making of the self as a 'warrior'. These types of actions were analysed in Chapter 7 as causing soldiers distress, because they killed innocent individuals who were not legitimate targets. The sense making of their self as a moral, honourable soldier makes such killings difficult to process. Moving on from Chapter 7's analysis, Fick demonstrates in this extract how such actions are exasperated when fellow soldiers do not conform to his understanding of what it means to be a Marine. Building on from the above extract, Fick feels extreme anger and hatred for his senior officer, who does not seem troubled by the potentially mortal injuries of civilians the Marines had caused. Fick's reaction to his senior officer's indifference is difficult for Fick to articulate: 'no clean, clinical explanation for what I felt', as it seems to be a combination of extreme anger and violent thoughts, 'I want to cradle the major's head and twist', to wanting to shock the Major into accepting the reality of the situation 'I wanted him to…put his hands in the kid's chest to stop the bleeding'.

Fick approaches these feelings from a different angle than previously seen, by describing himself as an 'American' and 'Americans don't shoot kids and let them die'. Fick is adding a complexity to his sense of self as a combat arms soldier by comprehending the taking of innocent lives as Un-American. In this sense, Fick has difficulty comprehending his senior officer's decision, and the actions of his unit, because it does not conform to how he makes sense of himself as an American citizen, which seems to comprise of a moral compass that guides Fick's way of thinking about the taking of lives. As such, Fick views himself, his men, and the US Marines as beholden to a moral standard, seemingly understood as being 'American'. These morals seem to go above and beyond how to behave as a soldier in war, to how Americans behave when faced with accidentally shooting innocents. McAdams (2011) argues that virtually all life narratives represent what society deems to be a good and worthy life. Thus, in order to make sense of an individual life, one must have an orien-

tation of good and bad, which is interwoven into cultural norms and beliefs. Indeed Fick's membership to the Marines is not the only thing that guides his behaviour, instead he looks to his membership as an American, which helps define his sense of self, and as a consequence, acceptable and unacceptable behaviours.

Fick also demonstrated a genuine concern that if the situation is not handled correctly, both him and his men could suffer psychologically: 'the men in the platoon had to look themselves in the mirror for the rest of their lives'. Combined with his sense of self as an 'American', and as previously described, a moral warrior, Fick is expressing how the actions of others, in addition to an already tragic incident, can have a cumulative effect on his sense making of the self, his sense of self as a group member and his role in the war.

This sense making as a force for good is further complicated by Fick's 'conditioning' to obey the orders of a superior officer, regardless of their 'Inhumanity'. As a Soldier, Fick is trained to follow orders of Marines who have obtained a superior rank to himself. This becomes an issue when those individuals above him do not behave in a way he makes sense of the Marines, as an honourable, fighting unit. Fick is demonstrating a conflict in making sense of his self as an 'American' and a 'Marine', which is being challenged by the behaviours of other Marines; that is to say, individuals belonging to the same group Fick holds in high esteem. Further from this, being a good soldier means obeying orders and by following the chain of command. By questioning the orders of his senior officer, Fick is wrestling with, on the one hand, his conditioning and desire to be a good soldier, and on the other, his moral outrage as an American.

In the next extract Fick continues to describe the psychological effects of experiencing actions that are not in line with his moral self. In this instance, Fick is describing an event after his soldiers shot at an oncoming lorry that refused to stop at their cordon, and which was later found to be carrying civilians:

> The responsibility is mine. If you hadn't fired [at a lorry that sped toward their cordon without stopping when prompted to], it would have destroyed most of our gear and maybe killed Marines. You did the right thing. "Yeah." Espera nodded, looking unconvinced. I ached for him. No one knows the costs of war better than the grunts.
>
> I guessed the television news that night was full of reports of collateral damage and civilian casualties. I wished people could see how much we agonised over our decisions and prayed they were the right ones.
>
> These choices didn't always translate into hesitation on the trigger or racking self-doubt, but sometimes it was enough to sit awake in the cold rain just thinking about them- US Marines, One Bullet Away, Nathaniel Fick, 2009, p.261

Killing, as described by Fick, is not something that he or the other 'grunts' (a colloquial term to describe soldiers on the lower end of the rank spectrum) take lightly. When doubts are raised about the legitimacy of their target (as is the case in this extract) it brings into question what they consider important to their sense of self both as a Marine and as Marines collectively. The sense making of the soldiers' selves as moral warriors does not easily allow them to assimilate killing innocents. As such, Fick is demonstrating that it is the context of the kill which aids in the sense making of killing in combat, and whether it fits into how they make sense of their role as a Marine. Fick clearly expresses how the soldiers 'agonised' over morally difficult decisions that potentially end in the killing of civilians, in order to demonstrate their sensitivity to taking a life, which did not conform to their sense making of their role in combat. In this way Fick is painting a picture of how killing in combat is more complex than a black and white issue of either suffering psychologically, or not, and is instead guided by individual and group processes. Individually, soldiers such as Fick behave in a way which they believe is suitable for a moral warrior, which in itself is informed by the group ethos, history and moral and legal code of that group.

It is also interesting to note how Fick uses the term 'grunt' to describe the men which carried out the kill, and who are the ones who 'knows the costs of war'. Fick takes responsibility for the killing in order to alleviate any guilt one of his subordinate soldiers may be feeling. By describing them as a 'grunt' Fick is almost minimalising their responsibility for

their actions, for a grunt is a term to describe a low-ranking or unskilled soldier. It should also be noted that by 'just following orders' the soldiers are conforming to what it means to be a traditionally good soldier: an individual who is disciplined, and who follows orders. As such a good soldier is an obedient soldier. Despite these techniques to try and share blame, or minimalise the effects of the killing, Fick still believes that the 'grunts' are the ones who experience the 'cost' of these unfortunate events in wartime.

This 'cost' of warfare, as well as prolonged combat exposure, has a negative effect on the moral stance Bury took to combat:

> My compassion lasts less than twenty-four hours. As we debate whether to return his body to a mosque before sundown, like the soft morale, Geneva-bound men we are, the Taliban prepare to ambush us at the mosque. Luckily, we don't have the manpower. The family can collect him later. Then we find out about the ambush. Rage,
> Fuck them, the dirty despicable bastards. Is nothing sacred? Ambush your enemy as he returns your dead? Honour? You bastards. YOU FUCKING BASTARDS. I WILL KILL EVERY LAST ONE OF YOU. - British Army, Call Sign Hades, Patrick Bury, 2011, p218

Throughout Bury's narrative he has demonstrated sensitivity to life. In acknowledging his childhood events as inspiration, Bury has been careful with how he talks about the enemy, often making a conscientious effort not to paint them all under the same brush, and opting to kill within the legal confines of his role as a soldier, even when an opportunity for revenge presented itself. However, within this element of the transcript Bury seems to have lost total control. Now Bury describes 'them' as dirty, without honor and holding nothing sacred. Bury's rage leads him to want to 'lay waste' to the enemy. No longer is he talking strategically about assaulting the enemy position, those words have been replaced with 'you fucking bastards' and 'I will kill every last one of you'. In this state it is unclear what Bury would do had he engaged with the enemy. As the tour goes on Bury becomes increasingly frustrated and angry. It appears that events such as the one described are an affront to

how Bury makes sense of the world, and these events seem to be eroding his sense of self, which until now has helped guide his moral decision making.

What is of particular note in this extract is the sheer outrage expressed by Bury at a combat tactic employed by the enemy. Bury sees their tactic as exploiting his group's 'soft' morally bound way of conducting warfare, in line with the Geneva Convention. This tactic, as described by Bury lacks 'honour', which demonstrates how important this quality is to Bury's sense making of combat and warfare. Bury believes in the moral code of warfare, and conducting oneself with honour, but more specifically, Bury seems to feel the enemy should also comply to this view of conducting warfare. In breaking this view of combat as steeped in 'honour', Bury reacts violently, he can no longer make sense of the actions of his enemy, or the rules which apply to facing them in combat.

**Making sense of the transitional self.**

This theme explores the way in which the authors negotiate transitioning out of the military, and how they make sense of their experiences of combat to aid this transition. This sense making came with accepting a loss of identity as a combat soldier, and reframing one's life to still have meaning beyond the life as a solder. Sometimes this was expressed as a new sense of purpose, such as continuing the legacy of a force for good. Other times it came from an acceptance of a stronger sense of the self as something other than a soldier in the combat arms. Yet still was the desire to find meaning in the experiences of combat, and how these experiences add to the strength of the author as they move on in their life. Wasdin begins by explaining how he feels when he is removed from his unit (team six) after a serious injury:

> Out of the seal team six loop and with no Team guys around, I suffered the withdrawal symptoms of being cut off from the camaraderie. I was in culture shock, too. People around town could talk to me about their lives, but I couldn't talk to them about mine. I couldn't joke with them about my Hell Week death leap to kill a rack of trays [During an intense training week consisting of sleep deprivation Wasdin became delirious. It is typical for instructors to play pranks on the delirious soldiers, by feeding into their hallucinations. In Wasdin's case he was in the food court room when one instructor convinced him a stack of trays were a deer, and his mission was to kill the deer. Wasdin, in a state of delirium, attacked the stack of trays, as ordered] that I thought was a deer…People around town didn't understand. I learned to shut up about those experiences. Now it occurred to me how different I had become from most people. Away from my teammates, I felt forgotten, too. With no real world missions, I had gone cold turkey from adrenaline. Now I couldn't even walk. In the SEAL culture, where it pays to be a winner, I was the biggest loser. I was angry at the world in general and at God in particular. Why did this have to happen to me? –US Navy, SEAL team Six, Howard Wasdin, 2011, p. 272

Wasdin is describing feelings of a loss of identity as a SEAL team six member, after being shot in the line of duty. By being 'cut off' from the camaraderie that comes with an elite unit, Wasdin has been removed from his group culture and has no one to turn to and talk about his experiences. In experiencing this 'culture shock', Wasdin no longer has people that understand him. Further, by suggesting that the absence of the team makes him feel 'forgotten', Wasdin is demonstrating how important being not only a SEAL team member was to his sense of self, but the importance of being surrounded physically by other SEAL team members.

However, as Wasdin demonstrates, it was not just the removal from his team, but the threat to his sense making of a warrior that has caused him to experiences feelings of being 'the biggest loser'. Being a warrior has been described as intimately connected to masculinity (Duncanson, 2007), which Wasdin has described as being 'a winner', and throughout this analysis as strong, powerful, and combat ready. However, by not even being able to walk properly, and thus, no longer able to perform to the standard he is used to, Wasdin is describing himself as being in a weaker position; the physical injury has manifested in a psy-

chological expression of weakness. This position of damaged and weak, is considered by Wasdin to make him 'the biggest loser', a polar opposite to the masculine traits he associates with being a warrior. As such, Wasdin struggles to make sense of his self as he begins the transition to a life outside the SEALS and without combat.

The feelings surrounding the struggle to accept his new reality has made Wasdin angry at the world and at 'God in particular'. Wasdin has previously described how important his spiritual identity is to him, and now that he feels a part of himself has been taken from him, he feels angry at what he believes is the source of his change in lifestyle. As such, Wasdin is demonstrating that his sense making of his reality, both the good and bad times, are very much guided by an external source; God. His sense of purpose, life goals and achievements are therefore a product of something outside of his control.

This sense making of the self notably shifts when Wasdin re-evaluates his life with a new sense of purpose, and from spiritual guidance from 'God'.

> He (God) humbled me and brought me back down to earth. Made me become a father to my children. At the time, no one could've convinced me of all that, but looking back, getting shot in the leg was the best thing that ever happened to me. –US Navy, SEAL team Six, Howard Wasdin, 2011, p272

Wasdin now talks about his life in a very different way, and seems to have accepted his reality, now separate from the SEAL teams, as still offering a sense of purpose. This purpose for Wasdin has changed from fighting in combat and being 'a winner' to being a father. This reframing of his life has allowed Wasdin to see his life narrative as a type of transition in which the injury which cost him his career is now seen as a blessing and a way to begin his new lifestyle. By suggesting he was brought 'back down to earth', Wasdin is demonstrating that his life as a SEAL was bigger than life, and that being in an elite combat unit possesses attributes that allowed him to live an extraordinary life that was important to his sense making of the self. His new life, as a contrast, is

more ordinary. Yet he sees this as a positive in that he can 'be a father to his children', thus in no way devaluing his new narrative. This selective reconstruction of a life narrative is noted by McAdams (2011) as used by individuals to make meaning out of their life, and helps individuals make sense of where their narratives are going. This rich sense of agency used by Wasdin is important for general wellbeing (Erikson, 1963; McAdams, 2011; Baerger & McAdams, 1999) as well as tackling psychological disturbances (McAdams, 2011).

On a final note, Wasdin demonstrates once again that 'God made him' have this new life, in which being a father was now central to his contribution as a force for good. In this way, Wasdin continues to demonstrate how his life, although agency rich, is very much the product of external mechanisms, almost beyond his control. Yet Wasdin is able to take control of his life by altering his perspective on what is important to him, in order to feel good about his new life. Wasdin continues to discuss how he molds his narrative and sense of self to suit his new life path:

> When I first started seeing patients [as a physiotherapist] is when I knew I'd made the right decision. They trust me, I figure out what's wrong with them, I help them feel better, and they love me for it. –US Navy, SEAL team Six, Howard Wasdin, 2011, p. 303
>
> Success stories like this [Wasdin is informed he has alleviated chronic pain a patient has had for many years] that let me know I made the right decision. I truly feel that this is the path God intended for me when he spared my life in Somalia…
>
> …Helping patients [like her] helps lessen the guilt that still makes me wonder why I'm still alive when better men than me like Dan Busch are not. I understand better why God spared me he really did have a purpose for me after my life as a SEAL. –US Navy, SEAL team Six, Howard Wasdin, 2011, p. 304
>
> [On reflection on his life as a physio-therapist] I once again have a positive mind, body and spirit. Professionally and personally, life is good again. –US Navy, SEAL team Six, Howard Wasdin, 2011, p. 305

Wasdin is reflecting on his life, which has gone from being a combat soldier in the elite SEALs, to a physiotherapist. Previously Wasdin has demonstrated the ability to reframe his life in order to gain a sense of purpose and to see events as transitions rather than insur-

mountable hurdles. In these extracts Wasdin builds upon this configuration of the life narrative by focusing on the good he does as a physiotherapist. This act of good comes by changing people's lives for the better, by alleviating long term pain and suffering. The sense making of the self as a force for good has been a running theme throughout Wasdin's extracts when he was a SEAL, and these extracts demonstrate how this element of being a soldier is important enough to guide his decisions in life post military. Wasdin focuses on how being a physiotherapist allows him to help other people, so much so that he believes it is the life path that God intended for him. In effect Wasdin is justifying and making sense of his life choice as guided by an external force greater than himself, in order to make sense of his decisions to heal people.

There is also an element of using this new career path as a way of dealing with survivor's guilt. Wasdin suggests that he feels guilty for surviving when 'better men' died during combat. However, in reconfiguring his life narrative, Wasdin feels that he was spared for a purpose of helping others, which helps him accept the reality of him surviving when others did not.

Wasdin also draws parallels between his career as a physiotherapist, and his old role as a SEAL. Wasdin was drawn to the SEALS because, as well as many other reasons, it gave him a sense of purpose, a challenge, and he knew he was part of something admired and 'seriously elite'. In this extract, Wasdin draws parallels with this role as a challenge 'I figure out what's wrong with them', as a force for good 'I help them feel better', and admiration 'they love me for it'.

Finally, Wasdin demonstrates a need to be validated in what he does. Previously he sought out a priest to confirm that killing in combat was acceptable as a spiritual person, and that it would not adverse consequences on his life after death. In this scenario, it could be sug-

gested that once again Wasdin creates the God element to validate his life choices and experiences (surviving, and becoming a healer of sorts), as well as receiving the positive reinforcement of being 'loved' for reducing suffering in his patients. In this way, Wasdin's narrative has a strong theme of agency, guided by an external source beyond his control. Because of this, Wasdin can accept certain events as happening that were not of his doing, as they were the product of 'God'. Whilst at the same time, accepting his new role in life as chosen for him, by 'God', which he embraces as a new chapter in his life.

Wasdin's narrative fits with the psychological research on how individuals can reshape their lives, and gain control of their future planned lives. Wasdin's narrative, like any narrative, contains plots and themes, based on an individual's subjectivity and moral justification of who a person was, and will be (McAdams, 2011). Wasdin's narrative also contains themes of emotional closure (Pals, 2006a) and themes of redemption (McAdams, Reynolds, Lewis, pattern and Bowman, 2001). Further, his narrative is in line with McAdams' (2011) research, which suggests that narratives are not 'set in stone', as such adults can continuously update and alter their narrative, as gains and losses change their perspective on who they are (Birren, Kenyon, Ruth, Shroots & Syendson, 1996). This research lends support to the idea that individuals like Wasdin can use these techniques as a resourceful tactic to gain control over their life narratives, and subsequent wellbeing.

When faced with moving on from the Marine Corps, Fick seeks comfort in reframing his life based on a stronger sense of self, which differs from others within the group who, unlike Fick, are 'great warriors'. Fick reflects after he was offered a desk job and decides to leave the Marines:

> They [his commanding officers] knew that I had joined the Marines to hold a sword, not a pencil. They were right, but the real reason was even deeper. I left the Corps because I had become a reluctant warrior. Many Marines

> reminded me of gladiators. They had that mysterious quality that allows some men to strap on greaves and a breastplate and wade into the gore. I respected, admired, and emulated them, but I could never be like them. I could kill when killing was called for, and I got hooked on the rush of combat as much as any man did. But I couldn't make the conscious choice to put myself in that position again and again throughout my professional life. Great Marine commanders, like all great warriors, are able to kill that which they love most — their men. It's a fundamental law of warfare. Twice I had cheated it. I couldn't tempt fate again. - US Marines, One Bullet Away, Nathaniel Fick, 2009, p.364

Fick stipulates that his reasons for joining the Marines was to be a warrior; to 'hold a sword', instead of riding a desk for the remainder of his career. Yet despite this strong sense of self as a warrior, which has been reflected throughout Fick's narrative as being important to him, Fick feels that he was merely 'emulating' the role. Fick terms this as the 'reluctant warrior'- one who 'kills that which they love most', the men under his command. Fick feels that a 'great' commander for a 'warrior' group, like the Marines, accepts that they will have to send men into battle to die, Fick cannot accept this responsibility again, and as such feels as though he could 'never be like them'. Fick goes further than describing the Marines as warriors; they are 'gladiators'. To Fick, gladiators have a mysterious quality- allowing them to put on armour (preparing for combat) and 'wade into the gore'. These qualities are admired by Fick, who feels that although he can kill when asked to, he did not wish to be put in that position 'again and again'. It is interesting to note that Fick would rather leave the Marines altogether, a group he has sought to join to prove himself as a 'man', instead of taking a desk based officer job. Fick describes his unwillingness to send men to their death, or indeed to have to be involved in combat 'time and time again', yet for Fick combat was the only role which made him a 'warrior'. This conundrum was enough to cause Fick to leave the Marines. There are several, possible explanations for this, based on previous extracts by Fick, which will now be explored:

I) Fick feels as though he has done what was required to 'test' himself by being in battle, and is satisfied that he had what it takes to join the ranks of the 'warriors' that came before him. II) During his narrative, Fick describes scenarios whereby he became increasingly angry and frustrated, and further demonstrated contempt for senior officers in command, which were in direct confrontation to how he viewed the way a 'warrior' behaves in combat. It could be that these realities of the Marines, had an impact on his choice to leave the Corps. Regardless, the extract provides a clear picture of how Fick views his sense of self, in relation to the 'gladiators' he views as true 'warriors'. Fick paints a very brutal and violent picture of individuals willing to expose themselves to extreme violence and 'wade into gore', whilst also being able to send individuals to die in combat. Fick does not see these attributes as part of who he is. As such, Fick feels he needs to begin a new chapter in his life.

Upon reflection of his experiences in the Army, Bury sees his time in the Infantry as a source of pride, which helps him make sense of past experiences:

> I don't know about post-traumatic stress disorder. But I do know about not sleeping in case I get shot in the head. I do know about nightmares, I do know about gory images flickering before my eyes. About violent fantasies. About burning rage. But I am not a victim. I knew the consequences. I saw the danger, and I passed along the enchanted way. I am proud of my experiences. Proud I served with these fine men in the corrosive war. Proud I learned a lot, of myself and of human nature. For that I am thankful. - British Army, Call Sign Hades, Patrick Bury, 2011, p.294

Bury gives a graphic portrayal of how being involved in combat has affected his life, as he looks back at his time as a soldier, and how it defined him. Bury does not focus on PTSD, or other psychological labels, instead he chooses to describe the 'nightmares' and 'gory images flickering' before his eyes as a consequence of being exposed to high risk scenarios for a long period of time. Being in combat for a tour of duty has left Bury with a range of extreme emotions to deal with, as he tries to make sense of what he experienced during

combat. By having ‘violent fantasies’ and ‘burning rage’, Bury acknowledges that there are aspects of the tour of duty that are unresolved or that he has had trouble accepting. By describing himself as a fully informed individual and not a ‘victim’, Bury is empowering himself and the way in which he makes sense of his life experiences. As a soldier in the combat arms Bury ‘passed along the enchanted way’, which could be said to represent a type of ritual of initiation for Bury into the lifestyle he sought after.

At this point in the analysis, Bury’s extract of empowerment over his life narrative shifts to a focus on an inner strength of ‘pride’, which allows him to look back at the experiences positively, despite being involved in a ‘corrosive war’. This is an interesting tactic employed by Bury to take his experiences as character building: ‘Learned a lot about human nature’, even if an external validation of a just war is missing. Bury employs this technique to an extent whereby he not only looks upon these events as positive, he is grateful for them to have made him into someone he can be ‘proud’ of. These techniques have been noted by McAdams (2011), as a way in which an individual not only makes sense of their life, but is crafted in a way to gain some semblance of meaning, purpose, and coherence.

Bury’s final transcript touches upon the way in which individuals can craft their life narrative in a way that is conducive to wellbeing, by focusing on agency rich story based on empowerment, moral justification, and emotional closure (McAdams, 2011; Pals, 2006a). Throughout Chapter 7, Bury demonstrated a desire to find a moral component for his role in the war in order to make sense of those experiences in combat by seeking out external validation, such as the merits of the war, preventing drugs from getting back to the UK, etc. These events were ultimately out of Bury’s control. As Bury’s narrative evolves, he begins to look inward for meaning making of his narrative, and his actions in the war, by focusing on things he has control over, such as gained attributes and life changing experi-

ences. This agency rich story seems to give Bury a way to negotiate his experiences in combat into his life narrative.

## 7.3 Summary

Chapter 7 continued to explore the research question of: How do soldiers in the combat arms understand their sense of self? The authors' transcripts and the researcher's analysis were separated into two superordinate themes: Negotiating the self as a force for good and Making sense of the transitional self. Both themes, and their respective subthemes will now be summarised.

The first subtheme: Negotiating the moral self, explores how the authors make sense of their selves as a moral combat soldier. In this subtheme, the authors were faced with the challenges of integrating their experiences of combat, with how they viewed themselves as a moral person, and a member of a collective force for good. Bury experiences this as a need to legitimise his role in a war, in which his actions were becoming less meaningful as a force for good. Wasdin required validation from his priest to ensure that his actions in warfare did not run contrary to his spiritual self. Whereas Lewis sought the validation of an officer in a similar position to his own, in order to validate the moral choice of putting his men and mission before anything else.

Overall, the moral self these authors expressed guided actions and behaviours, even to the point of disobeying a direct order (a potentially serious offence at a time of war).

The second sub theme: Disillusion as a force for good, explored the intense emotions expressed by the authors when they witnessed or experienced immoral orders. Sometimes a conflict emerged between being a good soldier, such as following orders, and following moral guidelines. These guidelines were informed by the sense making of the self as a

combat arms soldier, informed by the ethos of the group of past deeds and legal guidelines, and sometimes as a citizen of a country the author felt symbolised their moral and ethical guidelines. These guidelines came under stress when the author experienced negative events, such as a superior officer or enemy not valuing life. Bury felt pain and anguish when he was 'taken advantage of' as a western country citizen, who follows laws that govern warfare, when the enemies do not, whilst Fick experiences hatred for an officer who refused to help civilians, who were unintentionally shot by Fick and his unit.

In the final superordinate theme: making sense of the transitional self, the authors demonstrated how they experience and make sense of transitioning into a life outside of the military, and how their experiences in combat played a role in this new life. In reframing their life in this way, Bury described a sense of pride and achievement for his role within the military, a type of rite of passage that has given him positive attributes and life changing experiences. Fick experienced a realisation that he was not like his fellow marines in the sense of being a 'great' warrior, and that it was his time to move on. Wasdin, although initially experienced a loss of identity upon leaving the SEALS, reframed his life to see his new occupation as continuing his role as a force for good, and even fulfilling the role God intended.

Collectively, the authors experienced their life as combat soldiers as a way of being tested, providing them with a source of strength to see their old role as meaningful in context of their transition out of the military. This theme also served to demonstrate the role that an agency rich, empowering life narrative had on the authors' ability to reconstruct a life narrative.

Overall, the themes within this chapter explored the way in which the authors made sense of their selves in relation to their moral guidelines. Their experiences of war challenged this sense making of their group as a 'force for good', and sometimes pushed them into a conflict of being a good soldier, and a moral individual. In the end, the authors described

how their experiences in warfare shaped their sense of self, which ultimately helped for reframing their life, as they prepared to transition out of the military.

# Chapter 8

# It's All About 'Boots on the Ground'

## 8.1 Introduction to the Chapter

In the final part of this analysis, Study two, Chapter 8 presents an in depth, semi-structured interview. In Chapters 5,6 and 7 the authors explored how they made sense of their role as a soldier asked and willing to kill in combat, by negotiating not only killing in combat, but their sense making of their self as a masculine, moral, warrior. The authors described these concepts as steeped in a rich history of honourable, courageous deeds of soldiers gone by, expressed in a typically hegemonic masculine way of being tested in battle and to project, power, and to fulfil the role of protector. However, this masculine sense of self was often more complex and subtle, allowing the authors to balance traits required in the military, such as being submissive, and obeying orders, with the more traditional masculine terms of being dominant, and aggressive.

However, Jay's interview offers a slightly different narrative. For Jay, being in the combat arms was a highly professional, arduous role, which was more about 'boots on the ground', (a military colloquialism to describe the concrete act of soldiers being in a warzone, carrying out duties such as patrolling and engaging the enemy) than the 'modern' and 'risky' concept of being a warrior- a term Jay feels is more akin to a gladiator or superhero. Indeed, to Jay, a warrior was a romanticised view associated with an unacceptable level of risk, rather than the reality of being a soldier.

This chapter was split into five superordinate themes, Getting in touch with the ‘real me’, I just don’t like that level of risk, It comes down to ‘us’, or ‘them’, The European citizen and Reflecting on killing and combat.

Getting in touch with the ‘real me’ is a type of introduction into how Jay, as an introspective person, explores how he came to make sense of himself, both as a man, and as a product of his experiences in western society. In moving forward to answering the research questions set out in this thesis, the theme, I just don’t like that level of risk, explored how Jay views combat as a level of risk he was not comfortable with, whilst maintaining a sense of masculinity by describing combat as a lack of control, rather than a product of just fear. In this way the term warrior was associated as too risky for Jay, having more in common with superheroes than soldiers. Despite being uncomfortable with the term warrior, Jay describes himself as a protector, willing to engage in combat, and by necessity, kill in combat. Thus although the terms are different, and not steeped in an ethos of the warrior culture, Jay’s sense making still contained the same elements of moral thinking and masculine sense of self as compared to the authors of Study one.

In the theme, It comes down to ‘us’, or ‘them’, Jay explores the blurry lines between who he would be willing to kill in combat and who he considered to be the enemy. As a professional soldier, Jay acknowledges it is about doing the job which was required of him and ultimately it came down to a sense of being reminded of one’s mortality when one kills someone who shares similarities to himself.

In the final theme, reflecting on killing in combat, Jay describes war as intimately connected to masculinity both on the micro level of how combat works, and on the macro level of how wars are prevented; how they begin and end.

Chapter 8 is the last chapter of the analysis, presenting a semi-structured in depth interview with aforementioned, ex- Royal Marine Commando, Jay. As outlined in Chapter 3, it is

noted by Smith (1999) and a range of other IPA scholars (Smith & Osborn, 2008; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009) that semi-structured interviews are probably the most used and preferred method of analysis whilst conducting IPA. In line with this, an in depth semi structured interview was sought out to provide an additional wealth of information to explore the above research questions. The rationale behind the choice of interviewee is outlined within the methodology, briefly however, Jay was chosen as he fought in a time before the invasion in Afghanistan and Iraq, in a combat unit yet to be analysed within this analysis, and as such offered a unique perspective to the analysis.

## 8.2 Introduction to Jay, and Summary of Themes

Jay saw combat in Aiden, was personally shot at, and returned fire with the intention of killing the enemy. Jay was an enlisted man, with the rank of rifleman; this was the rank Jay held until the day he left service. During the analysis the following super ordinate themes emerged*: The 'real me', levels of risk, 'Us', or 'them', The European citizen* and finally *Reflecting on killing and combat.*

**Table 8.1**

***Chapter 8 - Master table of superordinate and subordinate themes***

| Superordinate themes | Page No. & location |
|---|---|
| **The real me** | |
| It occurred to me maybe the fact I got interested in Psychology, I have actually done quite a lot of self-development... | L. 1-9 |
| **'levels of risk'** | |
| flying bullets, you can't dodge them, erm, and so I hate it, uhm it would be the equivalent of falling off a cliff for me | L. 243-245 |
| **'Us' or 'them'.** | |
| I think where you have to be willing to stand your ground, turn around and pull the trigger. | L. 102-124 |
| **The European citizen** | |
| *I would hate a war with Germany or France* | |
| … Conflicted because of this German and English legacy, this tommy bastards versus Nazi spies, in me.. in one.. | L. 35-37 |
| *It boils down to self-preservation* | |
| I don't know if there is an exact cut off anywhere, it probably blurs, more discomfort the closer it is to home | L. 146-154 |

| | |
|---|---|
| *Sharing a common fate* | |
| I wouldn't want to pry, put it that way. I wouldn't want to see the mess | L. 154-163 |
| **Reflecting on killing and combat** | |
| *War and masculinity* | |
| …because particularly as a man you got dominance and hierarchy and if the dominance hierarchy go wrong in a more primitive state people, do get seriously injured or dead | L. 184-192 |
| *I don't buy into the inhibition* | |
| but I think it's normal I think most people if someone wrongs them in any serious way they would like revenge or would like to kill them | L-192-196 |

## 8.3 Analysis

### The 'real me'

To set the context, Jay begins his narrative by discussing his education in Psychology, and beyond. Jay was not asked to outline his education or qualifications; instead he offered these as a way of explaining how he 'got to the real me':

> "It occurred to me maybe the fact I got interested in Psychology, I have actually done quite a lot of self-development...stuff, classical conditioning, deconditioning…on top of a Psychology degree"
> I've done a fair bit, I think, to get at the real me, as opposed to the social robot, or military robot. For that matter the biological robot. - Royal Marine Commandos, Interview, Jay, 2014, lines 1-9.

Jay describes how his training has helped him get to the 'real' him, by deconstructing the societal constraints on his self, which seem to be a product of cultural conditioning. Jay refers to the social, biological and military aspect of himself as a 'robot', implying a type of automated or programmed set of algorithms, which are a considerable contrast to independent thought and choice making. This aspect of the narrative serves to demonstrate that

Jay is not satisfied with simply defining himself based on the 'status quo', or his experiences of being a male (biological), English (Social) ex Combat soldier (Military).

**Levels of risk**

Jay's description of being in a warzone offers a unique perspective of being in combat, which focuses on risk, and what it means to Jay to be involved in a highly chaotic, risky event such as being under fire from the enemy:

> For me immediately it's because I want the shooting to stop or the incident to stop. I want to get rid of that; I don't like that level of risk. I'm a keen skier I'm a keen white water kayaker I like surf kayaking, I like [pauses] a level of risk, but I like to feel like it is manageable risk. I feel warfare is a really low level of manageability, flying bullets, you can't dodge them, erm, and so I hate it, uhm it would be the equivalent of falling off a cliff for me, or it is..it is not that dissimilar, my experience of being under fire, is to how I felt when I slipped off a cliff…a strong contrast to white water rafting or skiing when I feel like I am in control. Royal Marine Commandos, Interview, Jay, 2014, lines 243-250.

