

THE EXPERIENCE OF IMPRISONMENT AMONGST EX-MILITARY PERSONNEL IN ENGLAND AND WALES



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Declaration

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the preface and specified in the text.

It is not substantially the same as any work that has already been submitted before for any degree or other qualification except as declared in the preface and specified in the text.

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Daniel D. Packham

23rd August 2022

Abstract

The experience of imprisonment amongst ex-military personnel in England and Wales

Daniel D. Packham

There has been a recent surge in academic research into military veterans in the criminal justice system but little of this has focused on UK military veterans in prison. This study contributes towards filling this gap in the research literature. The study used semi-structured qualitative interviews with 35 serving ex-military prisoners in six prisons across England to explore the experience of imprisonment amongst UK veterans in prison. Using thematic analysis, it maps out participants' life pathways, from childhood through military service and into prison. In doing so, it reveals the strong, persistent military identity that veteran prisoners held and the military mind-set that they employed in managing their lives in prison. It identifies clear similarities between the military and the prison, including the physical environment and their organisational structures and cultures, supporting Goffman's (1961) conception of the total institution, while also highlighting differences between the fragmented, individualistic social world of the prison and the collective and cohesive social world of the military. The study found that veterans employed their military mind-set and drew on their experiences of encountering physical and mental hardships in their previous military service to cope with the pains of imprisonment. It discovered a preference for highly-structured and disciplined prison regimes, with some veterans exhibiting degrees of institutionalisation. It examines how veterans navigated the social world of the prison, struggling to relate to most other prisoners while often bonding with other fellow veterans. It also explores veterans' attitudes towards authority, reflected in acceptance of their prison sentences, compliance with the institution's regime and a belief in the legitimacy of the nation state. Finally, it reveals veteran prisoners' concerns around their safety in prison and their positive perceptions of and relationships with prison staff, especially those who themselves were military veterans. Implications for policy-makers and practitioners managing military veterans in the criminal justice system are discussed, as well as proposed future areas of research.

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List of abbreviations and glossary of terms

Armoured Corps	–	Unit of the British Army which operates from Tanks or other Armoured Vehicles
Artillery	–	Royal Artillery Corps
AWOL	–	Absent without leave
Barracks	–	Group living quarters for junior, enlisted ranks
Battalion	–	Army regimental sub-unit of infantry amounting to between 500 and 1,000 soldiers, and subdivided into a number of companies
Base	–	Enclosed military facility to house and shelter military personnel and materiel
Beasted	–	Slang for forced imposition of arduous physical exercises, either as training or as punishment
Camp	–	Semi-permanent military base for the lodging of military personnel and materiel
Civvy	–	Civilian, i.e. not a member of the military or police.
Civvy Street	–	Slang for civilian society outside of the military.
Combat arms	–	Collective name for military troops which participate in direct tactical combat.
CO (Commanding Officer)	–	Officer commanding a military unit, typically a battalion or corps.
Commissioned Officer	–	One holding a high-ranking position of leadership. Almost exclusively recruited from the university educated population.
Company	–	Military unit, typically consisting of 80–250 soldiers, and subdivided into a number of platoons.
Colchester	–	Typical reference term for the Military Correctional Training Centre (MCTC) in Colchester.
Court Martial	–	A court convened to try an offence against military discipline, or against the ordinary law, committed by a person in one of the armed forces.
Dishonourable discharge	–	Expulsion of a member of the military due to a

breach of military rules or of military or civilian law.

While the term is not formally used in the UK military, it is occasionally used by military personnel to refer to expulsion from the military.

Enlisted ranks	–	See ‘other ranks’
Exercise	–	The employment of military resources in training for military operations.
Garrison	–	See base
Green	–	Term used to refer to a someone who is new and/or inexperienced.
Guardroom	–	Building typically situated by the entrance to a military base or camp where the duty guard are stationed. The building usually houses detention cells where arrested military personnel can be held temporarily.
HMP	–	Her Majesty’s Prison
IED	–	Improvised Explosive Device
Infantry	–	An army specialization whose personnel engage in military combat on foot.
IRA	–	Irish Republican Army.
Medical Discharge	–	Method of dismissal from the military on medical grounds.
MCTC	–	Military Correction and Training Centre. The military detention establishment at Colchester Barracks that provides corrective training for those servicemen and women sentenced to periods of detention.
MoD	–	Ministry of Defence
MoJ	–	Ministry of Justice
NAAFI	–	Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes. British Government-owned company which runs recreational establishments for the British Armed Forces, and sells goods to servicemen and their families

NCO	–	Non-Commissioned Officer. Middle ranking officer who does not hold a commission and has typically earned their position of authority by promotion through the enlisted ranks.
OC	–	Officer Commanding. Officer commanding a military unit, typically a company or troop.
Other ranks	–	Term used to refer to all ranks below officers in the British Army and the Royal Marines.
Platoon	–	Military unit, typically consisting of 25-30 combat soldiers, and subdivided into three or four sections.
PTSD	–	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
Regiment	–	Largest permanent organisational unit in the British Army, and is typically sub-divided down into 3-5 battalions
RP (Regimental Police)	–	Soldiers responsible for regimental discipline enforcement and unit custody within a British Army unit.
Royal British Legion (RBL)	–	A British charity providing financial, social and emotional support to members and veterans of the British Armed Forces, their families and dependants.
Rupert	–	Slang for a commissioned officer.
SAAFA	–	The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association). A UK charity that provides lifelong support to serving men and women and veterans from the British Armed Forces and their families or dependents.
Scoff	–	Slang for food.
Section	–	The smallest unit sub-division in the British Army, typically comprising eight combat soldiers.
Support arms	–	Non-combat troops of the UK military.
Squaddy	–	Slang for an Army soldier.
Squadron	–	Military unit, typically consisting of 25-30 non-combat soldiers. The equivalent of a company in a

- support arms unit.
- Tour (aka operational tour) – A period of time spent in combat or in a hostile environment. Typically overseas.
- Troop – Military unit, typically consisting of 25-30 non-combat soldiers, and subdivided into three or four sections.
- Veterans Liaison Officer – Member of prison staff working to support military veteran prisoners in prison.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Background and rationale for study

1.1.1. Military veterans in prison

Ex-military personnel are in the somewhat unusual position when sent to prison of having already experienced life within a total institution. Without having necessarily experienced imprisonment previously, the structured, disciplined and regimented routine of the prison, with its hierarchical body of staff directing daily routines and activities, is not altogether unfamiliar to those who have previously served in the UK military. Although similar features may be found in certain other institutions and organisations, the parallels between military life and prison life are particularly close, raising questions around how ex-military personnel might experience and interact with the prison environment.

There are estimated to be 2.8-3.8 million military veterans in the UK (Gribble et al. 2019), and roughly three thousand UK ex-military personnel in prison in England and Wales, making up between 3.5 and six percent of the total prison population (DASA 2010; HMIP 2014c).¹ Despite comprising such a substantial subgroup of the prison population, relatively little research has sought to explore how this unique group of people experience imprisonment in the UK. In recent years, following the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, there has been an emergent interest in the involvement of ex-military personnel within the criminal justice system in public, political, media and government discourse, with a limited corresponding interest in academic research within the field of criminology (Howard League 2011; Hansard 2015; Ashcroft 2014; Phillips 2014).

In 2014, a comprehensive review of the evidence was conducted in support of a UK government independent review on veterans in the criminal justice system which highlighted a lack of robust research in this area of study (see: Lyne and Packham 2014; Phillips 2014). Since this date there has been an increase in the amount of attention paid by researchers to the study of military veterans, with a limited amount

¹ Only in recent years have prison authorities officially recorded veterans in prison, based on voluntary self-disclosure on entry. Previous estimates range from three to 16.75% (Howard League 2011). However, recent best estimates using robust methodologies put the number at between 3.5 and six percent of prisoners in England and Wales (DASA 2010; HMIP 2014c).

of this focused on ex-military personnel in the criminal justice system and comparatively little specifically concerning UK military veterans in prison. Much of the research which has been published in recent years has been from a psychological or psychiatric perspective, focussing on mental health issues, for example, with relatively little approaching the issue from a criminological or sociological perspective.

While previous research on UK military veterans in prison is limited, inquiries by the Howard League for Penal Reform (2011), DASA (2010) and HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) (2014) do provide some insights into veterans in prisons to inform subsequent research, such as this study. These previous inquiries revealed that veterans were older than the general prison population and were disproportionately in prison for violent and sexual offences, while under-represented for drugs offences (DASA 2010). A further analysis paper by HMIP (2014) found that the needs of veterans in prison were broadly similar to those of non-veteran prisoners, but highlighted a number of concerns about veterans' welfare in prison. It reported that veterans were more likely to suffer from physical injury or disability and were more likely to suffer from depression and suicidal thoughts, as well as being more likely to report victimisation and bullying in prison. However, it also found that veterans managed some aspects of imprisonment better than non-veteran prisoners, with survey findings suggesting that they had more positive views of the institution's regime and systems of discipline, better relationships with staff and less incidence of being placed in segregation (HMIP 2014). The findings from this report suggest that veterans may differ from other prisoners in how they experience and cope with imprisonment and how they behave within the prison regime.

While there is a growing body of research literature on UK military veterans' welfare in society in general, this literature base is still relatively limited in volume and in scope and often takes a positivist approach, predominantly from a medical, psychological and psychiatric perspective. Nevertheless, this medical and psychiatric research provides some important insights into veterans, revealing findings around issues facing UK veterans in society such as: rates of substance misuse; prevalence of mental health disorders; and suicide ideation (see: MacManus et al. 2013; MacManus et al. 2011; Pinder et al. 2011), with only a small handful of these studies looking specifically at veterans in the criminal justice system. Outside of the positivist medical and psychiatric perspectives there has been a growth in the number of research studies conducted from a sociological perspective which have inquired into

issues such as homelessness, family problems, financial problems, unemployment and social exclusion (Higate 2000, 2001; Hockey 1986; Kapur et al. 2009; Ragonese and Murray 2017), but this still constitutes a somewhat limited body of literature.

Much of the research literature on veterans in the criminal justice system has emerged from other jurisdictions, most notably the USA. Here a plethora of quantitative research studies have been conducted on veteran populations in the criminal justice system, including those in prison. These have largely centred around assessing and evaluating the efficacy of various interventions and service provisions that have been implemented in the USA for veteran offenders over the past fifteen years. These interventions include Veterans Treatment Courts which aim to divert offenders away from the formal criminal justice system into tailored support or treatment programmes, and veterans-only prisons which seek to draw on military identity and cultural values of discipline, pride and cohesion to enact the effective reform and rehabilitation of veteran offenders. These American studies are almost exclusively quantitative, using surveys or administrative statistics conducted from a positivist perspective by researchers in the medical or psychiatric disciplines. While making valuable contributions to the criminological research literature base on veterans, there are limitations to applying the findings from these studies to the case of UK veterans in prison where both military experiences, societal contexts and prison contexts differ greatly. From a practical perspective, service-providers and policy-makers have little robust evidence available to them on which to base their approaches to managing and supporting this group in prison, left instead to rely on less methodologically robust data and information produced by media sources, charities, NGOs, and other interest groups or else research evidence not relevant to their own country's context.

This study seeks to redress this research deficiency and fill the gap in the research literature by exploring how UK military veterans experience imprisonment. With such a significant proportion of the prisoner population in England and Wales being veterans, it is important to develop an understanding of this prison sub-group and how they fit into the institutions and social worlds they inhabit. It also contributes to the broader understanding of total institutions by focusing on the similarities and differences of military and penal institutions in terms of structure, environment, culture and their social worlds. Further developing knowledge of these state institutions and gaining an understanding of veterans in prison also has important implications for

those involved in managing and servicing this population, such as policy-makers, practitioners and charitable service-providers, to ensure that their efforts are effective and appropriately targeted. This study expands the frontiers of knowledge in this research area, providing veterans with the opportunity to voice and record their experiences of imprisonment in the research literature and building a foundation on which to build further inquiry into this understudied population in prison in England and Wales.

1.1.2. Defining the military veteran

Veterans are a diverse group of people scattered throughout all levels of society, varying by age, sex, gender, ethnicity, race, religion, socio-economic background and nationality. Although historically used more commonly in the USA, the term veteran refers to someone who has served in a nation state's military, and has become commonplace more recently within public and political discourse, mainstream media and academic research circles in the UK. It is not my preferred term and was not used by many of the participants in this study who preferred terms such as ex-forces, ex-military, former military, former Armed Forces etc. In some cases participants actively disavowed the term altogether, believing the term should be reserved for people they considered to be older war heroes from the second world war². However, the term veteran has been used in this thesis to remain consistent with the terminology most prominently used in the broader academic and policy literature.

1.1.3. British military institutions

The UK military consists of three branches of service: The British Army, The Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force (RAF). These three distinct military institutions perform specific but complimentary functions to provide holistic defence of the UK on land, air and sea. The British Army is the UK's predominant land-based military force which conducts the majority of its operations on the ground. It comprises a combination of units that conduct front-line combat operations and those which provide support roles. The former consists predominantly of: the infantry, ground-fighting foot soldiers; Armoured units whose soldiers drive, operate and fight from armoured vehicles; and

² This aligns with the experiences of other researchers. Burdett et al. (2012) found that only half of their former military study participants considered themselves to be veterans.

Artillery, whose members operate heavy missile and artillery equipment. Each of these three branches of the British Army is sub-divided into individual regiments. The British Army also has a small Army Air Corps which operates a number of aircraft for transport and fighting purposes. The support roles include a range of regiments and corps which provide services to support the front-line, such as mechanics, medics, truck drivers and clerks. Entry into the Army requires no formal education, using a short entry test to determine suitable roles for the applicant recruit; Army intelligence requires the highest score and infantry requires the lowest. The British Army recruits more heavily than the other two branches of the military from lower socio-economic backgrounds (Beevor 1990).

The Royal Navy is the predominant military institution that operates at sea. Service in the Royal Navy typically involves prolonged periods away at sea aboard ships which include battleships, mine-sweepers, aircraft-carriers and submarines. While predominantly a sea-based force, the Royal Navy has its own small division of aircraft and its own attached front-line ground-fighting unit called the Royal Marines Commandos, which is considered to be one of the UK military's elite fighting units. With a range of roles across the service, many of which are technical, the Royal Navy has higher formal education requirements for recruits which means it typically has lower proportion of members from lower socio-economic backgrounds than the British Army.

The Royal Air Force (RAF) is the UK's predominant airborne force, operating a large fleet of aircraft with functions ranging from supply and cargo aircraft through to fighter and bomber jet aircraft and helicopters. Like the Royal Navy, it also has its own ground fighting unit called the RAF Regiment, which is responsible for guarding Air Force bases and the areas surrounding these. Due to the greater number of technical roles within the RAF, it has minimum academic education requirements for each role and so tends to recruit people with somewhat higher formal education levels.

Each branch of the UK Armed Forces, in addition to its regular forces, also has a Reserve Force of part-time military personnel who conduct training on evenings, weekends and two-week annual exercises, while typically holding civilian jobs simultaneously. These reserve forces occasionally join regular forces voluntarily on exercise or operations overseas and can be called up compulsorily for full-time active service on operations overseas in the event of war. Reserve forces have been deployed alongside regular forces in every major conflict involving the UK, particularly

in Northern Ireland, the Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq, the latter two conflicts involving large compulsory mobilisations of reserve forces.

All three branches of the UK military are governed by a rank structure which includes commissioned officers and non-commissioned ranks. Commissioned officers are typically drawn directly from university-educated applicants and, after training, enter service directly into a position above all non-commissioned ranks. Non-commissioned ranks are recruited predominantly from non-university-educated recruits who enter the service at the lowest entry level and can later advance up the Non-Commissioned Officer ranks, subject to performance and aptitude (Hockey 1986).

While still technically subject to UK civilian law, members of the UK military are also governed by military law and the 'Queens Regulations' which set out additional laws, rules and regulations governing life within military institutions. Such additional laws make it illegal, for example, to be insubordinate to those in command or to go absent from one's duties without permission for leave. Such offences result in either summary judgement by the unit's commanding officer or in a trial by court martial (military court), both of which can sentence offenders to a variety of punishments, including imprisonment at the Military Corrective Training Centre (MCTC) (Beevor 1990; Elmley 2013).