Jay begins by clearly stating that combat is a level of risk he does not 'like'. To Jay, warfare is not a 'manageable risk', in fact it is equivalent to a totally uncontrollable event, such as 'falling off a cliff'. Jay suggests that this feeling of not being in control of the risk comes from his experience of being under fire, an experience whereby he 'want[s] the shooting to stop', because 'flying bullets, you can't dodge em'. But Jay makes it clear that this is not about an aversion to all risky situations, or a form of cowardice. It seems that for Jay controlled risk is about manageability- the more manageable the situation is, the more control he has over that situation. In this way Jay's testimony differs considerably to that of the authors in study one, who described both the preparation for, and the act of combat in a much more positive, life affirming way. The authors in study one enjoyed combat; they sought it out, and even joined the military specifically to have these types of experiences. Rather than focus on a lack of control, they saw it as a chance to do what they had trained to do, a kind of release of their warrior self, and a way to find fulfillment. This focus on a

lack of control, instead of emphasising the warrior self, may be due to the way in which Jay makes sense of control. Jay described liking extreme sports which he had control over, but not combat, which he had no control over. When Jay can control the elements, or he feels there is an 'acceptable' level of risk, he has control over himself during that experience. However, since for Jay the experience of combat was chaos, there were too many random variables, such as 'bullets flying'; this was 'unacceptable risk' and thus Jay perhaps could not retain self-control during the situation. Further, Jay lists extreme sports such as surf kayaking, skiing and white water rafting as activities he is 'keen' on, because they offer what Jay describes as a manageable level of risk. Thus to Jay it was important to highlight that his aversion to combat, is not based on any form of cowardice, but on control. In this way Jay could be said to be eliminating the notion of an emotional weaknesses, such as fear, and replacing it with a more masculine term; control. Enloe (1993) suggests that masculinity is traditionally connected to war and combat, thus Jay may be feeling the need to enhance one aspect of his masculinity (the pursuit of extreme sports), as a way of balancing the scales of masculinity for not wanting to engage in combat. Indeed DeVisser, and McDonnell (2013) suggest that men may attempt to acquire 'masculine capital' by engaging in masculine behaviours, which also allows them to also engage in less typical masculine behaviours, in this case, by admitting he wants to avoid combat. Jay continues to discuss how risk plays an important part in his sense making when he was asked how he saw his role as a marine, and what this role meant to him…

> JAY: Uhm, I just thought of myself as a soldier, a job to do, a way to earn money. I had no idea how professional it would be, it was very arduous. I don't buy into the modern stuff, where you wonder if it's come from gladiators, thing. I don't really buy into the warrior or gladiator bit in any real sense. I think the notions go with that, are too high risk, a real gladiator, or warrior are running high levels are risk I would find unacceptable. I find some of that stuff is still where I was when I was reading Batman comics or Superman comics, not really feet on the ground.
> …I never really thought of myself as a warrior, but of course you end up in the same place. - Royal Marine Commandos, Interview, Jay, 2014, lines 165-172.

Jay does not think of himself as a warrior. To him, the warrior is ‘modern stuff’ that has more similarities with gladiators than the down to earth reality of the ‘feet on the ground’ role of the soldier. Jay focuses on the professional aspect of the role as a ‘job to do’, ‘a way to earn money’, which was ‘arduous’ and ‘professional’. This is quite a contrast to Study one, in which authors accepted killing in combat as part of their role as a ‘warrior’, a term built around the ethos of belonging to a fighting force which was steeped in a rich history of being ‘tested in battle’. As the ‘elite’ ‘warriors’, belonging to a unit of ‘heroic past deeds’, combat was experienced as a way to test themselves in a traditionally masculine way. It could be stated that in this way the authors of the modern day military have immersed themselves into this warrior calling and culture, demonstrating fascination and romanticism of the military from a young age, and developing that sense making of the self as belonging to a warrior culture during training and combat. Indeed Jay goes on to explain his issues with the term warrior, which are based on two notions, a type of distorted reality of the soldier as overly romanticised, and the level of risk associated with the term. Jay considers the idea of a warrior to be more similar to Batman and Superman comics, than the reality of his role as an infantry soldier. The idea of larger than life characters, which are considered heroic, with superhuman abilities is not the way in which Jay viewed his role. There may be a contextual component to this different attitude of the combat role; Jay joined the military in a different era, in which there may have been a very different perception of the military, the role of a combat soldier, and the elite nature of what they did may have been understated. In recent years, the MoD has increased in marketing and advertising (BBC, 2015), and taken to social media as a way to control the narrative on how the military is viewed by potential new recruits (Guardian, 2017). Indeed within the Royal Marine Commandos (Jay’s old unit), a focus has been made on the elite nature of infantry, and an emphasis on how difficult it is to get into (MoD, 2017). It would also be prudent to investigate the proliferation of military movies, and how this may have an effect on the mes-

sage sent to young people interested in joining the military. Since Jay's time of service, there has been a major increase in military movies (Vartabedian, 1986), some of which have increased recruitments drive by up to 40% (Vartabedian, 1986). There is also evidence that the military have a direct say in how the military is displayed in these movies. The military complex ultimately decides which movie directors are able to have access to not only military personnel, weapons and vehicles, but information. Thus, the military can choose which scripts they are happy to work with (Vartabedian, 1986 ). This, combined with the advent of social media campaigns as a means of product advertisement may play a major role in how individuals perceive the military as a positive, warrior culture so sought after by the authors in study one, and could help explain why Jay was not exposed to, and as a consequence did not seek out or desire to join this 'warrior' 'elite' group.

Secondly, Jay tackles what he spends more time discussing, and that is his sense making of what a warrior is, and why it does not fit into how he views his sense of self. To Jay a warrior is too high risk and thus to Jay the risk level is 'unacceptable'. Jay uses the word 'gladiator' to describe what being a warrior is. A gladiator can be seen in modern discourse as an individual who faced random events that cannot be foreseen or controlled; a gladiator took risks, and was often faced with bad odds. Since Jay likes to feel in control when he is in risky situations, such as when white water rafting, he does not like to see himself as fulfilling a role that would emphasis a lack of control over the situation and fall outside of his comfort zone or 'acceptable risk'.

Additionally, Jay suggests that although he does not consider himself a warrior, 'you end up in the same place'. From the rest of the narrative it can be deduced that by the same place, Jay means, engaging in combat, and being on tour of duty engaging the enemy. Thus regardless of how Jay views and makes sense of himself, there is something about being a soldier that leads him to the same place as being a warrior. Jay has already suggested that combat is already too high risk to be within his comfort zone, yet the way in

which he views combat and being a warrior are remarkably similar. Therefore, Jay sees combat as, like a warrior, a task that does not fit into his sense of self as someone who likes controlled risk. It would make sense that based on Jay's sense making of a warrior, a gladiator and what constitutes as 'high risk', does not fit with the way he experiences his sense of self.

On a final note, Jay's perception of his role as a job, instead of a calling, may have implications for how he views his sense of self as a Marine. In Chapters 5-7, the combat role was described by the authors analysed to be closer to a 'warrior' calling, rather than a job. Moore, Hopewell and Grossman (2009) suggest that warriors immerse themselves into the culture and history of their corps, which focuses on concepts such as honour, duty, courage and sacrifice. These terms carry genuine meanings for the warriors (Moore, Hopewell & Grossman, 2009). Conversely, Jay describes his role as a 'soldier, a job to do', to earn money. As such, Jay's sense making of the self is based on a completely different set of principles and does not seem to be based on the immersive ethos and history of the Marines.

**It comes down to 'us', or 'them'**

In this section of his narrative, Jay describes his view of the brutal realities of the world, and how this perspective informs his role as a protectorate, both to himself, and his country. In this way, killing in combat is more than self-defense; it's about accepting the realities of the world:

> **Interviewer: How did you feel about your role to shoot and kill in combat?**
> JAY: At the time it did come down to the, us or them thing, you shoot at them and that's that. That was enough for me back then. Do you want to know about the current?
> **INTERVIEWER: Yeah, please.**

> JAY: I still, well I value the liberal direction if you like, or the meme clusters in the west where we are trying to do things with less and less force, and I would say with the marines, we didn't have anything as I understood it rules of engagement or anything like that, we had three rules, get the job done, take minimum casualties, because you don't want your own mothers to be grieving, but number three was minimum collateral damage, and we are talking 1966, so a long time ago. I'm still very much aware, of the basis of all life is competitive and devouring, there comes a point where power has to be applied sometimes, and certainly in later life. If we stopped having an armed military we would be taken over in a month or two.
> **INTERVIEWER: And you feel at the time, as a marine, that you would be willing to do what was required to keep that peace?**
> JAY: I did not think of it at that time, but nowadays if I were to go in the marines again I would go in as a career's officer [Jay is referring to a career in the Marines as an officer, instead of an enlisted personnel]. I'm willing to accept even now I think where you have to be willing to stand your ground, turn around and pull the trigger.
> **INTERVIEWER: And you feel like you can live with that decision?**
> JAY: Yeah I really, erm, let's imagine, let's suppose xyz group of folks decided they fancied Britain, would I feel willing to pick up a gun and man the barricades? I think I would. Royal Marine Commandos, Interview, JAY, 2014, lines 102-124.

Jay describes the way in which he makes sense of his role to kill in combat as a royal marine commando. At the time, he simply thought of it as 'us or them', in order to make sure it's not 'your own mothers…grieving'. This frames killing in combat as a logical, almost common sense approach to self-preservation, and the protection of one's parents from emotional distress. Protection is a theme that runs through the remainder of Jay's transcript, as he begins to flesh out this sense making of killing in combat when reflecting on it later in life. This association of violence, aggression and fulfilment of the protectorate role is intimately connected to a form of military-masculinity (Duncanson, 2007; Higate & Henry, 2004), and may share similarities to the way in which the authors from Study one made sense of killing in combat. Study one focused on how the sense making of the self as a moral warrior helped the soldier negotiate killing in combat. This sense making was profound and meaningful for the authors in Study one, and seemed to aid them in making sense of the act of killing, and able to integrate the experience into their life narrative, to avoid psychological trauma. Although Jay did not subscribe to the idea of being a warrior,

he did describe himself as a protector, who would willingly kill in combat to protect ideals and values which the UK symbolised for him. Despite this different terminology and meaning between warrior and protector, the sense making of the role may share similarities; the term protectorate is a very military-masculine term, as described above, and featured quite prominently in Study one as falling under the umbrella of what it meant to be a warrior for the authors in Study one.

Further, it is interesting that although Jay attempts to untangle and analyse the 'military robot' part of his self, it is still very much a part of how he views engaging in combat, and the world in general. Jay wants to make it clear that despite his belief in realities of the world as 'competitive and devouring', he 'value[s]' the 'liberal direction' of less force. The words 'competitive' and 'devouring' are accurate, if not brutal descriptions of life for the vast majority of life forms and ecosystems, which despite the governing laws designed to protect humans, Jay feels is also applicable to humans. The way in which Jay applies this to his understanding of combat, seems to relate back to protection. When Jay describes what his motivation would be for joining in a hypothetical war in which 'xyz group of folks decided they fancied Britain', Jay uses the defensive words 'man the barricades', a contrast to a more aggressive notion of, say, charging the gun nests etc. Further Jay's view on national policy is that: 'you have to stand your ground, and pull that trigger, and without an 'armed military we would be taken over in a month or two'. Together Jay's description of fighting, and killing in combat seem to be based around protecting, himself, his family, and his country.

The 'stand your ground' concept put forward by Jay has interesting parallels to the Castle Doctrine, otherwise known as the 'stand your ground' law, which gives Americans the legal right to defend themselves with lethal force, and have no legal obligation to retreat from their position (New Jersey self-defense law, 2008). Taken together with his view of

the basis of life as competitive and devouring, Jay presents the best way to approach this as containing typically western masculine themes of confrontation, power, and strength over retreat (Duncanson, 2007), and protecting what is his (his life, the country he belongs to, his family). Furthermore, for Jay, killing in combat is about accepting the realities of a harsh world, in which there is a need to 'stand your ground', in order to protect what is important. Additionally, when talking about defending Britain, Jay does not refer to defending British people, but rather, the concept of Britain, and perhaps what Britain stands for as a country.

Finally, Jay's way of talking about this military role changes dramatically from when he was in the Marines, to the hypothetical scenario of re-entering the corps now. As previously suggested, Jay very much viewed his time in the Marines as just simply a job. However if joining today Jay suggests he would join the officer corps, and fulfill the protectorate role to Britain, in a time of voluntary service. Being in the officer corps is an extensive and considerably more challenging training and selection process, requiring an individual to be fully committed to joining the Marines, which are considered a highly elite service within the British military. Further, in having the desire to protect Britain, in a voluntary service of today's environment, Jay is demonstrating that he feels that his sense of self is defined as someone who would be willing to defend that which he is proud to belong to. A protectorate role of one's country in this capacity is more in line with viewing one's career as a calling, than a job.

**The European citizen**

**'I would hate a war with Germany or France'**. In this theme, Jay describes how he makes sense of who he would be willing to kill, based on his own heritage. For Jay that means exploring concepts of culture, religion, and his sense making of himself as a person with mixed heritage, in a multicultural world. Further from this, Jay's extracts look at how

he views others, and how difficulties may arise when asked to face those closer to home in combat:

> **How do you feel about the soldiers of World War II?**
> I'm totally, totally… ambivalent is the wrong word, conflicted because of this German and English legacy, this tommy bastards versus Nazi spies, in me.. in one..
> Britain's been good to me; if I were in the Marines now I would feel more of it. The biggest problems would come for me is if it was against Germany or France, because of my father and for that matter the British all together, with the Saxon immigration in 500ish and Norman invasion in 1066, I find either of those particularly difficult. I would hate a war with Germany or France. - Royal Marine Commandos, Interview, Jay, 2014, lines 35-37, 127-131

Jay describes his understanding of his self as mixed heritage, which he articulates as the 'tommy bastards versus Nazi spies, in me'. The conflict of these two countries seems to be internalised by Jay, and expresses itself as an inner conflict Jay feels as he makes sense of his self, and his difficulty in identifying with being British. Further, based on his childhood experiences and identity conflict as a product of European heritage (German and English), Jay does not find it easy to accept the black and white concept of good vs bad of WWII: 'tommy bastards versus Nazi spies'. This may have played a role in Jay not identifying as strongly with the military, and consequently any hero worship of WWII soldiers, as was seen in the previous analysis.

In this narrative we also learn more about Jay's identity as a citizen of Europe, which he suggests would make it difficult for him to face individuals in battle and kill them, if they were French, or German. Though his roots are not French, he feels an affinity to the French, due to the invasion of England in 1066, and the subsequent amalgamation of cultures and heritage, both social and biological, that stems from this invasion.

Furthermore, as a mixed citizen, having ties with France, the UK and Germany, Jay seems to never really feel like a British soldier fighting for Britain. However, as time has gone on,

Jay reflects that he begins to identify far more strongly with the British aspect of his Identity. As Jay notes 'Britain's been good to me, if I were in the Marines now, I would feel more of it.' To suggest he would 'feel' more of it has connotations of pride, and an emotional connection to being British. As such, Britain has been a 'good' country to Jay, and thus is a 'good' identity. This phenomenon of identifying and categorising the self into a group, and taking on those groups' perceived qualities is known as Self-Categorisation Theory (Turner, 1985; Haslam, Oakes, Turner & McGarty, 1995). This self-categorisation as British (A good country) makes Jay, by extension, good too, and thus he would consider contributing to the protection of Britain.

Lastly, despite his present strong identification with Britain, Jay still describes a conflict about killing individuals (in combat) from European countries such as Germany and France. Jay continues:

> It might be difficult for most of Europe. I don't know how far it would spread I do find beyond a certain point, I think I can see myself very easily as a European, I'm not sure I can see myself as a global citizen as of yet. Whether that's a mark of the time I was born, whether if I was born later I could see myself as a citizen of planet Earth I don't know. Uhm clearly, it isn't quite as black and white as it may seem, I have levels of discomfort, certainly as the levels are reduced I would find it easier and easier I think. I did find it quite easy when I came under fire to look for a target and shoot at whatever the best thing I could get. When you see a light from the barrel you aim the retinal and try and fire a bullet down the same line, yeah I'm quite happy doing that. . Well not happy, but not uncomfortable. - Royal Marine Commandos, Interview, Jay, 2014, lines 131- 141
> **Interviewer: Uhm, it was interesting what you were saying that it becomes more difficult if they were French of German, so you're saying it would be….**
> JAY: Further away, culturally more different, religiously more different, it feels, I don't know if that's a rationalisation to be honest. I did like quite a lot of the Arabs I met, so I don't really know, maybe it is just the notion if they're shooting at us we got to stop it, maybe. -Royal Marine Commandos, Interview, Jay, 2014, lines 141- 146

Jay illustrates that knowing who he would, and would not be OK with killing in combat, proves to be a difficult task. Jay has expressed conflict in himself as a product of European heritage, as such, he sees himself as 'European'. Thus, for Jay the difficulty for killing in combat seems to stem from cultural similarities with the enemy. By accepting that he does not see himself as a 'global citizen', Jay is making it clear that the decision seems to be based on how much of an identity he shares with the people he has been tasked to kill in combat. Although not a 'black and white' decision, the 'levels are reduced' the more cultural differences the enemy have to him. Thus for Jay, there appears to be a spectrum of comfort level, based on an evaluation of his cultural similarity to the perceived enemy. On one end of the spectrum, would be a fellow 'European', someone who shares a similar western dominant religion, and thus, similar morals and concepts about how to behave in the world. These concepts of western culture, laws, morals and religious beliefs make it difficult to see them as different, and thus, the enemy. On the other end of the spectrum would be someone with perhaps a different set of religious and thus, moral principles, following different laws and thus a different outlook on the world. These differences appear to make it 'easier' for Jay when deciding about killing in combat.

For Jay it ultimately boiled down to 'us' or 'them' mentality, in which case Jay vividly describes the process of killing in combat as: 'When you see a light from the barrel you aim the retinal and try and fire a bullet down the same line, yeah I'm quite happy doing that'. Jay readily accepts killing someone who is trying to kill him: 'when you see a light from the barrel', and makes no attempt to shy away from his actions of 'putting a bullet down the same line'. This perspective is a contrast to Grossman's (2009) resistance to killing theory, in which not only will individuals avoid killing in combat, but when they do kill, they will not accept the act, and attempt to mask the kill through means of dehumanising the enemy. Whereas for Jay, In every aspect of his extract, there is a concept of accepting killing after being attacked, which is thus self-defence, and a matter of survival .

Lastly, even when Jay expresses acceptance of killing in combat, regardless of culture, he makes it clear that it is not something he is 'happy' to do, but rather 'not uncomfortable'. This distinction touches on a theme throughout Jay's narrative of professionalism over a 'warrior' or 'gladiator' role; that is to say, accepting the role he has been tasked to do, but not outwardly seeking this role out. However, ultimately for Jay the decision to kill in combat boils down to his subscribed philosophy of us vs them. If his life feels threatened and he 'came under fire', Jay feels he would accept being able to 'fire down the same line'.

**It boils down to self-preservation**. In this sub theme, Jay describes how his feelings of being British may influence how he perceives who he would be willing to kill in combat. Ultimately however, Jay feels that killing in combat may be simpler than cultural divides and instead be more about self-preservation. Jay continues:

> **Interviewer: What do you mean, when you described yourself as a citizen of Europe [Missquote: Jay actually said 'European']?**
> JAY: I feel, I don't feel purely English or British; it's an odd thing isn't it? Loyalty. You have a sense of group membership at different levels, taking it straight up to being a member of the homo sapiens, I do see myself, in a sense, as a hunter gatherer, in the bush or in the forest. Then again I do see myself on the football field, in a British team shirt. I don't know if there is an exact cut off anywhere, it probably blurs, more discomfort the closer it is to home. If you're looking for a clear-cut off that's the one, are they shooting at me or my child or wife? -Royal Marine Commandos, Interview, Jay, 2014, lines 146- 154

In dealing with the complexities faced with making sense of killing in combat, Jay attempts to draw a line and fully make sense of what would be the deciding factor in accepting killing. Initially, Jay expresses that at the base level, there are no groups, and that Jay simply sees himself as a 'homo sapien'; he belongs to a species, which is a product of genetics, rather than social-cultural divides. However, simultaneously, Jay also feels a belonging to the British nationality, metaphorically described as seeing himself 'on the football field, in a British team shirt'. Thus Jay is describing a complex interweaving of sense making of the self, and his place within society, complicated by social and cultural divisions, which make it difficult to make sense of what he

would be willing to do in combat. Within psychological research, group memberships are understood as promoting a sense of belonging to the social world, and serve to inform individuals of who they are, based on these memberships, in order to understand and make sense of the world. As such, individuals assign both themselves and others to a group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Initially it appears as if Jay is using this concept of group memberships (being British) to differentiate himself from those he would be willing to kill (those not British), a distinction which would become 'blurred', the more similarities the other group would have with his group. Ultimately however, the 'clear-cut' answer as to who he would be willing to kill, is based on who poses a danger, or threat to the self, and loved ones.

**Sharing a common fate**. In closing Part 1 of this in depth interview, Jay provides insight into why he would not want to become too familiar with those he has been charged to kill in combat. In doing so, Jay goes further than describing group memberships, and threat to the self, and explains what it is about this cultural closeness that makes killing in combat harder. When asked to elaborate, Jay provides, in only a few lines, insight into why it may be difficult to humanise the enemy:

> **Interviewer: You said you would be willing to shoot at someone shooting at you, but would you be ok if they were French or German or?**
> JAY: I wouldn't want to pry, put it that way. I wouldn't want to see the mess, I wouldn't want to meet their families, certainly wouldn't want to meet their children, or their mothers…
> **Interviewer: What do you think is difficult about seeing the person you just killed or speaking to their family?**
> Well it's knowing it could have happened to you, so it's the empathy aspect.
> Royal Marine Commandos, Interview, Jay, 2014, lines 154-163

Initially Jay's dialogue seems to be in line with the humanisation literature, which suggests that dehumanisation (depicting people or groups of people as less than human) is required in order to kill in combat (Zimbardo, 2014). Indeed within the killing in combat literature,

Grossman suggests that from a distance, one can deny the humanity of the enemy (Grossman, 2009), thus it is easier to kill from a distance, when you can't see who you are killing. Jay articulates that his issue in 'seeing the mess' after battle, or dealing with the family members, is difficult because it does indeed humanises the enemy. However, Jay goes further, suggesting that the dehumanisation, or defense denial of the human aspect of the enemy, lies within the fear of acknowledging that both the enemy and Jay could have shared a common fate. This distinction demonstrates that the aspect which most bothers Jay is one of empathy. By acknowledging who they were, Jay can empathise with their life, and their families. In doing this, he is confronted with the very real possibility that 'it could have happened to you'. Thus the empathy aspect of his humanity helps Jay acknowledge that it could have been him killed, which is heightened due to the shared cultural similarities. In this sense it is the shared similarities with the enemy, which serve as a reminder of his own chances of being killed in combat, which causes distress for Jay to kill in combat, and not necessarily about taking a life in combat. In Chapter 1, the researcher outlines the research on mirror neuron activation, and how this can play a part in this process. As suggested by Botvinick and colleagues (2005), brain imaging scans have demonstrated that when observing someone else in pain, parts of the brain that are associated with pain also activate (the anterior cingulate cortex and the anterior insula). Thus, there appears to be an association between having a painful experience and observing someone else having a painful experience. This research can help contextualise Jay's experience of why seeing someone being killed in combat could remind Jay that he could have experienced a highly unpleasant death.

## 8.4 Part 2: Masculinity and Inhibition

Part 2 of the interview takes a unique approach to the analysis, by facilitating a discussion with the participant about the literature and research surrounding killing in combat. As this part of the interview began with a brief outlining of the killing in combat literature, it was the done last, in order to avoid leading Jay down any particular paths when talking about how he viewed killing in combat and his sense making of the self. As it stands, this section of the interview was designed to engage Jay about the literature, to hear his opinion, based on his combat experiences. Section two followed a similar structure to the rest of the semi-structured interview whereby questions were asked in line with the guidelines set out by Smith and Osborn (2008) and Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009).

**Reflecting on killing in combat**

**War and masculinity.** For the first question, Jay was informed about the surrounding research, involving Grossman (2009) and Marshall (1968) as noted key players, including the well-established criticisms by King (2013), and Murray (2013). The brief followed a condensed, yet very similar structure to the literature review chapters, following the way in which the research has evolved. Jay was specifically also informed about the biological, innate resistance to killing theory, along with its noted criticisms. Jay responded:

> JAY: I certainly don't think there is that much of a thing to not kill, I think the fear is the conflict, because particularly as a man you got dominance and hierarchy and if the dominance hierarchy go wrong in a more primitive state people, do get seriously injured or dead, and I think that underlies a lot with men in their reticence, of why there is a lot of sort of horse play and stuff, to kind of work out who's the strongest or the bravest or whatever, without actually having to come to that. Royal Marine Commandos, Interview, Jay, 2014, lines 184-192

In the first instance Jay addresses the motivations behind posturing and submission during war time. As noted by Grossman (2009), posturing is seen as a preventative measure, or a less extreme way to demonstrate dominance, in which animals avoid killing their own species, which ultimately results in avoiding killing their own species. Where Jay's dialogue

differs to Grossman's theory of innate fear of killing in combat (2009) is surrounding the motivations behind this avoidance of killing. Whereas Grossman suggests this is due to a fear or phobia of killing (Grossman, 2009), and by extension, a biological resistance to killing other people Jay offers a slightly different perspective. According to Jay, males within a more primitive society, unconstrained by laws, would kill each other during play for dominance if not for posturing and submission, which is not conducive to a modern society. In order to keep this in check, modern society regulates the violence, which leads to a lot of 'horseplay', in order to work out who is the dominant 'strongest' male, without having to cause significant damage. In the field of battle, this horseplay takes the form of posturing, in order to avoid more deaths than is absolutely required to demonstrate dominance.

Further yet, Jay's extract demonstrates how he makes sense of the connection between war and masculinity. For Jay the way in which 'men' attempt to mitigate conflict is by demonstrating who is the 'bravest' and 'strongest', two typically military-hegemonic masculine terms (Duncanson, 2007). Even when Jay is describing how conflict arises, it is due to a breakdown in very military-masculine concepts of the world, such as dominance, and hierarchy. Thus for Jay, conflict, and conflict avoidance is very much based on masculine principles or a masculine perspective of how the world functions.

In fully comprehending Jay's sense making of conflict and masculinity, the extract can be observed on either a micro or macro level. On the macro level, Jay could be suggesting that conflicts arising, and being mitigated, are the product of 'men'. For Jay, the failing of a hierarchy, a clearly defined masculine concept involving submission and battling for the top echelons, leads to conflict. On the other hand, as a 'man' the ability to be 'reticent', by demonstrating 'strength' or 'bravery', (all desired qualities in hegemonic masculinity), are what leads to conflict avoidance. The micro level would suggest the same concepts, but

applied to the person ‘as a man’, as opposed to society in general. Regardless, the end product is the same for Jay; masculinity is a dominant force in war, serving to both inhibit and excite conflict.

**‘I don’t buy into the inhibition’.** Jay continues to elaborate on his feelings about a resistance to killing in combat, and why he believes the idea of an innate phobia response, or inhibition, does not seem plausible within combat. Jay continues:

> I think if someone has wronged you, you know perfectly well you would like to kill them off uhm, whether you feel bad about it afterwards I don't know...but I think it’s normal I think most people if someone wrongs them in any serious way they would like revenge or would like to kill them. So I don't really buy the inhibition, in the full sense. - Royal Marine Commandos, Interview, Jay, 2014, lines 192-196

Jay does not ‘buy into’ the notion of a resistance to killing. In order to articulate this, Jay discusses the natural desire to kill, or take revenge on someone who has wronged you. Jay is thus making a connection between thought and action; thinking or fantasizing about an activity demonstrates a lack of phobia or inhibition to that fantasy. The logic for Jay is, psychologically speaking, why would one fantasize about something they have a natural, innate phobia against?

## 8.5 Summary

Chapter 8 acted as the final step of the analysis, presenting an in depth interview, exploring how Jay, the interviewee, made sense of his experiences of his life as a royal marine commando, in relation to his sense making of his self. The analysis was separated into five superordinate themes: Getting in touch with the ‘real me’, I just don’t like that level of risk, It comes down to ‘us’, or ‘them’, The European citizen and Reflecting on killing and combat.

Getting in touch with the 'real me' explored how Jay is willing to step back and discover himself, by stripping away the various aspects of his identity; the biological, social and military' robot'. The implications of an automated life based on preprogramed conditions demonstrated Jay's desire to reflect and not be defined based on a 'status quo'.

The theme, I just don't like that level of risk, explored how Jay views combat as an unacceptable level of risk, to a point he compares it to an uncontrollable event, like falling off a cliff. Jay eliminated the notion of any emotional weaknesses, such as fear, and replaced it with a more masculine term; control.

Jay did not see himself as a warrior, but instead as a professional combat soldier, just doing a job. To Jay, being a warrior was associated with risky behaviour, which had more similarities with comic book characters, than the reality of war. Regardless, of his feelings towards the term 'warrior', Jay felt that 'you end up in the same place' as a warrior; the same place in this case being to fight in combat. Therefore, Jay sees combat as, like a warrior, a task that does not fit into his sense of self as someone who likes controlled risk. However, as Jay has become more comfortable with his Identity as British, he would, if given the opportunity, not only voluntarily join the Marines again, and in a more demanding role, but also be willing to serve as a protectorate of Britain, and everything Britain stands for. As such later in life, Jay describes the role as a combat soldier more as a way of life, rather than simply a job to perform.

Within the theme, It comes down to 'us', or 'them', Jay took a logical, common sense approach to describing how he felt about killing in combat. To him, it was about self-preservation and by extension the defence of his loved ones. These notions of protection stem from a view of reality as competitive and 'devouring, in which Jay feels the best approach to this fact is through masculine ideas of power, strength and to stand one's ground.

As someone who sees themselves as a European citizen, Jay expresses difficulty coming to terms with a war with people who have cultural similarities to himself. As Jay reflects on his life experiences, he feels more 'British' now than whilst he served in the military. This consequently leads him to identify strongly and proudly with his British identity, and to be willing to 'protect' Britain by killing in combat. Further to this, Jay wrestles with where he would draw the line on killing in combat. At first he considers the culture similarities and religion, but ultimately settles on the concept of 'us vs them'. As a professional soldier, Jay accepts the role of killing in combat, but does not seek out this role or enjoy it; it is simply a professional job to be done. Ultimately Jay expresses difficulty in killing people who share cultural similarities, as it leads to emphasising with their life, and their families. In doing this, he is confronted with the very real possibility that 'it could have happened to you', or his mother could have lost a son. Thus the empathy aspect of his humanity helps Jay acknowledge that it could have been him killed.

In reflecting on killing in combat, Jay understands war as intimately connected to masculinity. War both stems from masculine traits based on authority and dominance, and is kept in control through intimidation, and displays of power and bravery.

Chapter 8 served as the final component of the analysis presented within this thesis. Jay offered a unique insight into how the term 'warrior' can be viewed by an individual not immersed within modern day military discourse. Jay did not describe himself as a warrior, instead Jay preferred a more down to earth description of what he did, based on professionalism, but yet still accepting his role to kill in combat. In this way Jay did not talk about being immersed in an ethos of honour, sacrifice, courage or heroism, as the authors described in the previous three chapters. Instead Jay focused on the role of a protectorate, simply defending himself, his family, and his country.

Further from this, Jay offered insight into what made killing in combat acceptable, and what caused Jay to pause and consider who he would be willing to kill in combat. As an

individual with a diverse cultural background, Jay described a type of spectrum of shared cultural similarities with his potential enemies, and how this scale influenced this decision making process.

In Chapter 9, the researcher will summarise the combined analysis of Chapters 5 through to 8, and discuss the findings, implications and contributions this thesis offers to the psychological literature of killing in combat.

# Chapter 9

# Discussion: Johnny, the Complex Warrior

## 9.1 Introduction to the Discussion

This thesis explores the combat experiences of soldiers, and how their sense making of their selves informed their perception of their role to kill in combat. Primarily, this thesis set out to better understand how soldiers experience combat, and specifically killing in combat, as this remains a contested topic within combat psychology. To this end the thesis contributes primarily in three ways: it contributes to an underdeveloped field of killing in combat, provides insight into the sense making of soldiers, and explores the warrior identity, which may have implications for current and future need of drone fighter pilots. Thus these three components can be summarised:

The literature suggests that whilst not a universal phenomenon, there seems to be varying degrees of resistance to killing amongst soldiers (Webber et al., 2013; Engen, 2008; Murray, 2013; King, 2013; Williams, 1999). With this in mind the researcher explored how combat soldiers experienced and made sense of killing in combat, and to this end how they negotiated the act of killing in their life narratives. This knowledge can contribute to the existing literature, which is still underdeveloped as a field of research.

Killing in combat is a highly stressful, dangerous, emotionally charged event, with PTSD symptomatology incidence rates ranging between 1 and 30% among those who kill in combat (Chappelle, Goodman, Reardon & Thompson, 2014; Otto and Webber, 2013; Webber et al, 2013; Mathews, 2013). It is therefore important to gain a better understanding of how combat soldiers experience and make sense of killing in combat. To

this end the literature in this area is at times conflicting, and has seemingly yet to reach a consensus about the phenomenon of killing in combat. The findings of this thesis shed some light on the experiences of killing in combat, which can contribute to informing policy and education provided to individuals within the military.

Additionally, as technology such as military drones continues to advance, soldiers are able to engage in combat and kill without leaving their own country, from thousands of miles away. These ever changing dynamics mean that more than ever, it is prudent to better understand the soldier's sense making of killing in combat, to better understand what it is that causes psychological disturbances, and thus better understand the varying degrees of reported trauma as a result of combat. The findings in this thesis contribute by exploring what it is about a combat soldier's sense making of experiences, which allows them to negotiate killing in combat. This is particularly salient due to the authors' emphasis on the warrior and combat soldier identity, and what that signifies to them, in a time where drone pilots are being recruited from a non-combat pool of soldiers.

In summary, the eight narratives presented in this thesis were analysed as a means to explore the following research questions:

**I)** How do soldiers in the combat arms experience and make sense of killing in combat**? II** How do soldiers who have served in the British and United Stated combat roles in the military understand their sense of self? The analysis provides eight in depth cases of individuals who navigated killing in combat as part of their role in the combat arms, whilst exploring how they made sense of their selves in the infantry, and killing in combat. The eight cases presented were representative of many of the infantry units and ranks from the UK and the USA, encompassing both the army and the navy, and included regular, elite and Special Forces. However, attention should be drawn to the fact that these individuals represent those that are 1) able to articulate and have published their narrative, and 2) have

served in recent wars. As such, their views and opinions are restricted by their place in time and context.

## 9.2 Summary of Findings

*Study one*

Within study one, every author described killing in combat in detail, and how they individually, and as a member of their unit, integrated the act of killing into how they viewed themselves. Outlined within these narratives was how the authors accepted killing in combat as part of their role as a combat soldier, or 'warrior', a term built around the ethos of belonging to a fighting force which was steeped in a rich history of being 'tested in battle'. As the 'elite', 'warriors', belonging to a unit of 'heroic past deeds', combat was experienced as a way to test themselves in a traditionally masculine way. Negative psychological impact which arose as a result of killing in combat was restricted to instances during which the act failed to reflect how they made sense of their selves as moral individuals. This included the accidental killing of citizens, and will be elaborated upon later in the discussion. The concept of accepting the role of killing in combat challenges the previous literature's notion of an innate, biological resistance to killing in combat (Grossman, 2009; Marshall, 1968), and instead builds upon the criticism that such ideas appear to be contradictory, ambiguous, and lacking in methodological rigour (Engen, 2009; Murray, 2013; King, 2013).

However, during the analysis, this thesis evolved beyond a simple exploration into soldiers' experience to better understand killing in combat into a more sophisticated exploration of soldiers' lives and how they make sense of combat. The analysis uncovered the importance of I) sense making of the role of a warrior and the role of masculinity within this role, II) social group processes, group bonds and the history and ethos of the infantry, and III) casual debriefing tools, communication strategies, and sense making of

the self during life transitions. This research relates to the previous literature which supports the concept of a 'warrior', or combat soldier identity which exists in the modern infantry, as a type of person who feels a calling to be in the military (Henriksen, 2007; Grossman, 2009; Dyer, 2006). Further, this research contributes to the ongoing literature on masculinities in the military, and how engaging in warfare is seen as the ultimate expression of masculinity (Enloe, 1993; Whitworth, 2004; Duncanson, 2007). This thesis's findings that negotiating killing in combat is based on how soldiers make sense of the act of killing in relation to their sense of selves, fits in with the 'bulletproof mind' research put forward by Grossman (2007), who suggests:

> "[trauma following killing in combat] is largely a twentieth century affection, a modern, self-inflicted psychic wound, to believe that you will be mentally destroyed or emotionally harmed by the act of killing during lawful combat. I am convinced, based on interviews with hundreds of men and women who have had to kill, that if you tell yourself that killing will be earth shattering, traumatic events, then it probably will be." (Grossman & Christensen, 2007, p.170).

Further, these findings build upon the bulletproof mind/ sheepdog/warrior concept put forward by Grossman, by exploring in depth what these roles as a 'warrior' and a 'protectorate' mean to the authors, and how they play a role in negotiating killing in combat. Finally, the strong sense of agency within the authors' life narratives is in line with narrative identity literature, which suggests that the modern narrative is central to constructing modern identity, and helps an individual make sense of their individual life as worthy, with the possibility of a positive future, by reflecting on past experiences (McAdams, 2011).

*Study two*

Study two offers a different perspective to study one, by exploring the sense making of a soldier who, by his own testimony, never really felt caught up in the mythos of joining the ranks of soldiers steeped in mythos and history, nor did Jay experience the 'warrior calling' quite like the authors from study one. Despite this, Jay described killing in combat

as something he could accept as part of his role, and successfully integrate into his sense of self. Instead of using the warrior mythos, Jay talked about being a 'professional'. This focus was important to Jay, as he felt the term warrior was more applicable to a gladiator than a soldier; indeed it was a term that carried with it an unacceptable level of risk, ignoring the realities of being a professional soldier. How Jay made sense of killing in combat was very much based on masculinity, infused with the perception of how the world really works.

Although Jay was uncomfortable with the term warrior, he describes himself as a protector, who would willingly kill in combat to protect ideals and values which the UK symbolised to him. The term protectorate shares similarities with how the authors in study one made sense of being a warrior, both in terms of hegemonic masculinity, and a moral sense of self. Masculinity was pervasive throughout Jay's sense making, even reflecting on his view of the world and combat. Indeed for Jay war stems from both masculine traits based on authority and dominance, and is kept in control through intimidation, and displays of power and bravery.

Finally, in order to make sense of killing, Jay went through a complex negotiation as to where he would draw the line of not being able to kill in combat, without feeling 'more of it'. Jay saw himself as a protector and a European civilian, however despite this, Jay felt that the only true obstacle of killing in combat, and facing the similarities between him and a potential enemy is that 'it could have been you' who died. For Jay it came down to 'us or them', which fits perfectly with Jay's view of the world as 'devouring and consuming'.

*Summary of study one and two*

In summary, there were some obvious differences between study one and study two. Study one focused primarily on a more romanticised view of what it meant to join the military; filled with comradeship, belonging, and being a part of a warrior tradition that went beyond the individual. Study one opened up the link between being a soldier, and

masculinity, which took on both subtle and complex variations to bring about a type of sense making of the self as an ethical warrior. These concepts set the scene for study two, and helped structure the interview, to explore and tease apart the complexities and nuances of sense making in more detail. Although study two offered some similarities, such as the infusion of masculinity with the sense of self as a protector of ideals, there were some observable differences which allowed the author of this thesis to explore killing in combat from a different perspective. Jay accepted killing as part of his role, yet he did not feel the need to immerse himself within that warrior mythos. It also opened up the narrative to find out exactly what it took for Jay to become uncomfortable with killing in combat. In a sense moving away from the warrior idea allowed Jay to ask himself practically: Where do I draw the line? For Jay that line happened to be to survive, and to protect, but for the authors it was about a role they had sought out since a young age.

For both study one and two, in accepting this role, the authors expressed that it was not about denying the enemies as human beings, but rather acknowledging their role to kill in combat, and accepting that they were the 'enemy'. This acceptance came in many forms, sometimes it was an 'us or them', scenario, but oftentimes it was a cultural divide, based on justice, principles, and western discourse of freedom and equality. These findings build upon Grossman (2007) and Moore, Hopewell and Grossman's (2009) research, which describe the warrior profession as accepting a role that includes harming, disabling, and destroying another human being.

## 9.3 The Warrior Self

Within the authors' narratives, joining the infantry was seen as a type of warrior calling, which went beyond just a job, and is better described as a way of life. For the authors, being an infantry soldier meant belonging to a culture of warriors, steeped in the history and ethos of courage, heroism and valour. The concept of being a warrior meant sharing a

similar ethos to ancient warriors, such as Knights, Samurai or warlike races such as the Spartans. In a way, this connection with warriors of old, helped solidify what being a warrior meant to them; becoming a part of something elite, hardened and tried in battle. Further, gaining membership to these groups meant becoming part of something bigger than them, something built on qualities which they admire, and in that sense, gaining immortality as they simply become a part of the regiment they joined. These findings provide further evidence to support those proposed by Henriksen (2007), Grossman (2009), and Dyer (2006) who suggest the 'warrior' concept as a way to understand those ' existentially committed to warfare' (Henriksen, 2007). It is suggested that individuals volunteer for combat not because of a personality disorder predisposing them to being aggressive psychopaths (Henriksen, 2007; Grossman, 2009), but instead due to a "personal and existential commitment to master and experience warfare, who is willing and able to kill and risk sacrificing his life in combat" (Henriksen, 2007, p 199). Dyer (2006) describes this warrior individual as "a natural soldier who derives his greatest satisfaction from male companionship, from excitement, and from the conquering of physical objects" (Dyer, 2006, p 117). Grossman suggests that these individuals fill the role of protectorate for the weak, against the 'bully'; they are defined by their ability to be strong and aggressive when called upon (Grossman & Christensen, 2007, p.130). Indeed the authors' narratives revealed how important the concept of 'defender' 'protectorate' and 'strength' was to the authors, and how this in turn was encapsulated by this 'warrior mentality'.

However, going beyond the concept of an individual's willingness to engage in combat, and to protect others, was the complex way in which the authors balanced the romantic ideals and the realities of warfare. The authors were able to balance the romanticism of being a warrior, and the history and trappings that come with belonging to an assemblage applauded for heroic deeds, with the brutal realities of killing another human being. At no time did the authors hide the harsh reality of their jobs to kill in combat. Indeed being a

warrior was described as being metaphorically akin to a sharp, close combat bladed weapon, thus, to kill the enemy was understood as an intimate, bloody affair. These descriptions contribute and build upon the concept of what it represents to be a warrior, by individuals who not only experienced real world combat, but had a romantic fascination with the military.

Study two, however, revealed a different concept of the role of a combat soldier. Indeed the only exception to this warrior calling was by Jay, the in depth interview of a Royal Marine Commando who served after WWII, but before the modern day wars, such as Iraq and Afghanistan. Jay did not see himself as a warrior, but instead as a professional combat soldier, just doing a job. Jay felt that the term warrior was associated with risky behaviour, and had more similarities with comic book heroes than the reality of war. Yet despite this, Jay felt that regardless of the description, warrior or soldier, both ended up fighting in combat and thus killing in combat. For the most part, this rejection of the term warrior was due to the term not fitting with how Jay made sense of his self as someone who preferred 'controlled' risk. Interestingly however, as Jay has become more comfortable with his Identity as British (as he has grown older), he has suggested that he would, if given the opportunity, not only voluntarily join the Marines again, and in a more demanding role, but also be willing to serve as a protectorate of Britain, a term that suggests a way of life, and a calling, over just a job.

Furthermore, Jay's motivations for joining were quite different from the other authors; he joined to get paid, and to have a job, at a time where he felt conflicted about his identity and heritage as a multi-national. In contrast, the authors analysed described a calling, a desire to be tested in war. Yet as Jay reflects back, from a more defined sense of self as European, and comfortable with his British self, he would join again for a different reason; to protect Britain. The implication, then, is that the difference between thinking of the role as a calling, or even a warrior calling, and simply a job, was a matter of how he made sense

of his self. It is unclear what effects this stronger clarity of the sense of self would have on accepting combat. However, it can be stated that Jay did not enjoy the chaotic nature of combat; he simply defined it as a survival scenario. Yet despite this description, he would willingly sign up to do this again, and in a more challenging role. It can be speculated then, that a stronger sense of self from an early age could have influenced his view of combat, and his role in the Marines. In a very real sense, Jay's interview provided a glimpse into how important this sense of self as a potential infantry soldier was for the authors at a young age, and how this led to them immersing themselves into the ethos and history of the corps, a part of which is this warrior ethos.

It could be reasonably argued that there may be a contextual component to the way in which Jay viewed not only the combat role, but being a warrior. It could be reasonably argued that there may be a contextual component to the way in which Jay viewed not only the combat role, but being a warrior. The generation of soldiers during which Jay joined the military was qualitatively different to those of the authors in study one. Between the two eras, it is possible, if not likely that the perception of the military and the role of the combat soldier has reformed.

Indeed, marketing and advertising for combat position has seen a broad increase (BBC, 2015), characterised by the advent of social media campaigns as a means to regulate the narrative with regards to the ways in which the military is viewed by potential recruits (Guardian, 2017). For instance, the Royal Marine Commandos (Jay's old unit) has seen a shift in focus, notably emphasising the elite nature of its infantry role, particularly stressing its difficult selection criteria (MoD, 2017).

Jay's testimonies add an additional layer to the warrior concept presented in the literature, by demonstrating how the term 'warrior' seems to be a concept more readily accepted by those who have a strong identity and commitment to the protectorate role in the military, and moreover a strong sense of self, and how the warrior fits this sense of self. An

individual's tendency to seek out the experiences of warfare and be part of a group of warriors underlies the 'warrior spirit', a type of calling encapsulated by the warrior concept described in the literature. (Grossman, 2007; Dyer, 2006; Henriksen, 2007). Indeed, the authors analysed in this thesis shared these similar traits and found a place in the infantry. As such Jay's narrative builds upon the literature by demonstrating how important a strong sense of self and identity is to those who seek out these combat roles in the modern military. Jay accepted this ideal more as he matured in years, and built a strong sense of self as someone willing to protect that which he saw was good; Britain. This offers insight that could potentially be useful especially in modern day warfare whereby drone operators are being recruited from traditionally non-combat roles (Fitzsimmons and Sangha, 2010).

Despite this subtle layer of complexity Jay's narrative offered about understanding the protectoral role and the warrior self, it is important to note that Jay did reject the label 'warrior' as something not fitting with how he saw being a professional soldier. By not 'buying into all that', Jay has clarified his position on how being a soldier, and fighting in combat need not be encapsulated into the mythos of being a warrior. Thus although the warrior mythos seemed to aid the soldiers analysed in part one from accepting their role in combat, and make sense of their life experiences, it appears that Jay, part two of the analysis, did not require this to do the job asked of him. The long term effects of using this term to aid sense making of killing in combat, or not, are unclear, and beyond the scope of this thesis. However, this would be an interesting and potential avenue of research to explore in the future, by analysing the long term sense making of the life narrative in soldiers in killing in combat, in relation to the warrior self.

It is also worth noting the ethical ramifications of the warrior self. Part one of the analysis leaves little room for doubt on how the warrior concept is linked with killing other people, and finding glory in such tasks. Regardless of whether it is described as 'protector' or 'defender of ideals', the individual 'warrior', is dedicating their life (at the time) to

becoming an expert in killing other human beings, be it from a thousand miles away with a missile, or up close and personal with a blade. The end result is still the same; the total immersion into the philosophy of killing. Although the researcher has no intention of making any judgement on this choice of profession, nor to delve into the legal and philosophical implications of the 'warrior' concept, a critical stance for the consequences of such a choice to be in combat can be investigated. It would be reasonable to summarise this research as the warrior concept being a positive influence in the soldier's life, both in helping them make sense of killing in combat, and their life after combat. However as a researcher, it is worth taking pause and considering the psychological and ethical impact of suggesting that this is the ideal discourse for modern day soldiers to become immersed in, especially, as Jay has suggested, it might not be required to accept killing in combat, and as noted, the long term benefits of the warrior self are not known. As future soldiers are trained for the sole purpose of killing other human beings, especially when their own life is not at risk, such as drone warfare, it is important to consider the ramifications of the warrior ethos, and how this may affect an individual's sense making of their actions. The term 'ethical warrior' has been used within military training for combat soldiers (Hoban, 2012) to describe the outlook soldiers should have when understanding their role of killing in combat. The concept reinforces that 'all life is equal', and that the 'ethical warrior' must protect not only themselves, but others (Hoban, 2012). Thus killing is only used to protect lives, when absolutely justified. As such an enemy's life must be spared, if possible. This defender or protector role calls for the warrior to make accurate assessments of different situations, and utilise violence within the ethical warrior code (Hoban, 2012). However, therein lies a potential dilemma in the warrior ethos. The soldiers analysed within this thesis described balancing their warrior mentality of killing the enemy, with the protection and respect for life, even the enemies. This caused tension and conflicted emotions throughout the analysis if the enemy combatants did not seem to act in the same way. However, as discussed within the limitations of this thesis, if the autobiographies and

interview are from introspective, articulate, and (either formally or not) educated individuals, does their way of representing the warrior ethos align with the majority of combat soldiers? If a soldier is immersing themselves into the warrior ethos, without the 'ethical' component, is there a danger that those individuals may lose perspective on what separates them from warriors of the past, who may not have been part of a society bound by legal/moral codes that protect life? These are questions which will no doubt be debated within the philosophical-military writings in the future, as they have been in the past, as far back as the writings of Homer's Odysseus and Iliad, recounting the tale of Odyssey, the story of a soldier's trials and tribulations after returning home from combat (Shay, 2003). Further, by being a part of a group of individuals that are tasked with killing, and at the same time being held in high esteem, and often glamorised in western society for doing this job efficiently, questions should be raised about how this affects soldiers psychologically as they both embrace this role, and make sense of their life post combat. If one's sole duty is to become efficient at killing in combat, what else are they to be equally rewarded for in society once this skill set is no longer useful in the civilian world? By extension, how does this sense making as the 'tip of the spear' align with civilian codes of conduct and way of life? These are questions that require further investigation within the literature. Several of the authors within this analysis touched upon a second career, post military, which made sense in their life narrative, as a career that utilises the skill set and training they had received within the military. However, this subject would need to be extensively researched in its own right for a more in depth, detailed analysis. Questions, for example, can be raised about the potential benefit of transferring some of those 'ethical warriors' skill sets towards saving the lives of civilians, in a demanding, and chaotic job role, such as paramedic. This could potentially put use not only the soldiers' training, but their sense making of self as someone who likes to challenge and push themselves, all the while trying to 'make a difference'.

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*The machismo of being a warrior*

Throughout the analysis, the authors expressed being a warrior as tough, manly, hard, aggressive, and the wielder of violence in order to protect others. Being a warrior meant being tested and hardened in battle, and the authors valued individuals who shared these traits of masculinity. Enloe (1993) suggests that masculinity is traditionally connected to war and combat, and indeed the authors in this thesis expressed the epitome of being a man as having attributes to be a potential warrior. These findings support the masculinity literature, which suggests that engaging in warfare is seen in western discourse as a 'manly' thing to do, or the penultimate expression of masculinity (Enloe, 1993; Whitworth, 2004). A soldier can often link himself to this idealised warrior status (Bourke, 1999), whose role includes to fight, and protect others (Elstain, 1987); in this way, being in the infantry is seen as the epitome of the 'heroic warrior' (Hockey, 2003).

The role of the infantry soldier was found to be empowering, aiding the authors to overcome great odds through strength, and toughness. This connection between heroic deeds, the warrior lifestyle, and masculinity was influenced by loved ones, books, television and positive reinforcements of this traditionally masculine behaviour from a young age. Authors described a type of socialisation of the idea of masculinity and being a warrior, through role models derived from cultural norms. Indeed masculinity research suggests that these masculine-warrior concepts are the product of a cultural discourse, which through the medium of television, films books and comic books dictates how individuals in western society view what it means to be 'manly', and how this relates to war (Cooke & Woolacott, 1993; Whitworth, 2004).

The way in which the authors understood being a warrior was romanticised by comparing themselves to heroic warriors, who were often steeped in a myth-like status. Thus the traits

they looked for in themselves included courage, strength, the desire to obtain self-mastery, and at times, leadership skills. These findings are in line with, and provide further support to the masculinity literature, which puts forwards a type of officer military-masculinity, which goes beyond violence and brutality, to include attributes of a natural leader, and thus the epitome of a man (Hooper, 2000; Duncanson, 2007).

The authors also described a complex type of masculinity that often went beyond the attributes described in hegemonic masculinity. DeVisser, and McDonnell (2013), suggest that modern masculinities can indeed be complex, whereby men can acquire what is known as 'masculine capital', that is to say, engaging in masculine behaviour, which gives them a type of credit allowance to then engage in what is typically viewed as less masculine behaviours. Indeed the authors within this analysis were able to describe emotional turmoil, and display emotions that would otherwise be considered vulnerabilities, such as love fear and despair, whilst at the same time maintain a masculine, warrior sense of self. Enloe (1983) demonstrates the complexity of masculinity in the military, by observing that soldiers are expected to be submissive, obedient and almost totally dependent, qualities that are perceived to be traditionally feminine. In line with this literature by both Enloe (1983) and DeVisser, Smith and McDonnell (2009), the researcher suggests the complex masculinity demonstrated by the authors, which includes submission, dependence and vulnerability, is possible, because being a soldier in the infantry is an expression of the ultimate warrior, and thus the ultimate man.

As suggested by DeVisser & McDonnell (2013), the positive perception of masculinity is important for individuals who place an emphasis on gender stereotypes on their own gender identity. Within this analysis, the authors demonstrated how important their sense of masculinity was to their identity. A particularly strong demonstration of this complexity was provided by Bury, who describes the feelings between him and the men he serves with as 'respect'. Respect is used because it fits with typically hegemonic masculine traits of

rationality, strength and as suggested by Bury: it is not 'soft'. Soft is 'embarrassing' because soft is a typically western 'feminine' trait, not associated with how these soldiers view themselves, and their role in the combat arms. However Bury then goes on to describe it by its true name, as revealed by one of his men: 'love'. The way in which Bury makes sense of this love between them does contain elements of hegemonic masculinity: motivating the men to be 'brave' and 'heroic'. However, it also incorporates a more complex masculinity involving less 'masculine' traits: emotionally it 'burns and tingles in you when it flickers'.

The analysis suggests that the authors' descriptions of the warrior component of their role is hyper masculine (heroic, violent, aggressive, to be tested), whereas the soldiering component is being described as more traditionally feminine (submissive to authority, a lack of control over their lives, and doing things like helping and caring for the civilians, the injured, children, etc.). It is perhaps a balancing act of the two parts of the role, which allows the men to negotiate more complex masculinities, and in turn perform a role that is not only about aggression, violence and protection, but also about submission, serving, and caring.

Part two of the analysis builds upon this notion of masculinity, albeit in a more subtle, macro level, linking the role of a combat soldier to the need for a military in today's society. When Jay discusses combat, it is clear he does not enjoy the level of risk, or the uncontrollable and chaotic nature of combat. During Jay's interview, he steered clear from using more emotional terms that might appear weak, such as fear, instead using more masculine terms, such as control. Combat was not a good experience for Jay, because he lacked control over the situation. Another way to explore this concept of control is the way in which Jay makes sense of control. Jay described liking extreme sports which he had control over, but not combat, which he had no control over. When Jay can control the elements, or he feels there is an 'acceptable' level of risk, he has control over himself

during that experience. However, since for Jay the experience of combat was chaos, there were too many random variables, such as 'bullets flying'; this was 'unacceptable risk' and thus Jay perhaps could not retain the perception of self-control during the situation. In addition to the concept of control, killing in combat was described in a typically masculine way of being a protector, and defender, which is not that different from how the soldiers in study one described their sense making of their self, in line with being a warrior. Going further, Jay's perception of a 'competitive' and 'devouring' world feeds into the masculine concepts of dealing with that harsh reality by using power and strength to stand one's ground. Jay's analysis built on study one by detailing how war was connected to masculinity in a more macro sense than the soldiers in study one, by discussing military tactics of dominance, authority, intimidation and displays of power and aggression.

*Sense making of killing in combat*

Throughout this analysis, in both study one and two, the authors accepted their role as individuals asked to kill in combat. This was described as a type of balancing act between holding sensitivity toward life- and the consequences of their actions- whilst accepting their role as a trained killer; neither gloating, nor down playing the nature of killing in combat. In this way the authors' sense making of self went beyond a 'mindless killing machine', or government tool used to assassinate people. In study one the authors lived by a moral code, which was based on their sense making of their individual infantry unit, their society, and the family they came from. These concepts of the moral compass stem from political rhetoric, childhood fantasies stemming from television and books, and stories of the heroic deeds of their unit within history. For study two the act of accepting killing in combat was more professional; based on the sense making of the role as a job that needed to be done. Both study one and two described a type of moral compass, which guided their behaviours and beliefs, which helped them negotiate acts of violence and death, amounting

to protecting the weak, killing the 'bad guys' and being a 'force for good'. These findings, from study one, support and build upon Grossman's (Grossman & Christensen, 2007) sheepdog/warrior theory, which is taught across America to armed police officers. Grossman suggests that indeed the role of the 'sheepdog' is to 'protect the weak, protect the community, face the bully, stand tall, stay aware, think ahead, be ready, be loyal, avoid aggression if possible and, if not, win and win fully' (Grossman & Christensen, 2007, p130). Indeed Grossman (2007; 2009) uses the term 'warrior' to represent those willing to sacrifice themselves to defend others, those who move toward the sound of the guns, and those who continue in the face of adversity to do what needs to be done. Grossman goes further, suggesting that to be transformed into a warrior, the individuals must study other warriors, and dedicate themselves to the role, as such, being a warrior/sheepdog is a choice, and a moral decision to accept their role of killing in combat, thus by extension not a role someone needs to be born into (Grossman & Christensen, 2007). The concept of having a choice to be a 'sheepdog', instead of being born with the required traits is an interesting concept put forward by Grossman that although ambiguous, and often conflicting with Grossman's other work (Grossman, 2007; 2009), does seem consistent with the authors narratives from study one and to a lesser extent, study two. In study one, a great deal of time was spent by the authors describing how they made sense of their life narrative as a series of interconnected events, serendipity, and desire which led to the path of becoming a warrior. This very agency of choice to become a combat soldier is what drove them to make sense of their role in combat, and what it meant to them to be given the task to kill in combat. Jay takes a more practical approach; his agency of choice was based on naivety of what the Royal Marines were and what his role would be. Despite this lack of understanding of his role, Jay accepted the job to kill in combat, and in later in life would make sense of his experiences in a way which would lead him to take on that role once more.

By supporting the research conducted by Grossman in study one, this thesis has brought methodologically thorough in depth testimonies to complement and lend support to the concept of an individual who accepts their role. For study two, the sheepdog/warrior concept was perhaps partially true. Jay did talk about protecting others and himself, and accepting the role and task to kill in combat. However, Jay did not show initial signs of embracing the calling of a warrior by dedicating himself to studying or wanting to become immersed into that way of life. Although Jay commented that he would feel 'more of it' as he became more comfortable with himself as a British citizen later in life, and would again attempt to join the ranks of the Royal Marines if he could, this never truly equated to the calling Grossman (Grossman & Christensen, 2007) described. However, this feeling 'more of it' in later life, instead of when he was younger, could go further than simply not being comfortable with his sense of self as British, and in fact could lend support to the notion of the military constructing a narrative, both through social media (Guardian, 2017) and Hollywood movies (Vartabedian, 1986), which may be influencing Jay's perception of the military retroactively.

Exploring this sense making further, the authors in study one described being in combat allowed the authors to join the ranks of the heroes and warriors that had preceded them, in this way the authors wanted to 'test themselves' in a combat situation, which inevitably meant the possibility of killing in combat. In study two, Jay did not place an emphasis in this calling or longing to join a unit that would allow him to be tested in this way. However in both study one and two far from denying the reality of killing in combat, the authors expressed, with graphic detail for, their training and understanding of what it meant to take another life. This was a responsibility they had been tasked with, and the authors expressed sensitivity to this, whilst being able to accept their role that would be difficult for a civilian to accept. In embracing this role, study one's authors expressed war-like warrior rhetoric, often entwined with hyper masculinity and lethality, as discussed in the previous section.

For both study one and two, in accepting this role, the authors expressed that it was not about denying the enemies as human beings, but rather acknowledging their role to kill in combat, and accepting that they were the 'enemy'. This acceptance came in many forms, sometimes it was an 'us or them', scenario, but oftentimes it was a cultural divide, based on justice, principles, and western discourse of freedom and equality. For Jay in study two, this went further, the role of killing was about protecting himself and others, and an 'us or them' mentality based on his view of the world as competitive and 'devouring'. Study one's findings build upon Grossman (2007) and Moore, Hopewell and Grossman's (2009), research, which describes the warrior profession as accepting a role that includes harming, disabling, and destroying another human being. Undeniably, the primary objective of the combat troop is to kill. Going further, Moore, Hopewell and Grossman (2009) suggest that warriors immerse themselves in a culture with a history and a tradition that focuses on concepts such as honour, duty, courage and sacrifice. Far from being abstract terms, the authors suggest these are "real" concepts, which carry genuine meaning for the warriors (Moore, Hopewell & Grossman, 2009). These concepts inform the soldier of their role, which is not ambiguous, suggests Grossman (2007); the job is to kill the enemy. By accepting this role before the act of killing, the individual prepares themselves for this responsibility. In this way it need not be a 'traumatic event' (Grossman, 2007, P. 170). In study two, Jay did not use words like 'honour' or 'sacrifice', and thus to him these were not words that held any significance or meaning, however Jay did talk about the role, similar to duty as important to him. For Jay protecting his unit was what it meant to do his 'duty', which Jay did accept, and as part of that, accepted killing in combat. In a sense Jay did not immerse himself into that warrior role to kill in combat, yet he still accepted the role to kill. Overall, in contrast to study one, Jay's narrative focused more on the practicalities and common sense of combat, instead of surrounding it in glory and prestige; Jay talked more about self-preservation and defending his loved ones. Although very much tied up in masculine concepts, as described above, for Jay this sense making was based on

introspection of his identity as a European citizen, and by extension the cultural differences and similarities to the enemy. As Jay reflected on his life, he suggested that with age and experience he would feel more of the 'British' mentality had he joined the military now, which would lead to proudly fighting to 'protect' or 'defend' Britain. Ultimately Jay's rationale for killing in combat comes down to 'us or them', something that as a 'professional soldier' he accepts. Thus although he does not seek out, or enjoy the role of killing in combat, he nevertheless accepts it. Combined, the findings presented in this thesis explores the way in which the way in which authors accepted this role, by the way they made sense of the enemy, the way they talked to each other, and in the case of study one, the way in which they immersed themselves into the 'warrior' culture.

However, the narratives for study one changed when the authors perceived the killing as 'wrong', based on their sense making of what they were supposed to stand for as a combat unit. When the authors killed a civilian, or ordered the accidental killing of a civilian, they struggled to accept killing in combat. Even if the kill was a legally sanctioned operation, and the civilian had given the author no choice (as in a self-defence situation), the soldiers still struggled to make sense of it. How the authors dealt with these accidental killings, along with supporting literature, will be covered in the next section.

## 9.4 Immersion into the Culture of the Group

The authors within study one of this analysis described how this exposure to the military culture prepared them to work in teams, and within these teams overcome the adversities they might face in combat. This experience served to alienate the group from the civilian world, by altering the group values, expectations, and goals. Indeed this falls in line with the literature suggesting that in 12 weeks, the military is able to convert a civilian into a

combat-ready soldier (Dyer, 2006). During this process, the soldiers undergo a socialisation process (Bury, 2010), whereby recruits are put through an arduous training program, a by-product, or possible end result of which, includes a strong bond formation between the trainees.

Described by one author as a 'religion', the military unit the soldiers joined allowed them to become part of something bigger than themselves, thus viewing one's life as a sum of a greater part, and in that way gaining a semblance of immortality, by living on in the memory of the groups ideals, ethos and actions. The bond the authors felt between them and their fellow soldiers was described by one author as nothing short of a platonic love. In sum, the authors felt admiration, and respect for each other that influenced the authors' behaviours and actions during combat. This feeling of love 'melted fear like butter on a hot furnace', and further, made the idea of protecting each other akin to them protecting themselves. In this way, the authors painted a picture of the unit as a type of machine; each of them represented one part of the whole. In relation to this, research exploring group processes (Castano, Leidner and Slawuta, 2008) suggest that the very story a group tells itself when entering a conflict, including the story about themselves, the group they are in conflict with, and their relationships, is of great importance. Stories relating to their relationships focus on the glory of the group, based on historical events the group took part in, whereby the 'enemy' is to be eradicated, and to do so is morally required (Castano, Leidner and Slawuta, 2008). In line with this, the authors placed a great emphasis on the story they shared about their relationships as combat soldiers, and what their shared values where, which allowed them to negotiate extreme events such as combat. Indeed, Haslam and colleagues (2005) have noted that military groups' collective experiences allow them to normalise aspects of work that might be quite abnormal and threatening to those outside of the military. However, unlike Castano and colleagues' (2008) research, suggesting that the enemies are to be considered 'evil', and must be 'eradicated' (Castano, Leidner and

Slawuta, 2008), the authors focused less on the enemy as being 'evil', but more on their role to uphold their countries moral values, and protect the country from these individuals. Indeed the enemy was accepted as a person, with loved ones, which the authors acknowledged was someone who took up arms to hurt, destroy and kill them, their colleagues, and their country. However, it should be noted that Castano's and colleagues' (2008) research is based on understanding extreme illegal behaviour of combatants during warfare, and not that of legally sanctioned killing in combat.

The group dynamics of infantry units also served to aid the soldiers in making sense of killing in combat. This came in both accepting killing in combat, as well as accepting unintentionally killing civilians. As a group the soldiers underwent a type of 'psychological unburdening' after combat. This type of unofficial debriefing, or as described by one of the authors, 'decompression', helped the soldiers share emotions and experiences, and validated their experiences of being in combat. The effects of not being able to debrief in this way, which was especially noticeable with officers in charge, led to a sense of profound loneliness, and feelings of inner turmoil. These findings add further support to 'casual debriefing' post combat literature. Grossman (2007) explores the benefits of soldiers' and police officers' 'debriefing' after killing in combat. Engagement with peers and superiors was noted as one of the most important ways a 'young warrior' can come to terms with and accept killing in combat. This was suggested to work in two ways: to feel that others surrounding you validate the experience, and to experience the pain together, in order to divide the burden (Grossman & Christensen, 2007). Grossman proposes that fighter pilots suffer from fewer psychological issues from killing in combat, in part due to their ability to celebrate the kill with their comrades after combat. It is argued that this process is aided by the fact that killing in combat appears to be more socially acceptable for fighter pilots, as is the process of being rewarded for the kills. Thus the individual is having their role and act validated (Grossman & Christensen, 2007). This

notion was corroborated by Webber and colleagues (2013) who found that killing was accepted as legitimate when socially validated by others. As a result, soldiers will likely surround themselves with people who validate their view of the war. Klinger (2004) interviewed 100 SWAT team members who shot at and hit a suspect during a gunfight and found that, among other factors, the support, recognition and casual debriefing sessions with friends and superiors helped them the most to make sense of killing in combat. Grossman argues that studies such as Klinger's (2004) and observations by Grossman & Christensen (2007) demonstrate the positive experience debriefing can provide for police officers, soldiers and other warriors in dangerous professions (Grossman & Christensen, 2007). It should be noted that Debriefing/Critical incident Debriefing/ Psychological Debriefing is a controversial topic that is still contested within psychological research (Rose, Bisson, Churchill & Wessely, 2002). Indeed despite Grossman's claims that the research is widely supported 'where it matters', citing research by army psychiatrist Dr. Belenky (N.D given, cited in Grossman & Christensen, 2007) the term debriefing, more commonly known as Psychological Debriefing (PD), is a structured, highly researched but ultimately controversial technique used to prevent and treat PTSD (Arendt & Elkit, 2001; Rose et al., 2002). In short, there is an extensive and serious debate around the limitations, benefits and dangers of PD (Rose, et al., 2002). Because of this, the term debriefing used by the researcher for this study, in this context, refers to group processes, in which individuals from the same group 'talk' in an unofficial capacity about their experiences, otherwise known as 'decompression' (Lewis, 2014). Indeed Artwohl and Chirstensen (1997) argue that debriefing can be defined as any discussion that happens after an event, which helps the participant come to terms with the event and learn from it. Further, an informal debriefing can simply be a discussion that arises spontaneously after an event (Artwohl & Chirstensen, 1997).