1.2 Summary of the thesis

This thesis demonstrates that ex-military prisoners experienced imprisonment in distinctive ways as a result of their previous military service which shaped their attitudes, behaviour and overall approach to their lives in prison. It supports Goffman's (1961) argument that, as total institutions, the prison and the military share certain attributes in terms of their physical environment (Jewkes and Moran 2017; Moran and Turner 2022a), organisational structures and some aspects of their organisational cultures, such as their structured regimes and hierarchical staff structures (Siebold 2001; Sparks et al. 1996). Previous experience of living within the military assisted veterans in adapting to the somewhat familiar institutional environment of the prison. Veterans did, however, consider prison regimes to be too lax and permissive, often describing prison as 'easy' and expressing frustrations with what they regarded as the relative disorganisation of the prison and incompetence of its staff, as compared to their previous military institutions (Turner and Moran 2023).

During their military service, veterans had been conditioned to life within an institution which promoted collectivism and cohesion, and instilled in its members a mind-set characterised by discipline, motivation, team-working and resilience to extreme hardship and physical and mental adversity (Matthews 2009; Hall 2010; Firmin et al. 2016; Green et al. 2010; Castillo et al. 2019). This ultimately helped them to cope with the pains of imprisonment, which often reflected deprivations they had previously experienced in the military (Logan and Pare 2016). Military service had also inculcated a military identity which persisted beyond military service and throughout veterans' lives, including into prison. This identity carried notions of pride, masculinity and a sense of the superiority of military and veteran personnel over civilians (Arkin and Dobrofsky 1978; Woodward 2003; Higate 2003; Hockey 1986). This negatively impacted some veterans' self-esteem as they suffered a drop in social status on entering prison and negotiated the label of criminal or prisoner. Nevertheless, these men retained their military veteran identity in prison, which they considered to be permanent and irrevocable, believing that they would shed their stigmatising but temporary prisoner identity on leaving the prison (Firmin et al. 2016).

Veterans' military identity also impacted how they perceived and navigated the prison social world, with their sense of superiority leading to a denigration of other prisoners who they often considered to be greedy, selfish and mentally weak (Woodward 2003). Veterans often avoided mixing with other prisoners, preferring either to spend time alone or in the company of other veteran prisoners who they felt they could relate to, trust and even bond with. Nevertheless, veterans were able to navigate the wider prison social world effectively due to their previous experience in the military, with its mass-living arrangements and shared facilities within a male-dominated environment in which threat and use of force was not uncommon in maintaining informal order (Zurcher 1965; Hockey 1986).

Veterans described that the values and ethos taken from their military service drove an overwhelming sense of personal responsibility for the criminal offences they had committed. Typically, they accepted their sentences and held positive views of authority and the legitimacy of the state (Bottoms and Tankebe 2013; Beetham 1991). These attitudes were reflected in their close compliance with prison regime and largely positive relationships with staff (HMIP 2014a; Logan et al. 2020), especially those who themselves had served in the military, with whom they sometimes felt they bonded

and from whom they occasionally received favourable treatment (Turner and Moran 2023).

This dissertation will explore each of these areas in turn to demonstrate how the data gathered in this study contributes to our understanding of each aspect of veterans' experience of imprisonment. It will discuss how the findings relate to the existing literature on veterans in prison, which is currently limited in the UK context, and on total institutions more broadly. It will do this by analysing similarities and differences between the military and the prison, and the experiences those have within these institutions, in greater depth and detail than previous research has. In particular, it will outline how the findings and conclusions contribute towards furthering our understanding of how previous experience within one total institution might impact a person's experience within another. It will consider implications of the study's findings and conclusions for policy-makers and practitioners and will outline possible further areas for future research.

1.3. Research aims and methodological overview

This study adopts an interpretive approach and employs qualitative research methodologies in order to explore the experience of imprisonment amongst this prison sub-group. Its overarching research question is 'How do UK ex-military personnel experience imprisonment?', with two sub-questions:

1. To what extent does any persisting military identity, including internalised cultural norms, values and beliefs, carry over into civilian and prisoner lives, and how does this shape the prison experience?
2. To what extent does previous military service shape a prisoner's perceptions of, and attitudes towards, institutional authority, power and state legitimacy, with what implications for the prison experience?

This study seeks to provide an in-depth, nuanced analysis of how previous military service impacts upon individuals' later life experiences and subsequently shapes their experience of imprisonment. It aims to make a substantial and unique contribution to the existing base of criminological and penological research literature in this field of study.

The study employs semi-structured, in-depth qualitative interviews with UK ex-military personnel currently serving prison sentences in England and Wales. Six research sites were selected across England and across prison security categories, in order to access a sample of participants that was as representative as possible of the sub-population as a whole. Participants were purposively sampled from across branches of UK military service, age groups and index offence types to ensure representation of the sample of participants.

1.4. Thesis structure

This thesis provides a novel contribution to the academic research literature in the fields of criminology, penology and the study of military populations and veterans. Using Goffman's (1961) analysis of the total institution as a theoretical framework, complemented by Sykes's concept of the 'pains of imprisonment', this study explores the experience of imprisonment amongst UK military veterans using a qualitative methodology to include the voices of veteran prisoners themselves in presenting a range of new findings.

Following this introductory chapter, chapter two comprises a review of the existing research literature. This commences with a critical analysis of Goffman's account of the total institution, including both its strengths and limitations in assessing the prison and the military. It then employs Sykes's pains of imprisonment as a framework to analyse and compare the hardships encountered in the military and the prison. This provides a theoretical base on which to conduct a comparison of the two institutions, assessing similarities and differences between them as well as the effects they have on the lives of those within them. Supplementing literature from the fields of criminology and penology, this chapter draws on some important and insightful literature from the fields of military sociology and defence studies to help frame the study and inform the analysis of the subject population. This chapter then delves deeper into the cultures inhabiting the two institutions. In particular, it considers the processes of disculturation and institutionalisation as well as the phenomenon of group cohesion in the military. It will look at the implications of these phenomena for identity formation and the consequent effects of a military identity on an individual's later life-course, including re-entry to civilian society and one's journey to prison.

Chapter three gives an account of the study design, methodology and methods employed to capture, collate and analyse the research data. It provides an overview

of the research questions, before giving an account of the delicate process of navigating the NOMS research access process and subsequent negotiations with individual institutions to gain access to the research sites. It then describes the process of sampling participants for the study and provides an in-depth account of the process of conducting interviews with participants. Some of this chapter is then given over to discussion around the insider-outsider perspective and where the researcher is situated on this scale as a former military service-man who was employed in an unrelated role as a researcher at the Ministry of Justice during the research design, preparation and fieldwork phase of the study. This discussion also highlights some of the benefits and drawbacks of the researcher's position as an insider to the military veteran community when conducting this research.

Chapter four begins by documenting some of the typical life pathways taken by participants from their early years, through their military service, out into later civilian life and ultimately into prison. Such narrative data can deepen and enlarge understanding of the population under study (Polkinghorne 2007) and this chapter provides such an understanding through the presentation of veteran prisoners' biographies. It looks at the different, individual life trajectories of veterans and some of the common features and recurring themes in their life narratives. In doing so, it provides a contextual framework with which to frame and interpret the more detailed thematic analysis of the data to follow in subsequent chapters.

Chapter five interrogates the concept of a particular military identity constructed during military service and explores how this can persist through the individual's life-course and be carried on into prison. It looks at the array of favourable character traits associated with this identity, such as strength, bravery, selflessness, self-discipline, self-reliance, personal responsibility, diligence and loyalty to one's country, and how these traits shaped veterans' conceptions of themselves and their values, beliefs, customs and other behavioural characteristics. The chapter discusses how this military identity carried notions of belonging to a family of veterans, as well as feelings of pride, masculinity and even a certain sense of superiority over civilians. It also considers how this identity was believed to confer a high social status which collided with participants' identity as a prisoner which, conversely, conferred a low social status and generated feelings of embarrassment, disappointment and shame.

Chapter six examines life in prison, beginning with the structure of total institutions and the stark similarities between the military and the prison when it comes

to the physical environment, organisational structure, regime and organisational culture of these institutions. The chapter discusses the similarities in these secure, enclosed physical environments and closely-confined, single-sex living quarters with communal facilities. It highlights similarities in organisational culture, including strictly ordered and regimented regimes, governed by an explicit code of regulation, enforced by a hierarchical body. However, it also identifies a stark difference in organisational goals of the two institutions, comparing the existence in the military of clear, collective, unifying organisational goals with the absence of these in the prison and how these shape the experience of imprisonment for veterans. This chapter considers how veterans' familiarity with such environments from their previous military service impacted their ability to adjust to and live within the prison regime. This chapter then goes on to analyse the social world of the prison, highlighting similarities and differences between the two institutions' social worlds and the implication that this has for veterans' experience of imprisonment. It evidences veterans' ability to navigate the informal social hierarchies and examines bonding and mutual support between ex-military prisoners, as well as tensions and conflicts encountered with some other prisoner sub-groups.

Chapter seven investigates how ex-military prisoners cope with the pains of imprisonment. It compares the ardours encountered in the military to those in the prison and examines how some similar hardships experienced in both institutions can manifest in different ways. The chapter details how military service, and the physical and mental difficulties this presented, equipped veterans with a particular mind-set characterised by self-motivation, self-discipline and resilience to adversity which helped them to cope with many of the pains of imprisonment. Using the concepts of the 'depth' and 'weight' of imprisonment, it explains veteran prisoners' preference for more structured, predictable and heavily disciplined prison regimes.

Chapter eight investigates ex-military prisoners' attitudes towards authority and interrogates their views of the state and its legitimacy to punish. The chapter outlines how military service inculcated pro-authority mores and values resulting in acceptance of authority and adherence to disciplined regimes. It demonstrates how these attitudes coincided with an ardent belief in personal responsibility for one's actions and a subsequent acceptance of strong punishment administered in response to infractions – views which supported positive views of the nation state and its legitimacy to govern.

It goes on to look at veterans' consequent acceptance of their prison sentences and the effects of this on their compliance with the prison regime.

Chapter nine explores the relationships between veterans and prison staff, and the nature of veterans' treatment in prison. It reviews the services available to veterans in prison and their views on tailored interventions for veteran prisoners. It examines veterans' ability to develop positive relations with prison staff, especially with those who themselves were veterans and considers how these relationships affected and shaped the treatment of veteran prisoners by staff.

The concluding chapter provides a summary of the study's findings, a review of its contributions and discusses implications for policy, practice and future research.

Chapter 2: A review of the literature

This review of the literature will assess and analyse the evidence base relating to the experience of imprisonment amongst ex-military personnel. It will combine an analysis of research literature pertaining to both the military and the prison and will highlight the relevance and importance of previous experience in military institutions to the experience of imprisonment for ex-military prisoners in the UK.

The chapter will begin by presenting the limited evidence on the prevalence of veterans in prison and their experiences of imprisonment. It will look at the transition that military personnel make on discharge from the military back into civilian life and inquire into some of veterans' motivations for offending and pathways taken into prison. It will unpack the concept of military identity and explore the implications that holding this entrenched identity can have for the individual beyond military service. It will demonstrate how, despite some of its merits, this persisting identity can lead to culture shock in military service-leavers on their return to mainstream civilian society, causing problems for some of those who fail to reintegrate successfully. The review will then explore how prevailing military identities and associated cultural beliefs, norms and values might shape views, attitudes and beliefs towards authority, the state and society and how these might impact upon the subsequent life-courses and experiences of those who have left the military.

The chapter proceeds with an in-depth interrogation of Goffman's analysis of the total institution, looking specifically at the cases of the military and the prison. It considers some of the criticism of Goffman's analysis and the challenges laid against the validity of the total institution as a conceptualisation of closed institutions. In turn, it reviews the literature in support of Goffman to demonstrate the continued relevance of his analysis. It then provides an overview of the structure and regime of the total institution as a base for the subsequent discussion of the institutions of the military and the prison.

The chapter goes on to examine literature on the hardships that individuals endure in prison through the lens of Sykes' pains of imprisonment, namely the deprivations of liberty, goods and services, heterosexual relationships, autonomy and security. It compares the experience of life within the two institutions of the military and the prison by highlighting some of the stark similarities between the two institutional

worlds and the hardships they present, whilst also highlighting some of the features that might cause the deprivations imposed by institutional life to be felt differently in the two institutions.

The review will then consider the culture of total institutions, looking in depth at military institutions and the culture that these institutions foster. As well as discussing the similarities between the two institutions, it will highlight some of the stark differences, focusing first on institutional goals before discussing the existence of social bonding and solidarity amongst peers in the military which creates social cohesion and instils pride, loyalty and dedication to the institution – something largely absent in the context of the prison. This notion of cohesion will be examined in depth to provide the reader with a full understanding of military cohesion, a central component of military culture and instrumental to military identity formation.

This is followed by an account of the creation of institutional identities, beginning with an examination of the processes of socialisation that take place on entry to both institutions, considering Goffman's disculturation, and the part that this plays in institutionalisation and the construction and redefinition of an individual's identity. It then provides an in-depth description of prison regime, using the concepts of 'depth', 'weight' and 'tightness' of imprisonment to frame this before moving on to compare this to military regime. The chapter concludes with a consideration of how previous military service might prepare military veterans for imprisonment.

2.1. Military veterans in prison

There has been relatively limited previous research on UK ex-military personnel in prison but one of the few studies that has been conducted was an inquiry reported in 2011 by the Howard League for Penal Reform. This inquiry interviewed 29 serving prisoners in England and Wales who had previously served in the UK military, from recent Iraq and Afghanistan veterans to veterans of World War II. It inquired into prisoners' backgrounds, occupations, military experience and offences. It looked at previous life issues and found that many of those in prison had encountered problems after leaving military service that had contributed to their offending and eventual entry to prison. These included the misuse of alcohol, which was identified as a feature of military culture during interviewees' service and sometimes continued on exit from service. Other issues highlighted were family breakdown and problems gaining and retaining civilian employment. All of these problems were exacerbated by a lack of

awareness of available support services, such as the Royal British Legion and SSAFA, or otherwise an unwillingness to seek help (Wainwright et al. 2017). The Howard League inquiry illuminated previously un-recognised issues surrounding the ex-military prisoner population, while calling for further qualitative research to help better understand ex-military prisoners (Howard League 2011).

The Howard League inquiry complemented a study conducted by Defence Analytical Services and Advice (DASA) (2010) which took the details of serving prisoners held by the Ministry of Justice and cross-checked them against those held in DASA's service leavers database. This produced a quantitative analysis of veterans in prison which found that ex-military persons were less likely to be imprisoned than the general population. It also found that ex-military prisoners were on average substantially older than the general prison population and were proportionally over-represented in categories of violence and sex offences, with almost 25% of all veterans in prison convicted of sex offences compared to less than 11% of the general prison population (DASA 2010). Although this study is now somewhat dated, this analysis does provide a somewhat reliable overview of the ex-military prisoner population in terms of the distribution of age, gender and offence type which was not previously available. It also established a minimum figure for the number of ex-military personnel in prison. However, DASA's service-leavers database does exclude reservists who at the time of analysis comprised 18% of total UK military personnel, raising the possibility that DASA's 3.5% estimate of veteran prisoners was still an underestimate (Ministry of Defence 2009).

2.1.1. Experience of veterans in prison

Since DASA and the Howard League published their reports, there has been an increase in research in the area of veterans studies but with a paucity of research into veterans in prison specifically. In 2014, HM Inspectorate of Prisons published findings from its surveys of the prisoner population conducted during its prison inspections and estimated that approximately seven per cent of the prison population had previously served in the UK Armed Forces (HMIP 2014a), higher than the 3.5 percent found four years earlier by DASA (2010). An updated report published that same year reported a revised estimate of six per cent (HMIP 2014c).

HMIP (2014a) highlighted that, although many of their needs are the same as the general prison population, ex-military personnel are more likely to suffer from

depression or suicidal thoughts on entry to prison and are more likely to be suffering from a physical illness, injury or disability. Of particular interest to this study, however, it also found that ex-military prisoners managed some aspects of prison life better than other prisoners. This included having more positive attitudes towards the institutional regime and its systems of discipline, better relationships with prison staff and lower levels of being placed in segregation units (implying greater compliance with regime). This was contrasted with greater feelings of feeling unsafe and higher reporting of incidences of being victimized by other prisoners (HMIP 2014a). This very brief insight into how ex-military personnel might experience imprisonment, which echoes tentative findings in veteran prisoners in the USA (see: Logan and Pare 2016), raises questions around whether and how previous military service might be responsible for these differences in views, attitudes and experiences of imprisonment.