Study two, on the other hand did not place much emphasis on group dynamics, or a bond forged through training or combat. Indeed, Jay commented that it was the professionalism of doing the job, and having each other's backs, which drove the unit to work together as a team, which they were trained to do. This mentality difference between Jay and the authors in study one may be one of two reasons. Jay did not spend his youth glamorising or in anyway building himself up to join a combat unit from a young age. He did not seek out the group bonds, or to join a unit that was steeped in 'heroic' deeds. Jay admitted within his transcripts that he had trouble with his British identity, and almost described it as belonging to one culture or the other. Secondly, Jay joined the military at a different time to the rest of the authors in study one. Since Jays tour of duty and exit from the military, the MoD have increased their advertising (BBC, 2015), and taken to social media platforms, such as Facebook in an attempt to control the narrative of how the military is presented to potential new recruits (Guardian, 2017). Combined with the military having a direct say in what type of military movies get made (Vartabedian, 1986), by controlling which scripts to allow access to hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of equipment (Vartabedian, 1986), it is clear that the youth post Jay's service are likely to be exposed to a military which actively controls the way in which is presented, to meet its needs. Perhaps these two factors combined, meant that Jay was not exposed to this sense making of the military, and its purpose, and instead saw it from a professional level of doing what was required to get the job done and protect 'your mates',

## 9.5 Narrating Life Transitions and Warrior Calling

Erikson (1963) proposed that Identity, much like a story, is contextualised by time and culture. This story is an internalised and evolving story of the self, which a person constructs to make sense and meaning out of his or her life (McAdams, 2011). Indeed the modern narrative is central to constructing modern identity, which is based on a selective

reconstruction of past events, combined with an anticipated future that helps an individual make sense of where their narrative is going (McAdams, 2011). In this way virtually all narratives represent what society deems to be a good and worthy life (McAdams, 2011). Thus, in order to make sense of an individual life, one must have an orientation of good and bad, which is interwoven into cultural norms and beliefs. This process is suggested to begin during young adult years, drawn from (amongst other things) prevailing cultural norms within their social world (McAdams, 2011). Throughout the analysis of study one, the authors looked at their life narrative through the lens of a moral 'warrior'. In this way, the authors integrated their experiences of combat, with their sense making of not only their selves, but the values of the infantry unit they have joined. When the author witnessed or experienced immoral orders, or information that is contrary to being a 'force for good', the sense making of their life narrative as a force for good came under threat. Ultimately when the authors were faced with distress and inner turmoil regarding the legitimacy of their calling, the authors in the analysis sought out new information that would alleviate these feelings of anguish, or seek reinforcement from a fellow soldier that their actions were just or unavoidable. It should be noted that study two did not conform to the 'warrior calling', and instead focused on the professional aspect of being a warrior. Although ultimately Jay described himself as becoming essentially more patriotic over his lifespan, and more likely to feel that immersion in the combat soldier lifestyle, this was not the case during his tour of combat. Jay had a short career as an enlisted individual within the military, and it was not described as something that fulfilled a 'need' or desire to conquer, or find himself in anyway. Instead the role for him was a way to earn a living, and based on a naïve young adult's sense making of what it meant to be a marine commando. As such, Jay's narrative does not offer any details on the combat infantry soldier's lifestyle being life-affirming in anyway, other than to say Jay firmly believes in the need for the military, and for combat soldiers, and would join again if he could. Indeed if he were to

join again, Jay speculates a different, more immersive experience, which may have led to a different way of making sense of the occupation he chose.

The research explored what happens when the soldiers had to transition out of the military and accept their life post tour of duty. The literature suggests that how the narrative is crafted, in order to gain some semblance of unity, purpose, meaning and coherence is important for wellbeing (Erikson, 1963; McAdams, 2011; Baerger & McAdams, 1999). Like any narrative, the individual's story contains plots and themes, based on an individual's subjectivity and moral justification of who a person was, and will be (McAdams, 2011). Indeed McAdams (2011) highlights the significance of agency within one's narrative in battling depression and other psychological disturbances, linking to emotional closure (Pals, 2006a) and themes of redemption (McAdams, Reynolds, Lewis, pattern and Bowman, 2001). Of significance to this study, McAdams (2011) notes that these narratives are not 'set in stone', as such adults can continuously update and alter their narrative, as gains and losses change their perspective on who they are (Birren, Kenyon, Ruth, Shroots & Syendson, 1996). In study one, making sense of the transitional self; the authors adapted their life narrative to aid in transitioning out of the military. Combat, and experiences of being in the infantry, shaped this new life, even if the events of warfare had tainted the authors' view of being in the infantry. Generally speaking, the authors focused on the positive aspects of not only the tour of duty, but the qualities they had gained from those experiences and group memberships. In effect the authors reframed their lives, by focusing on their strengths to overcome obstacles in life. Serving in the combat arms was a seen as rite of passage, and being a warrior was something they could utilise to help negotiate new life paths.

It is interesting to note that the authors demonstrated an agency rich narrative, which seemed to be empowering, aiding not only in a successful transition, but overall positive experience of their life narrative. Generally these narratives focused on inner strength, and

personal qualities. Even when an external source (such as God) was held responsible for their life, the author still took personal accountability in reshaping and framing their life. In this way themes of redemption and purpose were found to be important in this transition. This research both supports Webber's (2013) research, which emphasises the role of external validation in soldiers coming to terms with killing in combat, and further suggests the importance of focusing on an agency rich, empowering narrative based on strengths and experiences. In summary, like Webber and colleagues' (2013) research, the authors used validating techniques from group members and individuals in their unit, in order to make sense of combat. However, the authors also had a narrative which was empowering, focused on the positives of combat experiences, and how these experiences have shaped them into the person they are, and thus prepared them for challenges of the future. In study two, Jay provided a different way of expressing life affirming strategies and how an agency rich narrative helped form his identity. Indeed Jay's commentary of 'feeling more of it' and the attraction to re-join the Royal Marines, needs to be looked at under a critical light. Jay has been a civilian for most of his adult life, and since his discharge he has suggested within his interview to have done a great deal of "soul searching" (Jay, 2015) analysing his sense making of the self, and his experiences within the military. Due to the amount of time which has lapsed since his time in the military, there is a possibility that Jay looks upon these experiences more favourably, and perhaps even highlighting some of the more positives, and discounting the negatives of joining the modern day military. For example, Jay comments on feeling more British and on a sense of belonging, and as noted throughout the analysis, the authors frequently spoke of the sense of belonging the military provided. Thus Jay could be focusing on the immersive, sense of belonging, and life affirming part of the experience (protecting Britain), instead of the more practical nature of the role. Whilst this is possible, it does not fit within Jay's pragmatic,' common-sense' approach to describing his experiences within the military, nor does it seem in line with the way in which Jay presented himself, as someone able to see past the veneer of glory and

heroics, to the core of what combat is about. As it stands, this line of reasoning was not explored with Jay, and as such no conclusions can be discussed.

This research is also interesting in that it supports the role of identity in helping a soldier navigate from military to civilian life. Vest (2012), examined the construction of dual identities of the soldier-citizen within the US Army National Guard. From selected interviews of soldiers, pre and post deployment, Vest (2012) highlights how soldiers used narratives to reconcile these two potentially contradicting identities to develop a type of citizen-soldier identity (Vest, 2012). Vest concludes from the research that pre-deployment and post-deployment programming and screening initiatives might consider addressing the crucial role identity plays in aiding soldiers negotiate the transition from civilian life to that of a deployed soldier, and vice-versa.

Within study one the authors described the infantry role as a type of warrior calling, which seemed to go beyond just a job, toward a way of life. This idea of viewing one's work as a calling, as opposed to a career, or a job has been found in positive psychology to be linked to higher psychological wellbeing (Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin & Schwartz, 1997; Gazica and Spector, 2015; Wrzesniewski, 2003). An occupational calling can be defined as an occupation that someone feels drawn to, finds intrinsically enjoyable and meaningful, and is central to their identity. In this instance the word meaningful can be something deeply personal, and a subjective experience that may have far reaching implications for one's life (Gazica and Spector, 2015). As such, it is unsurprising that people who view their work as a calling are generally more satisfied with their lives and jobs, have fewer health problems, and found meaning and significance in their work. These individuals tend to spend more time at work, even when not compensated, and can derive more satisfaction from work, than leisure or hobbies (Wrzesniewski, 2003). The authors in this analysis described their role as going beyond a job: it was a part of who they were. Their role held meaning for them beyond the time they were at 'work'. The authors described being in the

infantry as something they sought out to fulfil a certain need or desire, indeed the role often fulfilled a calling to be something that the civilian world could not offer. Study two was lacking in any narrative which conformed to the combat role as a type of calling. Jay did not stay in the military for an entire career, nor did he speak about his experiences as 'meaningful' 'life affirming', or somehow integral to who he is now. To Jay, the role was simply a job to be done. The effects this has had on his life choices, and overall wellbeing compared to the soldiers from study one are unknown, as no baseline measurement was taken or considered appropriate for this type of analysis. However, what is known is that Jay looks back at his time in the military, and feels would immerse himself again into that culture, instead this time in a more career orientated role as an officer. Based on study one it would seem to be that the modern day military, especially the officer corps, has a strong feeling of a calling over just simply a role. Thus by describing his desire to become a part of that, and being a 'protector', Jay may be indicating that now he has a better sense of self, he would experience his role as a type of calling. This is, however, speculative; as Jay did not outright state this would be the case, only that he would feel 'more of it'.

Based exclusively on study one, the present research also supports the recent shift within psychology and military training (Matthews, 2013) toward a preventative model, by focusing and reinforcing the sense of self as a moral warrior as a way to negotiate killing in combat and avoid psychological distress. This thesis highlights the critical role an individual's sense making of the self has when making sense of killing in combat, life after combat, as well as returning to civilian life. Tools used to reinforce this sense of self are based on cultural and group norms, a strong sense of agency in one's narrative, social validation and collective processes. Resilience training appears to be the direction the U.S military has been moving towards over the last five years (Matthews, 2013), in the form of the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness (CSF) plan. This new program is a tool which provides soldiers the skills to make meaning of their experiences, which Matthews (2013) notes is

likely to be a cost saving manoeuvre over the long term. This eliminates both the amount of soldiers suffering from trauma, as well as the health care costs associated post military life, which Matthews speculates may be in the billions (Matthews, 2013). Seligman and Matthews (2011) and Matthews (2013) propose that this new approach fits perfectly with a positive psychological perspective by utilising a culture that promotes personal growth. Based on this approach, CSF provides soldiers with skills needed to be more resilient to combat and components of combat (Matthews, 2013). Resilience research shares some of the features of positive psychology (Seligman, Steen, Park & Peterson, 2005), which also focuses on positive adaptation to events (Cacioppo, Reis & Zautra, 2011). The comprehensive soldier fitness program includes four, fifteen minute modules developed around nine personal resources in line with the army's seven core values of: loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honour, integrity and personal courage (Cacioppo, Reis & Zautra, 2011). These traits were all shared by the authors in this thesis as important to their sense of self. This focus on social and personal growth, is a clear step away from the treatment of pathology model, which Matthews (2013) proposes is in line with the military culture that embraces training and education of soldiers with the tools needed to succeed. This move away from pathology and towards resilience and positive psychology is hoped to dramatically reduce the stigma associated with psychological trauma and encourage soldiers to seek resilience training to better adapt to their environments. In supporting the literature, this thesis's running theme was based on the soldiers' interpretation of events in relation to how they viewed their selves. Moreover, tools used by the soldiers to make sense of their actions in combat, including seeking out validation, and reframing the life narrative, seem to be in line with the current trend in military psychology. Although study two did not offer a narrative to support this view as strongly as study one, there are indications that Jay sense making of self as a professional, elite soldier, and a protector, against a 'devouring' world has similarities to the moral warrior expressed in study one, which may have helped Jay negotiate killing in combat and avoid psychological distress.

Indeed considering Jay served in the military in a different time, many decades before the soldiers in study one, it could be said that this new way of thinking about resilience, and sense making of the self could demonstrate progress in the way the military is engaging, recruiting and training individuals. Indeed a great deal of time and money has been put into military research since the war in Iraq and Afghanistan (Mathews, 2013), specifically looking at PTSD rates, and trying to prevent soldiers from suffering psychological distress (Seligman and Matthews, 2011). As such, it would not be overly presumptuous to assume that this research has influenced how the military recruits and trains its soldiers. Furthermore, since Jay's time in the military, there has been an influx of military culture pervading western society, through social media, Youtube, and Hollywood as becoming part of an elite, small, professional group (MoD, 2017; Guardian, 2017; Vartabedian, 1986), which as alluded to throughout this discussion, may be influencing younger individuals' view of the military, and what it can offer them.

Finally, it is important to note that these specific authors in both studies had a coherent, agency rich narrative, which seemed to aid their sense making of their life, including killing in combat. It is unknown what would have been the consequences to the authors had they not had this approach to life, or indeed if this characteristic of reflection led the authors to write autobiographies. It is suggested by the researcher that this is an area that would need further investigation, to see how important it is to have an agency rich narrative when negotiating killing in combat, and life after combat.

## 9.6 Summary

Previous research into killing and combat has suggested an innate resistance to killing (Grossman, 2009), based on a phobia to killing in combat, which when overridden, causes psychological trauma amongst soldiers (Murray, 2013). Although strides have been made

to explain the relatively low PTSD rates of soldiers who were involved in combat and killing the enemy (Webber et al., 2013; Maguen et al., 2010), there has been very little research into understanding killing in combat. Previous research has suggested an emphasis on understanding the 'warrior' and 'natural soldier' (Henriksen, 2007; Grossman & Christensen, 2007; Dyer, 2006) to better understand those who can kill in combat, which could be understood as individuals who wish to be 'Tried in battle' (Henriksen, 2007, p. 207), 'protect their community', and face the 'bully' (Grossman & Christensen, 2007, p. 130 ). This current research contributes to the understanding of the nature of what it means to be a warrior, how soldiers make sense of the warrior self, and how this aids them in negotiating killing in combat.

Primarily, both studies one and two add perspective to the ongoing debate on causes of psychological distress in combat, which remains a topic of dispute in the literature, as to the rates of PTSD among those who experience combat (Hoge, 2010; Webber et al., 2013), by identifying eight case studies of soldiers who showed no clear signs of resistance to killing, and successfully negotiated the act of killing in combat. Although 8 individuals is not representative or generalisable to the greater military population, they offer a detailed account of individuals who have successfully negotiated killing in combat, and provide insight into the sense making of these specific soldiers in combat, which could lead to potential avenues for further research and exploration. Further, this adds empirical support to Grossman's later work, *ON Combat* (Grossman & Christensen, 2007), and Henriksen's 'natural soldier' concept (2007), both of which highlight the importance of accepting the role as a warrior, to justify killing in combat. Study two adds to this research by focusing on the more professional side of being a soldier, by rejecting the term warrior as something impractical, fantasy like, and instead replacing the term with more realistic, concepts, such as survival, and protector. Despite this difference on focus, study two still focused on the

protectoral, defender role, sharing many similarities with the soldiers' testimonies from study one.

Secondly, a large body of the literature on killing in combat comes from conscription-based units. By focusing on a modern professional army, this study adds to the wealth of research that looks to contextualise killing in combat to the modern military, a voluntary organisation (Maguen et al., 2010; Webber et al., 2013), which may have implications for future research into killing in combat. In line with this, this research would further have the potential to be applied to other combatants, such as weapons-trained police officers, due to the overlapping nature of the roles between soldier and armed police officer, and due to the shared 'warrior' ethos, as outlined by Grossman (2007).

Originally this thesis was focused primarily on understanding how soldiers make sense of killing in combat, in the context of previous research which suggested that all individuals are susceptible to a universal, phobic-like resistance to killing which must be over-ruled in order to kill in combat. Once this over-riding is complete, soldiers will suffer the consequences of psychological distress from killing in combat. As the study progressed the analysis led to an increasingly sophisticated interpretation, exploring soldiers' sense making, resources, and narratives to negotiate not just killing in combat, but life after combat and transitions therein. In exploring the experiences of soldiers during killing in combat, this research directly contributes to the literature with a rich and detailed qualitative analysis that, as far as the researcher is aware, is the first of its kind to explore in detail why and how soldiers make sense of killing in combat, beyond Jensen and Simpson's (2014) thematic analysis of how soldiers experience hand to hand combat, by offering an experiential exploration of the soldiers' experience and sense making. One such avenue was the strong sense of prescribed hegemonic masculinity described by the authors in both study one and two, which both subtly and more overtly, dictated the way these soldiers viewed not only their self, and their role in combat, but the act of killing in

combat. The detailed and nuanced nature of this masculinity, both hegemonic masculinity, and a modern, more subtle masculinity, is in line with contemporary masculinity research (Duncanson, 2007; DeVisser & McDonnell, 2013), and informed the protector, defender role based on the harsh realities of the world, balanced with the ability to recognise when to be aggressive, and when to safeguard life. This masculine sense of self was both abstract and concrete, at times drawing the individual to the 'warrior calling', and at other times simply informing the practical nature of when one is justified in killing in combat, removed from the trappings and ethos of being a warrior, and instead focusing on being a soldier.

Of particular interest within these narratives, was the combined approach of a strong sense of agency within their own narrative and social validation tools to reinforce this narrative, as in line with previous research (McAdams, 2011), who found a coherent rich life narrative important to psychological wellbeing, and acceptance of life challenges, and Webber and colleagues (2013) who discussed the role of external validation in accepting killing. Once more, study two did not conform or elaborate on these social validation or sense making tools of accepting, or indeed embracing killing in combat. Although study two does not add knowledge to life after the military, other than to suggest that Jay would re-join, and feel more 'of it', the second time round, Jay does add to the research by exploring the macro masculine nature of the military, and by extension, the way in which he views himself as wanting to, and in the past being part of this tool that is used to protect Britain, from a harsh, all consuming and dominating world.

Overall, this research helped unpack killing in combat by exploring the rich experiences of soldiers, and their sense making of killing in combat, in a way which contributes to the literature and builds upon the existing research that helps researchers understand the experiences of soldiers, warriors, and other personnel that may be asked to use lethal force (such as police officers) in a combat situation.

## 9.7 Limitations

Although every attempt was made to carry out a comprehensive body of work which contributes to the body of literature and general theory surrounding the area, there are some obvious limitations of this thesis, which will now be explored.

*Cultural differences*

The belief of this researcher, first and foremost, is that the issue of cultural differences between how the American and British military servicemen was not explored beyond where it was useful to analyse their narrative.

This was a deliberate choice by the researcher as it felt it would detract from the primary research questions and general aim of this research; how do soldiers make sense of their selves and killing in combat? Clearly cultural differences do exist and were seen within these autobiographical and case studies, and undoubtedly were interesting within in their own right. Indeed, initially a theme was created to further explore these cultural differences, but ultimately dropped for the reason that they did not really contribute anything to the aim of the research. The researcher looked for any signs that there was a noticeable difference between how American and British soldiers dealt with, talked about, and understood, in relation to their sense of self, killing in combat. The differences that emerged between the cultures were found to lead the researcher to begin exploring discursive patterns and cultural differences, which the researcher believed was not appropriate for IPA, or for this study. A further study exploring how soldiers from different cultures talk about killing in combat, from a discursive perspective would be a valuable

and interesting thesis in its own right, but was thought beyond the scope of this study to do it justice.

*Sample size*

A sample size of 8, although appropriate for an IPA based PhD thesis due to the in depth nature of the phenomenological approach, is considered small, even among other qualitative analysis researchers. The researcher chose to sacrifice breadth for depth, and included the autobiographies that added unique, insightful, articulate and introspective accounts of soldiers who experienced front line combat. In saying that, it would add a great deal of wealth to the combat psychology research to analyse a far greater amount of autobiographies, perhaps using a method such as thematic analysis, which allows for breadth over depth, but only within the scope of a qualitative approach.

Finally, attention should be drawn to the fact that these individuals represent those that are able to articulate and have published their narrative in an autobiography. This means that the individual I) would be willing to tell their story II) has a story that was publishable, i.e considered a story that people would be interested in reading, III) has a writing ability that lends itself to commercial storytelling, and finally IV) is potentially free of PTSD symptomatology, which enables them to recount the story without suffering psychological distress. As previously stated, 8 individuals is not representative or generalisable to the greater military population, but they do offer a detailed account of individuals who have successfully negotiated killing in combat, and provide insight into the sense making of these specific soldiers in combat. However, in sacrificing depth for breadth, these accounts are limited in their representation of combat soldiers. However, it should be noted that the aim of this research was to not generalise these findings, and instead provide and in-depth

exploration of the ways in which combat is experienced and to better understand the way in which combat soldiers negotiate killing in combat.

*Autobiographical data*

Study one formed the major component of this thesis, comprising of over three quarters of the analysis. There are four major reasons for using autobiographies: I) autobiographies provided unparalleled detail in both depth and scope that the researcher did not originally anticipate. II) there were quite naturally some topics which could not be probed by the interviewer. The subject of killing in combat is a sensitive one, and the researcher wanted to avoid psychological distress to the best of their ability, III) the autobiographies offered unrestricted reflective accounts from soldiers about killing in combat, and combat in general and IV) in line with an idiographic and phenomenological approach, autobiographies were found to provide detailed exploration of life experiences and sense making, applicable to this research. Indeed studies using published autobiographies as data for IPA have made valuable contributions to understanding sense making of experiences and shifts in identity (Smith, 1999; Spiers & Smith, 2012; Boserman, 2009; Williams, 2004). Despite this, the author is aware that semi-structured interviews are the preferred method to gather data for IPA due to their flexibility, depth and possibilities to uncover unique information provided by the semi-structured interview (Smith and Osborn, 2008). Indeed one of the major limitations of the choice of method was that the researcher did not have the opportunity to delve deeper and explore avenues of interest, by prompting the authors of the autobiographies to respond to any questions the researcher may have. The researcher could not for example ask the authors to elaborate on ambiguous use of language, or metaphors, to clear up any ambiguity which caused the researcher to speculate, or begin a deductive inquiry based on the available information in the text. By prompting further, the researcher would have perhaps had the opportunity to gain more insight, and conduct a deeper, more nuanced analysis. Further, in light of what the other

authors said, in a semi-structured interview the researcher could have asked one author to comment on another's, asking whether they agreed, disagreed, which could have led to a more connected analysis.

*Contemporary research*

The researcher claims to be interested in investigating the contemporary military, a substantial limitation in a great majority of the literature thus far. Indeed many of the previous researchers' data is based on soldiers from conscription era, which the researcher has argued within the literature review as being very different from the professional, modern day military. However, every piece of research is limited based on the data available, and this thesis relied on soldiers' experiences, the latest of which was in Afghanistan in 2008, coinciding with the most modern day war the UK and USA militaries have been involved in. As such, the most recent autobiography is just under a decade old, with study two data being from over fifty years ago, in 1965. Considering the pace at which society evolves within the digital age of social media, and rapidly evolving technology, such sense making of life, and the military could potentially change at a pace not previously observed. Indeed the modern day drone pilots, who may become the next great research topic within military psychology, may have a totally different mindset and sense making then an infantry soldier.

## 9.8 Contributions to the Research

Within Military Psychology, there seems to be very little scientific research looking at how soldiers experience and negotiate killing in combat. This is surprising, considering killing in combat is one of the major, if not the most important aspect to the role of an infantry

soldier. Whilst there are quantitative studies looking at the correlation between combat and PTSD (Chappelle, Goodman, Reardon & Thompson, 2014; Otto and Webber, 2013; Webber et al., 2013; Fitzsimmons and Sangha, 2010), with mixed results, there have been very few looking specifically at the soldiers' experiences. This again is surprising, considering the varied reports of PTSD among combat soldiers (Webber et al., 2013; Otto and Webber, 2013) , and the criticism aimed at Marshall and Grossman's work (Engen, 2008; Murray, 2013; King, 2013; Williams, 1999) , the two best known theorists of killing in combat. Thus by conducting an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, this research addressed a significant gap within the current literature. Through an in-depth analysis of infantry soldiers' accounts, the researcher has explored how combat soldiers make sense of and negotiate killing in combat. The research provides much needed soldiers' testimonies about how combat is experienced by the modern day soldier, and what it is about their sense of self, and their experiences which they accept, or struggle to accept into the sense making of their life narrative.

The researcher has also identified the complex nature of the sense making of being an infantry soldier, and how these factors come together to help shape the way in which soldiers made sense of killing in combat, and combat in general. Providing eight in depth cases of soldiers who successfully negotiated killing in combat, the research looked at the nature of what it meant to be a warrior in the infantry, and how the idea of being a warrior framed the way in which they viewed combat. The authors demonstrated how they view the enemy, how they accepted their role to kill in combat, and how killing, that was out of alignment with their moral self, caused psychological distress. The authors demonstrated the importance of group dynamics, and how exactly these dynamics played a role in their acceptance of what they had done and experienced in combat.

By offering a detailed exploration of the factors that played a role for soldiers in combat, the research offers an alternative look at killing in combat, and thus challenges the innate,

biological resistance to killing theory. Each author accepted their role of killing in combat, and demonstrated no phobia, or innate mechanism that prevented them from killing the enemy in combat. The mechanism behind negotiating killing in combat was found to be a complex combination of sense making of not only the self, but the role of the infantry soldier from a country with strong moral and legal guidelines, and a sense of justice, freedom and democracy. In this way killing in combat was accepted only when it fit into the way the individual made sense of their experiences and role. If the authors accidentally killed a civilian, then killing in combat was much more difficult to accept, and the process of psychological unburdening with fellow soldiers was required to help accept and verify the actions in combat. The researcher suggests that further research into a more detailed look into how these 'psychological debriefing' events factor into this sense making of the self would be valuable.

Contributing to the literature, these findings demonstrate how important it was for the authors to have an agency-rich life narrative in accepting not only their role, but their life after combat and the military. As far as the researcher is aware, this is the first study to qualitatively analyse modern day soldiers' sense making of killing in combat, and thus potentially points in a direction for further research. For example the authors in this analysis demonstrated empowerment throughout their narrative, and this is something that could lead to further research as a point of interest.

Contributing to the research of causal de-briefing, this research explored how the soldiers 'decompressed' by discussing the events of combat with each other, as a way to psychologically unburden themselves, and validate not only their actions in combat, but their role as an infantry soldier. Much like Grossman's work (2007), this research lends further credence to the benefit of soldiers to have this change to discuss the events of combat. Further, this research describes what happens to officers when they don't have the chance to discuss these events, and the profound loneliness that follows.

The authors' narratives and emerging themes seem to be in line with the current research looking at reinforcing the warrior self, and further, contributes to the movement within the military research towards a preventative, rather than reactive model of dealing with psychological distress amongst soldiers. Until the emergence of the resilience training known as Combat Soldier Fitness (CSF) in 2008 (Seligman & Matthews, 2011), the U.S military followed a 'disease model' in its attempt to deal with psychological trauma from warfare (Matthews, 2013). The 'disease model' is based on the treatment of psychological trauma which is reactive in nature, that is to say, dealing with trauma after it has manifested (Matthews, 2013). Numerous flaws have been reported for this approach, including but not limited to an apparent stigma attached to seeking help, which naturally discourages soldiers from the getting the treatment necessary to remain psychologically robust and healthy (Blais, Renshaw & Jackupcak, 2014). Recently, this approach by the military has shifted toward a preventative (rather than reactive) model to psychological injuries, thus moving away from the disease model (Matthews, 2013). This new approach, known as Combat Soldier Fitness (CSF) is based on state of the art knowledge of the psychology of resilience (Matthews, 2013; Seligman & Matthews, 2011). The program, although not designed to train soldiers how to cope with the taking of lives, reinforces the act of killing as acceptable within context of serving one's country (Seligman & Matthews, 2011). Thus this new program is designed to give soldiers the skills to make meaning of their experiences, in light of having to kill in combat (Matthews, 2013).This thesis lends further support to notion of reinforcing the role of killing in combat, by further exploring exactly how soldiers make sense of killing in combat, and thus potentially opens up research paths to further explore how to better reinforce this sense making of the self as someone who finds the act of killing in combat acceptable, in the right context.

Finally, this research adds and contributes to Grossman's (2007) work of the sheepdog/warrior, by fleshing out why and how soldiers' sense making of the self plays a

role in accepting killing in combat. Much like Grossman's research, this thesis found that soldiers can negotiate the act of killing in combat, when this duty was congruent with their sense making of the self as a combat infantry soldier. By accepting their role, and immersing themselves into the 'warrior' ethos of the group, the authors provided detailed testimonies of how they integrated this role into their life narrative. Specifically, this thesis demonstrated that these narratives were complex, based on how they made sense of being a masculine, moral warrior, a concept influenced by culture, group dynamics and bonds between the soldiers.

Additionally, this thesis adds empirical support to Grossman's (2007) sheepdog research. Grossman's work, which is commonly cited within military psychological research was said to be the product of 'hundreds of interviews' (Grossman & Christensen, 2007, p. 170). However this researcher has not found any peer reviewed papers, outlining the methodology, data collection or analysis of these interviews. In this way the current research adds and contributes to the literature by providing eight methodologically rigorous cases, based on the principles of scientific inquiry and peer review. As mentioned above, the collected research, combined with this study seems to suggest that the sense of self, plays a vital role for soldiers when attempting to make sense and come to terms with killing in combat. This research brings a level of psychological rigour and modern perspective to the existing work, contributing to the way training and policy research is utilised by soldiers and armed police forces. Grossman's work, On Combat (Grossman & Christensen, 2007), has formed a vital training component for police officers across the United States, and it is hoped that this research contributes to the existing work started by researchers such as Webber and colleagues (2013), Cacioppo, Reis & Zautra, (2011) and Matthews (2013), to further enhance the scientific merit of such training.

## 9.9 Implications and Further Research

Primarily, the research presented in this thesis demonstrates the significance of a soldier's sense making of the self, in negotiating killing in combat, and further questions the validity of an innate biological resistance to killing in combat. The implications for further research are clear; why can some soldiers negotiate killing in combat, and not others, and specifically what factors are involved? This research has presented eight in-depth case studies to begin answering these questions, and has opened up a dialogue into alternative ways to study the phenomenon experienced by soldiers in combat.

The Marine Corps subject their trainees to graphic imagery of brutal deaths, as a way to desensitise the individual to killing (Fick, 2009). This strategy is based on Grossman's (2007, 2009) Killology theory of the need to overcome a resistance to killing. The research suggests that being told that 'normal people' react badly to something they have been asked to do may have implications for how they make sense of their identity as soldiers and warriors, by introducing conflict to what they feel, and what they feel like they should feel. Webber and colleagues' (2013) findings suggest that the validation or invalidation of killing in combat can have potential consequences pertaining to how the soldier accepts the act of killing. If soldiers are told that they should be experiencing difficulty accepting this role, then the effects are at best unclear, and at worst potentially damaging to soldiers' sense of well-being.

In suggesting a shift in the focus of killing in combat as a significant contributor to psychological distress, and a focus on how soldiers talk about and make sense of killing in combat, this research could have implications for what has become, and undoubtedly will remain for some time the pinnacle of combat psychology research: Drone warfare. As

reported in the review chapters, Otto and Webber (2013) suggest the incidence of mental health issues in drone operators is similar to that of pilots of manned aircraft, which is less than 1%. A self -reported PTSD assessment of USAF drone operators of Reaper and Predator drones (weapons capability) revealed that 5% were at high risk of developing PTSD (Chappelle et al., 2012). There seems to be some obvious and contradictory research surrounding Drone warfare, in no small part due to Grossman's (2009) research that killing in combat causes psychological trauma, and that mechanical distance mitigates these effects. The current thesis has clear implications for the drone warfare emerging literature, which will now be addressed.

Firstly there seems to be some confusion around whether drone killing in warfare is either going to be like video game (Calhoun, 2011), where no emotions will be felt toward killing in combat (Royakkers & Van Est, 2010), or conversely, where psychological distress will be exposed from witnessing the deaths of people the drone pilots are killing in combat (Fitzsimmons and Sangha, 2010; Chapelle and colleagues, 2012). This seems to be based around the concept of mechanical distancing, versus trauma associated with directly killing in combat. The current thesis, along with the considerably varied rates of reported PTSD (Chappelle, Goodman, Reardon & Thompson, 2014; Otto and Webber, 2013; Webber et al., 2013; Mathews, 2013) from witnessing killing in combat, suggest that there are other factors in combat that need to be addressed, such as witnessing innocent deaths, events that are in direct violation of the morale self, and mutilated bodies of allied soldiers. The thesis also suggests that an emphasis could be placed on exploring the sense of self of the operator, and particularly whether they have accepted killing in combat as part of their job. The high demand for drone operators during the Afghan war, and beyond, left a demand that exceeds supply, which the USAF has had to fill with non-trade recruits, ranging from military police to engineers (Fitzsimmons and Sangha, 2010). This thesis has outlined how important the soldiers' sense making of the self, their moral compass, and the ethos of their

group was to them negotiating killing in combat. If the military are fulfilling operator positions with individuals not prepared to accept killing in combat as their role, then this may need to be explored further as potentially causing psychological distress.

Fitzsimmons and Sangha (2012), suggest that one of the issues for Drone pilots/operators, is the lack of ability to discuss the events or 'cool off' with fellow soldiers. Both this thesis, and Grossman and Christensen's work, On Combat (2007), outlined the profound feelings of isolation that came about when there was no opportunity to decompress after combat. This thesis specifically highlights how soldiers utilised the group to reflect on their actions and experiences, as well as reinforce the role as a warrior in combat. When soldiers were unable to decompress, they struggled to accept their actions and experiences during combat. The researcher suggests that this may have implications for drone operators/pilots, who may not be given the opportunity to engage in such group dynamic tools. Adding to this is the complex nature of the masculine warrior sense of self, and the questions this raises, but remains unanswered. Although study one had a heavy focus on the masculine warrior, and the ethical components that came with that, study two demonstrated that killing in combat, and accepting that role, can be based on a more practical component of warfare, such as survival, but still wrapped in the masculine concepts of defender or protector. Future research will need to further explore the warrior concept, both in trying to tease apart its different components, and what is useful and not useful to the modern day soldier, especially with regards to drone warfare, which will find combat soldiers facing the enemy in a very different way, establishing very different group dynamics, training models, and by extension, very different ways of making sense of their role. By extension to this, the ethical ramifications of the 'warrior' self, need to be further explored, to understand both the positive and negative aspects to this, and how these align with the everyday soldier's understanding of them, and how this may impact their day-to-day life, and transition into the civilian world. The warrior ethos of being a part of something, a

group of individuals captured in time as mysterious, and glorious has profound implications to the sense making of the self as part of this group, however it is not clear whether this is always a positive experience. Future research could investigate how this sense making of homing one's skills to kill another person has long term effects on soldiers. Combat soldiers throughout history have been highly respected and praised, often falling into a classification of individuals who are held in prestige and glamourised. What implications does this have for individuals who become part of this group by totally immersing themselves into the warrior calling, by becoming efficient at killing, when they decide to, or are forced to re-enter the civilian world? What other tasks could they complete that would match up to this sense of belonging to a group highly respected in society and considered elite, and further, how does this lifestyle lend itself to becoming a civilian, living by rules that govern society? These are future research questions that should be addressed, considering the obvious warrior ethos that permeates the American and to some extent, the British military value systems.

Further to this is the question of how the masculine sense making of what being an infantry soldier is, as well as the masculine culture surrounding training, selection and battle, affects female infantry soldiers. In 2016, the UK and the USA lifted a ban on women serving in the majority of combat front line roles within the military (MoD, 2016; DoD, 2016), and as of 2017, women are officially joining the United States Marine Corps (Tatum, 2017), a historical occasion which will undoubtedly bring about a new wave of research into the combat arms. From a military psychological perspective, a logical step within the research would be to see how female soldiers make sense of their role as an infantry soldier. Will there be the same emphasis on the moral warrior and will it be so heavily entwined with masculinity? The masculine component of belonging to the combat arms, to be tested, and to protect is seemingly integral to the soldiers analysed in study one, it would be important to find out how female soldiers talk about, and make sense of this

masculinity. The soldiers within this analysis, for both study one and two, talked about themselves in a typically hegemonic way, however it went further than this, often using more subtle, nuanced 'modern day' masculinity. It could be that this subtle masculinity may be further pronounced, expanded upon and developed by female soldiers, or quite the contrary as a likely minority, this sense of masculinity may be over-emphasised. Of course such notions are purely speculative, and as such will require investigation. Furthermore, how will this sense making affect the way they experience killing in combat, and how will this affect their vulnerability to psychological trauma? The soldiers analysed in study one talked about debriefing tools for soldiers to collect their thoughts, share their stories, and make sense of combat. Will female soldiers feel a part of the group enough to expose themselves and become vulnerable, or will they feel judged for doing so? If the military is to accept women into front line roles, this is an important area of future research, to both understand how women experience the role of killing in combat, and to understand whether their sense making affects their likelihood of suffering psychological trauma.

Finally, the present research also has implications for where the research community might focus their efforts, in trying to better understand psychologically disturbing events during combat. Combat is a complex, multi-faceted event, which forces military personnel to experience a range of unpleasant stimuli and phenomena. Due to this complexity, it is difficult to 'tease apart' the psychologically distressing events, and as such, the focus of research, in order to better understand what is potentially psychologically damaging. To demonstrate the complexity of issues that could cause psychological trauma during killing in combat, the case study of Christian Slater (Hirschfield, 2014), which was discussed briefly in the introduction, will be briefly discussed within the context of the present research.

As reported within the introduction, Christian Slater (Hirschfield, 2014) was a Mortuary Affairs officer in The Marines, whose job was to ‘process’ the bodies of the dead. During this time, Slater (Hirschfield, 2014) describes graphic scenes of handling and observing heavily mutilated bodies on a daily basis. The effects of handling and dealing with dead bodies up close led to Slater to attempt to take his own life. He described seeing the faces of the dead stare at him, he became distant, withdrawn, flat and lifeless (Hirschfield, 2014) He eventually was diagnosed with PTSD. Slater was not involved in combat and specifically killing in combat, however he was exposed to stimuli that is all too familiar to a soldier involved in combat: dead, mutilated bodies, both allied and enemy alike. The findings within the present research, along with the considerably varied rates of reported PTSD among combat soldiers (Chappelle, Goodman, Reardon & Thompson, 2014; Otto and Webber, 2013; Webber et al., 2013; Mathews, 2013), suggest that other factors, besides killing in combat, deserve to be the focus of researchers’ attention within military psychology. In short, the research presented here has strong implications for the direction research could head when the focus is removed from killing in combat causing trauma, to other events of people who are not prepared for the extreme situations they find themselves in.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Ethical release checklist.

**Psychology Ethics Committee Decision Form**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Applicant: Co-applicant(s):** | **Elio Martino** | **Supervisor (if applicable):** | **Lin Bailey, Brian Wink** |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Title of study:** | **Revisiting killing in combat: An interpretative phenomenological analysis of the experience of killing and the impact on the sense of self and identity in soldiers** |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Submission date:** | **23rd December 2013** | **Feedback date:** | **10th January 2014** |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Submission type:** | **First submission** | | **Minor modification re-submission** | | **Chair's action resubmission** | X | **Not approved resubmission** | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Lead reviewer:** | **Rhodri Davies** | **Other reviewer(s):** | **Paul Hitchcott, Zoe Wimshurst** |

**Decision:**

X **Approved**
*Ethically sound, you have permission to conduct your study.* **The modifications have been addressed and full approval is now granted Lin Bailey co supervisor: 10/01/14**

**Approved, subject to minor modifications**
*Resubmit modified ethics form to your* SUPERVISOR *for approval.*

**Chair's action**
*Resubmit modified ethics form via* myCourse *for approval.*

**Not approved, right to resubmit**
*Resubmit modified ethics form via* myCourse *for* ***full board*** *consideration.*

**Rejected, no right to resubmit**
*A* NEW *ethics application must be made to* myCourse *for approval.*

**Comments:**

**Attachment 1**

**Amendment of ethical concerns**

The following amendment will be added to the ethics form in order to reflect an addition to the professional guidance the researcher has been provided with. This amendment is to be used in conjunction with the elaboration of ethical concerns attachment of the ethics form, which was designed with Dr. Murdoch:

**Actions taken:**

The researcher has sought the assistance of Jane Adlard, to add to professional expertise for this study, in order to act as an experienced professional for assistance whilst interviewing the participants. Jane Adlard is a Chartered Forensic Psychologist, member of BPS Forensic Division, Registered Practitioner Psychologist with the HCPC and Masters in Forensic Psychology. Jane has extensive experience working with, interviewing and treating prisoners with a variety of vulnerabilities within the prison system. As such, Jane appeared to be the ideal candidate to assist me in one interview, by being available for the following:

1) Jane will be conducting a screening process of the interviewee pre interview. As suggested by Jane:

> "I've had a look and would be happy to have a chat with [Name deleted] if [gender deleted] still wishes to take part. I think just some general questions to see how [gender deleted] feels about discussing [gender deleted] time in the military would be ok." (Personal correspondence, March 31st 2014).

2) Guidance of behaviours to look out for whilst interviewing the participants, in order to identify signs of anxiety or distress.
3) Jane will be close by and instantly contactable by phone should the participant exhibit signs of distress during the interview. Jane is able to intervene at any point in the interview should the participant show any signs of anxiety or distress.

**Rationale**

The following rationale has been devised in alignment with the current literature on killing in combat:

Litz et al. (2009) describes the following:

> "It is important to appreciate that the military culture fosters an
> intensely moral and ethical code of conduct and, in times of war, being
> violent and killing is normal, and bearing witness to violence and
> killing is, to a degree, prepared for and expected…For example,
> it makes sense that most service members are able to assimilate most of what
> they do and see in war because of training and preparation,

> the warrior culture, their role, the exigencies of various missions, rules of engagement and other context demands, the messages and behavior of peers and leaders, and the acceptance (and recognition of sacrifices) by families and the culture at large" (p697)

It has been recognized that unlike the world of a civilian, killing in combat is a central role of a modern day, professional soldier. From my experience of reading dozens of biographies and documentaries about the military, cultural norms are established within the military that allow soldiers to freely and openly talk about the act of killing as a way of venting, debriefing, and inoculating. This is not to say that one should understate the psychological implications to the welfare of soldiers when pursuing the topic of killing.

Further, other psychological studies have already posed such questions to military personnel. For example, Maguen et al. (2010) devised a survey that was administered to over 2700 soldiers after deployment to Iraq and included the following questions:

> (a) During combat operations did you become wounded or injured?
> (b) During combat operations, did you see the bodies of dead soldiers or civilians?
> (c) During combat operations, did you personally witness anyone being killed?
> Soldiers responded to the following question to assess direct and indirect killing experiences, "During combat operations did you kill others in combat (or have reason to believe that others were killed as a result of your actions)?" The response format was dichotomous (yes/no).

Although it is understood that interviews are more substantial than surveys, the researcher believes that taking into account the current literature's views and practices, as well as the help offered by Dr. Murdoch and Jane Adlard, the subject of killing in combat can be explored in an ethically safe manner.

## Any other information:

**Attachment 2**

**Elaboration of ethical concerns**

Upon reviewing the comments left by the ethics committee, the following actions have been taken and rationale devised in order to more accurately articulate how the researcher meets the ethical requirements for the proposed study:

**Actions taken:**

The researcher has sought the assistance of Dr. Nicholas Murdoch in order to act as a gate-keeper and experienced professional for assistance whilst interviewing the participants. Dr. Murdoch is a researcher in Psychology at the University of Portsmouth. For ten years he served as a Medical Technician within the Royal Navy, working alongside a Consultant Psychiatrist in order to treat service members with anxiety and depression.

Dr. Murdoch is a consultant and expert advisor with the Trim4Veterans association (http://www.trim4veterans.org/our-team/expert-advisors/) and has offered to help me recruit veterans for the purpose of interviewing them. Dr. Murdoch works closely with this community and is aware of the sensitivity and needs required to engage with members of this population. As such, he appeared to be the ideal candidate to help me develop:

4) A screening process for the veterans in his association for the study.
5) A checklist of behaviours to look out for whilst interviewing the participants, in order to identify signs of anxiety or distress.
6) To sit in the interviews so that a specialist and trusted, trained expert is present throughout, should a participant exhibit signs of distress.
7) Dr. Murdoch will also advise and help develop questions that display sensitivity to the topic at hand and to the community.

5) The group based interviews will be carried out in groups of two only. This will allow both the researcher and Dr. Murdoch to be able to deal with a situation should one of the participants shows signs of distress or wishes to discontinue the study. Dr. Murdoch has had over a decades worth of experience dealing with group conversation based sessions and will provide the researcher with the required training in order to deal with the situation.

**Rationale**

The following rationale has been devised in alignment with the current literature on killing in combat:

Litz et al. (2009) describes the following:

"It is important to appreciate that the military culture fosters an

> intensely moral and ethical code of conduct and, in times of war, being violent and killing is normal, and bearing witness to violence and killing is, to a degree, prepared for and expected…For example, it makes sense that most service members are able to assimilate most of what they do and see in war because of training and preparation, the warrior culture, their role, the exigencies of various missions, rules of engagement and other context demands, the messages and behavior of peers and leaders, and the acceptance (and recognition of sacrifices) by families and the culture at large" (p697)

It has been recognized that unlike the world of a civilian, killing in combat is a central role of a modern day, professional soldier. From my experience of reading dozens of biographies and documentaries about the military, cultural norms are established within the military that allow soldiers to freely and openly talk about the act of killing as a way of venting, debriefing, and inoculating. This is not to say that one should understate the psychological implications to the welfare of soldiers when pursuing the topic of killing.

Further, other psychological studies have already posed such questions to military personnel. For example, Maguen et al. (2010) devised a survey that was administered to over 2700 soldiers after deployment to Iraq and included the following questions:

> (a) During combat operations did you become wounded or injured?
> (b) During combat operations, did you see the bodies of dead soldiers or civilians?
> (c) During combat operations, did you personally witness anyone being killed?
> Soldiers responded to the following question to assess direct and indirect killing experiences, "During combat operations did you kill others in combat (or have reason to believe that others were killed as a result of your actions)?" The response format was dichotomous (yes/no).

Although it is understood that interviews are more substantial than surveys, the researcher believes that taking into account the current literature's views and practices, as well as the help offered by Dr. Murdoch, the subject of killing in combat can be explored in an ethically safe manner.

## Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form

Research Information Sheet for Participants

I am Elio Martino a PhD student at Southampton Solent University. I am requesting your participation in a study regarding in understanding what makes up a soldier, what motivates them to join the military, to stay through the training, and perform the job whilst on tour. This will involve an informal interview. You will not be asked to talk about anything you are uncomfortable to talk about. You will remain totally anonymous during the entire process and are free to leave or have your data removed from the project at any time. The entire interview should take no longer than an hour, but please keep free 1.5 hours in case it over runs.

This interview will be, for the most part, led by you, but from time to time, I will steer the conversation with certain questions. At no time are you required to answer ANY of the questions or talk about ANYTHING you find stressful, uncomfortable, and traumatic. During the interview you will

be audio recorded, however your data will remain totally confidential and anonymous. You have the right to have your data removed, or leave the interview at any time.

Personal information will not be released to or viewed by anyone other than researchers involved in this project, the marker(s), and in some cases external examiners. Results of this study will not include your name or any other identifying characteristics.

Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw your participation at any time

Please sign below to indicate your consent to participate and also that you understand the following: That you may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefit to yourself. You understand that data collected as part of this research project will be treated confidentially, and that published results of this research project will maintain anonymity. In signing consent, you are not waiving your legal claims, rights, or remedies. A copy of this information sheet will be offered to you.

If you have any questions please ask them now, or contact me [researcher's name] at [phone number and/or email address NB: students should not give out their home phone number. Supervisors numbers should be used where appropriate].

You are giving your consent to participate in this study, for the release of personal information. You consent to be audiotaped, understanding that audiotapes will be destroyed after analysis.

You understand that 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 can contact: Rhodri Davies (023) 8031 9057 (external)

Rhodri.Davies@solent.ac.uk.

Or by post:

Chair of the Psychology Ethics Committee,

Psychology Programme Group,

Southampton Solent University,

Southampton, SO14 0RF.

PLEASE NOTE if you are suffering from PTSD or any type of trauma related to combat then you are strongly advised not to take part in the interview process.

Please remember, you are asked to think very carefully about how you feel about killing in combat.

Please sign and date here to indicate that you understand the information above and that you are willing to participate in this study.

Signature [participants signature] Date

Name [participants name]

Email Address_____

Gender_____

Rank_____

Nationality_____

Military Unit_____

Position in Military_____(if civilian please state position interested in and start with: Interested in joining

## Appendix C: Research Debrief Sheet

Research Debrief Sheet for Participants

Debriefing Statement

The aim of this research was to further explore how soldiers and veterans talk about, construct and maintain their sense of self and Identity. Further, this exploration into how soldiers make sense of themselves may help us further understand how soldiers deal with the act of legally killing in combat.

It is expected that your results will help us further underline the significant role identity plays in motivation and resistance to trauma, within the context of being a soldier.

Your data will help our understanding of the critical importance of interviewing modern day soldiers to further enrich our understanding of identity and identity resilience. 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.

If you have any further questions please contact me Elio Martino at el-io.martino@solent.ac.uk, Or Lin Bailey at Lin.Bailey@solent.ac.uk

Thank you for your participation in this research.

Elio Martino

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: Rhodri Davies (023) 8031 9057 (external)

Rhodri.Davies@solent.ac.uk.

Or by post:

Chair of the Psychology Ethics Committee,

Psychology Programme Group,

Southampton Solent University,

Southampton, SO14 0RF.

The following information lists some helplines and mental health programs available to Veterans. These services offer counseling, diagnosis and referent relevant to both serving, ex serving and family members of the military.

UK:

South Stafford and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Coton House

St George's Hospital Site

Corporation Street

Stafford ST16 3AG

Tel: 01785 257888 ext 5280

Community Veterans' Mental Health Assessment Service

Traumatic Stress Clinic,

73 Charlotte Street,

London.

W1T 4PL

Telephone: 020 7530 3666

E-mail: veterans@candi.nhs.uk

www.candi.nhs.uk/veterans

Cardiff and Vale NHS Trust

Neil Kitchiner – CV MHT

University Hospital of Wales

Heath Park

Cardiff

CF14 4XW

Tel: 029 2074 2284

E-mail: neil.kitchiner@cardiffandvale.wales.nhs.uk

Website: http://www.veterans-mhs-cvct.org/

Community Veterans Mental Health Service

Trevillis House

Lodge Hill

Liskeard

Cornwall

PL14 4NE

Tel: 01579 335226

Fax: 01579 335245

Email: Veteran.Assistance@cornwall.nhs.uk

Medical Assessment Programme - MAP

Dr Ian Palmer

Head of Medical Assessment Programme

Baird Medical Centre

Gassiott House

St Thomas Hospital

Lambeth Palace Road

London

SE1 7EH

E-mail: map@gstt.nhs.uk

Freephone Helpline: 0800 169 5401

Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust

Psychological Therapy Service

Symon Day - Veterans Mental Health Therapist

St Aidans House

St Aidans Walk

Bishop Auckland

County Durham

DL14 6SA

Tel: 01388 646 802

symon.day@TEWV.nhs.uk

USA:

*Veterans Crisis Line available 24/7 at 1-800-273-8255 (Spanish/Español 1-888-628-9454). Veterans press "1" after you call.*

*You can also chat live online with a crisis counselor 24/7 by visiting the* Veterans Crisis Line* *website.*

National Call Center for Homeless Veterans: If you are a Veteran who is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, you can contact the National VA Call Center 24/7 at 1-877-424-3838 (also intended for Veterans families, VA Medical Centers, federal, state and local partners, community agencies, service providers and others in the community). You can also chat live online 24/7 through the Homeless Veterans Chat service.

DoD/VA Suicide Outreach: Resources for Suicide Prevention*: You will find ready access to hotlines, treatments, professional resources, forums and multiple media designed to link you to others. This site supports all Service Branches, the National Guard and the Reserves,Veterans, families and providers.

DCoE Outreach Center*: The Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury (DCoE) runs a resource center that provides information and resources about psychological health (PH), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and traumatic brain injury (TBI). The center can be contacted 24/7 by phone at 866-966-1020, by e-mail at resources@dcoeoutreach.org, or you can also go to DCoE Outreach Center Live Chat.

Military OneSource*: Military OneSource is a free service provided by the Department of Defense to Service Members and their families to help with a broad range of concerns. Call and talk anytime, 24/7 at 1-800-342-9647.

National Resource Directory (NRD)*: The NRD is a website for connecting wounded warriors, Service Members, Veterans, and their families with those who support them. It pro-

vides access to services and resources at the national, state and local levels to support recovery, rehabilitation and community reintegration. Visitors can find information on a variety of topics including benefits & compensation, education & training, employment, family & caregiver support, health, homeless assistance, housing, transportation & travel, and other services & resources. The NRD is a partnership among the Departments of Defense, Labor and Veterans Affairs.

## Appendix D: Structure of interview and Semi Structured Interview Questions

Interview structure

At the beginning of the interview, the researcher will begin by ensuring that the participant fully understands the nature of the research, and is happy to continue. They will be asked if they are happy with the interview being recorded. They will be reminded of the following:

- That they can suspend or withdraw from the interview at any time
- That they can withdraw their data after having participated
- That their data will remain confidential and that there will be no identifying characteristics in the research
- That they should not disclose anything confidential that might pertain to legal action be taken against them by the military or appropriate government sectors.
- They do not have to discuss the details of their kills.

Once this has been established, audio recording equipment will be switched on, and participants will be asked to state their rank, gender and age and given the brief (See Appendix D).
At this point the participant will begin the interview by discussing how they feel about the title, any misgiving they might have about the interview, or any topics they may specifically wish to pursue or avoid. As a semi structured interview the participant will be allowed to naturally begin the interview how they see fit, and be steered by the researcher with the questions outlined in Appendix A and Appendix A part B.

Once the interview has finished, the participant will be thanked for their time, and reminded that they are able to withdraw their data at any point. They will be provided with a debriefing statement, (Appendix E) and informed that they can have access to a summary of the research once completed.

The participant will be provided with the relevant details of the closest VA association and help-lines to them, and reminded that their data will remain totally anonymous.

Opening

Establish Rapport

Nice to see you again and thank you for agreeing to take part in this study.

Structure

I do have a list of questions, but if at anytime you want to say something, or add anything I have not brought up, please feel free to interject, or do so in your own time.

Purpose

The purpose of this interview is to explore how you experienced being in the military, both in training and during deployment. I will be asking you questions to do with your motivations for joining, what led you to the military, your experiences and feelings in the military, and specifically some questions about combat.

Motivation:

I would just like to begin by asking you to tell me a little about yourself, and some questions about what led you to join the marines commandos.

Timeline:

I know we agreed to an hour session today, and that you have limited time to offer me, but I wanted to let you know that you are welcome to elaborate or go over the time limit, if you so wish. That being said, I would like to dive right in with asking about your interest in joining the military if that's alright with you?

Questions (the questions were divided into part one and two, for more details please see chapter 8)

- Please note, questions will be modified based on the researcher's findings in the autobiographies, and from the advice of Dr. Murdoch during the process, to reflect sensitivity and understanding toward a soldiers/veterans lifestyle and experiences.

- What made you join the military?

- What made you join a combat arms?

- What attracted you to that style of life?

- What got you through training?

- What gets you through tour of duty?

- What inspires you to be a soldier?

- How do you feel about the enemy?

- How do you feel about your role as a combat soldier to kill the enemy?

- How do you feel about the legal use of deadly force in combat?

- When I applied for the RAF I was asked would I be willing to kill the enemy in a combat environment and why?
- What would be my motivations?
- Were you asked a similar question?
- Prompt: What was your response?

- If you have ever experienced killing in combat, how did you feel after the event, both directly afterward and some-time later?

- What feelings have any soldiers you know expressed towards legally killing the enemy?

- Combat high, and the rush of doing what you are trained to do, especially when you are being fired at or taking casualties is well known. Bearing this in mind, how do you feel about combat in general?

- If you or your squad were taking fire from the enemy, do you think you would kill the enemy?

- Do you feel like you would be justified in this action?

Ending the interview:

Thank you for partaking in this interview Jay, I appreciate your time and interest in this study. As you know, the handout provides you with the debrief we discussed, and provides my contact details and my supervisors if you have any further questions. I also want you to know that this form contains a list of contacts if you are feeling distressed by this interview. Thank you again.

**Please note, questions will be modified based on the researcher's findings in the autobiographies, and from the advice of Dr. Murdoch during the process, to reflect sensitivity and understanding toward a soldiers/veterans lifestyle and experiences.**

What made you join the military?

What made you join a combat arms?

What attracted you to that style of life?

What got you through training?

What gets you through tour of duty?

What inspires you to be a soldier?

How do you feel about the enemy?

How do you feel about your role as a combat soldier to kill the enemy?

How do you feel about the legal use of deadly force in combat?

When I applied for the RAF I was asked would I be willing to kill the enemy in a combat environment and why?
What would be my motivations?
Were you asked a similar question?
Prompt: What was your response?

If you have ever experienced killing in combat, how did you feel after the event, both directly afterward and some-time later?

What feelings have any soldiers you know expressed towards legally killing the enemy?

Combat high, and the rush of doing what you are trained to do, especially when you are being fired at or taking casualties is well known. Bearing this in mind, how do you feel about combat in general?

If you or your squad were taking fire from the enemy, do you think you would kill the enemy?

Do you feel like you would be justified in this action?

## Appendix E, reflexive statement.

This PhD began with a simple spark of excitement over a summer holiday in France, and led to a challenging, highly demanding, rewarding and growing experience that ended up lasting three years. Four years, if one includes the corrections, as well as months of full time research, pre- PhD official start date.

At the time I was simply excited about the area of military Psychology, it felt like an under researched, rich and vivid world I could sink my teeth into. It began with, what I hope is a healthy obsession, trying to understand how soldiers can kill in combat. That summer in France was, in my idealised memory, a perfect summer holiday. I was living in the south of France on the Riviera with my partner's parents, enjoying what felt like a well-deserved vacation after my Masters degree. I was drinking good wine and beer, enjoying the sun, swimming every day in their pool, and eating Mediterranean food. Best of all though, I was totally engrossed in a book titled: *On Killing*. As I recall it, you could not tear me away from that book; I was totally addicted to what Grossman, the author, had to say about a deeply controversial, and frankly taboo subject. I absorbed every sentence of every page, reading and re-reading, finding myself fascinated by his theory and concept. As I was pouring over the annotated book, I found myself stopping every half an hour or so, and doing as I always do when excited about some idea, I paced back and forth the outside patio, wondering how I could contribute to this literature. Initially I was so excited by it all, I missed many of the major flaws with the Grossman's theories. In saying that, something from the get go did not sit right with me; years of studying Psychology had informed me that some of these concepts were, putting it generously, a little thin on the ground evidence-wise. There was a lot of intuitive thinking, sweeping statements and assumptions, but at this point I was simply too overwhelmed and too smitten to truly acknowledge them. Once I finished the book for the third time I began searching for literature to support his theory. That's when I came across Engen's research into Canadian soldiers, which essentially totally and utterly rebutted Grossman's, and by extension, Marshall's theory of a resistance to killing in combat. My reaction was typical: I was in denial, and immediately began scouring through Engen's research to find flaws. After all, Grossman's work was so readily accepted universally, and based primarily on Marshall's work, a pioneer in the field. How could he be so wrong? More importantly, how could so many military officials and academics miss something, which I, a nobody, at least academically seeking, have found a flaw with. That was my first important lesson in being a better researcher; never trust a big name, just because they are a big name. Indeed this lesson would continue to test me throughout the years; each time I read a new piece of research that confirmed Grossmans theory, or took it for granted as a given, I found myself doubting myself. I believe this to be a normal insecurity of a young researcher, facing up to the combined monolith of the academic elite. Rewinding momentarily back to 2012 found me reading and re-read Engen's research. It quickly became apparent that many of his counter points to Grossman were legitimate. So I re-read Grossman's book with a critical eye, and over the next few days riddled it with pencil marks denoting the dozens of errors, contradictions and vague theories based on superficial evidence. My hours of confusion were not long-lived however, as it dawned on me that I had just found my gap in the literature. At this point two things occurred to me, it seems far too good to be true, how can someone so wrong, be so popular? The same insecurity hit me in the gut once more, It must be me that is wrong, surely someone else has done a systematic review of this literature and come to a similar conclusion? I spent

the next two months scouring the research, finding little evidence to support either theory. I had to keep looking at Engen's research to remind myself that it was not just me that felt this way, until I reached the inevitable conclusion: this is no longer a healthy fascination, this has become an obsession. At this point I did what any sane person would do; I enrolled onto a PhD.

My search for an appropriate supervisor was short-lived. I first approached the University of Sussex, as this was where I obtained my Masters, and I found a supervisor who was interested. Dr Viv Vignoles. 'alright, you convinced me' he said 'now we got to convince the university that this can be done'. So I began writing a proposal, based on his research, and what we thought the uni would accept, when it dawned on me: I don't want to do a quantitative study. It just did not fit what I wanted to explore. Viv wanted to do surveys running into the thousands, somehow bypass the stone wall of the Ministry of Defence, who almost always refuse researchers, unless you knew the right people, or you went to King's College. I spoke to Viv about my concerns, and he very kindly understood, and said he could not help me with qualitative, and suggested I approach two people. King's college, and Southampton Solent University. Solent was based on the fact that I went there for my undergraduate degree, I spoke highly of it, and I knew the lecturers. He said that being a big fish in a small pond would be more beneficial than another PhD student number lost at Sussex, and then sent me on my way.

I approached Solent and King's college at the same time, both of which replied about the same time. I went for a meeting with Brian, the head of Psychology at Solent, and it went very well. I was excited, well received, and eager to get going. When I got home I found a rather curt, brutal and dismissive email from King's College:

We only take the highest achievers, meaning distinction at Masters level. Which you don't have. Failing that, we sometimes take students with 3-4 publications under their belt, which you also don't appear to have. We don't think you would be the right fit for King's college.

I tried to shrug the email off, not take it personally, and move on with my life. As the months went by I finally met my supervisors, and felt like Solent was the right choice for me. Their focus was qualitative, they liked the concept, and it felt like it was a right fit from the get go. I had a strong PhD cohort at Sussex, so I decided to continue to live in Brighton and get a train to Southampton daily. Lin seemed concerned that I did not have like-minded people to discuss my ideas with, so I used this cohort at Sussex as a type of replacement. I actually found this very helpful, in that I could spar with likeminded people at my leisure, yet I was not distracted by office mates during the day. I also took the lengthy train rides to work hard, and at the time, I believed, I had this thing in the bag. I was excited, challenged, and surrounded by fellow PhDs; it was a good time in my life.

Deciding on which direction to take the thesis was very challenging. I knew we were going down a qualitative route, and I knew it was between Discourse, Thematic or IPA, but picking which one was one of the hardest decisions (within my PhD) I have ever made. Every time I thought I had understood one of the methods, I read a little more, and realised I knew very little. It is like Socrates said: 'I know that I know nothing'. Indeed, I knew just enough of each method, to know that I

was only scratching the surface. This was to be especially true for Discourse Analysis (DA). This went on for quite some time until it came to a point where I had to make a decision to get over my first academic hurdle, the assessment of your proposal.

On reflection, the difficult thing was I wanted to do it all, and then some. I wanted to leave nothing out, and I knew each method had its limitations, which would mean I simply could not cover everything. DA was Lin's speciality, and would have probably made her very happy, and perhaps made my life easier had I chosen that route. However, despite poring over the research, I just felt like I did not quite grasp DA. DA was not clear; there were no guidelines, no rules to follow, and many, many different thoughts on how to go about it. It seemed like I would spend years tangled up in philosophical debates about the meaning and construction of reality. At the time I thought to myself: 'This is not why I did a PhD'. In my mind I was here to conduct high quality research, and to contribute to knowledge. I was not a philosopher, I was a psychologist. This was very naïve, and as I soon learned, not something I could ever fully escape. Later I learnt to somewhat embrace it, but I enviously looked over at some of my cohort who were getting away with writing a paragraph of philosophical underpinning, if at all, whilst I was here reading about the difference between ontology and epistemology. I asked many of my friends, from York, Cambridge, Sussex and even Oxford, and many had not been asked to delve into the philosophy of knowledge. Despite this, I am grateful I spent the time learning about these concepts, they have made me a better researcher, a more critical thinker, and importantly, a better therapist. In the end, I chose IPA. IPA was clear, I could understand it, there was plenty of research, it was respected in Psychology, and it had a guideline to follow. It became a personal choice over similar methods because of its interest in link between thought and cognition, exploring sense making or life events, without making assumptions about reality. In short, it fit with me.

The RD1PA was a pretty stressful time in my PhD. My ethics is the most elaborate and complicated applications I have ever completed. The University were very concerned about underlying trauma when interviewing ex-soldiers, and made sure they were totally covered, and that the soldiers were, to the extent possible, prevented from reliving traumatic memories. This took months of negotiation, planning, preparing questions, consulting with psychologists who treat veterans, and a lot of hoop jumping until we got there in the end. My ethics form was over 50 pages, but in hindsight, totally worth it. I am painfully aware from my studies into narrative psychology that we often craft our narrative to have coherency and meaning, therefore it is not lost on me that I may be merely looking at these hurdles at gateways to serve as a psychological mechanism to protect myself. But I digress. In the end, despite these few months, I really enjoyed the first two years of my PhD. I was getting the chance to pour over autobiographies, analyse them meticulously, get lost in the richness of the soldiers' sense making, and using the guidelines of IPA to bring out meaning and sense making. It was an exciting, fun time. Occasionally at night time as I drifted off to sleep I smiled to myself with the thought: 'I am possibly discovering information that no one else had ever discovered'. I was conducting Science, and I was having a great time. I used to do this all day, and all night, writing, re-writing, and thinking. It occupied most of my thoughts. In January of 2015 I had a draft, I was excited, way ahead of schedule, and proud. I had done the hard work, and I was ready for the mock VIVA.