In 2014, the Secretary of State for Justice commissioned an independent review into the needs of ex-military personnel in the criminal justice system which included the needs of those in prison (Phillips 2014). The review highlighted the lack of available evidence in this area and was published alongside two analytical reports produced by the Ministry of Justice, one co-authored by this researcher (Lyne and Packham 2014; Kelly 2014). These supplementary reports researched and reviewed existing evidence on the needs of ex-military personnel in the criminal justice system (CJS) and looked at what programmes have been found to be effective in their rehabilitation. Despite highlighting some limited evidence available regarding ex-military personnel in the CJS, based largely on literature from the USA, they highlighted the overall lack of research evidence available and the need for more research to be conducted in order to better understand veterans in the CJS (Lyne and Packham 2014).

This lack of available evidence has been highlighted by other researchers, including Murray (2013) who proposes the concept of 'veteranality' as "a theoretical observation of the criminal justice process that places the veteran within it... and problematizes the same" (Murray 2014:93). 'Veteranality' attempts to conceptualise how the criminal justice system responds to the crisis of identity that veteran offenders undergo and how it treats them according to their needs as an occupational group rather than by offending type or profile (Cooper 2018). This involves acknowledging veterans' specific needs, including their distinctive vulnerabilities and risk factors (Murray 2014; Cooper 2018). However, while this approach provides insight into the

criminal justice system's approach to veteran offenders, the concept of 'veteranality' is limited in providing insight into veterans' own specific lived experiences in prison.

One jurisdiction where there has been more research in this area is the United States. The Howard League (2011) highlighted significant differences between UK and US ex-military prisoner populations in terms of age demographics, offence types, drug habits and prevalence of mental health problems such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Nevertheless, research from the USA can still provide insight into some of the issues that can affect ex-military personnel serving prison sentences. Most recent estimates indicate that veterans comprise around 8-10% of the total US prison population (Maruschak and Bronson 2021; Finlay et al. 2016; Blue-Howells et al. 2012) with high prevalence of drug dependency and mental health issues amongst US ex-military prisoners (Greenberg & Rosenheck 2012).

In the USA, a small body of research has also focused on veterans' behaviour in prison. One such study by Logan and Pare (2016) found that veterans were less likely to be given punishments for a variety of rule infractions including insubordination, abuse and drugs. This led researchers to conclude that veterans' previous military service assisted them in adjusting to institutional life within prison and reduced their likelihood of coming into conflict with authority figures. These findings are tentatively supported by a further study by Brooke (2018) who found that veterans who were older or had served in the military for longer were less likely to be punished for prison misconduct. Logan and Pare (2016) attribute this phenomenon to what they term the 'veteran effect'. That is the resilience of veterans that derives from their military experience and insulates them from the worst effects of the pains of imprisonment, helps them to cope with imprisonment, and helps them to comply with prison regime (Logan and Pare 2016; Logan et al. 2020). Such a conceptualisation is supported by research conducted by Wright et al. (2005) who found positive effects of resilience against the pains of imprisonment in veteran prisoners. However, other studies have found veterans to be more susceptible and vulnerable to the pains of imprisonment (Drapela et al. 2019; Fleming et al. 2013). Suggesting a possible explanation for such mixed findings, Logan et al. propose that "both perspectives about veteran adjustment in prison might be correct for certain inmates under certain circumstances... specifically for those who are newly admitted to prison" (2020:21), further highlighting the need for additional research to gain a greater understanding of this under-researched group.

In the USA, specialist intervention, diversion and treatment programmes have been established for military veterans, such as mental health care provision and treatment for substance misuse as well as implementation of special Veterans Treatment Courts³ and veteran-only prisons and dormitories. These provide targeted support to veterans in custody, focusing on their supposed different and unique needs in prison. While evidence on the effectiveness of such interventions is limited, some evidence tentatively points to possible benefits in the management and treatment of veterans in prison, with Burke et al. (2019) finding lower levels of recidivism in veterans who had been released from veterans-only prison units.

This previous research provides some useful insight and illuminates some of the issues affecting ex-military prisoners in the USA and in England and Wales, also providing estimates of the number of UK ex-military personnel in prison. However, despite their merits, little of this research has attempted to explore the views, attitudes and beliefs that veteran prisoners may have and how these might shape prisoners' experiences.

2.2. The transition from military to civilian lives

2.2.1. The road to prison

There is a sparsity of research into why military veterans ultimately end up in prison. DASA (2010) found that veterans were serving prison sentences in England and Wales for offenses spanning across the criminal offence spectrum. Specifically, its analysis revealed that veterans were most likely to be in prison for violent and sexual offences but were under-represented in the category of drugs offences (DASA 2010).

Little research has comprehensively investigated motivations for offending, but Wainwright et al. (2016) identified four main groups of reasons that featured in veterans' pathways into criminal offending: pre-service vulnerabilities, including childhood adversity and social deprivation; in-service factors, including operational deployment, alcohol use and bullying; post-service issues, including mental health problems, substance misuse and transition difficulties (particularly loss of the 'military family'); and a set of triggers to offending, including impulsivity, substance misuse,

³ Veterans Treatment Courts seek to divert veteran offenders away from the criminal justice system into treatment and support services to address causes of offending (e.g. substance misuse treatment programmes and mentor support) (see: Yerramsetti et al. 2017; Slattery et al. 2013; Burke 2019).

mental health problems and an inability to resolve conflict without resort to violence (Wainwright et al. 2016). For those veterans leaving the 'military family' and experiencing one or more of these risk factors then, the risk of offending is elevated.

As a result of the protracted conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, many veterans who served during this period, typically referred to in the literature as post-9/11 veterans, have spent time on overseas operations and experienced combat and the rigours that come with this. This is also true for some veterans from previous generations who experienced deployment during the Falklands Conflict, the first Gulf War, the Balkans conflicts and Northern Ireland during The Troubles. These combat experiences can have a profound impact on later life experiences of veterans and be a factor in criminal offending. MacManus et al. (2013) found that deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan was associated with increased risk of perpetrating violence, especially amongst those with combat experience. They also found that veterans who had experience of operational deployments were at increased risk of suffering from mental health conditions such as Traumatic Brain Injury and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) which, in themselves, can be risk factors in criminal offending (MacManus et al. 2013).

Another factor to consider in criminal offending by veterans is the experience of moving from the 'military family' into civilian society and the impact that this can have on an individual. The sudden loss or absence of the power, authority, social status and a sense of belonging amongst close peers that military personnel experience on leaving the military can cause a service-leaver to seek a replacement for these in their new civilian lives. Many service-leavers seek to fill this gap through employment in the protective services, such as the Police, Fire Service or Prison Service (Turner and Moran 2023; MoD 2021). However, where this cannot be satisfied through employment, for example in the uniformed services, or elsewhere, individuals can sometimes be drawn towards criminal organisations which offer familiar environments and desired features and benefits. Such organisations can provide veterans with an environment in which they feel a sense of purpose, feel valued for their abilities, enjoy renewed camaraderie, find financial security and enjoy a degree of power and authority with a corresponding level of social status within their new world (Smith 2019).

By way of illustration, Fletcher (2014) recounts his own previous life experiences of leaving the Royal Marines. After a number of unsuccessful applications

to the police and Fire Service, he moved into nightclub security work and was later recruited into a criminal gang. This position within an organized crime group offered him power, authority, camaraderie and renewed elevation of social status, albeit status in a social world outside of mainstream society, all of which he felt had been lost on leaving the military. After being convicted and imprisoned for firearms and drugs-supply offences, he described his time in prison as familiar and similar to the disciplined, regimented and autocratic environment of the military (Fletcher 2014).

Such problems with transition from military to civilian life essentially derive from a dislocation between veterans' military self-conception and their inability to reconcile this with their new civilian selves and a world that feels unfamiliar.

2.2.2 The formation and endurance of military Identity

Stryker (1980) argues that an individual's identity is formed through social and emotional attachment to a role-based group, with the most important factors being "the number of others to whom one relates through occupancy of a given position [and] the "importance" of others to whom one relates through occupancy of a given position" (Stryker 1980). Identity is formed, internalized and embedded through a combination of: interpersonal social relations with a role-based group; perceived rewards gained from the identity; and the investment one makes in the role identity (McCall and Simmons 1978; Turner 1978). All three of these conditions can be readily seen in the formation of military identities. The intense and prolonged nature of military service, which necessitates intense investment in the role, involves close interpersonal social relations with other military personnel creating kinship and camaraderie and provides benefits such as raised social status (Woodward and Jenkins 2011). All of this serves to shape and redefine an individual's identity to internalize a military identity (Hockey 1986).

Although military identity may not manifest as a single monolithic military identity (Kaspersen 2021), with its construction varying across different roles performed within the military (Martin 2022), certain characteristics such as that of physical and mental strength exist across all military roles, units and branches (Woodward 2003; Higate 2003).

With a constant focus on the achieving of objectives and endurance of hardships, many military personnel adopt a determined, task-oriented mind-set (Matthews 2009; Hall 2010; Firmin et al. 2016). Instilled into individuals early on in

their military careers and constantly reinforced throughout their service, this is characterised by resilience, resistance to physical and mental hardships and commitment to completion of a task (Green et al. 2010; Castillo et al. 2019). Military institutions build and relentlessly foster this mind-set in its personnel to the extent that it becomes an integral part of a person's identity, an identity characterised by pride, professionalism, stoicism, physical strength, mental resilience and endurance (De Bere 2003; Green et al. 2010; Hopton 2003). This identity has connotations of traditional masculinity (Arkin and Dobrofsky 1978; Woodward 2003), with individuals defined as "disciplined, aggressive, mentally and physically fit and the ultimate protector of the state" (Kaspersen 2021:3). Belkin (2012) notes that military masculine identity is applicable to most if not all of those serving in the military, pursued, promoted and adopted by military personnel regardless of sex, gender or sexual orientation. However, this is particularly pronounced amongst those serving in combat units, especially the infantry (Higate 2003; Hockey 1986).

Burdett et al. (2012) describe how dominant, embedded military identities can persist beyond the end of military service and are often carried forward into civilian life (see also: Brewster et al. 2020). Ashcroft (2014) further highlights the myriad ways in which this can impact upon an individual's adjustment to mainstream civilian culture on release from service and on one's subsequent life-course and experiences.

In civilian life, people can present different parts of their identities to different people in different contexts and life situations, for example 'the professional' at work with colleagues or 'the caring parent' at home with family, in what Goffman (1959) terms the *presentation of self*. This is not always the case for serving military personnel, who may spend months or years in an environment with continuous company of other military personnel, consistently presenting a single military identity (Harrison 2003). The duration and intensity with which this identity is performed can reinforce its internalisation and its predominance in social contexts outside of the occupational environment such as the family home or when in the company of civilian friends (Green et al. 2010; de Bere 2003). To observers, such as family and friends, individual military service personnel can come to be wholly defined by their status as a military person. Everett Hughes (1945) refers to this tendency of observers to believe that one's label or identity is more significant than other parts of an individual's background, character or identity as their *Master Status*, typically carrying with it determining behaviours, characteristics and traits.

For a person leaving the military, then, it is not only one component of identity that must be redefined, as might be the case for a civilian leaving a typical job. It is an entire identity and core sense of purpose and being that must be redrawn. This can be especially difficult when one is attached to, and places high value in, an identity imbued with special notions of pride, strength, respect and elevated social status, all of which might be perceived to be lost once one is detached from the role that defined him or her (Huniecutt 2022; Walker 2012). This can make detaching from life in the military and entering civilian life particularly difficult for some, especially those who have little with which to replace a perceived loss of status and pride in that status (Ashcroft 2014; de Bere 2003).

2.2.3. Culture Shock

Cohen and Taylor (1972) describe how the removal of an individual from a previous life and insertion into another can create profound feelings of dislocation from a previous self and lead to identity crises. Similarly, Goffman (1961) describes the shock experienced on entry into a total institution whereby the recruit must rapidly come to terms with a new and wholly unfamiliar way of life. Once inducted and conditioned to this complete, regimented way of life, institutionalised and absorbed of the institution's culture, the shock experienced on return back to civilian life can be similarly as sharp as that experienced on entry, as the service-leaver encounters a foreign set of beliefs, value system and cultural norms (Ashcroft 2014; Walker 2012; Lyne and Packham 2013). Despite already having experienced civilian life and civilian culture prior to military service, military veterans can find it difficult to adjust to their new civilian cultural environment and to construct a new civilian identity conducive to their new civilian lives (Walker 2012; de Bere 2003; Higate 2001).

2.2.4. From cohesion to disintegration

Military personnel can find it difficult to move from a world in which they depend heavily on others and in which others depend heavily on them, into what may feel like an individualistic, selfish and uncaring civilian society (de Bere 2003; Ashcroft 2014). Military personnel can often feel a sense of belonging to an institution that they (and others) regard with pride and associate with notions of honour, loyalty, duty and professionalism (Green et al. 2010; Walker 2012). They often consider themselves part of an expert team working together towards a clear and common goal, with

Woodward and Jenkins finding that military identity derives from “professional skill, competence, [military] expertise... and the significance of fictive kinship and camaraderie amongst soldiers” (2011:252). Moving back into the civilian world, service-leavers can feel alone, unsupported, un-needed and directionless, living a life without any clear purpose and no longer feeling as highly regarded by society (Ashcroft 2014; Walker 2012).

Furthermore, military service-leavers can find it difficult to relate to civilians who may not share concerns or fixations with order, organisation and presentation, with anxieties over punctuality and time-keeping feeding into an already entrenched intolerance of incompetence, delay, failure and unreliability (Higate 2003). Walker (2012) highlights both the consequent inability of ex-military personnel to relate to civilians who do not share these seemingly fundamental values, and the prevailing sense of elitism amongst military and veteran populations.

Issues with personal identities on leaving the military can be handled in a variety of ways. In researching veterans’ transitions from military to civilian lives, Thompson et al. (2017) reported that veterans found their military identities challenged in their new civilian lives as they interacted with new social groups with different norms, values and beliefs. They found that a veteran’s ability to manage his or her identity during the military to civilian transition was important to his or her understanding of who they were, how they functioned in society and their overall well-being, with peer support being crucial to this transition. Giffen and McNeil (1967) describe the process of transition in three phases: first, depression and anxiety experienced immediately before exit; second, role confusion on leaving; and third, if left untreated, maladjustment, asserting that “removal of the uniform and its insignia carries with it a certain loss of identity” (Giffen and McNeil 1967:851).

Despite this, the majority of military service-leavers do manage the transition from military to civilian life successfully and go on to live successful civilian lives (Iversen 2005; Ashcroft 2014), with McAllister et al. (2015) finding that fifty-six percent of post-9/11 service-leavers in the US reported no problems readjusting to civilian life (see also: Morin 2011). These service-leavers were able to move on from their military service lives, recognizing the existence of their military identity and its limited utility in mainstream civilian society, making a conscious effort to separate it from their present selves and forge new identities suited to their new civilian lives (Walker 2012).

Many service-leavers even carry forward positive aspects of their military identity, such as self-discipline and motivation into their new civilian lives and careers (Atherton 2009). For example, Walker found that some veterans emphasised the benefits of their military service in their new civilian careers and lives and “shoehorn[ed] [their] identity to fit a sense of a civilian-other” (2012:291). Some veterans attempting to reconcile their military identities with new civilian lives might find themselves gravitating towards occupations that are regimented and quasi-military in nature, such as the Police (Ivie and Garland 2011; Johnson 2013; Patterson 2002), Prison Service (Turner and Moran 2021) or Fire and Rescue Service (Bartlett et al. 2021). Higate describes these institutions where familiar notions of authority, status and camaraderie persist as “masculinized institutions” (2001:456). Others may find alternative mechanisms by which to ease the transition to civilian life such as engaging with veterans’ groups, socializing in the Royal British Legion club or pursuing team sporting activities which might offer masculine environments that foster feelings of camaraderie and social bonding (Higate 2003).