The mock Viva, by all accounts, went pretty well. The examiners had no idea about qualitative analysis, and gave what I still consider very bad advice on how to convert it into a Ph. D from an M. Phil, but still, I learned a great deal from the process, and I grew. Despite their lack of knowledge of qualitative analysis, they provided good insight into my thesis, challenged me where

I needed to be challenged, and made me realise how knowledgeable I was about my area. I felt confident, reassured, and humbled enough by the process to go away and to make this a PhD. I was little shaken up by them expecting me to go out and get 'another 5-6 autobios' or the same amount of interviews. But ultimately, I found a middle ground, and ended up with what I believe is a good quality piece of work. I felt like I had a good thesis, and it was basically complete. This would turn out to be the second most naïve thought I had during my three years as a PhD student. In my mind I had spent the better part of two years totally immersing myself into IPA, military culture and the autobiographies. I felt like I had analysed them to within an inch of their life, I had explored everything there was to explore, and that I had a coherent, well written thesis.

I was wrong on all accounts.

Lin warned me about what state my drafts would come back to me: 'littered with red ink, constructive, critical comments, and it will knock you down, but don't take it personally.' My third most naïve thought 'it won't be so bad, I won't take it personally'. I did. Littered is putting it mildly, and critical was right. It hurt. I thought I was useless, did not deserve to be doing a PhD, and a terrible researcher. I missed obvious things I should have found, I made stupid mistakes, did a shallow analysis in places where it was obvious only after it was pointed out. Why was I even doing a PhD? It was bad. But it was a growing and learning from the experience. To this day, very few things can hurt me because of this, I am confident in what I say, and I know that it is OK to disagree with someone who is well established in your field. This last point, as mentioned before, took a lot of soul searching.

On June of 2015 I had hit a slump. I was feeling very low about my PhD. Months of criticism had taken their toll, I felt like anything I did was going to be sent back with corrections, and I was turning out inferior pieces of work, because I was tired, frustrated and fed up. Lin was feeling this, and knew I was handing it lacklustre corrections. She came down on me hard, and I got to a point where I wondered whether I had the skills and ability to match her level of rigor. It was at this point I had come to a realisation; I was not treating this like a book, or piece of art that others will see, and that's the problem. I decided to think of this work as written in stone, something that others might read one day, and it will tell people about who I am, and what I am willing to do. Was I OK with something average, or did I want something great? I pulled my self together and I went at it again. I poured over my analysis and wanted to do one thing: I wanted Lin to come back telling me to cut things out, to tell me I have elaborated too much, and that I had to trim it down. By August- October I started to notice a difference, I was getting (far and few) compliments, positive statements, and what felt like milder corrections. I finally felt like this PhD was achievable.

Between October-April, the final stretch of my PhD, I was exhausted and bored with it. Mustering the energy to so much as look at the thesis made me feel ill. I tried to remember the feelings I had in the first two years, when I got up and worked all day on it, coming home proud I had done my best for the day. Instead I felt beaten by it, and easily distracted. There were days where I would do well, and be proud of my achievements, but far too few between. Finally, as the realisation came that it was due in, and if I did not get it done I never would, I found some last bit of energy, and attempted to finish it. Delaying to another year would have been just a way to shrug it off, and I fear, never get it done. I knew it was now or never, and I worked hard to try and hand in something I was proud of. In the last month I checked over every page as best I could. Each time I found myself skipping sections I would go back, take a break, and read them again to make sure it was my best work. Sometimes a paragraph took days, but eventually I feel I handed in something that I could defend, and know it was a solid piece of research. In completing this in three years,

and racing to get it done by the end (Lin's corrections were still coming in), I knew it would not be perfect, whatever that means. In truth I suspect Lin would say I could have spent another six months working on it, but based on the examiner's feedback, I would have had to spend another six months re-doing some of the changes made, and making the corrections the examiner suggested. In my mind it was either another 6 months, or 12 months. I made the decision that I felt reflected my ability to complete this thesis, and I was proud of what I handed in.

Overall, the experience has been a life altering, growing and very emotional experience. It has not always been fun, or great, but I feel it has defined me as a person. From a qualitative perspective I feel I have grown as a researcher, I have become much more critical, analytical and open to new ideas, more so than I would have doing quantitative analysis. At least, that is how I feel; of course I do not have a comparison to make, since I will never do a PhD again, yet alone a quantitative one. There are still days where I wonder if it's worth it, especially as I am working on my examiner corrections, I wonder: 'if I don't finish this, will it be the end of the world?' I rarely entertain these thoughts in my life, and it gave me pause. Despite these thoughts, I did manage to dig deep. At the end of the day I am not special when it comes too completed in PhD, most people go through trials and tribulations, and perhaps one of the points of the PHD is to see if you can stick it out until the end? Ultimately, I do not know, but this is how I have chosen to take this life lesson: I have what it takes to complete the highest degree possible, even when it seemed unbearable.

On a final note I will say that completing a PhD has had an effect on my level of anxiety. Being informed I had to make substantive changes was a bit of a blow to me, as it meant some serious work in something I thought I had put to bed. I still open up my PhD feeling sick to my stomach with anxiety, wondering If I will have 'wasted' three years of my life and fail by not addressing these comments adequately, or if something was missed and will be picked up when these corrections are looked over which will signal a fail. These thoughts, occupy my mind, and make these corrections a difficult task. On the other hand, I have felt like this has given me a chance to take an experienced person's ideas, almost like a third supervisor, and inject my PhD with something that will make it that little bit better. I have taken this opportunity to flesh out ideas, improve some of the literature, make this thesis more coherent, tie up loose ends, and, I hope, something I can look back in ten, twenty, even thirty years from now, with pride.

I am not sure I know what perfect means, or if that is ever attainable in an academic piece of work. Academic social sciences are subjective in nature, especially qualitative analysis. By extension, what one person thinks is a good piece of work, another may describe as drivel. In this I have learnt that some things are simply out of my control, and that just because an 'authority' says, it does not make it so. The only thing I can control is how I view these challenges, these frustrations, and these hurdles, and how I rise up to the challenge.

## Appendix F Example of analytical steps for IPA

**(Amended from original draft, which had comments on the right hand margin to demonstrate researcher's note due to formatting issues. the paragraphs leading up to, and above the highlighted green comment are in reference to the comment in green)**

**Step 2: Annotate the transcript with comments**

One Bullet Away: The Making Of A Us Marine Officer by Nathaniel Fick

Add a note

None of it appealed to me. I wanted to go on a great adventure, to prove myself, to serve my country. I wanted to do something so hard that no one could ever talk shit to me. In Athens or Sparta, my decision would have been easy. I felt as if I had been born too late.Read more at location 105

Add a note

There was no longer a place in the world for a young man who wanted to wear armor and slay dragons.Read more at location 106

Add a note

I wanted something more transformative. Something that might kill me — or leave me better, stronger, more capable. I wanted to be a warrior.Read more at location 109 - Two things, the desire to prove himself, both to himself and to the world, to become what he wants to be, the thing he identifies himself as, a warrior. Born of the wrong time, yet this is the way to follow that path.

Add a note

The Army sent me a letter during my junior year at Dartmouth, promising to pay for graduate school. The Navy and Air Force did the same, promising skills and special training. The Marine Corps promised nothing. Whereas the other services listed their benefits, the Corps asked, "Do you have whatRead more at location 120

Add a note

it takes?" If I was going to serve in the military, I would be a Marine.Read more at location 122 His motivations for joining were therefore not financial.

Add a note

started to subside for me, too. "Two magazines and my M-16. I'm lean and mean." By suffering together, we could spread the hardship around until it almost disappeared.Read more at location 356

Add a note

"I'm a U.S. Marine."Read more at location 357

Add a note

it is as natural as a reflex." He said we would be taught one tenth at OCS and another five or six tenths at The Basic School (TBS). If we were lucky, we'd pick up an additional one or two tenths in our first platoons. The final tenth could be learned only in combat. That tenth, for us, seemed impossibly remote.Read more at location 420

Add a note

"The more we sweat in peace, the less we bleed in war. Good night, candidates." Sergeant Olds always said "we," never "you."Read more at location 548

Add a note

"Foxes dig holes to hide in. Marines dig fighting holes to kill the enemy from. Are you planning to hide in your hole or to use it as a weapon to kill the enemy?" In the Marines, anything can be a weapon; it's a whole new way of thinking. My plastic MRE (Meal, Ready-to-Eat) spoon was a weapon if I used it as an insulator on a radio antenna so that I could talk to jets and call in air strikes.Read more at location 608 Marines identify as a warrior and thus a killer, by describing everything they do and use in war is a tool for killing.

Add a note

For me, it was no decision at all. OCS had planted the hook. I hadn't suffered through ten weeks at Quantico for nothing.Read more at location 645

Add a note

My classmates would soon be marching off to their graduate schools and consulting jobs, but our paths had not yet diverged. We still lived in the same world. Walking together out into the sunlight on the Hanover green, I felt the first twingeRead more at location 646

Add a note

of impending separation. I had already noticed a subtle change in my worldview.Read more at location 648

Add a note

My tolerance for abstract theories and academic posturing had evaporated. Instead of classes in philosophy and classical languages, I gravitated toward national security and current events. When the Marines went into Kosovo, Macedonia, and Liberia, I followed their progress every day. The world's problems felt closer and more personal.Read more at location 648 Identifying with the Marine corps, changing his lifestyles to fit this identity.

Add a note

Joe Rosenthal's Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph of the flag-raising on Iwo Jima in 1945.Read more at location 656

Add a note

The anonymity of the statue appealed to me. Six men. No names, ranks, or distinguishing features. They were Marines.Read more at location 656 SIT

Add a note

I stood by the statue, conscious again that I was being intentionally steeped in the history of the CorpsRead more at location 682

Add a note

and its heroes. Around me stretched the six platoons of Alpha Company, 224 newly commissioned second lieutenants.Read more at location 683

Add a note

President Harry Truman once saidRead more at location 695

Add a note

that the Marines had a propaganda machine second only to Stalin's. He was right. My impression of the Corps, even as a newly commissioned officer, was one of a lean, mean fighting force, all teeth and no tail.Read more at location 695 Marine tactics to increase identity and cohesion of the units. When you identify yourself with the group, you behave in the way they want.

Add a note

I nodded but knew that only one thing would satisfy me: infantry officer. I wanted the purity of a man with a weapon traveling great distances on foot, navigating, stalking, calculating, using personal skill. I couldn't let a jet or a tank get in the way, and I certainly wasn't going to sit behind a desk. I wanted to be tested, to see if I had what it takes.Read more at location 700 Chose to be an infantry soldier, knowing his primary role was to kill

Add a note

The Marine Corps hadRead more at location 703

Add a note

recently unveiled a recruiting campaign using the motto "Nobody likes to fight, but somebody has to know how." It was dropped because Marines did like to fight and aspiring Marine officers wanted to fight .Read more at location 703

Add a note

The grunt life was untainted. I sensed a continuity with other infantrymen stretching back to Thermopylae. Weapons and tactics may have changed, but they were only accouterments. The men stayed the same.Read more at location 705 Identifying with warrior culture in history.

Add a note

In a time of satellites and missile strikes, theRead more at location 707

Add a note

part of me that felt I'd been born too late was drawn to the infantry, where courage still counts. Being a Marine was not about money for graduate school or learning a skill; it was a rite of passage in a society becoming so soft and homogenized that the very concept was often sneered at.Read more at location 707 Differentiates himself from others, civilians, sees himself as adopting into the warrior culture.

Add a note

Captain Novack, a TV-perfect infantry officer, told us earnestly that our responsibilities as leaders would be three: to be ready when called, to win every time, and to return our Marines to society better than they were when we got them. We learned that moral courage is as important as physical courage.Read more at location 968

Add a note

Captain Novack had pinned a quotation on the classroom wall from Steven Pressfield's Gates of Fire, about the Spartans at Thermopylae:Read more at location 972 informing them of the identity they must form to be

part of the marines, what is expected of them wil shape their behavior from someone they respect, both from an indv and a the institution.

Add a note

**Step 3: Emerging themes**

*Themes*

Relating to the bomber. The waste of life. Questions the sanity of the situation.

The beginning of the narrative The author looks at the event with sadness, as he notes, he still has his compassion

Attack on ones national identity, pride etc.

Early fascination with the military, with the identification of good and evil and those that fight for good. As The author notes, he wanted to be part of that he:" always wanted to be a solider"

Further solidifies his fascination with the tool used by a solider to fight the evil.

Associates soldiers with heroism, something he yurned for. The weapons used were just a part of that world.

Desired to be part of the brotherhood of soldiers to have brothers, to have the glory.

Resilient to failure, justifying status as a soldier

Has a clear understanding of the world in terms of good and bad, black and white.

Process of constructing new group identities as soldiers, also formation of outgroup and in group can be seen here.

The author understood what he was going through, and understood it was pedantic, but also understood the merit to such techniques, it is social identity, bringing people together, sharing common goals, tasks, out-groups.

Enjoyed the mock operations to kill the enemy. Cleary his childhood understanding of the army, and a warriors role within the military is to be an infantry man.

A reason to accept what the army does to soldiers, an element of gratitude

Note these traits and observations are not negative, they are descriptive

**Step 4: Clustering of themes**

Identifying as a soldier/warrior. Desire to be a warrior, talking and sense making of the role of a killer

- Attack on ones national identity, pride etc.

- Early fascination with the military, with the identification of good and evil and those that fight for good. As The author notes, he wanted to be part of that he:" always wanted to be a solider

- Further solidifies his fascination with the tool used by a solider to fight the evil.

- Associates soldiers with heroism, something he yurned for. The weapons used were just a part of that world.

- Desired to be part of the brotherhood of soldiers to have brothers, to have the glory.

- Resilient to failure, justifying status as a soldier

- Has a clear understanding of the world in terms of good and bad, black and white.
- Note these traits and observations are not negative, they are descriptive
- Common sense is a positive observation, combined with above para he relates more to killing infantry.

- Identifies him self proudly as an infantry man and accepts the mantra, the role as a killer.
- Although this might seem dark to the average civilian, but it is setting the tone of what is expected as an infantry man. However, this role does not fit well with that of a peace keeper.

- Being subjected to and accepts extreme talks of violence as part of his role. The infantry do not try to cover up what they do, they are clear to their purpose.

- The author is discussing how his childhood experiences, and that of his group, help guide the collective behavior of the group, they identified themselves again as soldiers, synominous as a force for good, and not killing for the wrong reason.

- Roles that are counter to their belief of their role as a soldier, how they view themselves and their identities. Related to before about warrior identity.

- Still controls himself, note it his identity as a soldier, and what that means that prevents him from such an action. (these are great to explaining Marine a,b,c. ) Even when he could have done so and in his eyes escaped justice

- Excellent example of the use of identity, the importance of it for soldiers not to break the law (Marine a,b,c)

-

Social Identity and love

- Process of constructing new group identities as soldiers, also formation of outgroup and in group can be seen here.

- The author understood what he was going through, and understood it was pedantic, but also understood the merit to such techniques, it is social identity, bringing people together, sharing common goals, tasks, out-groups.

- A reason to accept what the army does to soldiers, an element of gratitude

- Could speak toward killing in combat, a deep love causes through the veins of these soldiers, what would you do to protect the ones you love? Would you kill?

- He is aware of this mentality as an issue, and they are not of the inside group, even in the military, they were not one of ours. Demonstrates sensitivity and awareness about killing. When is it appropriate?

- An excellent transcript about the strong bonds the in-group develops, which might further enhance their experiences and actions.

-

Talking about Killing  and sense making of death

- Enjoyed the mock operations to kill the enemy. Cleary his childhood understanding of the army, and a warriors role within the military is to be an infantry man.

- Talking about killing without remorse. It is poetic almost in describing the event.

- Talking about killing with no remorse, or aversion

- And once more, actually cheering about killing the enemy

- This says it all about killing in combat. They celebrate with punching the air, they feel relief, not anxiety, and excitement, not remorse. The author describes killing the enemy as sweet, pure and self affirming.

- Feelings associated from killing are a far contrast to feeling associated with a confronting a phobia or an innate resistance. Identify as masculinity, tough, manly, powerful.

- A demonstration of killing outside of the context of how they identify themselves as a soldier

- Itching for a scrap (contact to fire and kill the enemy) does not sound like something one would say about a fear. Not only is one not opposed to it, or just accepted it, they want it.

-

Conflict of identity

- Desire to do good, as he thought was the reason for joining the army starting to break down, it plays a part in how he thinks of himself, and thus, his identity as a soldier, synominous with him as a force for good. Past tense of really believing in, this suggests now he does not, and that inner conflict is dangerous.

- Author his aware how he needed to construct this reality of doing good to reinforce his soldier identity, but he is starting to show CogDis. He knows he is creating hisown good and evil, black and white that he is comfortable with.

- The force of good, the role of helping these people is being challenged by the hatred they show him.

- Cog di is starting to take effect, they are protecting that which they consider evil, bad, un just, the things they joined the army to prevent.

- See his life or death as pure chance shows an interesting and unique shift whch is dangerous for morale and behavior toward the outgroup. Searching for someone to blame…

- Killing without remorse, close contact baynoets.

- Noting his decline into hatred. Note how the cheapness of life and disregard for it is one factor, despite his role as a killer, he has a sensitivity, a moral compass to killing. That black and white image has been shattered.

- The last of it, the event that seals his anger and causes him to lose the plot in Afghanistan. He struggles with himself, with his feelings, his identity as a soldier, as a good just man, and his desire for revenge, it is fracturing him. Causing distress.

- Highlighting what I have said above. Chaos and cheapness of life

- Fighting with himself, with the situation, might this be the cause of ptsd? The stress of fighting what he knows is right, what is good.

- Threat of ingroup differences of appropriate behavior. All of these things build up to cause severe distress.

- Struggling with the situation and what he thought he was going out there to do, and why he is carrying out those actions. Warrior identity under threat

- Loss of moral behaviour based on a very bad situation they have been put in and frag

ment between role as a soldier and the impossible situation.

- From childhood he read about these adventures with admiration, wanting to have these adventures himself, yet that is not occurring.

- Has no clear justification or his actions, he can not see it black and white, just as he likes to.

- As above, black and white need.

- He learned to take the bad situations and make them positive, this positive attitude probably prevented trauma.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Identifying as a soldier and warrior** | | | |
| *Sense making of a warrior* | *109* | *I wanted something more transformative. Something that might kill me — or leave me better, stronger, more capable. I wanted to be a warrior* | **Step 5: Superordinate themes** |
| *Sense making of soldiering* | *700* | *I wanted the purity of a man with a weapon traveling great distances on foot, navigating, stalking, calculating, using personal skill.* | |
| *Desire to belong and to achieve: Finding ones self* | *648* | | |
| *Sense making of the role as a killer* | *2070* | *The anonymity of the statue appealed to me. Six men. No names, ranks, or distinguishing features. They were Marines.* | |
| *Identity construction and maintenance as a soldier* | *2872* | *A feeling of profound gratitude that I was in a position to get revenge for 9/11 surged through me. Its intensity was startling. It wasn't just a professional interest in finally doing what I'd trained so long to do. It was personal. I wanted to find the people who had planned the attack on America and put their heads on stakes* | |
| **Social Identity group processes** | | | |
| *Constructing the group identity* | *1463* | *"Hardness," I was learning, was the supreme virtue among recon Marines. The greatest compliment one could pay to another was to say he was hard* | |
| **Negotiating killing and sense making of death** | | | |
| *Talking about killing* | 4255 | *History is the Marine Corps's religion. I'd seen it throughout my training and felt it at the Marine Corps War Memorial*<br>*I lobbed a grenade at him and the round exploded against the wall* | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | *just above his head. I watched him fall over the rifle. We flashed past the alley, and I reloaded, firing more grenades into windows and open doors* |
| *Debriefing* | 4717 | *When the Marines went back to their places on the line, they walked in groups of two or three. They would stand watch together, eat together, and joke together. But I was alone. I sat in the cab of the Humvee and watched them go.* |
| *How killing is constructed during socialisation* | 1019 | *He defined "killology" as the study of healthy people's reactions to killing* |
| **Conflict of identity** | | |
| *Threat to the sense of self as a force for good* | 4650 | |
| *Decline into frustration and anger* | 4659 | *I wanted to do. I wanted to tell the major that we were Americans, that Americans don't shoot kids and let them die* |
| *Justifying disparity* | 4671 | *Those cracks in my trust were getting wider, growing into chasms, filling with fear and rage, sorrow and regret. I felt impotent, but I wasn't powerless* |
| | | *I had to get them home physically and psychologically intact. They had to know that, whether or not they supported the larger war, they had fought their little piece of it with honor and had retained their humanity* |

# Appendix G Ethics form

Psychology Programme Group
School of Human Sciences
Southampton Solent University

Application to Conduct Research Using Human Participants
Psychology Ethics Committee

All researchers (staff and students) wishing to conduct research **MUST** seek approval of their research from the Psychology Ethics Committee by completing this form.

Potential participants and/or organisations **MUST NOT** be approached to take part in any research, nor may data collection commence until approval of the research has been granted by the Psychology Ethics Committee. Once approval has been granted, data collection can start but **ONLY IN ACCORDANCE** with information stated in this application.

**NO CHANGE** can be made to the research without first resubmitting this form for ethical approval. Any unauthorized change to the process set out in this application renders ethical approval null and void and may result in serious (misconduct) consequences for the applicant.

Make sure you have read and understood the 'Code of Human Research Ethics' published by the British Psychological Society and the University Ethics Policy and Procedures before submitting your ethics application.

Ensure that **ALL SECTIONS** of this form are completed. Incomplete applications will **NOT** be given outright ethical approval, will result in a delayed response, may be returned to you without been considered by the Psychology Ethics Committee and will require a resubmission.

**NOTES FOR STUDENTS:**

**You will need to discuss this form with your practical class tutor for each practical study you undertake and with your project supervisor for your final year project.**

**Notes to assist final year project students on completion of this form have been included for general guidance only. Final year students are expected to discuss their application in detail and prior to submission with their project supervisor.**

**The Psychology Ethics Committee cannot and will not provide advice to individual students on any aspect of their application prior to submission.**

# A: Applicant Details

| **A1: Name(s) of researcher(s)** |
| --- |
| Applicant: Elio Martino<br>Co-applicant(s): |

| **A2: Contact details**<br>*Provide e-mail address and/or telephone number and indicate your preferred contact method.* |
| --- |
| E-mail: elio.martino@solent.ac.uk<br>Telephone: |

# B: Study Details

**B1: In which category does the study fall?**
*MARK one of the following categories and provide supervisor details for supervised studies.*

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Year 1 practical | | Year 2 practical | | Year 3 project | | Postgraduate research | **Y** | Staff searc |

Supervisor's name: Dr. David Clarke Dr. Lin Bailey Dr. Brian Wink
Supervisor's e-mail: david.clarke@solent.ac.uk, lin.bailey@solent.ac.uk brian.wink@solent.ac.uk
Supervisor's telephone:

**B2: Provisional title of study**
*Enter the provisional title of the study below.*

**Revisiting killing in combat: An interpretive phenomenological analysis of the experience of killing and the impact on the sense of self and identity in soldiers.**

**B3: Study aims**
*Briefly state the aims of the study followed by a summary of your research questions/hypotheses.*

**Proposed plan of study**

- **Aim 1.** To investigate whether a universal resistance to killing exists within textual sources. If so, can it be satisfactorily demonstrated in both past wars and the modern military?
- **Aim 2.** To explore, if a resistance to killing does exist, whether it is better explained by identity sense making, perception and maintenance, within a qualitative analysis framework, as opposed to a Freudian/biological approach, as suggested by Grossman (2008), Molloy and Grossman (2008), and Marshall (1968; 1988).
- **Aim 3.** To investigate whether there are particular themes of identity salience, perception and maintenance that over-ride this resistance to killing, if it does indeed exist? Are there any predictors within identity research that will suggest whether an individual is willing/likely to be able to kill in combat?
- **Aim 4.** To investigate if a theory of universal resistance to killing- based on analysing textual sources from conscripted soldiers, is applicable to a modern professional all voluntary military.
- **Aim 5.** To investigate the role of identity reinforcement in resilience to trauma and preventative measures.

**Summary**

**Aim 1:** In order to investigate this universality-in both past and modern wars- a detailed critique of past literature, biographies and archives will be conducted. Using this method the researcher will intend to pick up on themes of a resistance or lack thereof to killing.

**Aim 2:** The second limitation of Grossman's theory is based on the explanation of this resistance to killing. Grossman suggests a predominantly instinctive element to this resistance to killing; a type of biological, innate resistance, which is inconsistent with current themes in evolutionary psychology and human behaviour.

However, if there is indeed a resistance to killing as Grossman suggests, the theoretical explanation provided does not take into account the literature, transcripts, interviews, memoirs, biographies and studies. Furthermore, within these transcripts and studies (Chacho 2001; Dyer, 2006), there appears to be important themes of identity that have yet to be fully analysed.

Vignoles, Schwartz and Luyckx (2011) note how identity is so powerful as a construct, that it can guide life paths and decisions. Further, it allows people to draw strength from affiliation with social groups and collectives, (Brewer & Hewstone, 2004) and describe many of the destructive behaviors people carry out on out-groups (Vignoles Schwartz & Luyckx ,2011) .

Using a qualitative approach, themes of identity sense making, perception, maintenance and negotiation will be analysed within the available data, to investigate the nature of resistance. Further, this part of the project will seek to understand the identity perception based on cultural norms that form the basis of this resistance, if it exists at all. An interpretive phenomenological analysis approach will be used as it allows flexibility, a rich analysis and a level of scrutiny (Smith & Osborne, 2009) that will allow the researcher to explore and understand how individuals make sense of their identity and their social world. (Please see method section for more details)

**Aim 3:** In investigating RAF bomb disposal unit performance, Haslam, Brien, Jetten, Vormedal and Penna (2005) found that social identity and categorization theory play a key role in structuring people's experience of stress and hence their stress outcomes. Crucially, Haslam et al. (2005) have noted that groups' collective experiences had allowed them to normalize aspects of work that might be quite abnormal and threatening to the uninitiated. It is also apparent that group membership does have some role to play in stress appraisal and in the stress related views that people hold. The purpose of this aim is to use Social Identity Theory literature (SIT) as a theoretical underpinning to further explore identity/social identity saliences that help to over-ride this resilience within textual sources.

Traditionally, Identity Theory, and Social Identity Theory (SIT) have been used separately to understand behavior. (Stets and Burke, 2000). More recently, however, research has suggested the two are complementary and may naturally lead to a united theory (Terry, Hogg & White, 1999; Vignoles, Schwartz & luyckx, 2011; Stets & Burke, 2000). Indeed, Terry Hogg and White (1999) successfully combined measurement scales from both theories to be able to predict intentions.

SIT will be expanded upon within a qualitative analysis framework to explore these themes. Further, by observing the ease/difficulty in which this resilience to killing is overridden (if it exists) this aim further speaks to the nature of this resistance.

**Aim 4:** Grossman (2008) often cites wars in which individuals were enlisted rather than volunteers and as such, has made no effort to take into account the differences and limitations of looking at volunteers as opposed to conscription. Military Psychological research has shown that individuals seek out combat roles, even during WW2, by volunteering for an elite fighting unit. Motivations behind this voluntary enlistment are complex and involve anything from adventure-seeking behaviour through to seeking out a desired in-group (Chacho, 2001). In order to better understand the mentality of the modern military, and the applicability of resistance to killing as en explanation, a detailed analysis of rhetoric discourse and sense making will be analyzed from members of the modern military, to see how they 'talk' about killing, as well as their understanding of their role as a modern soldier.

**Aim 5:** This proposal seeks to further explore how identity enhancement and reinforcement play a critical role in resilience to trauma. Grossman (2008) states that killing is a primary cause of trauma among soldiers, a notion that is not agreed upon in the literature (e.g. Hoge, 2010). The proposed research will address and answer this argument by focusing on identity and its effects on resilience to trauma. The aim of this thesis will be to identify identity traits that make an individual less susceptible to trauma. To fully answer this research question, an IPA approach will be utilised to analyse and expand upon the collected textual data in order to pick up themes that may be used as predictor variables at a later date.

**A qualitative approach:**

Qualitative analysis allows for a rich, detailed analysis of data, especially when used to investigate Identity across Social Psychology. This can be seen in a range of eclectic qualitative studies such as Drury (2008), Reicher (1995), and Smith and Osborne (2007).

In order to better understand the way in which individuals are expressing their identity both in a one off report (Archive) or over time (Biographies and documentaries) the present study will seek a methodology that understands how the actor- an individual who is creating and making sense of their social world- constructs their reality through discourse.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) emphasizes the active role of the researcher to gain an insider's perspective. Thus IPA is twofold; understanding how participants make sense of the world, and how the researcher makes sense of the participants trying to make sense of the word. In doing this, the researcher can both play the critical researcher and the supportive role, giving a full and rich set of data, or as noted by the Smith & Osborne (2007) "a warts and all" approach.

Further, not only does IPA explore the way in which individuals make sense of the social world around them, IPA assumes an individual to be a cognitive, linguistic, affective & physical being, and assumes a chain of connections between people's talk and their thought processes and emotional states. Combined, these characteristics make IPA ideal for analysing biographies, memoirs and interview transcripts.

**Rationale:**

Research into legally killing the enemy in combat has so far been limited in its scope, its methodology and analysis. The conclusions of this research have been controversial, ambiguous and heavily criticised (Engen, 2009). Whilst the majority of research in this area focuses on group cohesion and combat in general within the military (Bartone, 2006), academics such as Grossman (2008) and Marshall (1988) have tackled the act of killing specifically. Predominant theories within the research have suggested a universal resistance to killing that is biological and innate in nature (Grossman, 2008). Although disputed, this research is frequently cited and used as the foundation for other research (Chacho, 2001).

The proposed study intends to further explore this nature of resistance, tackling both the notion of resistance, as well as developing more modern theories of resistance. The proposed study aims to utilise an Identity perspective, and answer questions about Identity and legal killing that affect the modern military, police force, and academic research of killing in combat. The planned project will seek to further underline the significant role Identity plays in motivation and resistance to trauma, within the context of being a soldier. This research would also contribute to the evidence base of the current debriefing tool used by the US military (Battlemind), which also emphasizes the merits of reinforcing Identity.

Additionally, as the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are coming to a close, and with such little information truly known about protective measures against PTSD, contemporary issues are likely to include the ever-increasing homelessness and trauma rates among veterans. The proposed research will attempt to address and identify methods of reducing these issues within social psychological and preventative therapies frameworks.

**Research Questions:**

- How can factors such as proximity and dehumanization be understood in combat in a way that differs from a biological resistance to killing?
- How do soldiers, both of past and modern wars, talk about killing in combat?

  Using a SIT as a theoretical framework instead of a methodological analysis, this research will investigate themes of Identity by utilising IPA to explore the data. This will allow the researcher to expand the scope of the analysis and provide a richer analysis to answer the following questions:
    - How do soldiers perceive, maintain and make sense of Identities, the social world, and their place within it during discourse?
    - What forms/types of Identities are these soldiers expressing?
    - How can reinforcement of these Identities and the way in which the soldiers make sense of the social world help in preventing trauma?
    - In what way do socially constructed norms in society shape soldiers' Identities and thus the way they view killing?

**Contribution**

- Grossman's theory is widely cited and has gone relatively undisputed, impacting government and military view on the theme of resistance to killing. This research will either solidify the theory, bringing a rich source of evidence to the argument, or bring criticism to the theoretical underpinnings that go beyond evaluating Marshall's work.
- Identity enhancement and reinforcement plays a critical role in resilience to trauma, (Clarke, 2002; Drury et al, in press). Grossman states that killing is a primary cause of trauma among soldiers, a notion that other literature contradicts (Hoge, 2010). This study will contribute to this argument, and perhaps reinforce the notion of the critical part Identity plays in resilience.
- The ability to better understand the Identities, as well as the way in which soldiers make sense of these Identities and traits that make an individual less susceptible to trauma, would be of high significance to the military and Police. The US military currently use Battlemind as a debrief and brief, which incorporates merits of reinforcing Identity. This suggests the Military are aware of the critical importance Identity reinforcement has in trauma prevention, this research would contribute to that body of evidence.
- This literature will challenge the relevance Grossman's theory has on the modern voluntary military of today, utilizing more contemporary research.
- This literature would have potential to be applied to other combatants, within socially constructed roles, such as gangs and weapons trained police officers. As stated by Professor Negrón-Díaz:

  "As I have studied Grossman's position, I have become aware that this killing process is not learned only in the military but in gang related crime. There are many theories that can explain youth gang behavior but none have make {sic} an approach to this military-like behavior. They have symbols, leadership, ranks, territorial boundaries to protect, have an intelligence corps and communications infrastructure built around technology and have training procedures."

  (Professor Negron-Diaz, personal communication, October 15th, 2012, Appendix 1A of proposal)

- In expanding his theory, Grossman has extended his findings to explain killing and violence in society. His research has once again been published in a book, and he himself has appeared on numerous documentaries and news programmes. This lit-

erature would help solidify or challenge the findings that he proposes to use to alter government legislations.

- This research will combine the theoretical knowledge and research of Identity and Social Identity, further contributing to the literature that both theories complement each other and can be used in conjunction to understand behaviour.
- There is an unprecedented amount of recorded footage, documentaries and biographies of the war in Afghanistan. This has led to a rich vein of unparalleled research into combat Psychology, which may affect the way the government views combat and soldiers. The proposed research will contribute to this literature.
- If the resistance can be more adequately explained with an Identity model, this will have important implications for the military and training methods.
- The research will further contribute to understanding the make up of a modern day soldier, dealing with misconceptions relating to Psychopathy, Identity, and resilience.

**Method**

Utilization of secondary sourced data, archives, and interviews to understand human behaviour during wars is a well-established method of predicting combat motivations (Engen 2008, 2009; Chacho, 2001; Stouffer, 1949; Grossman, 2008; Dyer, 2006; Bartone, 2005).

The United States Army Military History Institute has over 300,000 volumes of general oral history transcripts, including diaries and memoirs.

The National Archives hold information on dozens of documents listing individual soldiers' motivations and desires to engage in combat. This also includes the largest amount of Social Psychological data collected during the Second World War by Stouffer (1949), known as the American Soldier Surveys. The National Archives also hold the sources analyzed by Chacho (2001) who commented extensively on the motivations and reasons for joining an elite infantry unit during WW2 from secondary sources alone. Studies such as Engen (2008, 2009) Chacho (2001), Stouffer (1949), Dyer (2006), and Bartone, (2005) will be combined with the online library each institute provides, to allow for an inclusion-exclusion criteria to be estab-

lished.

In 2011 the Ministry of Defence (MoD) released thousands of hours of video footage from soldier head cams, including combat patrols and interviews with soldiers on the front line. Using this footage in combination with recent interviews with modern infantry, the BBC has released a documentary series called Our War. These 40 episodes include interviews specifically addressing killing in combat.

In conjunction with these materials, dozens of additional mainstream autobiographies of soldiers in combat, are available to test this universal notion of a resistance to killing. Archive material and interview data can provide the researcher with a versatile and robust platform in order to conduct analyses. However an initial reading of military personnel biographies have demonstrated detail in both depth and scope, which, if included, would allow for a richer analysis.

Therefore a qualitative analytical approach will be used to pick up on specific themes within the discourse of modern combat drawing from experiences in war over the past forty years. The discourse will be conducted on three mediums: A) Archive material B) Documentary and biographical material C) Interviews.

**Semi Structured Interview**

As an individual who spent time in the Officer Training Corps, and spent 6 months going through the RAF elite combat selection process, I have met, spent time with and been interviewed by individuals in the military. I have a small but useful understanding of army culture, life, and Identity, that I believe has helped me not only design appropriate questions for the interview, but also will help me to build a rapport between me and the participants.

Interviews have the potential to overcome the issue of poor response rates of questionnaire surveys, (Austin, 1981) which is suited to the exploration of attitudes, values, beliefs and motives (While & Barriball, 1993). Further, the ability to pick up on non-verbal cues to answer

more sensitive questions, and to guarantee the participant answers every question without the unwanted influence of others whilst formatting a response are all benefits to an interview (While & Barriball, 1993).

A number of benefits from a face-to-face meeting include having questions answered in more elaborate detail than questionnaires would allow, as well as a confidence and familiarity between participant and interviewer, enabling discussion or elaboration of items that would perhaps be avoided on a questionnaire. Further, utilizing an IPA approach will allow the researcher to play both a critical and supportive role, providing a rich analysis.

Semi-structured interviews in particular allow for the clarification of answers. Furthermore, the way in which the participant speaks and phrases particular responses, whilst maintaining the freedom to elaborate, can lead to a greater understanding of the participants (While & Barriball, 1993).

Further, the semi-structured interview allows the interviewer to probe interesting areas that arise during the interview that may have not been considered beforehand (Smith and Osborne, 2007). In this way, participants can be allowed to take lead and explore the way in which they create and think about their social world. Since the participant is the expert they can (and are encouraged to) tell their own story (Smith and Osborne, 2007).

Questions can range from specific to general, including prompts in order to deal with different types of participants and the responses they give. As noted by Smith and Osborne, (2007). If the researcher emphasizes the value of being aware that one is entering the social life of the participant and not forcing them into theirs, then the knowledge gained can be of great value.

**Consideration for Interviews**

Internal testing of interview schedules must be taken into consideration (While, Barriball, 1993). Previous studies have found it invaluable to have questions piloted with colleagues who are familiar with interview techniques in exploring Identity and personality (While, Barriball,

1993). The researcher has ample opportunity to consult and test both the feasibility and appropriateness of the questionnaires with Dr. David Clarke, Dr. Lin Bailey, and Jane Adlard, all of whom have had extensive experience in conducting interviews within the fields of Social and Forensic Psychology. Specifically, their areas of interest lie within Identity and Psychopathy, making them ideal candidates for testing the questions.

Although this research will not use psychopathy questionnaires and inventories, there will be incorporated elements of them in the interview schedules to help shape and define the questions (See Appendix A, B).

The questions within the appendices will be used to gain a more complete picture of the participant's identity; this includes psychopathic-like traits that may have an affect on the way participants view combat and killing. However it is not the intention of this research to make clinical diagnosis of Psychopathy and as such, the inventories and questionnaires merely act as inspirations.

Further points to consider are funneling and guidance: Funneling is a technique that should be used to begin the interview more generally and get more specific as time goes on; this can help avoid experimenter bias and allows the researcher to ask more specific questions that the participant will have led you to (Smith and Osborne, 2007). Secondly, it is important to remember to guide, not force the interview, and to create an air of trust and support so that the participant feels comfortable during disclosure (Smith and Osborne, 2007).

Like any methodology, there are advantages and disadvantages to conducting a semi-structured interview. The pros for semi-structured interviews over structured interviews are as follows: Allows greater exploration and flexibility, which allows pursuit into novel areas, often producing richer data (Smith and Osborne, 2007). On the other hand, semi-structured interviews are time-consuming, often taking longer than an hour (Smith and Osborne, 2007). Further, by sacrificing rigidity, there is a potential to lose control over the direction of the interview (Smith and Osborne, 2007).

Despite these limitations, a semi-structured interview appeared to be the more appropriate

technique for this project, based on the significant pros afforded to the researcher using this technique.

**Approach to Qualitative analysis.**

In order to better understand the way in which individuals are expressing their identity both in a one off reports (Archive) or over time (Biographies and documentaries) the present study will seek a methodology that understands how the actor- an individual who is creating and making sense of their social world-perceives and make sense of their reality- and thus their identities through discourse.

Qualitative analysis follows an idiographic approach, giving the researcher the opportunity to undertake a rich, detailed analysis, an option that is often limited by a nomothetic approach. An apt analogy sums up the merits of utilizing a qualitative model; All patients are cases in the sense they are illustrations of a disease category, and yet unique in how they are affected by the disease. (Radley & Chamberlain, 2001, p.323) This detailed, 'absorption' approach is especially useful when investigating Identity across Social Psychology, as seen in a range of eclectic qualitative studies such as Drury (2009), Reicher (1996a), and Smith and Osborne (2009).

Smith & Osborne (2009) describe Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as a way of understanding how participants are making sense of their personal and social world by exploring an individual's perception of an object or an event, and understanding that they are not making an objective statement about that object or event. IPA allows for this by emphasizing the active role of the researcher to gain an insider's perspective (Shinebourne & Smith, 2007).

Thus IPA is two fold; understanding how participants make sense of the world, and how the researcher makes sense of the participants trying to make sense of the world (Smith 1999). In doing this, the researcher can both play the critical researcher and the supportive role, giving a full and rich data, or as noted by the Smith & Osborne (2009) "a warts

and all" approach. Further, this double hermeneutic approach allows the researcher to simultaneously play both a critical and empathic role during data analysis; on one hand the researcher can delve into the mind-set of the individual, whilst simultaneously not taking the information provided at face value. (Arosti, Eatough & Brooks, 2010) Of particular interest to this research is IPA's 'unconstrained' approach, by taking into account how the researchers own conceptions affect their ability to understand the observed individuals personal world, whilst at the same time being able to ask critical questions such as 'what is this person trying to achieve here?' "Am I becoming aware of something the participant is less aware of?' (Smith and Osborne, 2009)

IPA is ideally suited for the current research as it allows the examination of both cold cognition, based on reflection of past events, and hot cognition, dealing with issues that are currently significant to the individual. (Smith, 1999; Aresti, Eatough & Brooks, 2010) Moreover, Smith & Osborne (2009) note how IPA is very well suited to picking up themes of Identity, and identity over the individual's life. Indeed, IPA has been used in previous studies to measure Identity and identity shifts such as change in Identity in pregnant women (Smith, 1999).

IPA assumes an individual to be a cognitive, linguistic, affective & physical being, and assumes a chain of connection between people's talk and their thinking and emotional states. (Smith & Osborne, 2009) This is particularly relevant to the current research, as it provides a method for examining in detail the personal lived experience of participants making sense of their experience (Smith, 2004). Perhaps more crucially, IPA allows the researcher to focus on 'lived experiences' and acknowledges historical, cultural, social norms and practices that influence this. (Aresti, Eatough & Brooks, 2010) Whilst taking into account the complexities faced with individuals expressing how they are thinking and feeling, leading to interpretation by the researcher. (Smith & Osborne, 2009).

Further IPA is well suited for both diaries/journals/autobiographies and semi-structured interviews, which make up the major components to this research. Notably, IPA provides flexible guidelines, which can be adopted by the researcher to meet their research aims. (Shinebourne & Smith, 2007) This flexibility will allow the researcher to use and adapt IPA

for both semi-structured Interviews and journals/autobiographies.

Therefore, an interpretive phenomenological analytical approach will be used to analyse interviews, biographies and archival data to better understand the perception, maintenance, sense making, negotiation and latency of particular themes of Identity within the current discourse.

**Issues affecting research:**

The research proposed is not without its potential trap falls and limitations. It is understood that given the scope and limitations of this research, the findings, in context, may not be a perfect representation of the specified demographic.

**Foreseeable limitations of research:**

With a British Army size of just over 129,000 individuals, Royal Marine Commandos at just over 8,000 the United States Army at 525,000 and the United States Marine Corps at over 195,0000, one is faced with an insurmountable goal of hearing every voice of those that have been or will be engaged in combat.

This research, however, does not intend to burden itself with such an impractical goal. Nor, if it were possible, would such research necessarily reveal novelty in the field of Combat Psychology. Marshall (1968, 1988) Engen (2008) Chacho (2001) Dyer (2006) have all conducted detailed analyses on thousands of questionnaires that were administered from wars that ranged from WWI through to Vietnam, and, although paramount in understanding trends, personality traits, and motivations, they have yet to demonstrate any tangible tools for understanding the modern soldier in combat. To be sure, a great deal of research has been conducted on motivations for fighting (Bartone, 2005 ; Wong et al.,2003 ) . However, we have yet to understand Grossman's universal resistance to killing. A more detailed analysis is required that goes beyond questionnaires and although Grossman has claimed to have interviewed and communicated with hundreds of Military personnel to form his theory on a resistance to kill-

ing, his research (among other things), lacks depth of explanation and a solid foundation to be considered conclusive or exhaustive.

The notion of carrying out a detailed qualitative analysis on archives, biographies, journals and interviews, although not exhaustive, can give us a glimpse into how soldiers, in general feel about killing the enemy in a way that might be able to contribute to the literature on killing in combat. Yet due to the qualitative and in-depth analysis required to form a solid theory of Identity, the research will be limited in the following ways:

- Lack universal applicability: Although Grossman and Marshall make claims of universality, based on interviews with American soldiers, it is not the intention of the researcher to follow suit from the present analysis. Although analysis will be conducted on soldiers from the U.S.A and the U.K, it would be naïve to assume results of a qualitative nature of this scale could be truly applied on a universal level. However, due to the nature of IPA, it is possible to extrapolate on the basis of particular findings.
- Lack cultural validity: No doubt this analysis will demonstrate cultural differences between the USA and the UK, not to mention other non 'westernised' countries not covered in the scope of this analysis. Therefore this study should not be seen as conclusive or exhaustive.
- Lack inter service/branch validity: Due to the nature of the research, the researcher will be limited to the individuals agreeing to the interview, as well as those who have written journals/biographies and submitted to archival data. Because of that, is in unclear to what branch might be better represented within the data. However, records will be kept and presented on the branch of service the individual was/is part of to put the data into context.

**Fundamental issues arising from existing research**.

**Under-developed theory**

Grossman's theory of resistance to killing has gone beyond Marshall's findings, tackling the taboo topic of combat and killing on a theoretical level that has yet to be critically dis-

cussed.

However, the nature of Grossman's theory of resistance to killing has been noted by other scholars as being occasionally ambiguous, sometimes contradictory, and at best, overly simplified in nature (Engen, 2008).

A study by Chacho (2001) found motivations to join a combat unit to be complex, and in many instances soldiers tended to be motivated to voluntarily join combat elite units based on many types of motivational factors. These soldiers chose to perform a combat role, in which killing was a critical part of their role, based on desires to push themselves hard, to be surrounded by like minded people and to fulfil an idealism they had about the war they were fighting, to name some examples.

Grossman suggests:

> "In battle we see the id, the ego, the super ego, Thanatos, and Eros in turmoil within each soldier. The id wields the Thanatos like a club and screams at the ego to kill. The superego appears to have been neutralized, for authority and society say that now it is good to do what has always been bad. Yet something stops the soldier from killing…What if there is within each person a force that understands at some gut level that all humanity is inextricably interdependent and that to harm any part is to harm the whole?" (Grossman, 2008, p37-39)

Although influenced by psychoanalysis, Grossman hints at a role of social identity, suggesting (briefly) this resistance to killing is a combination of factors, including Social constructs. However on analyzing Grossman's main argument, Engen (2008b,) notes how Grossman suggests a predominantly instinctive element to this resistance to killing, a type of biological, innate resistance, which is inconsistent with current evolutionary psychology and human behaviour.

**Applicability to the modern military**

If there is indeed a resistance to killing like Grossman suggests, the theoretical explanation provided does not take into account the literature, transcripts, interviews, memoirs, biographies and studies such Chacho's (2001) examination of WWII airborne units, which describe a complex list of reasons why individuals choose to fight.

Additional recent literature describes combat motivation from a group cohesion perspective, brought together by intrinsic and extrinsic elements (Ahronson and Cameron, 2007, Bartone, 2005).

Grossman's research (2008) cites wars in which individuals were enlisted rather than volunteers and as such, does not take into account the differences and limitations of looking at volunteers as opposed to conscription. Military psychological research has shown that individuals seek out combat roles, even during WW2, by volunteering for an elite fighting unit. Motivations behind this voluntary enlistment are complex and involve anything from adventure through to seeking out a desired in-group (Chacho, 2002).

**Influence over policies**

Grossman's research has won critical appraisal for his theory of resistance to killing. His book: On Killing, has become mandatory reading for the CIA, FBI, Army, Air Force, Marines and countless police academies across the globe. Grossman's research is frequently cited and has heavily influenced the academic and non-academic world alike.

# C: Ethical Screening Checklist

| | Yes |
|---|---|
| **C1: Will the study involve participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent (e.g., children, young people, disabled people, the elderly, people with declared mental health issues, prisoners, people in health and social care settings, addicts, or those with learning difficulties or cognitive impairment or (for staff research, your own students))?** | |
| **C2: Will the study require the cooperation of a gatekeeper (e.g., a head teacher, a service provider; a care giver; a relative or a guardian) for initial access to the participants to be recruited (e.g., school pupils, residents of nursing homes)?- None?** | Yes |
| **C3: Will the study involve recruitment of patients or staff through the NHS?**<br><br>**(NHS Ethical approval will be required.)** | |
| **C4: Will participants take part in the study without their knowledge and consent at the time (e.g., covert observation of people in public places)?** | |
| **C5: Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensations for time) be offered to participants?** | |
| **C6: Will the study be conducted by individuals unconnected with the University but who wish to use staff and/or students of the University as participants?** | |
| **C7: Will personal data OTHER THAN gender, age and address of participants be collected as part of the study?** | Yes |
| **C8: Will the study involve any risk to the participants' health?** | |
| **C9: Will the study involve vigorous physical exercise?** | |
| **C10: Are drug placebos or other substances (e.g., food substances, vitamins) to be administered to participants, or will the study involve invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedures?** | |
| **C11: Will blood or tissue samples be obtained from participants?** | |
| **C12: Is physical pain or mild discomfort likely to result from the study?** | |

| | |
|---|---|
| **C13: Could the study induce psychological stress or anxiety, or cause harm or negative consequences beyond the risks encountered in normal life?** | Yes |
| **C14: Will the study involve the use of deception?** | |
| **C15: Will the study involve sensitive topics that might be considered offensive, distressing, politically or socially sensitive, deeply personal or in breach of the law (e.g., criminal activities, sexual behaviour, personal appearance, ethnic status, experience of violence, addiction, religion, or financial circumstances)?** | Yes |
| **C16: Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing?** | Yes |

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:**

**This checklist is <u>ONLY</u> a screening device to aid the Psychology Ethics Committee in consideration of ethical issues.**

**Answering <u>NO</u> to <u>EVERY</u> question <u>DOES NOT</u> mean that there are no other ethical issues to be considered.**

**The remaining sections of this form <u>MUST</u> be completed in full for this application to be considered by the Psychology Ethics Committee.**

# D: Participant Recruitment

**NOTES FOR FINAL YEAR PROJECT STUDENTS:**

**Limiting recruitment to the participation pool is strongly advised.**

**Recruitment outside of the participation pool should ONLY be considered if specifically required as part of your study design and may result in a delayed response to this application.**

**You should understand that due to the participants' right to anonymity, social network sites (e.g., Facebook) should not be used for participant recruitment and will NOT BE AUTHORISED.**

**Furthermore, the use of ANY UNAUTHORISED method of recruitment is likely to result in serious (misconduct) consequences.**

| **D1: Will participants be recruited SOLELY from the participation pool?**<br>*If no, state why not and justify recruitment outside the participation pool.* | **Yes** | **No** |
|---|---|---|
| | | no |

Justification of recruitment outside the participation pool:

PhD Recruitment, NOT undergraduate degree.

Participants must be either serving (active) or retired Military personnel, and will therefore be recruited from establishments, such as Veteran associations (VA) and from Military groups, (such as forums) which will be found by the researcher. It is anticipated that the participants will come from Military groups and forums –such as army rumor service (aarse.co.uk, military forums.co.uk), as well as VA associations. It is also likely that some participants will be referred to by organization leaders/managers/forum masters and word and mouth. It is also the case that these groups are under-researched in regards to killing in combat as such topics have gone undisputed until recently, it is therefore important to gauge their reactions to combat.

| **D2: Will participants be recruited electronically via the Psychology Resources page on myCourse?**<br><br>*If yes, append a verbatim copy of the electronic post to this application.* | **Yes** | **No** |
|---|---|---|
| | | no |

Appendix location of the Psychology Resources page post (e.g., Appendix A):

| **D3: Will participants be recruited using a poster on the Psychology Notice Board?**<br><br>*If yes, append a copy of the poster to this application.* | **Yes** | **No** |
|---|---|---|
| | | no |

Appendix location of recruitment poster (e.g., Appendix B):

| **D4: Will participants be recruited using ANY other means?**<br><br>*If yes, give FULL details and append copies of any and all recruitment materials to this application.* | **Yes** | **No** |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | |

Participant information and consent forms can be found in Appendix C, D and E .

Participants will be recruited from the various VA associations, forums and word of mouth. At this stage it is difficult to know exactly which associations and mediums will be used, as it is at the discretion of each association as to whether they wish to be posted the recruitment material and give me access to engage with their members. However the following will be initially contacted:

Army benevolent fund

British Armed forces association

Combat stress

Help for Heroes

The Royal British Legion

VA associations and forums will be initially contacted via email with the relevant recruitment materials. Once the forums and VA associations have agreed to be involved, the researcher will provide the recruitment materials to the prospective participants, either by posting online, putting up posters, or coming in to brief the project and requirements.

Potential participants will be asked to provide a response as to whether they wish to participate by replying to the thread, placing a request form in a confidential box or by letting the researcher know directly. This information will then be collected by the researcher at the end of the day (in VA associations) or as an ongoing process on the forums. This visit will also provide the opportunity for the researcher to answer questions, and to discuss the research with those who wish to participate. Should there be more potential participants than are required, the researcher will pick the participant based on rank and position in the military (information is requested on contact sheet), in order to get the most eclectic range of responses. There will be associations where no confidential information is required. For example, in forums, names are already often replaced by a username that represents the individual user. However, since usernames available publicly can be traced back to the original identity of the individual, all participants will be given aliases.

Those who are not chosen will be written to and explained why, and thanked for their interest. This will be important, as rejection can be taken personally, especially in regards to something related to combat. Appointments will then be made to conduct the interviews at a time and place convenient to the participant.

Due to the qualitative nature of the current methodology, only a small sample size is needed (between 6 and 14 participants). Depending on the amount of participants who give consent, the semi-structured interviews will be individual or group based. This option will allow the researcher the scope to analyse both interactions between individuals as well as individ-

ually, to account for group pressures and consequently the way in which individuals express themselves.

The participants will be fully briefed on the two possible options and offered to opt out if they feel uncomfortable with either notion. The interviews and group-based interviews should take approximately 1-1.5 hours, and will be provided with refreshments and the opportunity to take breaks.

There will be no financial or other reward/incentive. The benefit to participants will be that they will be able to express their views and have their voices heard. They will in effect be given a voice, which is a key aspect of the nature of qualitative research and until recently, something lacking in military combat research. It is expected that this research will contribute to the combat literature and Military policies. Considering the prevalence of the existing model of resistance to killing, along with its noted limitations and criticisms, this research will be important in further understanding killing in combat and its effects.

# E: Measures and Materials

**NOTES FOR FINAL YEAR PROJECT STUDENTS:**

**The use of validated and readily available materials is strongly advised.**

**The use of copyrighted or unvalidated measures may not be approved and may result in a delayed response to this application.**

**You are encouraged to think VERY carefully about the ethical implications of conducting qualitative research in which participants may disclose sensitive information.**

**Consent, anonymity and confidentiality issues should be thoroughly discussed with your supervisor.**

| **E1: Will the study use questionnaires/inventories?**<br><br>*If yes, list the name(s) of ALL measures that will be used along with the source of each measure. Any self-constructed or modified measure(s) must be clearly identified. Append a copy of (or a link to) the measures to this application.* | **Yes** | **No** |
|---|---|---|
| | | No<br>**Go to E4** |

| **E2: Are ANY questionnaires/inventories copyright protected?**<br><br>*If yes, identify which measures are copyright protected and explain how you will obtain these measures.* | **Yes** | **No** |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

Names of copyright protected measures and how these measures will be obtained:

| **E3: Is permission required to use ANY of the questionnaires/inventories?**<br><br>*If yes, identify which measures require permission for their use and append evidence of the permission given, to this application.* | **Yes** | **No** |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

| Names of measures requiring permission and the appendix location of the evidence that permission has been given (e.g., Appendix G): | | |
|---|---|---|
| **E4: Will the study use focus groups/structured interviews?**<br>*If yes, append details of the questions/topics that participants will answer/discuss to this application.* | **Yes** | **No** |
| | Yes ↓ | |

Appendix A, A part B (Questions)

Appendix B (List of inventories that Influenced interview questions, but were not specifically used, all questions were changed.)

A semi-structured interview will be used and will consist of 34 questions (Though other questions may be asked as the participant leads the interview). This is to be found in appendix A.

Qualitative analysis allows for a rich, detailed analysis of data, especially when used to investigate Identity across Social Psychology. This can be seen in a range of eclectic Qualitative studies such as Drury, (2008) Reicher, (1995) Smith and Osborne (2007). Further, Interviews have the potential to overcome poor response rates of questionnaire surveys (Austin, 1981) which is suited to the exploration of attitudes, values, beliefs and motives (While, Barriball, 1993). Further, the ability to pick up on non-verbal cues to answer more sensitive questions, to guarantee the participant answers every question and not receive help form others whilst formatting a response are all benefits to an interview (While, Barriball, 1993). Therefore Semi Structured Interviews will be used as a form of data collection

**Data collection**

Semi-structured interviews: This research will utilize the two major strengths of the semi-structured Interview by in the first instance allowing the questions to take on a flexible manner during the interview process. In short, initial questions can be modified, or omitted entirely in the light of issues raised during the discussion with the participant. This will enable rich areas of information to be probed in more detail that may have not occurred to the researcher initially.

Secondly, interviewer and interviewee are both active participants in the process, as such prompting and phrasing play a significant role in providing rich and valuable data. Semi structured interviews in particular allow prompting for clarification of answers, whilst the way in which the participant speaks and phrases particular responses with the freedom to elaborate can lead a great deal to understanding of the participants (While, Barriball, 1993).

Planning a schedule for the interview is useful for three reasons:

- It allows the interviewer to consider the important topics worth discussing during the interview
- It allows practice and planning of how to phrase particular questions, and the effect that could have on how those questions are interpreted or seen as leading. For example use or avoid the term killing?
- To make sure the questions are not seen as judgemental or biased and totally impartial.

The attached schedule provides (see Appendix A) questions with prompts. These questions are based on and influenced by a number of factors including:

- Knowledge and understanding of the military, and sensitive topics- e.g. detailed knowledge about military language and culture, including humour and ways of dealing with death and killing.

- Personality traits, which are important to the research themes- Type A personality, are frequently found in combat roles, which help shape the way individuals talk about themselves and their social world. Questions designed to pick up on specific traits of psychopathy will also be integrated into the questions to get a fuller picture of the individual.
- Based on themes and findings explored by other research -e.g. wording of questions required to extrapolate information successfully, based on previous research.
- General questions that funnel to become more specific. However questions will relatively generalised throughout interview, to allow both the flexibility for the interviewee to lead the discussion, as well as the augmentation of questions to remain relevant to the individual discussion. This is standard practice in qualitative data collection and often provides richer, versatile data. The flexible nature of the interview should not affect the ethical issues outlined for this research, as explained above.

Participants will be provided with an information sheet, consent form, and a debriefing. It will be made clear to the participants that they can withdraw their consent or their data at any time.

| **E5: Will the study use ANY OTHER methods/materials for data collection or experimental stimuli (e.g. audiovisual material, physiological equipment, vignettes, and computer simulations)?**<br>*If yes, give FULL details and append the methods/materials used to this application.* | **Yes** | **No** |
|---|---|---|
| | ↓ | No |

Details of methods/materials used and appendix location of the methods/materials used(e.g., Appendix I):

| **E6: Will participants be asked to provide potentially sensitive information?**<br><br>*If yes, what is the nature of this information and what limits will be placed on participants' disclosure.* | **Yes** | **No** |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes ↓ | |

Nature of information sought and limits:

Participants will be asked to describe their experiences during combat, including (if applicable) killing in combat.

Combat and indeed killing in combat is a natural part of a modern infantry soldier's role, and is not only expected to occur, but often required in a battle situation. Further, research has indicated that the primary cause of trauma, stress and anxiety experienced during combat comes from death or injury of fellow soldiers and civilians, fear of death, and prolonged exposure to danger.

At no time will the participant be asked to describe or explain anything that makes them uncomfortable, if combat, and indeed the act of killing is something the participant is unhappy to discuss then they will not be taking part in the study. Further, if during the interview the participant shows signs of distress, or is uncomfortable in continuing the interview, then they will be given the option to discontinue the interview. If the participant agrees to take part, but finds themselves stressed, anxious or traumatized by killing then they should be screened out by the initial consent form which asks the participant to think carefully about the act of killing the enemy, and if they feel this has or will cause severe

stress and anxiety. (Please see Attachment 1 for further clarification on training, professional support and dealing with distressed individuals during group interviews)

Participants will NOT be overtly asked to describe the act of killing in **detail**; instead questions will be focused on dealing with that role within combat, including experiences about killing, but specifically focusing on Identity. Participants will not be asked the question directly: "Have you ever killed?" or words to that effect. Participants will be frequently offered 'time-outs' and informed of the opportunity to call for a 'time-out' at any time.

Further, the interview will be semi structured and the participant prompted on occasion to steer the conversation.

Naturally, participants will be offered the right to withdraw before and after the interview, and will be provided with the relevant contact information to local and national aftercare.

| **E7: Will participants be given the option of omitting ANY questions/ topics/ activities they do not wish to answer/ discuss/ participate in?**<br>*If no, justify this approach.* | **Yes** | **No** |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | ↓ |

Justification of why participants cannot omit questions/topics/activities:

# F: Procedure

**F1: The procedure used in the study <u>ONCE INFORMED CONSENT HAS BEEN GIVEN</u>.**
*Describe what the participant(s) and researcher(s) will do in the study; (e.g., the study setting, the sequ events in the study, the sequence in which materials are presented to participants). Append any standa verbal instructions given to participants.*

Description of procedure and appendix location of any standardised verbal instructions given (e.g., Appendix J):

Participants will be recruited as outlined in section D4 above.

Participants will be involved in a semi structured or focus group scenario.

The researcher will arrange appointments to conduct the interviews by email or telephone. A suitable place will be established where the participant feels comfortable and relaxed.

The security and safety of the researcher will be considered whilst considering the location for the interview, including an easily accessible phone and point of entry and exit. Having sought training in conducting interviews with the appropriate faculty at Southampton Solent University, it is anticipated that the researcher will not be placed at any undue risk.

At the beginning of the interview, the researcher will begin by ensuring that the participant fully understands the nature of the research, and is happy to continue. They will be asked if they are happy with the interview being recorded. They will be reminded of the following:

- That they can suspend or withdraw from the interview at any time
- That they can withdraw their data after having participated
- That their data will remain confidential and that there will be no identifying characteristics in the research
- That they should not disclose anything confidential that might pertain to legal action be taken against them by the military or appropriate government sectors.
- They do not have to discuss the details of their kills.

Once this has been established, audio recording equipment will be switched on, and participants will be asked to state their rank, gender and age and given the brief (See Appendix D).

The interview will then commence according to the schedule (see Appendix A, A part B).

At this point the participant will begin the interview by discussing how they feel about the title, any misgiving they might have about the interview, or any topics they may specifically wish to pursue or avoid. As a semi structured interview the participant will be allowed to naturally begin the interview how they see fit, and be steered by the researcher with the questions outlined in Appendix A and Appendix A part B.

Once the interview has finished, the participant will be thanked for their time, and reminded that they are able to withdraw their data at any point. They will be provided with a debriefing statement, (Appendix E) and informed that they can have access to a summary of the research once completed.

The participant will be provided with the relevant details of the closest VA association and helplines to them, and reminded that their data will remain totally anonymous.

List of relevant VA associations and hotlines available to the participant:

**UK:**

**South Stafford and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust**

Coton House

St George's Hospital Site

Corporation Street

Stafford ST16 3AG

Tel: 01785 257888 ext 5280

**Community Veterans' Mental Health Assessment Service**

Traumatic Stress Clinic,

73 Charlotte Street,

London.

W1T 4PL

Telephone: 020 7530 3666

E-mail: veterans@candi.nhs.uk

www.candi.nhs.uk/veterans

**Cardiff and Vale NHS Trust**

Neil Kitchiner – CV MHT

University Hospital of Wales

Heath Park

Cardiff

CF14 4XW

Tel: 029 2074 2284

E-mail: neil.kitchiner@cardiffandvale.wales.nhs.uk

Website: http://www.veterans-mhs-cvct.org/

**Community Veterans Mental Health Service**

Trevillis House

Lodge Hill

Liskeard

Cornwall

PL14 4NE

Tel: 01579 335226

Fax: 01579 335245

Email: Veteran.Assistance@cornwall.nhs.uk

**Medical Assessment Programme - MAP**

Dr Ian Palmer

Head of Medical Assessment Programme

Baird Medical Centre

Gassiott House

St Thomas Hospital

Lambeth Palace Road

London

SE1 7EH

E-mail: map@gstt.nhs.uk

Freephone Helpline: 0800 169 5401

**Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust**

Psychological Therapy Service

Symon Day - Veterans Mental Health Therapist

St Aidans House

St Aidans Walk

Bishop Auckland

County Durham

DL14 6SA

Tel: 01388 646 802

symon.day@TEWV.nhs.uk

**USA:**

***Veterans Crisis Line*** *available 24/7 at 1-800-273-8255 (Spanish/Español 1-888-628-9454).*

*Veterans press "1" after you call.*

*You can also chat live online with a crisis counselor 24/7 by visiting the* Veterans Crisis Line* *website.*

- **National Call Center for Homeless Veterans:** If you are a Veteran who is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, you can contact the National VA Call Center 24/7 at 1-877-424-3838 (also intended for Veterans families, VA Medical Centers, federal, state and local partners, community agencies, service providers and others in the community). You can also chat live online 24/7 through the Homeless Veterans Chat service.
- **DoD/VA Suicide Outreach: Resources for Suicide Prevention*:** You will find ready access to hotlines, treatments, professional resources, forums and multiple media designed to link you to others. This site supports all Service Branches, the National Guard and the Reserves, Veterans, families and providers.
- **DCoE Outreach Center*:** The Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury (DCoE) runs a resource center that provides information and resources about psychological health (PH), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and traumatic brain injury (TBI). The center can be contacted 24/7 by phone at 866-966-1020, by e-mail at resources@dcoeoutreach.org, or you can also go to DCoE Outreach Center Live Chat.
- **Military OneSource*:** Military OneSource is a free service provided by the Department of Defense to Service Members and their families to help with a broad range of concerns. Call and talk anytime, 24/7 at 1-800-342-9647.
- **National Resource Directory (NRD)*:** The NRD is a website for connecting wounded warriors, Service Members, Veterans, and their families with those who support them. It provides access to services and resources at the national, state and local levels to support recovery, rehabilitation and community reintegration. Visitors can find information on a variety of topics including benefits & compensation, education & training, employment, family & caregiv health, homeless assistance, housing, transportation & travel, and other services & resources. The NRD is a partnership among the Departments of Defense, Labor and Veterans Affairs.