Whether done consciously or not, these can sometimes serve as a mechanism through which service-leavers can attempt to manage the transition into civilian life by seeking familiarity in an unfamiliar world (Higate 2003; Hunnicutt 2022). This desire is further reflected in the tendency of ex-military personnel to remain in or move to towns and cities with military traditions and military bases where they feel more secure and at ease among a familiar population whose history, culture and values might more closely reflect their own (Herman and Yarwood 2014; Teachman 2012).

2.2.5. Difficulties managing re-entry to civilian society

For some of those returning from the supportive military environment in which they feel valued, back to civilian society where they feel unsupported and no longer valued, difficulties in adjustment and reintegration can arise (Higate 2001; Walker 2012; Ashcroft 2014). Many service-leavers unable to successfully reshape or redefine their identity and reintegrate into civilian society, can go on to experience problems with social isolation and maladjustment (Hatch et al. 2013; MacManus and Wessley 2011). McAllistair et al. (2017) found that 44% of US military veterans reported some type of problem in managing their reintegration back into civilian society following their service. They found that “the resultant strain associated with this reintegration may be caused by an incongruence between veterans’ military identities and their civilian work

environment”, a phenomenon which McAllistair et al. (2017) term *Veteran Identity Strain*.

The problems that veterans can encounter on reintegration can manifest in a number of ways, with co-morbidity of these problems far from uncommon. These can include unemployment and subsequent financial difficulties (Carpenter 2020; Ashcroft 2014) which can also compound family problems and lead to homelessness (Higate 2000; Johnsen et al. 2008; Dandeker et al. 2005), with Royal British Legion (2014) estimating that three to six percent of the UK homeless population are veterans.

Some of those struggling to adjust can also suffer from mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression, or even more seriously from acute conditions directly related to their military service such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)⁴ or Moral Injury⁵ (Murphy and Busuttil 2019; Iversen et al. 2005). Rona et al. (2012) found the prevalence of TBI amongst UK personnel returning from Afghanistan and Iraq to be between 4.4% (for those in non-combat roles) and 9.5% (for those in combat roles). Meanwhile estimates of the prevalence of PTSD in UK veterans are between three (MacManus et al. 2013) and six percent (Richardson et al. 2010), with eight percent estimated amongst recent Iraq war veterans (Rhead et al. 2022), and incidences of various other mental health problems even higher (Murphy et al. 2008; Iversen and Greenberg 2018).

In the USA, however, estimates of PTSD amongst military veterans are somewhat higher, ranging from four percent (Richardson et al. 2010) up to as high as 30.9% (Tanielian and Jaycox 2008). This higher estimated prevalence could be due to a number of interconnected factors such as differences in the structure of health and social care systems in the UK and USA (MacManus and Wessely 2013) or other socio-political and cultural factors such as media influence and broader societal expectations (Richardson et al. 2010). Some scholars have raised concerns around over-reporting of combat exposure and seeking of PTSD diagnoses amongst US veterans which qualifies individuals for financial disability benefits and free healthcare from the US Government’s Veteran Affairs department (Frueh et al. 2018), an issue of

⁴ Traumatic Brain Injury is a traumatically induced structural injury and/or physiological disruption of brain function (NICE 2014)

⁵ Moral Injury is where sustained moral distress leads to impaired function or longer-term psychological harm (British Medical Association 2021; Williamson et al. (2019a; 2021a; 2021b).

lesser relevance to veterans in countries with a free public healthcare system like the UK (MacManus and Wessely 2013). While PTSD and other service-related trauma in US military veterans is a comparatively heavily researched area of study, such differences in jurisdictions underscore the need to exercise caution when considering this evidence in the context of UK military veterans.

Previous research has also highlighted problems of self-harm and suicide amongst UK ex-military populations (Jones et al. 2019; Pinder et al. 2011; Kapur et al. 2009; Sareen and Belik 2009; Kaplan et al. 2007), with Kapur et al. (2009) finding a higher risk of suicide in veterans than in non-veteran populations and veterans under the age of 24 being three times more likely to commit suicide than their non-veteran counterparts. Veterans can also experience problems with substance misuse, particularly alcohol which is already entrenched as an important part of military lifestyle and culture (Murphy and Turgoose 2019; Goodwin et al. 2017; Higate 2010). Indeed, Ashwick and Murphy (2018) conclude that military personnel and veterans are more likely to suffer from substance misuse problems than civilians.

Ultimately, these myriad problems can compound and lead to anti-social behaviour, aggression, and criminal offending (Short et al. 2018; Treadwell 2010; MacManus and Wessely 2011; Macmanus et al. 2013; Turgoose and Murphy 2019; Howard League 2011), particularly in those previously deployed on operations overseas and especially those exposed to combat. MacManus et al. (2015) estimated that 29% of UK and US veterans had exhibited aggressive behaviour in the month prior to the study, and that 10% had perpetrated a physical assault. All of these problems can be exacerbated by a persisting military identity characterized by pride, self-reliance and an aversion to seeking and accepting help (Williamson et al. 2019b; Wainwright et al. 2017; Rafferty et al. 2017; MacDonald 2014), with these issues ultimately leading some veterans into prison (Treadwell 2010; Howard League 2011).

2.2.6. Attitudes towards authority and the state

As documented below, military institutions strive to generate and maintain an uncompromising obedience to authority in their members. Failure or refusal to observe and conform to this obedience elicits (sometimes severe) sanction from the institution's staff, thereby creating a culture of compliance driven by constant anxiety over threat of sanction (Hockey 1986). Although those in higher positions of power and authority, such as commissioned officers, are sometimes derided or resented by

lower, non-commissioned ranks, obedience to authority is maintained due to a universal acknowledgement of authority in the system (King 2006; Elmsley 2013). In addition to this acknowledgement, however, Hockey (1986) also documents the willingness to comply with the instructions of staff in positions of authority out of respect for the individual authority holder. This is most often (but not exclusively) reserved for authority holders in non-commissioned ranks who are considered to have earned respect by having proven their worth in past performance in arduous circumstances such as combat, or else shown themselves to be good leaders who do not cause unnecessary work for their charges (Hockey 1986). Hockey (1986) describes this as a form of negotiated order.

Having been conditioned over time to the obeisance of authority, military personnel can develop and maintain a lasting attitude of acceptance towards authority and positive attitudes towards those in the institutions that govern society and protect its people (Hopton 2003; Higate 2001; Ashcroft 2014). Nevertheless, despite the acceptance of and ultimate support for state authority to govern society, ex-military personnel can be sceptical of those in control of the apparatus of government, namely civilian politicians and civil servants, believing that the state (and society) would be better off in the hands of the military which are seen to be stronger, more capable and more efficient than civilians (Tootal 2009; Junger 2010; Beattie 2009). Such sentiments are evident in numerous personal accounts of those returning to civilian life after military service (Hennessey 2010; Wolff 1994; Mason 1983; Junger 2010; Sledge 2002). In effect, non-ex-military powerholders can often lack what Bottoms and Tankebe (2012) term *audience legitimacy* amongst some veterans.

Ex-military personnel may also struggle with authorities in civilian society due to the absence of constant paternalistic oversight and enforcement of discipline, as previously experienced under Military authorities which might otherwise protect the individual from his or her impulses (Ashcroft 2014; Howard League 2011). Meanwhile, the kinds of offences handled with discretion in the military may, in civilian society, result in severe and consequential formal sanctions considered excessive and unjust (Emsley 2013). This could result in feelings of betrayal as one is punished for behaviours now regarded as illegal that were previously taught and encouraged in the military, e.g. a mutually consensual bar-fight, and which might not be considered to be morally wrong within the context of military culture (Hockey 1986).

2.3. The Total Institution

Although far from identical institutions, the prison and the military undoubtedly share many similarities. Both are structured, disciplined and autocratic state-governed institutions with clearly defined chains of staff hierarchy. Both seek to maintain compliance with their regime through a system of defined rules and regulations which are strictly enforced through coercion and threat of force.

In *Asylums*, Goffman (1961) describes both prisons and military institutions as total institutions; institutions which he defines as “a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable amount of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life” (Goffman 1961:11). He describes all aspects of life activity in total institutions as being conducted in the same location with the same group of people, treated alike and intentionally cut off from the outside world, living, working, eating, socialising and sleeping together in mass-living arrangements. Daily life activities are tightly scheduled and orchestrated under a single unitary authority, directed from above through a system of explicit formal rulings and a clearly defined hierarchy of governing staff. These enforced activities together form a single rational plan directed at fulfilling the institution’s official aims, whether those aims be the containment and control of imprisoned citizens or the maintenance of a constant state of military readiness for warfare (Goffman 1961).

2.3.1. Questioning the total institution

In the decades following Goffman’s publication of *Asylums*, some scholars have sought to further interrogate and re-conceptualise Goffman’s account of the total institution, challenging the extent to which the total institution that Goffman described really is quite so ‘total’. The majority of this challenge has centred around the institution of the prison, although the totality of some other institutions has also been questioned (see: Martens and Laenen 2019; Mali 2008; Altheide 1991). Farrington (1992) questioned the level of isolation of the prison and challenged Goffman’s notion of complete submergence of the inmate into a prisoner identity. He asserted that the “not-so-total institution” of the prison was “enclosed within an identifiable-yet-permeable membrane of structures, mechanisms and policies, all of which maintain, at most, a selected and imperfect degree of separation between what exists inside of and what lies beyond prison walls” (Farrington 1992:7).

Advancing this critique, Baer and Ravneberg (2008) contended that prisons were not sufficiently set apart from the rest of society, and that the inside of prisons shared too many features with the outside world (and vice-versa), for them to be considered truly 'total'. They called for resisting the dualistic terms suggested by Goffman and argued for prisons to alternatively be considered 'heteretopias', a concept which Foucault (1998) used to describe places that have the effect of "[l]ooking into a mirror, it is as if you are somewhere else, in another space separate from your own, but you also come back to your current space" (Baer and Ravneberg 2008:208). Baer and Ravneberg note a number of features of the inside of the prison such as sofas, the presence of newspapers and occasional supervision of prisoners by teachers instead of guards, as evidence of the non-totality of the prison as an institution, while accepting that their reflections might not concur with those of prisoners actually living prison lives. This view has been supported by other scholars within the field of carceral geography, such as Moran et al. (2013), who also contend that prison is not sufficiently isolated from society to justify being termed a total institution (see also: Gill et al. 2013; McCorkle et al. 1995).

Ellis builds on the arguments of these earlier scholars by arguing that prisons are porous institutions with "pre-defined openings... through which influences may permeate from the outside in and from the inside out" (2021:176). She highlights three features of prisons which evidence their porosity as opposed to their totality. Firstly, that prisons open their gates daily to staff, visiting family and friends and to new prisoner admissions, all of whom inevitably bring aspects of their outside knowledge, information and culture into the prison. Secondly, that the surveillance and punishment of prisoners is dictated by outside political and economic interests. Thirdly, that outside institutions regularly introduce into the prison attitudes, practices and resources that may shape the material and interpretative experiences of an individual within the institution, through a process she terms *institutional infusion* (Ellis 2021). Ellis argues, contrary to Goffman's assessment, that prisoners do not undergo a process of total self-mortification and that Goffman's conception of the total institution is a mischaracterization which fails to account for "a scale of porosity [which] allows for more apt international and comparative research on prisons" and can vary across location, security level and type of prison (2021:194).

2.3.2. Support for the total institution

Contesting these arguments, however, some scholars have argued that such a scale of openness and porosity does not necessarily negate or replace the concept of the total institution. In support of Goffman's analysis, Davies (1989) describes a scale of closedness and openness of total institutions, with prisons situated at the extreme of the closed end, military institutions in the intermediate of the scale and institutions such as kibbutzim and US college sororities at the open end of the scale (Davies 1989).

Also defending Goffman's conception of the total institution, Schliehe opposes efforts to reject Goffman's analysis, arguing that "there is no warrant for dismissing total institutions as an old and disposable concept" (2016:32). She acknowledges the partially open state of the prison which allows the passage of certain elements into the prison while preventing others, and maintains that prisons (and other total institutions) remain essentially closed institutions, separated from the outside world, as opposed to the more "open field" (p.21) proposed by Baer and Ravneberg (2008) and others. She points out that Goffman identified this within his original analysis and accounted for the semi-permeable nature of the total institution, while maintaining a "tangible distinction between 'inside' and 'outside'" (Schliehe 2016:22). This view is supported by Crewe et al. (2013) who also noted that Goffman himself identified certain domains within the prison which reflected more normal life from outside, recognizing and acknowledging the often less-than-total nature of prison life.

Goffman's analysis is not without its limitations and certain aspects of his conception of the total institution may now be of less relevance to some institutions than they were at the time of his writing, especially as some institutions have become increasingly open and porous. Overall, though, Goffman's original account of the total institution did not insist on a conception of institutions that were completely isolated and impenetrable to influences from the outside world. As Schliehe asserts, "Goffman's account of total institutions does not set them up as isolated, impermeable, wholly micro-managed establishments conditioning of every facet of an inmate's life-world, identity, possible future, outside contacts and more" (2016:31). In actuality, Goffman accounted for the exchange of influence between the inside and the outside of institutions in his noting the movements of people in and out of total institutions. Indeed, in his original analysis, for example, he described military camps themselves as archetypal total institutions where aspects of the outside world and aspects of inside

institutions feature in each. Military personnel have regular contact with friends and family outside of their institutions, leave their institutions on home leave and may even have their immediate families living with them within the military camp. This porosity of the institution can be considered a *feature* of the total institution, rather than counter-evidence of its existence, and Ellis's (2021) proposal of a scale of porosity is a suitable lens through which to study closed institutions and compare prison establishments.

2.3.3. Structure and regime in a total institution

Since the time of Goffman's writings, prisons in England and Wales have undergone many changes and reforms with the progressive softening of penal power in recent decades (Crewe 2011b). Prisons have become less definitively closed, isolated and impenetrable and have become increasingly open to penetration by external influences. Nevertheless, despite increased communication and correspondence with the outside world, prisoners today are still closed off to the majority of outsiders and live formally administered lives largely cut off from the outside world, conforming to Goffman's definition of the total institution.

Many physical features of the prison also remain. Jewkes and Moran (2017) describe the clearly defined prison perimeters enclosed by high walls or fences often topped with barbed wire surrounding a range of buildings which make up the prisoner's world, including medical units, stores, kitchens, workshops, education units, gymnasias, chapels, senior staff offices, security buildings and residential units. The compartmentalised residential units contain individual cells in which prisoners live, sleep and often eat, typically sharing this space with other prisoners. Most social interaction is with other prisoners on the same wing or unit with some opportunity for interaction with others during work, education, physical exercise and religious activities (Morgan and Liebling 2007; Crewe 2009).

The arrangement of military establishments bear striking resemblance to the arrangement of prisons (Moran and Turner 2022a). In a similar fashion, military bases and camps are cut off from the outside world and enclosed within defined perimeters surrounded by protective barbed-wire-topped fences (Hockey 1986), with other military establishments such as Navy ships similarly cut off and self-contained (Zurcher 1965). These sites often contain a similar range of buildings to the prison. Large residential blocks house military personnel in mass, shared accommodation, and other buildings on the sites contain shared facilities where inmates eat, work,

exercise and socialize together. Even when away from the base, military personnel share shelter and continue to live, work, eat and sleep together 'in the field' (Hockey 2003). In addition to similarities in architecture, infrastructure and accommodation arrangements, military institutions' regimes, like those of the prison, are heavily rooted in strict adherence to and enforcement of rules and regulations (Emsley 2013; Siebold 2001; Sparks et al. 1996).

Modern prisons operate according to formal rules, practices and procedures which govern life within them under a central institutional authority. Non-compliance with rules is subject to disciplinary sanction aimed at inducing obedience and conformity amongst inmates and ultimately achieving the official institutional aims of maintaining control and order (Sparks et al. 1996). Military institutions operate in much the same way with strict rules, regulations and military laws used by the institutional authorities to govern the lives of its personnel, enforce discipline and impose sanction on those who fail to comply (Beever 1990; Siebold 2001, 2007). These rules are also ultimately aimed at achieving the official institutional aims which, in the case of the military, are of maintaining a constant state of readiness for warfare (Emsley 2013). Both institutions, which exhibit such similarities in regime, infrastructure and institutional practices can still today be classified as total institutions.