# G: Risk to and Protection of Participants

| **G1: Does the information sheet provide adequate information for the participant to give informed consent?**<br><br>*If no, justify why the sheet does not provide adequate information.* | **Yes** | **No** |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | |

Justification of why the sheet does not provide adequate information for the participant to give informed consent:

| **G2: Does the information sheet inform participants of their right to withdraw from the study?**<br><br>*Append a copy of the information sheet given to participants to this application.* | **Yes** | **No** |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | |

Appendix location of the information sheet (e.g., Appendix K):

Located in Appendix D

| **G3: Does the verbal/written debrief information provide adequate information for the participant to understand the purpose of the study?**<br><br>*If no, justify why the debrief information is not adequate for participants to understand the purpose of the study.* | **Yes** | **No** |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | |

| Justification of why the debrief information is not adequate for participants to understand the purpose of the study: |
|---|
| |

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| **G4: Does the verbal/written debrief information provide details on how participants can find external sources of information and/or sources of support (e.g. Students 1st, Samaritans) relating to issues raised in the study?**<br>*If no, justify why the debrief information does not provide details of sources of information and/or support.* | Yes | |

| Justification of why the debrief information does not provide details of sources of information and/or support: |
|---|
| |

| **G5: Does the verbal/written debrief information offer participants access to the results?**<br><br>*If no, justify why access to results is not given.* | **Yes** | **No** |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | |

Justification of why access to results is not given:

| **G6: Does the verbal/written debrief information provide participants with details of how to contact you should they wish to do so?** | **Yes** | **No** |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | |

Appendix E

| **G7: Does your study involve deception?**<br><br>*If yes, justify the use of deception in the study.* | **Yes** | **No** |
|---|---|---|
| | | No |

Nature of and justification for deception:

| **G8: Do you foresee any risks to participants in participating in this study?**<br>*If yes, give details.* | **Yes** | **No** |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | |

Details of risks you foresee:

Every effort has been made to limit the chance of participants becoming at risk to unveiling potentially traumatic events, including staying away from direct questions that may prompt such reaction unless otherwise spoken about freely by the participant. If at any time the participant begin to shows visual or auditory cues of distress or anxiety they will be asked if they wish to continue with the interview, be offered a small break, and the line of questioning will change. Further, participants will have been made fully aware of the discussion topic, areas avoided if they do not wish to discuss, and the ineligibility of anyone suffering or previously diagnosed with PTSD.

In the event that a participant becomes distressed or anxious during the interview, regardless of how they feel after a break and change of questions, they will be offered contact details for veteran services that support troops suffering from trauma. The veteran helpline details will change depending on the closest support to them, which will be fully researched and checked by the researcher before the interview (However generic Veteran mental health national and local helplines have been provided in debrief in appendix E).

As detailed in section E6 At no time will the participant be asked to describe or explain anything that makes them uncomfortable. If combat, and indeed the act of killing is something the participant is unhappy to discuss then they will not be taking part in the study. If the participant agrees to take part, but finds themselves stressed, anxious or traumatized by killing then they will be screened out by the initial consent form which asks the participant to think carefully about the act of killing the enemy, and if they feel this has or will do cause severe stress and anxiety.

Further as outlined in Appendix C,D,E and section F1, participant will have been fully briefed (before and during the interview) and debriefed. They will be reminded of their rights to have the data removed or leave the interview at any time.

| **G9: Will participants' anonymity be maintained in this study?** | **Yes** | **No** |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | |

Explain how participant anonymity will be maintained:

No names will be provided at any time. Further, participants' data will be coded by a designated number (e.g 001) and each audio file will be kept separately from one another when saved. At no point within the analysis of the interview will the participant's features be described. However, to contextualize the analysis the participant's age, rank and unit will be mentioned. I do not anticipate these details will breach the individual's anonymity.

During group based interviews anonymity cannot be maintained by using aliases, as there may be the chance of recognition from physical attributes or past experiences. However, Dr. Murdoch will be acting as a gatekeeper and it is likely the researcher will be conducting group interviews with individuals who have passed through the trim4veterans interview process. Trim4veterans provides veterans with an in depth interview and screening process to asses any needs the veteran may have, so that they may be able to be forwarded on to the relevant association or health care provider, if their needs warrant such actions. These associations hold regular meetings for Veterans to discuses issues with each other, and as such they are used to divulging information to one another. Participants will be asked to not talk about anything that is discussed during the group interview, as a natural extension to what is expected of them during their standard group discussions within their veteran associations.

Explain why participant anonymity will **NOT** be maintained:

| **G10: Will participants' confidentiality be maintained in this study?** | **Yes** | **No** |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | |

Explain how participant confidentiality will be maintained:

The participants' data will be nameless and referred to only by participants' allocated number. (e.g 001) Participants will have their data stored separately from other participants and will be listened to by only the principal investigator and supervisory team, who will be fully briefed on the importance of confidentiality.

The audio transcripts will be maintained on a password protected encrypted hard drive that will only be available to the researcher. When the research has been completed and the PhD written up the recordings will be totally destroyed. The audio files will not be backed up or kept anywhere else. All audio recordings will be digital.

The transcripts will be stored on a password protected encrypted hard drive that will be labeled by participant number which will have no bearing on the individual. The transcripts will be available to only the researcher and supervisors.

Explain why participant confidentiality will **NOT** be maintained:

# H: Other Risks and Ethical Issues

| **H1:** Do you foresee any risks to yourself in conducting this study?<br>*If yes, give details.* | **Yes** | **No** |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | |

Details of risks you foresee:

I do not anticipate that there will be any physical risk to my wellbeing whilst conducting the interview. Military individuals are highly disciplined with extensive criminal checks and background checks having been conducted prior to service. However, in dealing with emotional and sensitive topics it is always important to recognize the small possibility of risk.

Every precaution will be taken to avoid putting the participant in a state of anxiety or stress, as an individual familiar with the military, I will make every effort to steer away from known potentially sensitive topics.

As a human being, some of the topics addressed may cause me some emotional distress. However, I have built up resilience to this type of sensitive information by watching and reading extensive interviews and journals about the topics of death, killing, and loss of loved ones within the military. Furthermore, as an individual who has been through the recruitment process, I have been extensively briefed and provided scenarios of what can happen in combat and the emotions people often feel. As such, I have prepared myself for these events to come up in conversation and feel I have adequately explored my reactions to them. However, in the event that I become more distressed than expected, there are the following services available to me in order to deal with any residual distress, anxiety, depression or trauma:

Confidential support at Southampton Solent University. Students 1st Information Centre, RM050, 023 8031 9427, students1st.infocentre@solent.ac.uk or email the Counseling Service counselling@solent.ac.uk

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **H2:** Do you foresee any risks to the University in conducting this study?<br>*If yes, give details.* | **Yes** | **No** |
| | | No |

Details of risks you foresee:

Research outside of the University setting must adhere to University principles, practices and ethics. This ethics submission should ensure that this is the case and is in place to prevent those risks to the reputation of the University. Furthermore, it is acknowledged that the researcher must conduct themselves in a professional and appropriate manner that is not unbecoming of a researcher.

The outcome of the research will be written up and presented in accordance with university principles and ethics and make every attempt not to damage the university's reputation and standing.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **H3: Are there ANY OTHER ethical issues not covered elsewhere in this application that should be brought to the Psychology Ethics Committee's attention?**<br>*If yes, give details.* | **Yes** | **No** |
| | | No |

Details of ethical issues not covered elsewhere:

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:**

**There is an obligation on all researchers (and supervisors) to bring to the attention of the Psychology Ethics Committee ANY and ALL ethical implications of the research covered in this application form.**

# I: Declaration

**I1: Does this study have significant ethical implications that should be brought before the Psychology Ethics Committee?**
*MARK one of the following categories.*

| | |
|---|---|
| | **I consider that this study has NO SIGNIFICANT ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS to be brought before the Psychology Ethics Committee.**<br>**Furthermore, I request that this application is submitted for a fast-track decision.** |
| **Yes** | **I consider that this study MAY HAVE ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS that should be brought before the Psychology Ethics Committee.**<br>**Applications in this category will automatically be submitted for a full board decision.** |

**I2: Signature**
*Provide an electronic signature (i.e., type your name) and date this application.*

**I confirm that I have a copy of, have read and understand the 'Code of Human Research Ethics' published by the British Psychological Society.**

**Signature (electronic): Elio Martino**

**Date: 05/06/2013**

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:**

**Do not under any circumstances contact participants or organisations prior to gaining ethical approval of your study.**

**Only after this form has been reviewed and approved by the Psychology Ethics Committee is approval of your study granted.**

**Only then do you have approval to begin the data collection process on the basis of the information stated on this form.**

**Should there be any changes to your study, then ethical approval no longer stands. In this case you must resubmit a modified ethics application CLEARLY HIGHLIGHTING all the modifications**

**made.**

**NOTES FOR FINAL YEAR PROJECT STUDENTS:**

**You need to ensure that you have discussed in detail the content of this ethics application form with your supervisor.**

**As a result, you need to provide your supervisor with ample time to review your application prior to submission.**

**Only when your supervisor has reviewed your application and agrees that it is suitable for submission should you submit your application.**

# J: Submission and Resubmission Checklist

Use this section as a checklist of the questions you need to answer and information you need to provide, so that your application can be processed as quickly as possible.

## Have I answered all the questions?

Check that you've answered **ALL** questions on this application form. If the application is incomplete it will **NOT** be given outright ethical approval, will result in a delayed response and will require a resubmission.

## How do I include additional information?

Append all relevant documentation (e.g., recruitment poster, electronic recruitment post, information sheet for participants, debrief sheet, questionnaires, inventories, materials, links to You Tube clips, links to on-line resources used, etc.) at the end of this form.

Include this information in clearly labeled appendices. Each new appendix should start at the top of a page. e.g.,

| | |
|---|---|
| Appendix A: | Recruitment post on Psychology Resources Page |
| Appendix B: | Recruitment Poster on Psychology Notice Board |
| Appendix C: | Permission to use copyrighted measure of anxiety |
| Appendix D: | Symptoms of Anxiety and Depression Scale |
| Appendix E: | Self-constructed questions on anxiety amongst students |
| Appendix F: | List of questions/topics to be discussed in Focus Groups 1 to 4 |
| Appendix G: | Link to video clip used in mood repair |
| Appendix H: | Standardised instructions given at start of focus groups |
| Appendix I: | Information Sheet for Participants |

Appendix J: Debrief Sheet

## What if some of the material I use cannot be appended to this document?

If your study uses materials that cannot be appended electronically to this document, state what the materials are in Section E: and indicate in the appendices and how the Psychology Ethics Committee can access the materials.

## What do I need to do if I'm resubmitting this form?

If you're resubmitting your application you need to complete this form again **CLEARLY HIGHLIGHTING** (using the highlighter function in Word) all the modifications you've made.

In addition you should append a covering letter at the start of this form providing a summary of the modifications made. For clarity you should refer to specific labeled questions in your covering letter, e.g.

Summary of modifications made:

D4: Additional participants to be recruited on University campus. New recruitment poster included in Appendix K.

E1: New questionnaire measuring stress amongst students used. New questionnaire included in Appendix L.

G7: Deception technique used in the study has been clarified.

G9: Issues of participant anonymity have been clarified.

H2: Previously missed question, now answered.

# Appendix A:

**Appendix A-Interview schedule**

Part A- Identity Questions

Part B- Psychopathy questions and checklists that inspired questions

**Appendix B-** Checklists and inventories that inspired Appendix A (questions).

**Appendix C-** Advert

**Appendix D-**Consent form/Information sheet

**Appendix E-** Debrief

**Appendix A Part A**

What made you join the military?

What made you join a combat arms?

What attracted you to that style of life?

What got you through training?

What gets you through tour of duty?

What inspires you to be a soldier?

How do you feel about the enemy?

How do you feel about your role as a combat soldier to kill the enemy?

How do you feel about the legal use of deadly force in combat?

How does the act of killing within combat make you feel?

When I applied for the RAF I was asked would I be willing to kill the enemy in a combat environment and why?

What would be my motivations?

Were you asked a similar question?

Prompt: What was your response?

If you have ever experienced killing in combat, how did you feel after the event, both directly afterward and some time later?

Do you know any other soldier who has expressed a distaste, anger, sadness, trauma toward killing the enemy?

Combat high, and the rush of doing what you are trained to do, especially when you are being fired at or taking casualties is well known. Bearing this in mind, how do you feel about combat in general? Will you ask them if they have experienced this?

If you or your squad were taking fire from the enemy, do you think you would kill the enemy?

Do you feel like you would be justified in this action? (and ask for explanations- applies throughout really)

**Appendix A part B.**

Based on the Levenson Self-Report Psychopathy Scale) the Dutton Psychopathy test and the Hare Psychopathy checklist and Psychopathy checklist Short Version.

PCL-R Factors 1a and 1b are correlated with narcissistic personality disorder and histrionic personality disorder. They are associated with extraversion and positive affect. Factor 1, the so-called core personality traits of psychopathy, may even be beneficial for the psychopath (in terms of non-deviant social functioning). Due to this, the factor one questions are most useful for this project and will be italicized. The following is a list of the personality traits to look out for in the questions and checklist: Factor 1: Personality "Aggressive narcissism"

Glibness/superficial charm

Grandiose sense of self-worth

Pathological lying

Cunning/manipulative

Lack of remorse or guilt

Shallow affect (genuine emotion is short-lived and egocentric)

Callousness; lack of empathy

Failure to accept responsibility for his or her own actions

(ADDED) seeks dangerous and pressured roles.

(Questions in Appendix A will also be used to measure personality traits)

**Part B will consist of prompts in order to further direct participant. Brackets demonstrate related questions in Appendix B.**

When I went through RAF selection I was told that the nature of the role involved making split second decisions that could affect people's lives. Did that or does that interest you, and why? (PCL Q3)

Part of the parcel, I was told, was being away from home for long stretches of time, which can have an effect on long term relationships. Do you find this is something that worries you? (PCL Q10)

Does the prospect of being in danger excite you? (Dutton, Q5)

What would you consider to be a successful soldier?

Prompt..(Are you a successful soldier?) (PCL Q: 2,6,7,8,14)

Whilst training or on tour, did you find that the mistakes made were often a problem with the team as a whole, yourself, or others? (PCL Q 16)

Which one of the following two statements would you say suits you or drew you to the military lifestyle?

Stability, long-term career prospects, gradual promotion.

Constant change in pace, ability to be called up at a moments notice, never know where you will be from one month to another.

(PCL Q 3,13, DUTTON Q1, SRPS Q 6,8)

How do you feel about seeing someone injured or in pain? Does this depend on if it is the enemy or a fellow soldier?

(Dutton Q 4 PCL Q 6,7,8)

I was warned that the Afghan national live in often poverty and have been terrorized by both the Taliban and war in general. When you see the living conditions, how does it make you feel in general?

Prompt: Do you think they bring it on themselves? Survival of the fittest.

(SRPS Q 1, 13, PCL Q 8)

A scenario: An afghan civilian approaches a patrol. He is unhappy because one of his goats has been killed and seeks compensation. He ignores signals to back away as he comes toward soldiers, he is clearly upset and being verbally aggressive but he is unarmed. In the confusion a solider kills the civilian.

Is that the civilians problem for not listening? Or would you feel guilt/remorse over this action?

(SRPS, Q1, 11, 13)

Military rules: There for others to follow, but you find they can be broken when it suits you?

(Dutton Q 11)

Ultimately, why are you in the military?

Prompt: Team work, patriotism, values, High rank, money and power

( SRPS Q 5,7,9,11,15)

During selection I was told that there was a very real possibility that you would have to put others in front of self. In your experience, would you make the ultimate sacrifice for a team-mate? Why?

( SRPS Q 11,15)

Does the idea of riding an armored vehicle through potentially mined territories, and the chance of being shot at excite you? Or is it just part of the job and you do it for a higher purpose? ( Dutton Q 5,8)

# Appendix B:

**Appendix B**

**Psychopathy Checklist (PCL-SV)**

**Psychopathy Checklist - Short Version**

Scoring criteria: 0 = factor is not present

1 = factor may be present or is partially present

2 = factor is present

Rating (0, 1, 2) PCL: SV Item

_____

_____ **Superficial:** a “slick” style of verbal interaction that sounds impressive, but is insincere or shallow

Evidence:

_____ **Grandiose:** controlling, domineering with a grossly inflated sense of self-worth or self-importance

Evidence:

_____ **Deceitful:** pathological lying, conning, manipulative

Evidence:

_____ **Lacks remorse:** failure to appreciate the harm of actions on others, or blaming others for it

Evidence:

_____ **Lacks empathy:** spiteful, demeaning, no regard for the feelings, rights, or well-being of others

Evidence:

_____ **Does not accept responsibility:** avoids accepting personal responsibility for his own actions through denial, minimizing, or rationalizing

Evidence:

_____ **Impulsive:** shows behaviour that lacks forethought or planning; makes reckless, "spur of the moment" decisions

Evidence:

_____ **Poor behavioral controls:** "hot-headed," typically responds to failure, criticism, or frustration with threats, violence

Evidence:

_____ **Lacks goals:** no realistic long-term plans, lives day by day

Evidence:

_____ **Irresponsible:** unable to keep promises, honour commitments, fulfill social or occupational obligations

Evidence*:*

_____ **Adolescent antisocial behaviour:** documented juvenile delinquency before age 17

Evidence:

____ **Adult antisocial behaviour:** has adult criminal record

Evidence:

_____ **Total Score** marks (18-25 = acceptable)

4. On the basis of the above estimated PCL: SV score, I believe this patient (check one):

· is psychopathic (18 or higher)

· is not psychopathic (12 or lower)

· may be psychopathic (refer to psychologist for a full PCL-R) (13 to 17)

**HARE ORIGINAL PCL CHECKLST.**

**1. GLIB and SUPERFICIAL CHARM** — the tendency to be smooth, engaging, charming, slick, and verbally facile. Psychopathic charm is not in the least shy, self-conscious, or afraid to say anything. A psychopath never gets tongue-tied. They have freed themselves from the social conventions about taking turns in talking, for example.

**2. GRANDIOSE SELF-WORTH** — a grossly inflated view of one's abilities and self-worth, self-assured, opinionated, cocky, a braggart. Psychopaths are arrogant people who believe they are superior human beings.

**3. NEED FOR STIMULATION or PRONENESS TO BOREDOM** – an excessive need for novel, thrilling, and exciting stimulation; taking chances and doing things that are risky. Psychopaths often have a low self-discipline in carrying tasks through to completion because they get bored easily. They fail to work at the same job for any length of time, for example, or to finish tasks that they consider dull or routine.

**4. PATHOLOGICAL LYING** — can be moderate or high; in moderate form, they will be shrewd, crafty, cunning, sly, and clever; in extreme form, they will be deceptive, deceitful, underhanded, unscrupulous, manipulative, and dishonest.

**5. CONNING AND MANIPULATIVENESS**- the use of deceit and deception to cheat, con, or defraud others for personal gain; distinguished from Item #4 in the degree to which exploitation and callous ruthlessness is present, as reflected in a lack of concern for the feelings and suffering of one's victims.

**6. LACK OF REMORSE OR GUILT** — a lack of feelings or concern for the losses, pain, and suffering of victims; a tendency to be unconcerned, dispassionate, coldhearted, and unempathic. This item is usually demonstrated by a disdain for one's victims.

**7. SHALLOW AFFECT** — emotional poverty or a limited range or depth of feelings; interpersonal coldness in spite of signs of open gregariousness.

**8. CALLOUSNESS and LACK OF EMPATHY** — a lack of feelings toward people in general; cold, contemptuous, inconsiderate, and tactless.

**9. PARASITIC LIFESTYLE** — an intentional, manipulative, selfish, and exploitative financial dependence on others as reflected in a lack of motivation, low self-discipline, and inability to begin or complete responsibilities.

**10. POOR BEHAVIORAL CONTROLS** — expressions of irritability, annoyance, impatience, threats, aggression, and verbal abuse; inadequate control of anger and temper; acting hastily.

**11. PROMISCUOUS SEXUAL BEHAVIOR** — a variety of brief, superficial relations, numerous affairs, and an indiscriminate selection of sexual partners; the maintenance of several relationships at the same time; a history of attempts to sexually coerce others into sexual activity or taking great pride at discussing sexual exploits or conquests.

**12. EARLY BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS** — a variety of behaviors prior to age 13, including lying, theft, cheating, vandalism, bullying, sexual activity, fire-setting, glue-sniffing, alcohol use, and running away from home.

**13. LACK OF REALISTIC, LONG-TERM GOALS** — an inability or persistent failure to develop and execute long-term plans and goals; a nomadic existence, aimless, lacking direction in life.

**14. IMPULSIVITY** — the occurrence of behaviors that are unpremeditated and lack reflection or planning; inability to resist temptation, frustrations, and urges; a lack of deliberation without considering the consequences; foolhardy, rash, unpredictable, erratic, and reckless.

**15. IRRESPONSIBILITY** — repeated failure to fulfill or honor obligations and commitments; such as not paying bills, defaulting on loans, performing sloppy work, being absent or late to work, failing to honor contractual agreements.

**16. FAILURE TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR OWN ACTIONS** — a failure to accept responsibility for one's actions reflected in low conscientiousness, an absence of dutifulness, antagonistic manipulation, denial of responsibility, and an effort to manipulate others through this denial.

**17. MANY SHORT-TERM MARITAL RELATIONSHIPS** — a lack of commitment to a long-term relationship reflected in inconsistent, undependable, and unreliable commitments in life, including marital.

**18. JUVENILE DELINQUENCY** — behavior problems between the ages of 13-18; mostly behaviors that are crimes or clearly involve aspects of antagonism, exploitation, aggression, manipulation, or a callous, ruthless tough-mindedness.

**19. REVOCATION OF CONDITION RELEASE** – a revocation of probation or other conditional release due to technical violations, such as carelessness, low deliberation, or failing to appear.

**20. CRIMINAL VERSATILITY** — a diversity of types of criminal offenses, regardless if the person has been arrested or convicted for them; taking great pride at getting away with crimes.

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Results

When properly completed by a qualified professional, the PCL-R provides a total score that indicates how closely the test subject matches the "perfect" score that a classic or prototypical psychopath would rate. A prototypical psychopath would receive a maximum score of 40, while someone with absolutely no psychopathic traits or tendencies would receive a score of zero. A score of 30 or above qualifies a person for a diagnosis of psychopathy. People with no criminal backgrounds normally score around 5. Many non-psychopathic criminal offenders score around 22.

**DUTTON Survey of Psychopathy**

Disagree strongly, disagree agree agree strongly

I rarely plan ahead: I'm a spur-of-the-moment kind of person.

Cheating on your partner is ok as long as you don't get caught

If something better comes along it's OK to cancel a longstanding appointment.

Seeing an animal injured or in pain doesn't bother me in the slightest.

Driving fast cars, riding rollercoasters, and skydiving appeal to me.

It doesn't matter if I have to step on other people to get what I want.

I'm very persuasive. I have a talent for getting other people to do what I want.

I'd be good in a dangerous job because I can make my mind up pretty quickly.

I find it easy to keep myself together in situations when others are cracking under pressure.

If you're able to con someone, that's their problem. They deserve it.

Rules are meant to be broken.

Great British survey

http://www.flipnosis.co.uk/psychopath-survey.asp

**Levenson SRPS Scale**

Source of questionnaire (the Levenson Self-Report Psychopathy Scale):

Levenson, M.R., Kiehl, K.A., & Fitzpatrick, C.M. (1995). Assessing non-psychopathic attributes in a non-institutionalized population. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 68(1), pp. 151-8.

| All responses completely anonymous. Score provided at the end... | Disagree strongly | Disagree | Agree | Agree strongly |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Success is based on survival of the fittest: I am not concerned about the losers. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 2. I find myself in the same kinds of trouble, time after time. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 3. For me, what's right is whatever I can get away with. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 4. I am often bored. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 5. In today's world, I feel justified in doing anything I can get away with to succeed. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 6. I find that I am able to pursue one goal for a long time. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 7. My main purpose in life is getting as many goodies as I can. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8. | I don't plan anything very far in advance. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 9. | Making a lot of money is my most important goal. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 10. | I quickly lose interest in tasks I start. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 11. | I let others worry about higher values; my main concern is with the bottom line. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 12. | Most of my problems are due to the fact that other people just don't understand me. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 13. | People who are stupid enough to get ripped off usually deserve it. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 14. | Before I do anything, I carefully consider the consequences. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 15. | Looking out for myself is my top priority. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 16. | I have been in a lot of shouting matches with other people. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 17. | I tell other people what they want to hear so that they will do what I want them to. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 18. | When I get frustrated, I often "let off steam" by blowing my top. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 19. | I would be upset if my success came at someone else's expense. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 20. | Love is overrated. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

21. I often admire a really clever scam.

22. I make a point of trying not to hurt others in pursuit of my goals.

23. I enjoy manipulating other people's feelings.

24. I feel bad if my words or actions cause someone to feel emotional pain.

25. Even if I were trying very hard to sell something, I wouldn't lie about it.

26. Cheating is not justified because it is unfair to others.

# Appendix C:

**Appendix C**

Hi,

My name is Elio Martino, and I am a Psychology PhD researcher at Southampton Solent University. I am interested in understanding what makes up a soldier, what motivates them to join the military, to stay through the training, and perform the job whilst on tour.

Moreover, I am interested in how a soldier deals with combat. Current thinking not only misinforms the average civilian, but governments and institutions who form policies around academic findings.
Specifically this project will seek to understand how soldiers feel, talk about, and deal with the act of killing the enemy in a combat situation in a way that gives power and voice to the modern day soldier.

There are no questionnaires or tests. You will be invited to an informal interview and or focus group. You will not be bombarded with questions, or asked to talk about anything you are uncomfortable to talk about. You will remain totally anonymous during the entire process and are free to leave or have your data removed from the project at any time.

**It is not required that you have killed the enemy, nor are you required to talk about this act if you feel distressed or upset by the act**. **-** I will be audio recording this interview, and you are reminded at this time that participation will remain anonymous and your audio file can be deleted at any time you wish. If you wish to have access to the interview at any time please feel free to contact me and request the information.

**If you have been diagnosed with any type of Psychological trauma in conjunction with your role as a soldier (Such as PTSD) that you feel stems from killing the enemy, you are strongly advised against taking part in the interview process.**

I am aware that most trauma stems from other stressors within combat, these topics (including but not limited to civilian casualties, blue on blue casualties, death or injury of a fellow soldier) will not be addressed or covered in any way.

If you chose to take part then you will be fully briefed before being invited, and then again during the interview process, should you chose to accept my invitation.

If you are still interested in taking part in this study please feel free to reply to me: Elio.martino@solent.ac.uk.

Thank you for your time

Elio Martino

# Appendix D:

**Appendix D**

**Research Information Sheet for Participants**

I am Elio Martino a [PhD student at Southampton Solent University. I am requesting your participation in a study regarding in understanding what makes up a soldier, what motivates them to join the military, to stay through the training, and perform the job whilst on tour. This will involve an informall interview and/or focus group. You will not be asked to talk about anything you are uncomfortable to talk about. You will remain totally anonymous during the entire process and are free to leave or have your data removed from the project at any time. The entire interview should take no longer then an hour, but please keep free 1.5 hours in case it over runs.

This interview will be, for the most part, led by you, but from time to time, I will steer the conversation with certain questions. At no time are you required to answer ANY of the questions or talk about ANYTHING you find stressful, uncomfortable, and traumatic. During the interview you will be audio recorded, however your data will remain totally confidential and anonymous. You have the right to have your data removed, or leave the interview at any time.

Personal information will not be released to or viewed by anyone other than researchers involved in this project, the marker(s), and in some cases external examiners. Results of this study will not include your name or any other identifying characteristics.

Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw your participation at any time

Please sign below to indicate your consent to participate and also that you understand the following: That you may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefit to yourself. You understand that data collected as part of this research project will be treated confidentially, and that published results of this research project will maintain anonymity. In signing consent, you are not waiving your legal claims, rights, or remedies. A copy of this information sheet will be offered to you.

If you have any questions please ask them now, or contact me *[researcher's name]* at *[phone number and/or email address NB: students should not give out their home phone number. Supervisors numbers should be used where appropriate]*.

You are giving your consent to participate in this study, for the release of personal information. You consent to be audiotaped, understanding that audiotapes will be destroyed after analysis.

You understand that 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 can contact: Rhodri Davies **(023) 8031 9057** (external)

Rhodri.Davies@solent.ac.uk.

Or by post:

Chair of the Psychology Ethics Committee,

Psychology Programme Group,

Southampton Solent University,

Southampton, SO14 0RF.

PLEASE NOTE if you are suffering from PTSD or any type of trauma related to combat then you are strongly advised not to take part in the interview process.

Please remember, You are asked to think very carefully about how you feel about killing in combat. If you feel that talking about this subject will cause you stress, anxiety or trauma beyond what you would experience in everyday life then please do not agree to take part in this study.

Please sign and date here to indicate that you understand the information above and that you are willing to participate in this study.

Signature *[participants signature]* Date

Name *[participants name]*

Email Address_____

Gender_____

Rank_____

Nationality_____

Military Unit_____

Position in Military_____(if civilian please state position interested in and start with: Interested in joining

# Appendix E:

**Appendix E**

## Research Debrief Sheet for Participants

**[Revisiting Killing: An identity approach.]**

**Debriefing Statement**

The aim of this research was to further explore the existence and nature of resistance to killing, tackling both the notion of resistance, as well as developing more modern theories of resistance. The proposed study aims to utilise an identity perspective, and answer questions about identity and legal killing that affect the modern military, police force, and academic bases of killing in combat. The proposed study will also seek to further underline the significant role identity plays in motivation and resistance to trauma, within the context of being a solider.

It is expected that your results will help us further underline the significant role identity plays in motivation and resistance to trauma, within the context of being a soldier.

Your data will help our understanding of the critical importance of interviewing modern day soldiers to further enrich our understanding of identity and identity resilience. 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.

If you have any further questions please contact me Elio Martino at elio.martino@solent.ac.uk, David Clarke at David.Clarke@solent.ac.uk. Or Lin Bailey at Lin.Bailey@solent.ac.uk

Thank you for your participation in this research.

Elio Martino

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: Rhodri Davies **(023) 8031 9057** (external)

Rhodri.Davies@solent.ac.uk.

Or by post:

Chair of the Psychology Ethics Committee,

Psychology Programme Group,

Southampton Solent University,

Southampton, SO14 0RF.

The following information lists some helplines and mental health programs available to Veterans. These services offer counseling, diagnosis and referent relevant to both serving, ex serving and family members of the military.

**UK:**

**South Stafford and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust**

Coton House

St George's Hospital Site

Corporation Street

Stafford ST16 3AG

Tel: 01785 257888 ext 5280

**Community Veterans' Mental Health Assessment Service**

Traumatic Stress Clinic,

73 Charlotte Street,

London.

W1T 4PL

Telephone: 020 7530 3666

E-mail: veterans@candi.nhs.uk

www.candi.nhs.uk/veterans

**Cardiff and Vale NHS Trust**

Neil Kitchiner – CV MHT

University Hospital of Wales

Heath Park

Cardiff

CF14 4XW

Tel: 029 2074 2284

E-mail: neil.kitchiner@cardiffandvale.wales.nhs.uk

Website: http://www.veterans-mhs-cvct.org/

**Community Veterans Mental Health Service**

Trevillis House

Lodge Hill

Liskeard

Cornwall

PL14 4NE

Tel: 01579 335226

Fax: 01579 335245

Email: Veteran.Assistance@cornwall.nhs.uk

**Medical Assessment Programme - MAP**

Dr Ian Palmer

Head of Medical Assessment Programme

Baird Medical Centre

Gassiott House

St Thomas Hospital

Lambeth Palace Road

London

SE1 7EH

E-mail: map@gstt.nhs.uk

Freephone Helpline: 0800 169 5401

**Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust**

Psychological Therapy Service

Symon Day - Veterans Mental Health Therapist

St Aidans House

St Aidans Walk

Bishop Auckland

County Durham

DL14 6SA

Tel: 01388 646 802

symon.day@TEWV.nhs.uk

**USA:**

***Veterans Crisis Line*** *available 24/7 at 1-800-273-8255 (Spanish/Español 1-888-628-9454). Veterans press "1" after you call.*
*You can also chat live online with a crisis counselor 24/7 by visiting the* Veterans Crisis Line* *website.*

- **National Call Center for Homeless Veterans:** If you are a Veteran who is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, you can contact the National VA Call Center 24/7 at 1-877-424-3838 (also intended for Veterans families, VA Medical Centers, federal, state and local partners, community agencies, service providers and others in the community). You can also chat live online 24/7 through the Homeless Veterans Chat service.
- **DoD/VA Suicide Outreach: Resources for Suicide Prevention*:** You will find ready access to hotlines, treatments, professional resources, forums and multiple media designed to link you to others. This site supports all Service Branches, the National Guard and the Reserves,Veterans, families and providers.
- **DCoE Outreach Center*:** The Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury (DCoE) runs a resource center that provides information and resources about psychological health (PH), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and traumatic brain injury (TBI). The center can be contacted 24/7 by phone at 866-966-1020, by e-mail at resources@dcoeoutreach.org, or you can also go to DCoE Outreach Center Live Chat.
- **Military OneSource*:** Military OneSource is a free service provided by the Department of Defense to Service Members and their families to help with a broad range of concerns. Call and talk anytime, 24/7 at 1-800-342-9647.
- **National Resource Directory (NRD)*:** The NRD is a website for connecting wounded warriors, Service Members, Veterans, and their families with those who support them. It provides access to services and resources at the national, state and local levels to support re-

covery, rehabilitation and community reintegration. Visitors can find information on a variety of topics including benefits & compensation, education & training, employment, family & caregiver support, health, homeless assistance, housing, transportation & travel, and other services & resources. The NRD is a partnership among the Departments of Defense, Labor and Veterans Affairs.