2.4. The Pains of Imprisonment

The institutional structures and practices of the total institution impact heavily upon those living within their regimes, shaping and reshaping their views, values and belief systems, as well as their perceptions of the world around them. Sykes's (1958) analysis of the 'pains of imprisonment' outlines the five main deprivations imposed on the individual, which result from the prison's restrictions and conditions, and illustrates the effect that these can have on inmates. Although Sykes' analysis was concerned only with the prison, it can be equally applied to the military to highlight similarities in the experiences of those living within the two institutions' regimes. Furthermore, it raises questions as to how an individual, having experienced life within one total institution, might experience life within another.

2.4.1. Deprivation of liberty

The first of Sykes's pains of imprisonment is the deprivation of liberty in which the inmate is involuntarily cut off and isolated from family, relatives and friends and is

described by Sykes as “painfully depriving or frustrating in terms of lost emotional relationships, of loneliness and boredom” (1958:65). In this ‘double confinement’ both to the institution and within it, the prisoner is forever reminded that “he has foregone his claim to the status of a fully-fledged, *trusted* member of society” (1958:65).

This pain is more directly relevant to prisoners who are coercively removed from society, typically against their will, and confined to the prison, often causing great psychological distress (Sykes 1958; Cohen and Taylor 1972). Liebling (2011a) contends that this loss of liberty is at the heart of imprisonment and makes imprisonment inherently depriving and painful. In contrast to imprisonment, enlistment in the UK military is voluntary with individuals freely choosing to surrender their liberty to the institution for a set period of time. However, once enlisted, the individual’s liberty is immediately curtailed as he or she is removed from society and no longer allowed to leave, with little option but to serve the full length of service committed to (Beavor 1990).

Although military personnel still experience a deprivation of liberty, Scott (2011) points out that in total institutions such as the military, recruits have agency unavailable to prisoners in being able to choose to enter the institutions and adhere to the institutional regime. Having essentially chosen and consented their restriction of liberty and being compensated financially for doing so, they are therefore likely to experience this deprivation in different ways to prisoners. For prisoners the deprivation of liberty creates boredom, loneliness, frustration and loss of emotional relationships (Cohen and Taylor 1972), while in the military, although some of these emotions undoubtedly feature (Maeland and Brunstad 2009; Ahall and Gregory 2017; Braswell and Kushner 2012), they are often supplemented, negated or otherwise replaced with comradeship, mutual support, close emotional relationships with peers and a sense of collective goals and destiny, ultimately making for a less painful experience than imprisonment (Siebold 2007; Green et al. 2010; Kirche 2009). The deprivation of liberty is therefore present in both institutions but due to a fundamental difference in how it manifests it is experienced differently in the two institutions of the prison and the military.

2.4.2. Deprivation of goods and services

Sykes’ second deprivation is that of goods and services which are restricted or altogether withheld from inmates in total institutions (Sykes 1958). Previously accessible outside services, for example restaurants, medical services and

recreational facilities, are replaced by those provided by the institution and inmates are supplied with prison or military issued clothing and other items. In prisons, personal clothing is often only permitted when inmates are considered to have earned the privilege (Khan 2020). In the military it is only permitted for those beyond a certain stage in recruit training and when off duty (Hockey 1986). Cigarettes, confectionary and certain other products can often be purchased in the prison canteen, or in the NAAFI⁶ shop on the military camp or ship (Khan 2020; Crewe 2009). For military personnel, however, these deprivations are in some ways less severe and consequential. When not on operations, exercise or confined to camp or ship, military personnel may access ordinary civilian goods and services by travelling into civilian towns, freedoms only enjoyed by those prisoners who qualify for day release, home leave or work outside of an open prison (Crewe 2009; King and McDermott 1995). Furthermore, unlike the prison where alcohol is expressly forbidden, alcohol is often available to those in the military who have completed their recruit training and are not on exercise or operations overseas (Goodwin et al. 2017; Jones and Fear 2011).

Nevertheless, deprivation of goods and services for military personnel can be particularly acute during routine and prolonged deployments on field exercises, operations overseas in conflict zones or out at sea. Those in such circumstances may spend prolonged periods of time outside, exposed to the elements, effectively sleeping rough either on or in the earth with restricted or no access to basic ablutions, electricity or fresh food (Hockey 1986, 2003).⁷ Furthermore, with work a near-constant for many deployed on exercise and operations, recreation is limited (Ahall and Gregory 2015; Junger 2010). By contrast, prisoners typically do not encounter periods of such acute deprivation but rather a constant but moderate level of restricted access to outside goods and services coupled with regular access to cooked food, sanitation, heating, electric lighting, a bed and in many cases television, radio and other recreational activities (Crewe 2007).

2.4.3. Deprivation of heterosexual relationships

Third for Sykes is the deprivation of heterosexual relationships as the inmate is

⁶ Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes (NAAFI) is the provider of retail and recreation services to HM Forces personnel on military camps and bases.

⁷ Field rations often consist of meals in vacuum sealed bags designed for long-term storage.

“figuratively castrated by his involuntary celibacy” (1958:70) leading to psychological problems and anxieties concerning individuals’ masculinity. This is similarly experienced in both the military and the prison yet, as Sykes alludes to, it is often more pronounced for prisoners. Male-only accommodation and the prohibition of conjugal visits in prison limits sexual intimacy and can generate various psychological anxieties related to masculine self-image (Sykes 1958; Barter 1997; Earle 2018). In the military, many personnel reside in somewhat similar mass-living arrangements, in single-sex barracks from which the opposite sex are prohibited (Hockey 1986). Furthermore, the under-representation of women in the military, particularly in the male-dominated combat arms, restricts contact with the opposite sex⁸, with Keeling et al. (2015) noting that most military work, but especially time away for training and operational deployments, can often negatively impact romantic relationships. However, despite some conditions and restrictions, intimate relationships are permitted in the military and made possible when military personnel are not away on exercise or operations and when not confined to camp (Keeling et al. 2015). Military personnel are also permitted to engage in same-sex relationships, a practice still technically prohibited in prisons (Loucks 2000).

2.4.4. Deprivation of autonomy

The fourth deprivation is of autonomy where the inmate is “subjected to a vast body of rules and commands which are designed to control his behavior in minute detail” (Sykes 1958:73). Both prisoners and military personnel experience severe restrictions to personal autonomy, with their daily lives organised, governed and directed by the institutional authorities through rules, law and regulations over which they have very little influence, coupled with forced respect and deference to authority (Sykes 1958; Crewe 2009; King and McDermott 1995).

Prisoners are allocated to prisons based primarily on the Prison Service’s operational requirements, with little consideration of personal preferences. A prisoner is assigned to a house block and cell which will be routinely searched and inspected by staff and in which he or she will live his or her life until released or moved elsewhere

⁸ Although women account for approximately 11% of the total UK military population (Ministry of Defence 2021) at the time of fieldwork being conducted, most frontline combat roles were preserved for men only (Ministry of Defence 2015; Emsley 2013).

(Crewe 2009; King and McDermott 1995). Inmates' daily lives are orchestrated by prison regime with permission required from staff to perform many basic life functions and movement around the establishment restricted. Prisoners have no choice but to accept the finality of authoritarian decisions made about their lives (Sykes 1958). Information regarding inmates' fate and destiny is intentionally restricted and decisions are made by the institution with limited consultation with inmates themselves (Crewe 2009). Failure or refusal to adhere to this restricted lifestyle and comply with the institution's directions is met with sanction, physical coercion (Sykes 1958; Goffman 1961) and psychological coercion (Crewe 2009).

Military personnel experience a similar set of circumstances whereby operational service requirements typically dictate where individuals are posted (Matthews 2009; Keeling et al. 2015). On arrival at their unit's location or aboard their ship, personnel are assigned accommodation which is subject to regular, intrusive inspections and searches and are sometimes more crowded and cramped than prison accommodation, especially on board naval vessels. Zurcher documents life aboard a Naval ship where "each day is tightly scheduled by a 'plan of the day' [which] specifies all the day's activities from reveille until taps: what and when ship's work will be, what uniforms will be worn during which time of day, what time meals will be taken, who will be on duty" (1965:390). Among others, Hockey (1986) and Boer (2001) have documented similarly structured regimes in other branches of the military where movements and activities take place under strict direction and surveillance of the institution's authorities, and permission is required from staff to perform many basic life activities.

Similar to prisons, decisions are made by military authorities without inmates' input, with information regarding their fate and destiny intentionally withheld, creating what Hockey's describes as "'mushroom soldiers,' kept in the dark and fed on shit" (1986:134). Feld (1959) asserts that this is done intentionally to exercise power and control over subordinates. He contends that "[t]he structuring of information is an integral part of military discipline... and thus enables commanders to maintain control over subordinates at times when nothing else responds to their will. Confusion and uncertainty strengthen their hand" (Feld 1959:19). This mirrors the prison in which Sykes describes how ignorance "is deliberately fostered by the prison officials in that explanations are often withheld as a matter of calculated policy" (1958:75). It is through this creation and maintenance of ignorance that institutional control is maintained over

inmates and their autonomy deprived.

One notable difference between the experience in the military and the prison, however, is the existence in some prisons of “bottom-up” participatory governance practices through bodies such as ‘prisoner councils’. These can provide prisoners with a means to voice grievances, challenge injustices and influence governance practices, albeit to a limited degree (Weaver 2018; Barry et al. 2016). Such organized bodies are prohibited in military institutions and would be considered mutinous if they were to organize independent of the institution’s authority. Hockey found a complete absence of power amongst those at the bottom of the institution, noting that “the privates possessed no formal power to influence how their lives were ordered, and despite the presence of the negotiated order between them and their superiors, the main features of privates’ existence remained largely outside their own control” (1986:131). Ability to gain or express a degree of autonomy through the shaping of the institution’s regime or through challenging the rules is therefore absent in military institutions, and failure or refusal to comply with the institutional regime is often met with physical coercion (Beevor 1990; Hockey 1986; Emsley 2013).

2.4.5. Deprivation of security

Finally for Sykes, prisoners are deprived of security as they are held in close confinement with other prisoners who may attack, bully, exploit or steal from them, while violence from staff is also a possibility (Sykes 1958; King and McDermott 1995). Warr (2016) outlines the particular psychological pains surrounding security in prison caused by prisoners’ need to constantly monitor their behaviour, from interactions and conversations to glances, smiles, laughs and yawns, to ensure that they do not inadvertently cause offence to others who then might threaten or enact violence in response. Although military personnel are unlikely to share accommodation with convicted violent offenders, bullying, stealing, exploitation and violence is not an altogether uncommon experience in the military (Stuart and Szeszeran 2020; Zedlacher and Koeszegi 2021; Mageroy et al. 2009). Coetzee et al. (2013) found evidence of bullying between peers in the UK military, while noting a downward trend in such incidents, and an independent review by Blake (2006) revealed evidence of bullying, abuse and violence towards recruits by staff in the British Army, occasionally resulting in injury and death (Blake 2006; Ministry of Defence 2014a). Indeed, Emsley (2013) illustrates how, within some units, violence is treated as a recreational activity

and a necessary and celebrated part of a soldier's occupational lifestyle, a claim corroborated by other analyses (see: Hockey 1986; Higate 2001) and numerous personal accounts of military service (e.g. Hennessey 2010; Junger 2010).

Second, the security of military personnel is directly compromised during training exercises and operations in which injuries and deaths occur with relative frequency. Dandeker and Gow (1999) highlight the unique demands placed on military personnel who are trained to kill and, when required, to sacrifice themselves. On operational deployments in particular, personnel are sent into perilous situations to engage in combat with the enemy where there is a known risk and typically an expectation that some will be seriously injured and killed (Siebold 2001; Higate 2003). To illustrate the practical effects of this, from 2000 to 2020, 857 UK military service personnel were killed on operations overseas or on exercise in the UK or abroad, the majority of these killed intentionally by hostile enemy action (Ministry of Defence 2021a; 2021b; 2021c). By comparison, over the same time period, 322 people are recorded to have died in prison custody in England and Wales from other than natural causes and self-inflicted deaths (Ministry of Justice 2021).⁹ During this period, the prison population of England and Wales was just under half the size of the regular UK military population,¹⁰ rendering UK military personnel at greater risk of injury or death. While military personnel are routinely sent by their institutions into situations where some of them are expected to die or be maimed, this is not typically the case for prisoners.

These deprivations imposed by the total institution, first detailed by Sykes and acknowledged by Goffman, are features of life in both prisons and military institutions today. For ex-military personnel, their familiarity with such hardships in the military might prepare them for the experience of the pains of imprisonment, potentially affecting the ways in which they might ultimately cope with these.

⁹ Between 2000 and 2020, the Ministry of Justice (2021) recorded 46 deaths by homicide and 276 accidental deaths, almost all of which are estimated by Prisons and Probation Ombudsman to be from drugs use (PPO 2021). Over the same period the Ministry of Defence (2021a) recorded 542 deaths resulting from intentional hostile enemy action (Ministry of Defence 2021c), i.e. homicide (e.g. shooting, bombing, shelling etc.) and 150 accidental deaths (Ministry of Defence 2021b).

¹⁰ During this period, the prison population of England and Wales fluctuated between 65,000 and 80,000, while the population of UK military personnel was between 146,000 and 207,000.

2.4.6. Additional pains of imprisonment

Since Sykes and Goffman first detailed the pains of imprisonment over sixty years ago, more recent scholars have illuminated various other deprivations, hardships and pains associated with imprisonment. In his research on long-term imprisonment, Flanagan (1980) found that prisoners faced acute hardships in the form of feelings of loneliness, thoughts of suicide and anxieties around missing life outside and worries about release. Such findings are reflected in more recent research by Crewe et al. (2017) who describe pains relating to prisoners' experiences around missing family and friends, the inability to trust others and a longing for more privacy.

Other, more contemporary pains reflect recent changes in the nature of imprisonment. With the softening of penal power and a move towards more of a risk-based, managerial approach to prison governance. Crewe (2011) describes the ways in which prisoners are induced into regulating their own behaviour in prisons through the use of incentive systems, rehabilitation plans and psychological assessments, thereby generating pains of self-governance that create a particularly restrictive, constraining and 'tight' experience of imprisonment (see below).

Haggerty and Bucerius (2020) further outline how many of the pains of imprisonment identified in recent years apply heterogeneously across the prison population, affecting some prisoners more than others depending on a range of individual factors. For example, older prisoners may suffer from the failings of the institution to account for their needs for example, by not providing extra time to complete activities or age-appropriate furniture and infrastructure to account for limited mobility (Crawley 2005). Conversely, younger prisoners may experience particular frustrations at having to submit themselves to the institution's behavioural regime and can experience profound confusion about where to express agency within the prison's regime (Cox 2011).

Other pains of imprisonment can be gender-related, with women generally finding prison more painful than men due to a number of factors including mental health vulnerabilities (Crewe et al. 2017), anxieties about the risk of sexual abuse (Jones et al. 2019) and distress at being separated from children (Foster 2012; Rowe 2012), although this can also be relevant for men (Ugelvik 2014). Similarly, for men, hyper-masculine cultures in prison, which Jewkes (2005) describes as becoming increasingly extreme with a proliferating patriarchy, can cause men to become victims of bullying and violence. Some pains of imprisonment may be related to cultural

backgrounds, with Ugelvik (2014) finding that male prisoners from certain minority ethnic groups experienced infantilising prison regimes as a particular affront to the masculine self-image associated with their ethnic and cultural identity.

Some of these pains and hardships might be familiar to people in military institutions; particularly those of missing friends and family, desiring more privacy and worrying over life after discharge from service. However, many are particular to the experience of prison and might not typically feature in military institutions.

2.5. Staff and inmates of the total institution

A fundamental feature of the total institution is the hierarchical structure of authority and the institution's staff. Goffman divides those living and working within total institutions into two distinct classes, 'staff' and 'inmates' who he describes as occupying "two different social and cultural worlds... jogging alongside each other with points of official contact but little mutual penetration" (1961:20). Social mobility between these groups is severely restricted and a vast social distance between the two classes is intentionally maintained to create a clear divide between the governing and the governed. This ensures the submission of those in the inmate class to those in the staff class, guaranteeing their deference to the authority of superiors and ultimately enforcing discipline and compliance (Feld 1959; Hockey 1986). However, such a structure also creates within each class negative and hostile conceptions of the other. Staff consequently perceive themselves as righteous and superior compared to inmates who are viewed with suspicion and distrust, while inmates see themselves as inferior and staff as condescending and mean (Goffman 1961).

2.5.1. Differences in staff structures

The staff-inmate divide is evident in both the prison, where there exists a clear distinction between staff and prisoners, and also the military, between those with rank and those without, particularly between officers and 'other ranks' (Sparks et al. 1996; Dandeker and Gow 1999). However, this particular aspect of Goffman's analysis is underdeveloped and pays insufficient attention to staff structures in military institutions. Some total institutions, such as the prison and the asylum, have a binary staff-inmate structure whereby both classes are clearly defined and fixed. The 'staff' class are situated in positions of power and authority over the governed class of 'inmates', with Goffman's described suspicious and hostile attitudes towards each

class still often evident (Liebling and Arnold 2004), although this has lessened substantially since the time of Goffman's writing with the softening of penal power (Crewe 2011b). However, while this binary structure still exists in prisons, it is less relevant to the military context. Goffman does recognise that staff-inmate structures of some total institutions can vary, referring briefly, for example, to a separate staff stratum of hospital nursing staff and boarding school house-keeping staff, and also to the single internally stratified ranking system of the nunnery (Goffman 1961). However, limited attention is paid to an important aspect of staff-inmate hierarchy which is crucial to understanding authority, discipline and relations in some total institutions, particularly the military.

Goffman describes the same division of personnel in the military as in the prison, with commissioned officers constituting the staff class and 'enlisted men' constituting the inmates. There is a clear divide in the military between officers and other enlisted ranks, not least in terms of social and cultural differences, with officers selected and recruited largely from the university-educated and 'cultured' middle classes, while enlisted ranks often require little in terms of pre-entry educational qualifications and life experiences (Beever 1990; Davies 1989). These two classes inhabit separate social worlds with minimal penetration and are separated by a social and cultural gulf which Hockey describes as "a division so profound that it almost resembles the legally entrenched divisions between the 'estates' – nobility and commoners – of medieval Europe" (Hockey 1986:3). However, amongst the enlisted men is a third stratum of intermediary personnel situated between the officers and the lowest ranking personnel which does not feature in Goffman's account. These military staff hierarchies even provide substantial opportunities for upward social mobility that are otherwise not seen in other total institutions, such as the prison (Moskos 1976).

This third stratum consists of a large body of Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) who are promoted from the lower ranks and whose role it is to supervise, manage and control lower enlisted ranks. NCOs relay to lower staff the orders given by commissioned officers whilst also assuming responsibility for the enlisted ranks' obedience of these orders, their performance and their welfare (Siebold 2007; King 2006). These intermediaries themselves are structured hierarchically and are subdivided down into Junior NCOs (JNCOs) and Senior NCOs (SNCOs), each with further sub-divisions. The former are concerned mainly with supervising the lowest ranks under their command with minimal direct officer contact while the latter act as the direct

link between the Commissioned Officers and the junior NCOs, with orders cascading down through to the lowest ranks. One's position in the hierarchy of what Moskos terms the "caste system of rank structure" (1976:61) generally dictates the degree of contact with officers and the lowest ranks, with higher positions bringing greater interaction with officers and lesser interaction with lower ranks. This hierarchical structure aims to limit contact between commissioned officers and lower ranks so as to maintain the social distance deemed necessary to maintaining deference to authority and enforcement of discipline (Hockey 1986; Moskos 1976).

2.5.2. NCOs: Staff or inmates?

Previous literature fails to clarify whether such intermediary personnel might be classified as staff or inmates. Goffman's categorization of the enlisted ranks – of which NCOs are part – as part of the inmate class might be reasonable since NCOs are chosen by staff from amongst the inmate class to supervise, monitor and control other inmates, much like "the trusty" or "straw boss" (Goffman 1961:109) described in other institutions. Ultimately NCOs are promoted from the lowest ranking enlisted men and still occupy the same social and cultural world which Goffman uses as a basis for defining the two distinct classes. Although separated socially from lower ranks to some degree, with many NCOs eating and socialising in separate venues¹¹ and living and sleeping in separate accommodation, they are still defined officially as enlisted 'other ranks' by the institution. NCOs do not enjoy many of the freedoms and privileges enjoyed by commissioned officers and are still heavily restricted in terms of autonomy, access to information and influence over their own destiny (Beavor 1990).

In some other respects, NCOs could be seen as part of the staff class. Although starting their time in the institution at the bottom of the hierarchy - as an 'inmate' devoid of all power and authority – on each incremental promotion up the chain of command, the individual is increasingly endowed with official power and authority over subordinates. With this comes increased pay, privileges, access to information and influence over one's fate, especially on reaching the Senior NCO ranks where increased access to and interaction with Commissioned Officers allows for some limited input into decision making. Furthermore, unlike the prison or asylum, it is

¹¹ NCOs typically dine and socialise together in their respective Junior NCOs or Senior NCOs mess, away from the other enlisted men.

possible in rare circumstances for an NCO to be 'promoted from the ranks' into the Commissioned officer ranks (Beevor 1990; Hockey 1986).

The fact that NCOs occupy a different social and cultural class to commissioned officers from whom they are intentionally separated and with whom they have only limited contact could at first suggest that they might best be located in the inmate class, alongside those of lower ranks with whom they share social and cultural values, have greater personal contact and endure many of the shared deprivations and hardships described above. However, the fact that NCOs perform a professional role within the institution which is directly comparable in function and status to junior staff in other quasi-military institutions, and that they enjoy, at least theoretically, limitless upward social mobility, leads to the conclusion that NCOs are best defined as belonging to the staff class, within perhaps a less rigid view of the staff-inmate structure in the total institution which allows for additional strata and more flexible incremental hierarchies that account for social mobility.

2.5.3. Military veterans as prison staff

Research by Turner and Moran (2023) has revealed that many former military NCOs can be found amongst the ranks of prison staff where they have exchanged their staff role in the military for one in the prison. Moran and Turner (2022b) estimate that over a quarter of prison staff in England and Wales have served in the UK military, and that at certain points in recent history (through the 60s, 70s and 80s) this could have been as high as 75% of operational prison staff. Moran et al. (2019) assert that former military personnel have long been desired, even directly targeted, as ideal recruits by the Prison Service due to their presumed attitudes towards discipline, punctuality, presentation, obedience and their perceived aptitude for using authority (see also: Crawley and Crawley 2008; Shaw 2012), all of which are attributes traditionally sought by the prison service. This recruitment of ex-military personnel has been further aided by the tendency for service-leavers to gravitate towards civilian careers in the protective services, such as police, fire service and prison work (Turner and Moran 2023). Indeed Moran (2013) found that many veteran prison staff had directly and intentionally sought such employment on leaving the military with around one in five seeking employment in the prison service specifically, primarily because of the desire to continue in crown service. While expressing commitment to their new profession, Turner and Moran (2023) found that ex-military staff expressed certain frustrations

with the prison's organisation, lack of cohesion and poor leadership, when comparing this to their previous military institutions.

While research into military veterans as prison staff is limited, some initial findings suggest that the recruitment of ex-military personnel into prison roles can shape institutional culture (Shaw 2012; Moran et al. 2019). Some research also suggests that the recruitment of military veterans as prison staff might produce positive outcomes in prisoner treatment. While based only on prison officer perceptions, research by Moran and Turner found that participants "believed that military service gave ex-military staff the life experience and outlook to change offenders, being adaptable to situations and treating others decently whilst having a good sense of discipline and fairness ... [T]he possession of a certain degree of confidence... enabled 'order' to be kept through engendering respect, and *without* use of the physical prowess" (2022b:409). Such abilities and attitudes in prison work conform to Crewe et al.'s (2014) view that prison officers who perform their duties well use informal means to resolve issues where possible, with more forceful responses kept in reserve until needed. Furthermore, Moran and Turner (2022b) found evidence of increased empathy, care and compassion for prisoners amongst veteran prison staff, especially for veteran prisoners who they sometimes felt had been damaged by their service, and had lacked support on leaving the military.

Perhaps as a result of staff members' positive perceptions of veterans, research by Turner and Moran (2023) identified better relationships between prisoners and veteran staff, echoing earlier, tentative findings from HMIP (2014a). Prisoners preferred veteran prison staff who they perceived to be more professional, reliable and trustworthy (Tait 2011), reflecting Crewe's (2011) typology of 'traditional-professional' prison officers. Such prison officers ascribed to traditional prison values and culture of discipline and were seen by prisoners to be confident, boundaried, clear, vigilant and knowledgeable. Such an approach is preferred by prisoners to those which Crewe (2011) describes as 'traditional-resistant', characterised by cynical, petty, disrespectful behaviour and preoccupied with control.

2.6. Culture of Total Institutions

Total institutions such as the military and the prison, which are isolated from the rest of mainstream society, develop and maintain particular organisational cultures.

Dandeker and Gow assert that “formal organizations normally possess both formal and informal cultures... that comprises a set of ideas, beliefs and symbols that provide a definition of the world for a group or organization and guides for action” (1999:59). An organisation’s formal culture includes its vision as expressed in its mission statement, its policies and specific procedures as guides for action and its even more specific rules or prohibitions. Meanwhile, an organisation’s “informal culture comprises those elements of shared values and beliefs that are not evident in or sanctioned by the formal culture” (Dandeker and Gow 1999:59).

Goffman describes an almost monolithic universal culture of the total institution and a homogenous set of social values held by inmates living within them, placing little emphasis on the differences across and within different institutions. Institutional culture as well as inmates’ social norms, practices, beliefs and values are in fact unlikely to be consistent across all total institutions. McEwan highlights that within an institutional environment, “the attitudes, values, social adaptability, self-concepts, and behavior of members vary substantially with organizational structure” (1980:114). Dandeker and Gow contend that “[t]he culture of the military is unique. The functional imperatives of war and military operations ensure that the Services stand apart from civilian society” (1999:60), and even different military institutions have their own specific cultures. Likewise, the culture of the prison is also specific to these particular institutional forms (Crewe 2009). However, before delving into an analysis of the fundamental differences that exist between the cultures of the prison and the military, the literature suggests that there exist some important similarities.

2.6.1. Cultural similarities

In prison, inmates share living space and ablutions with numerous others in mass-living environments which severely restrict inmates’ privacy. With this lack of privacy is found the common-place frank discussion of otherwise taboo subjects amongst prisoners (Crewe 2009; Goffman 1961), often dominated by stories of sexual activity and sexist and objectifying discussion of the opposite sex (de Viggiani 2018; Jewkes 2005). This is strikingly similar to the military where Hockey found pervasive dark humour and that soldiers’ “barrack room conversation was heavily monopolized by the topic of sexual activity” (1986:115). Furthermore, one also finds in military institutions a corresponding hyper-masculinity with accompanying sexism and sexual objectification of women, particularly in male-only combat units (Higate 2003; Hinojosa

2010), similar to those found in the prison (Crewe 2009).

Prisons are sites of palpable expressions of masculinity, described by Jewkes as “a hypermasculinity in which “normal” values and behavioral patterns of powerful men take on an extreme form” (2005:61-2). Such a conception of masculinity constitutes a form of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ in which men’s dominant position in society is legitimised in relation to the subordination of women and other ways of being a man that do not conform to prevailing masculine forms (Connell 1987; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005) (see also: Newton 1994). Hinojosa explains that the “traditional constructions of hegemonic masculinities include risk-taking, self-discipline, physical toughness and/or muscular development, aggression, violence, emotional control, and overt heterosexual desire” (2010:179) (see also: Newton 1994; Evans and Wallace 2008; Symkovych 2023), although hegemonic forms of masculinity can vary. While some research has questioned the universal proliferation of this model of masculinity in the prison (see: Brown and Grant 2018; Bandyopadhyay 2016), others have argued for its continued predominance in the culture of prison social worlds, albeit with increased nuance and some evident exceptions (see: Connell et al. 2005; Evans and Wallace 2008; Ricciardelli et al. 2015; Seymour 2018; Karp 2010).

Masculinities in prison, as in many other homosocial settings (Earle 2018), are based on social hierarchies, with prisoners competing for status within the institution’s “hierarchies of domination” (Jewkes 2005:44) (see also: Connell 1995; de Viggiani 2012). Prisoners seek to gain and maintain acceptance from others (de Viggiani 2018; Jewkes 2005; Bengtsson 2006), and to “ensure emotional, psychological, and social survival” (de Viggiani 2012:271). Crewe (2014) also highlights the existence of emotion in prisoners’ expressions of masculinity, with ‘homosocial relations’, the social bonding between males, and ‘homosocial desires’, the desire for (non-sexual) emotive affection from and towards other males, being prominent in relationships between prisoners. Through analysis of accounts and observations of prisoners’ interactions, Crewe (2014) illustrates how this emotive engagement manifests in the prison beneath the external veneer of hyper-masculine interaction. Such expressions of traditional masculinity and of homosocial relations and desires documented in the prison environment very much conform to that in the military where the desire for recognition by one’s male peers and social acceptance into the male group are of paramount importance (Siebold 2007; Higate 2003; Hockey 1986).

Arkin and Dobrofsky describe the aim of military training as being to create “a

strong, silent, self-reliant man” (1978:159), with more recent scholars further describing the traits which are promoted and inculcated in military institutions as courage, physical strength, mental resilience, aggression, sexual competence, discipline, self-control and a willingness to be exposed to danger (Woodward 2003; Higate 2003; Belkin 2012; De Bere 2003; Green et al. 2010; Hopton 2003; Hockey 1986). These traditional masculine characteristics sit neatly within the model of hegemonic masculinity, described above, which is also predominant in the prison. These similarities in the expression of masculinity in the two total institutions are perhaps unsurprising, with Phillips asserting that “the construction of manhood in prison is an adaptation to an environment of extreme danger and deprivation” (2001:13), and those in the military facing similar exposure to danger, adversity and deprivation.

Like the prison, informal social hierarchies also exist in military units and are also often determined by interpersonal relationships, power dynamics and the perceived or actual ability to enact violence on others (Coetzee et al. 2013; Stuart and Szeszeran 2020; Blake 2006). Similar hierarchies are well-documented in prisons where they are fundamental in ordering the prisoner social world (Crewe 2009; Jewkes 2005; de Viggiani). The importance of such informal social hierarchies is perhaps less prevalent in the military where the existence of formal internal hierarchies based on a formal rank system help to regulate social order in ways that are less present in prisons (Hockey 1986). Nevertheless, such informal hierarchies do still exist amongst those without rank at the lowest levels of military institutions, with higher status and informal power conferred on those considered to be physically strong or otherwise popular due to their personality and character.

Other social norms in the military mirror those of the prison with a strict adherence to rules against informing on fellow personnel, with violation of this code eliciting repercussions such as social exclusion or even violent reprisal (Emsley 2013; Clemmer 1958; Crewe 2009). This coincides with a code of no stealing personal possessions from comrades, although theft of equipment officially belonging to the institution is tolerated (Emsley 2013; Graves 1969). Informal violence constitutes a common means of punishing such offences, as well as a way of resolving interpersonal conflict, a practice which often receives tacit staff approval, especially if this is in retaliation against a suspected perpetrator of theft from a comrade (Hockey 1986; Sparks et al. 1996). However, despite these similarities, one crucial difference

between the social cultures of these two types of institution is the existence in the military social world of what is often varyingly referred to as group bonding, solidarity or cohesion (Siebold 2007).

2.6.2. Cultural differences: Institutional goals

The UK military has undergone various changes and reforms since World War II due to wider societal changes, radical technological advancements and an overall shift in the global strategic role of the UK military, from defending post-war empire to conducting strategic international interventions and peace-keeping (Dandeker and Gow 1999). However, despite resultant changes to its methods, procedures and strategies, the fundamental aims and objectives of the UK military remain the same. These are to “protect the state against an external enemy, to aid in the pursuance of state interests in support of its foreign policy, by coercing other states [and] to maintain the power of the state against possible internal threats” (Hockey 1986:2), all of which are sought through the threat (implied or explicit) or application of force. Whilst maintaining order within the ranks is important, the military ultimately directs its focus outwardly toward a defined ‘other’. Whether this enemy is real in times of conflict or hypothetical during training, all personnel within the institution, staff and inmates alike, are united by a shared goal of defeating or deterring this external adversary (Beever 1990; Siebold 2007). These institutional objectives differ from those of the prison in which the institution looks inwardly, focusing solely on targeting its own population. Inmates are the subject of the prison’s objectives with all institutional efforts oriented towards their safe containment and ultimate reform (Sparks et al. 1996).

For those at an operational level in the military, failure to achieve the overall objective of defeating the enemy is intimately linked to physical survival. As such, all members of the institution must strive towards achieving this collective goal and are personally invested in the outcomes of success or failure. Coordinated collective action between and amongst inmates and staff is therefore of paramount importance and so the institution strives to encourage and enforce the necessary conditions for achieving this. It does this by propagating a culture of social bonding, internal group cohesion and team-working amongst inmates and staff whilst also promoting bonding and loyalty to the institution and one’s particular unit within it (Dandeker and Gow 1999; Siebold 2007). This contrasts with the culture found in modern prisons where prisoners’ investment in institutional goals, loyalty to the institution and cohesion

amongst other inmates and staff is markedly low (Crewe 2009).

2.6.3. Cultural differences: Group cohesion

The difference in functions and goals of the military and the prison gives rise to differences in the social cultures within their populations. In a 1930s study of a prison in the USA, Clemmer (1958) describes the process of *prisonization*, through which the inmate is socialized to the mores, customs and culture of the prison. Clemmer described a pervading culture of mistrust of and antipathy towards prison staff which promoted a culture of solidarity between inmates and created a set of norms around inmate behaviour which he termed the *inmate code*. This code bound all prisoners into a system of unofficial rules oriented towards promoting inmates' mutual support, including loyalty to other inmates expressed through a norm against informing on or stealing from other inmates (Clemmer 1958). Further studies in the middle of the 20th century produced similar findings of a shared values system which advocated solidarity amongst prisoners (see: Sykes and Messinger 1960; Irwin and Cressey 1962).

More recent analyses of inmate social culture have found a decline in the prominence and intensity of such a fixed code amongst prisoners, with solidarity less evident and relations between prisoners often fragmented, distrustful and individualistic (Crewe 2005, 2009; Liebling 2012). Furthermore, relations between prisoners and staff have been found to be less oppositional with greater staff-inmate interactions (Crewe 2011b). Where such codes do exist, they are not always strictly observed in practice and are surrounded with ambiguities and caveats (Crewe 2005, 2009; Liebling and Arnold 2012). Evidencing a departure from past notions of the inmate code, Crewe (2005, 2009) found a decline in the importance of a shared inmate value system of solidarity and mutual aid in the modern UK prison, with informing to staff deemed appropriate for certain behaviours such as serious violence or bullying.

Despite these more recent findings, group bonding has been documented in certain sub-groups within prisons. Wood (2007) found elements of solidarity and bonding between prisoners in English prisons along the lines of regional or town identification and gang affiliation, a phenomenon also reported in prisons in other jurisdictions (see: Hunter et al. 1996; Sheldon 1991; Crewe 2014). Similarly, bonding and cohesion between prisoners in England has been documented along linguistic, ethnic and religious lines (Phillips and Earle 2011; Thomas and Zaitzow 2006; Liebling

et al. 2011). More relevant to a military context, however, McEvoy's (2001) study of paramilitary prisoners in Northern Ireland found very high levels of cohesion amongst members of these groups who considered themselves to be part of a military-style structure and organisation. While research which might explore such cohesion or bonding amongst UK military veterans in prison is ongoing (see: Gooch forthcoming), current evidence in this area is limited beyond examples of mutual support groups for veterans established in some prisons, typically by prison staff (Phillips 2014).

2.6.4. Primary group cohesion

The culture of cohesion in the military is intentionally instilled and cultivated, in both inmates and staff as a means to promote and achieve military effectiveness (King 2006; Kirche 2009). This is promoted on a number of levels using the process of *othering* whereby those who are not part of a group are defined as outsiders or 'others' and viewed with suspicion and derision, thereby creating an 'us' and 'them' dichotomy which unites the group against the 'other' and facilitates bonding (Kirche 2009; Hockey 1986).

The aims and objectives of military training, instruction and socialisation are directed not only at providing technical knowledge and skills but also at building group cohesion (Siebold 2007). From initial entry into the military, the institution and its staff promote group bonding, solidarity and cohesion by encouraging personnel to form close friendships with each other, to work together and rely on each other, to protect and defend each other and to avoid becoming a burden on each other (King 2006; Kirche 2009). Team-working, group socialisation, joint achievements and collective deprivation, punishment and suffering are all regarded as important and necessary experiences required to bond personnel together and thereby construct and promote group cohesion (Shils and Janowitz 1948; Siebold 2007).

This collective mentality continues beyond recruits' initial training and throughout their service where cohesion continues to be of paramount importance. Personnel are encouraged by the institution and its staff to bond with their team through arduous work exercises and social engagements (Boer 2001; Hockey 1986). As a result, military personnel exhibit largely positive interpersonal relations and frequently display very high levels of collective trust, loyalty and mutual dependence. This cohesion is shared not just with the lowest ranks but also with staff (Siebold 2007; Shils and Janowitz 1948). This *peer and leader bonding* in the military which Siebold

(2007) terms *primary group cohesion* is actively encouraged by military establishments as it is key to military combat effectiveness. In fact, it has been cited as one of the principal factors in combat units continuing to fight together through arduous, hopeless and even suicidal situations (Siebold 2001, 2007; Shils and Janowitz 1948). This cohesion can often reach extraordinary levels, with individuals taking exceptional personal risks to assist comrades, often in the knowledge that they will incur serious injury or death as a result (Shils and Janowitz 1948; Siebold 2007). It is worth noting that although such high levels of cohesion in the military are documented most frequently in ground fighting units, they are found across all military units and services, including Navy ships and air force units (Zurcher 1965; Boer 2001). This contrasts with the prison social world where such close bonding, cohesion and team-working amongst the inmate population is far less common and where close bonding between staff and inmates is even less evident.

It is worth noting here that this process of othering, whilst creating internal group cohesion, can generate a culture within the military of suspicion, derision and animosity towards outsiders. This can create mutual rivalries between military units but can also generate a negative view of civilians – outsiders who are often considered to be weak, lazy and inferior (Siebold 2007; Higate 2001, 2003). Readily expressed from early in recruit training to cultivate the notion of physical and mental superiority of British military personnel, this negative conception of civilians is combined with a perception of them being unsupportive and unappreciative of the protections afforded them by the military (Higate 2003). This process can also be seen in the prison with the process of othering used by mainstream prisoners to reject certain groups of other prisoners such as sex-offenders, drug-users or otherwise vulnerable individuals. This process likewise serves to relegate such prisoners within an unofficial prisoner hierarchy to that of morally and mentally inferior, compared to those morally and mentally superior mainstream prisoners (Crewe 2009; Liebling et al. 2012).

This promoted narrative of superiority of military personnel over all others can breed feelings of animosity towards the civilian population and cultivate a culture of patriotism and nationalism which can lead to xenophobic views or intolerance of certain religious or cultural groups (Higate 2001, 2003). Furthermore, this process can have a detrimental impact on the service-leaver's attempts to reintegrate into civilian society on final departure from the institution (Ashcroft 2014). However, these negative by-products of the othering process are considered to be of lesser importance to the

institution than the benefits of primary and secondary group bonding that are achieved through it.

2.6.5. Secondary group cohesion

In further contrast to prison culture, military personnel not only bond with their immediate peers and leaders but also with their military organisations (e.g. company, battalion and regiment) and institutions (e.g. Army, Navy or Air Force) in what Siebold (2007) terms *secondary group cohesion*. Military institutions intentionally use the process of othering to unite primary groups and cultivate an almost tribal ‘us’ and ‘them’ sentiment amongst the different branches and units of the military, thereby increasing identification with the secondary group.

Although these rivalries can lead to interpersonal violence between personnel from different units seeking to promote or defend their organisations’ and institutions’ reputation and honour against other rival units, the perceived benefits of maintaining and promoting group cohesion are seen by the institution and its staff to outweigh the associated risks, highlighting the importance of cohesion to the institution (Siebold 2007; Dandeker and Gow 1999; Kirche 2009). Although prisoners may sometimes express a degree of preference for or identification with particular prisons – for example, Sullivan found “a sense of belonging, identification with and loyalty to the individual’s wing and to the prison as a whole” (2010:186) in the therapeutic community at HMP Grendon – feelings of pride, loyalty and devotion to their institution are rare.

In summary, although there are many similarities between the prison and the military, especially in terms of institutional organization and structure, there are some fundamental differences that serve to generate and maintain different cultures and social dynamics within these institutions. The military intentionally promotes a culture of internal social cohesion and derision of outsiders, as well as strong feelings of identification with and loyalty to military institutions. This contrasts with the somewhat internally disintegrative and individualistic nature of inmate social relations in the prison and prisoners’ weak identification with their institutions. The cultural differences between total institutions not only shape social relations within these institutions but also impact upon individuals, shaping their views, attitudes and beliefs and ultimately

shaping their personal identities which can persist for long after leaving the total institution.

2.7. Creating institutional identities

The effects of total institutions on their inmates can be profound and long-lasting. Through the promotion and inculcation of certain views, attitudes, beliefs and customs, the total institution can re-shape the individual's character to make it conducive to life within the institutional regime, ultimately reshaping a person's identity. Once established, this character is reinforced to ensure compliance and the maintenance of order. Goffman (1961) refers to the initial process of resocialization as *disculturation*.

2.7.1. Disculturation and institutionalisation

Goffman argues that disculturation occurs immediately on the recruit's entry into the total institution and involves the process of 'untraining' the inmate's understanding of outside culture and reshaping of a culture conducive to life within that institution (Goffman 1961). Inmates are intentionally cut off from the outside world and are then subjected to "a series of abasements, degradations, humiliations and profanations of self" (Goffman 1961:24), aimed at severing ties with their previous outside lives which Goffman describes as systematic mortification. This takes place in both the modern prison and the military where 'recruits' are intentionally shut off from the outside world and are socialised into the new institutional social world, complete with particular customs, practices, procedures, language and culture (King 2006; Kirche 2009; Goffman 1961). The new inmate must adapt to the total institution's social world characterised by: ordered regimes of routine and intrusive searches and inspections; intentionally restricted information; pervasive boredom; informal structure and practices including informal violence; unofficial inmate hierarchies; frank talk of taboo subjects; and unofficial codes of not informing on fellow inmates (Goffman 1961; King and McDermott 1995; Hockey 1986). Goffman describes how the process of disculturation "instigates some radical shifts in the recruit's *moral career*, changing his beliefs concerning himself, others and the world around him and socialising him to the new institutional world" (Goffman 1961:24).

Entering into a new institutional environment where the individual is absorbed into its daily routines can result in increased dependence on that institution and ultimately lead the individual to surrender to the institutional regime and environment,

creating a dependence on the institution in daily life in a process described by Cohen and Taylor (1972) as *institutionalisation*. This process of institutionalisation occurs similarly in the military (Elmsley 2013) and can create difficulties for those institutionalised individuals who then attempt to reintegrate back into society on leaving the military or on leaving prison (Howard League 2011; Moran et al. 2019; Treadwell 2010).

The process of disculturation is still in evidence in prisons today and serves to alter conceptions of the self, limit personal autonomy, and instil deference to authority and compliance with the prison regime. Goffman describes the process commencing on entry to the institution, with inmates made to wear a uniform and assigned a unique number that must be used for all administrative purposes. Privacy is removed, both in terms of personal space but also in body, as inmates are placed in close, shared living conditions with communal ablutions and are subjected to mandatory medical examinations and security checks. Inmates face restrictions in their freedom of personal relations as visits from outside friends and family are restricted and they are forced to interact with others in the institution, in addition to restrictions on the ownership of personal property. Finally, inmates are forced to show deference to authority and to seek permission to move around the institution or acquire materials to perform basic everyday functions.

Despite its continued relevance, the degree to which this process of disculturation takes place in modern prisons is less than at the time of Goffman's writing. Prison reform over the past 60 years has resulted in changes to the prison system, making establishments less insulated from the outside world and less domineering in the enforcement of their regimes, ultimately reshaping the prison experience to make it less 'deep' and 'heavy' (King and McDermott 1995; Crewe 2011b).

2.7.2. Prison regime: 'Depth', 'weight' and 'tightness'

Downes (1992) defines the depth of imprisonment as the extent to which a prisoner is embedded in the prison system, with those who are 'buried' in 'deeper end custody' experiencing less openness to the outside world and facing greater personal restrictions in their daily lives than those in the shallow end of the prison estate. Such restrictions include more limited opportunities for communication with those in the outside world such as family, friends and individuals or outside agencies through visits,

phone calls and written correspondence (Downes 1992). King and McDermott (1995) support this assessment, further highlighting that such restrictions are more common in more highly-controlled prison regimes, often the higher security categories of the prison estate, where feelings of remoteness, exclusion and distance from the outside world are more pronounced. Crewe (2021) further analyses these feelings of dislocation and how they can be experienced differently, shaped by individual factors such as identity and social positioning as well as the degree to which the prison environment fails to reflect or replicate the outside world. He identifies three prominent forms that this dislocation can take: feeling removed, lost, hidden or stranded in a *lateral* relationship with the outside world; feeling shut in a box or bubble *within* it; or being buried *beneath* (or suspended *above*) it. He also identifies “a temporal component” of depth in which the world outside is anticipated to be different to the one from which prisoners were originally removed, creating anxieties over eventual release into a less familiar outside world (Crewe 2021). Crewe (2015) also describes how the depth of imprisonment is not uniform across penal institutions, whereby feelings of exclusion and isolation can be more pronounced in certain parts of the prison, for example a segregation unit, where one experiences less interaction with others and less access to information and material from outside the prison walls. These feelings of isolation and dislocation caused by deep imprisonment can bring with it greater physical, emotional and psychological burdens than those encountered at the ‘shallow end’ (King and McDermott 1995; Toch 1975; Liebling 2011a).

While the concept of depth describes the extent to which the individual is buried in the prison system and isolated from the outside world, the ‘weight’ of imprisonment refers to the burden felt by prisoners from the regime bearing down on them. Specifically, ‘weight’ entails the extent to which living conditions, such as the quality of rights and privileges, the severity of discipline and punishment and staff-prisoner relations weigh down on the prisoner to create a heavy or light prison experience (King and McDermott 1995). Heavy prison regimes are characterized by oppressive rules, and the excessive or abusive use of staff authority (King and McDermott 1995; Downes 1980; Marquart 1986). Liebling and Arnold (2004) identify other features of prison life that create such heavy and oppressive prison experiences, and which negatively affect prisoners’ quality of life. These include quality of accommodation, access to purposeful activity and, most importantly, the treatment of prisoners by staff, particularly that seen to be unfair, disrespectful and excessively strict. However, as

Crewe (2015) notes, 'lighter' prison regimes do not always translate into positive experiences for prisoners. In some prisons, weak enforcement of the rules and lower presence of staff can lead to "establishments [which] are chaotic and disorganized" and "regimes that are un-boundaried and unsafe" (Crewe 2015:57). Instead of excessive use of power and bullying by staff, 'light' regimes can enable exploitation of vulnerable prisoners, violence and hostility between prisoners and the existence of violent informal economies (Crewe 2015). Crewe et al. (2014) further describe how this can be mitigated or exacerbated by the relative presence or absence of prison staff, proposing a 'heavy-light', 'present-absent' quadrant to describe the nature of prison regimes. Prisons in which staff were unavailable or invisible to prisoners, or were laissez-faire, weak and insecure in their use of authority, tended to enable dysfunctional regimes characterised by bullying, violence and intimidation. Meanwhile, those institutions which were lighter with visible, available, confident, interventionist staff enabled more safe, secure and psychologically endurable regimes (Crewe et al. 2014). Alternatively, regimes which were heavier allowed for staff abuses of power and were experienced as less safe, more oppressive and difficult to endure. The experience of imprisonment therefore depends on a combination of depth and weight, with staff presence (or absence), professionalism and relationships being crucial factors.

Prisoners experiencing deep and heavy imprisonment can experience feelings of acute frustration, anxiety, fear, isolation and desperation which threaten psychological well-being and survival (Liebling and Maruna 2005). A lack of adequate support for prisoners in such deep and heavy regimes can result in prisoners struggling to cope with these painful feelings and can ultimately lead to prisoners developing dangerous maladaptations or experiencing psychological breakdown (Flanagan 1980; Toch 1975; Liebling 2011a). Such responses can manifest as aggression or depression (Gallo and Ruggiero 1991), bringing outbursts of anger and violence or otherwise withdrawal and apathy (Toch 1975; Porporino and Zamble 1984). Liebling also found that, when compounded by drug misuse and mental health problems, such maladaptations can ultimately result in suicide (Liebling 2007, 2011a).

The physical assaults by staff on new inmates described by Goffman no longer form part of the routine induction process, and militaristic aspects of prison regime, such as standing still to attention in front of staff when spoken to, no longer form part of the daily prison regime. Restrictions on ownership of personal property are now

more relaxed and many prisoners wear their own clothing and footwear rather than a prison-issued uniform. Furthermore, a better understanding of the link between family and social ties and reduced reoffending has led to the increased provision of telephone calls, visits, mail correspondence and access to news and televisions. All of these reduce the effect and degree to which the inmate is cut off from the outside world (Morgan and Liebling 2007; Crewe 2007, 2011b).

These changes have come about as a result of the progressive softening of penal power which has seen a shift away from more authoritarian regimes, with their harder physical and material assaults and deprivations on the body, towards a 'neo-paternalistic' system of managerialism concerned with the assessment and management of risk (Crewe 2011a, 2011b). This approach adopts a somewhat softer and lighter approach to imprisonment, focusing more on the regulation and manipulation of behaviour through psychological tools such as systems of incentives and earned privileges and using prisoner progress reports from specialist staff to induce self-regulation (Liebling 2011a; Crewe 2009, 2011b). Crewe (2011a) describes the effect of such processes as creating a form of 'tightness'. He describes this as "the way that power operates both closely and anonymously, working like an invisible harness on the self. It is all-encompassing and invasive, in that it promotes the self-regulation of all aspects of conduct, addressing both the psyche and the body" (Crewe 2011a:522). Through these practices penal power is psychologically intrusive and confusing, creating an environment of uncertainty and insecurity in which prisoners are constantly monitored and required, therefore, to become the agents of their own control, continually mindful of their daily actions (Crewe 2011a; Crewe and levins 2021). The absence of predictability and consistency creates blurred lines between what is required of those within the regime and what is considered inappropriate or unacceptable, having the effect of playing 'mind games' on prisoners (Liebling et al. 2020; McDermott and King 1988). Such 'tight' systems of imprisonment produce restrictive experiences characterised by perpetual tension, anxiety, uncertainty and insecurity (Crewe 2011a; Crewe and levins 2021).

2.7.3. Military regime and hard power

In the military, the process of disculturation is still very much evident in modern day practice for new recruits. On entry, they are stripped of all personal property, issued with military clothing and equipment along with a personal service number and are

immediately shut off from the outside world without access to or communication with anybody outside of their immediate group (Arkin and Dobrofsky 1978). With communication severely restricted and even access to radios and newspapers strictly controlled, the institution seeks to instil deference to authority, unquestioning obedience to rules and compliance with the institution's regime whilst also seeking to instil military cultural values of mutual dependence, resilience to extreme deprivation and collective dedication to achieving group goals (Dandeker and Gow 1999; Arkin and Dobrofsky 1978).

While direct physical abuse is less common than in the past, verbal abuse, material deprivation and enforced physical exertion still form the basis of the recruits' induction process, where every instruction must be complied with and failure to do so can bring swift punishment (Scott 2011; Novaco et al. 1989). Permission must be granted by staff to eat, rest, smoke and sleep, and when spoken to by staff the recruit must stand to attention, motionless and expressionless and without any sign of discontent. Even after recruit training when graduated personnel are considered completely socialised to the military environment, the instilled culture of compliance, deference and subordination continues to be enforced, albeit often with less vigour (Hockey 1986).

Over recent decades, military practices have undergone some progressive developments and reforms which have improved the experience of military service. The introduction of anti-bullying policies, the civilianisation of certain roles, the opening up of recruitment to homosexuals, the progressive introduction of women into various roles and the abrogation of corporal punishment have all served to make military regimes less harsh. However, compared to prisons, the military of today relies on harder, more physically coercive forms of power to maintain control over its charges, with less of a move towards a risk-focused, managerialist model as found in the modern prison.

2.7.4. Depth and weight of military regime

With life conditions and experiences varying across the different branches of the military, the concepts of depth and weight can be employed to account for the extent to which military personnel are embedded into military regimes and the extent to which restrictions on rights and privileges and the systems of discipline and punishment weigh down on individuals living within these.

Much as there is no typical prison experience, there is likewise no single military experience, as each individual service and unit has its own specific military culture (Dandeker & Gow 1999). Life conditions and experiences in different military regimes vary across the different services, units and roles to create deeper or shallower, heavier or lighter experiences of military service. Within different branches of the military, for example, those serving in the RAF generally enjoy greater freedoms and privileges within their institution's regime, along with less strict discipline, than those serving in the Navy or Army (Higate 2003). Conversely, those in the Navy confined to a ship or submarine away from home for prolonged periods of time and subject to routinely enforced strict discipline inevitably have their freedom of action, movement and association restricted in a way not entirely unlike a prison, creating what might be considered a deeper and heavier institutional experience (Zurcher 1965).

Even within a military service branch, a person's experience can also vary by unit or role. An Army clerk who resides off the base, working only weekdays and very rarely deployed on field exercise or on operations overseas is likely to have a lighter and shallower experience of military service than an Army infantryman who must reside on a military base in mass-living accommodation with prolonged and irregular working hours, subject to regular role-calls, subject to continual surveillance and strict discipline from superiors and regularly deployed on field exercises and operations overseas with prolonged discomfort and much higher exposure to personal danger (Beevor 1990; Hockey 1986). In the military, one's branch of service, unit and role often determine the level of physical and mental hardships one must endure, with those in roles such as Navy submariner or Army infantry soldier experiencing somewhat deeper and heavier institutional regimes than their colleagues in other units and roles within their own institutions.

2.7.5. Military preparation for prison

Limited research has attempted to assess how experience of military service, with its numerous physical and mental hardships, might impact the ways in which an individual might experience deep and heavy prison regimes. The similarities that exist between the military and the prison as institutions, and the similarities in the experience of living within these institutions, raises questions about how familiarity with the former might impact on an individual's ability to adjust and adapt to life in the latter. Having been previously exposed to, and learned to alleviate, some of the hardships and challenges

imposed by institutional life, a certain mind-set might make veterans more adept at coping with some of the rigours of imprisonment (Scott 2011).

One insight into this issue is provided by Howard League (2011) which found evidence of former military personnel who claimed that they found the routine hardships and arduousness of prison life to be easier to bear as a result of their previous military experience. One interviewee explained, "After the Army, jail doesn't bother me, because I know how it is. I spent half my life living this way, following petty rules" (Howard League 2011:58). The Howard League's (2011) analysis, however, does not delve into how previous experience in military institutions, with their reliance on structured regimes and strict discipline might impact on the experience of imprisonment within somewhat less familiar lighter, shallower but tighter institutional regimes.

With such limited research having been conducted in this area, there is presently only a limited understanding of how those with previous military service might experience imprisonment. The core aim of this study is to address this.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

This chapter will describe the research design and detail the methodology employed in this research study. It will first provide an overview of the research design and research questions before moving on to describe the process of accessing research sites and recruiting the research sample. It will then discuss the interview process and consider issues of positionality and reflexivity before describing the process of data analysis and ethical considerations relevant to the study.

3.1. Research design overview

There has been an increase in research conducted on veterans in the criminal justice system in the past ten years with much of this conducted in other jurisdictions, principally in the United States. A substantially smaller volume of research has been conducted on ex-military personnel in the UK criminal justice system, the vast majority of which has been quantitative research conducted from a positivist perspective. Very little research has focused on those in prison in the United Kingdom and none (to my knowledge) specifically on how ex-military personnel might experience imprisonment. The scarcity of such research provides the justification for conducting an exploratory and inductive research study, employing a qualitative methodology. This is based on a constructivist-interpretivist paradigm, an approach which holds that knowledge is constructed through interaction between the researcher and participant (Ponterotto 2005). Interviews were therefore conducted with ex-military prisoners currently in prison as a means of understanding “the ‘lived experiences’ from the point of view of those that live it day to day” (Ponterotto 2005:128). This proved to be an effective means by which to generate a detailed and nuanced understanding of the views, attitudes and experiences of imprisonment amongst UK ex-military personnel (Noaks and Wincup 2004; Bachman and Schutt 2011).

The overarching research question directing this study is:

How do UK ex-military personnel experience imprisonment?

It has the following two sub-questions:

1. To what extent does any persisting military identity, including internalised cultural norms, values and beliefs, carry over into civilian and prisoner lives, and how does this shape the prison experience?
2. To what extent does previous military service shape a prisoner's perceptions of, and attitudes towards, institutional authority, power and state legitimacy, with what implications for the prison experience?

The study addresses these questions through in-depth interviews with military veterans purposively sampled from serving prisoners in six research sites (prisons) across England. The data were transcribed, coded and analysed using thematic analysis.

3.2. Research site access and sampling

To fully understand the lived experiences of veteran prisoners, I was eager to interview participants within their lived environments, at the time that they were still living experiences of relevance to the study. Due to challenges in gaining access to prisons for research purposes, previous studies have resorted to researching prisoner experiences through interviews taking place after prisoners' release back into society. I worried that this approach risked compromising the accuracy and authenticity of the recollections and would make it difficult to get a feel for the prison environment and for how prisoners felt during their prison experience. I therefore resolved to commit to the challenging process of accessing prisons across England as my research sites in which to conduct my research.

3.2.1. Accessing research sites

Gaining access to research sites was a lengthy process which involved communicating and negotiating with a number of people at different prison establishments and with the National Offender Management Service (NOMS)¹². This began by applying to the NOMS National Research Committee (NRC) for approval to access prison establishments to conduct fieldwork. I was fortunate that during this time I was employed by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) as a Research Officer (while pursuing

¹² Since renamed and rebranded in 2017 as Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service.

my doctoral research part-time) in the Prisons and Probation Research Team. One of my duties was to cover on occasion as the MoJ representative on the National Research Committee research approval board which assessed applications from researchers requesting access to prisons for research purposes. This gave me useful insight into the criteria used to assess applications and assisted me in presenting my own application. Despite this, my application was initially declined due to safety concerns over my researching in high security prisons. The committee was concerned that, as an ex-military researcher, my safety could be at risk from groups or individuals hostile towards the UK military and former military personnel. I was required to revise my application and re-submit to the following board. My application was subsequently granted, after I accepted the condition of only conducting research in category B prisons or lower and made assurances to the board around safeguarding my own safety.

Ex-military prisoners are represented in prison establishments across the full range of security categories. I therefore sought access to all prison security categories so as to draw a sample that would represent a full range of views and experiences. This would necessarily include establishments in high and maximum-security categories where ex-military prisoners have been found to be in relatively high concentrations (HMIP 2014a; Phillips 2014). The conditions agreed with NOMS NRC meant that I was only able to access category B prisons or lower. Although this limited the number and breadth of prison categories that I was able to conduct research in, some participants in the sites that I did access were able to reflect upon their experiences in high security establishments prior to their progression on to lower security category prisons. This allowed experiences of higher security category prisons to be represented in the study indirectly.

Once approval from NOMS NRC had been obtained, I approached a number of prisons in turn to discuss the possibility of conducting research in them. I intentionally requested access to sites that spanned both the public and private sectors, and in different geographical locations, to ensure a representative sample of sites that would allow the findings to be generalizable. I had initially planned to access only three research sites, which I projected would yield a sufficient sample size for the study – a modest 15 participants from each site where I might expect around 60 veterans to be housed. However, it became apparent early on that the lack of awareness and under-recording of veteran prisoners in each establishment would

require me to access a greater number than had originally been envisaged, bringing with it additional, unexpected logistical demands and challenges.

Gaining access to individual prisons was often a somewhat lengthy and occasionally frustrating process. Examples of frustrations I encountered included: arriving at prisons for a day of interviews only to discover that nobody could be made available for interview (this happened twice); and encountering sudden loss of communication with my main prison contact only to find out later, following lengthy enquiries, that the contact had moved prisons. However, I was ultimately successful in accessing each establishment by contacting prison governors and managers and then travelling (sometimes long distances) to meet them in person to introduce myself, explain my study and outline its potential benefits. I found this face-to-face contact to be instrumental in securing access to research sites. In my communications with prison management, I intentionally highlighted my previous experience in both the police and Ministry of Justice to present myself as a reliable and trustworthy researcher who had previous experience of working with offender and prisoner populations. This appeared to be well-received by prison governors and managers who seemed to have concerns over whether some student researchers were aware of and able to address risks associated with interviewing prisoners, for example being tricked or exploited.

Once granted access to establishments, I was then able to meet and build rapport with prison managers and staff who could facilitate my visits and help to organise my interviews. These managers and staff often had military connections¹³ and so I found that my own military experience, combined with my experience of working with offenders, helped me to build rapport and gain their trust since I was able to talk seamlessly using their terminology and also relate to them and their work by joining in with sharing of jokes, stories and anecdotes from times in the military and police. These managers and staff were often very committed to and accommodating of my study and were often eager to assist once I had established a good rapport with them. Some, I later learned, had come into their place of work on scheduled weekend days off without pay to ensure that my interviews were facilitated.

¹³ Even where staff members working with veterans were not themselves veterans, they often had other connections to the military, for example a veteran husband, a son serving in the military or having grown up on military bases.

3.2.2. The research sites

After a number of polite rejections from a small number of prisons, I was granted access to HMP Standford Hill, a category D open prison with an operational capacity of 464 located within a cluster of three prisons on the Isle of Sheppey in Kent. This establishment accommodated prisoners towards the end of their sentences, many of whom worked in the outside community in either paid employment or reparative work. On site the establishment offered education and vocational training opportunities (Ministry of Justice 2015). In its most recent inspection conducted in 2014 by HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP), HMP Standford Hill was judged to be performing well with very few concerns raised (HMIP 2015a). A former World War II Royal Air Force base situated on a hill in rural Kent, the site was first used as a prison in 1950 and occupied a sprawling complex which bore many of the hallmarks of a military base or encampment, as the following extract from my research diary illustrates:

“As I approach the prison, I am surprised to find no walls or fences. Just a guard house at the front gate with a vehicle barrier. The buildings are scattered around the complex connected by roads and prisoners wander around at will. Seems much like a military camp. There is even a concrete pillbox¹⁴ still on the hill.” – Field notes (15th August 2015)

After meeting with the governor and another member of the senior management team, I was introduced to the Veterans co-ordinator who was to assist me with my research by recruiting participants to the study. Standford Hill was the only site at which a prisoner, rather than a staff member, was assigned to facilitate my research. Here, I was left to move around the prison complex unescorted to my different appointments where I conducted interviews in prisoners’ rooms or in nearby offices.

On completion of interviews at HMP Standford Hill, I was granted access to HMP Swaleside, a category B training prison located across the road from HMP Standford Hill. Opened in 1988, HMP Swaleside housed only longer-term prisoners (serving four years or longer) with an operational capacity of 1,112, including 460

¹⁴ A pillbox is a reinforced concrete military defensive structure dug into the ground and equipped with loopholes through which to fire weapons.

places suitable for prisoners serving life sentences. Prisoners in this category B training prison were those deemed by the Prison Service not to require maximum security, but for whom escape would still pose a large risk to members of the community (Ministry of Justice 2016a). As a training prison, the establishment offered a number of workshops, educational opportunities and other employment opportunities within the prison. A recent inspection of the prison conducted by HMIP in 2014 had found conditions to be reasonably clean, staff-prisoner relationships to be reasonably good and drug availability to be relatively low. However, the inspection team did raise concerns over violence, offender management, and prisoner access to work, educational and resettlement services, as well as the use of force by staff (HMIP 2014b). At this establishment, I was put in touch with a member of prison management staff who had previously served in the military. Being very receptive to the subject of the study, he facilitated my visits and helped to recruit participants.

The third prison I was granted access to was HMP Brixton, a category C and D closed prison in South London. Originally opened in 1819, HMP Brixton had recently (in July 2012) been re-categorised from a category B to a category C and D resettlement prison and had an operational capacity of 810 adult male prisoners. Category C prisoners are categorised by the Prison Service as those who cannot be trusted in open conditions but who are unlikely to try to escape. Category D prisoners are considered to be those who can be reasonably trusted not to try to escape and can be given a place at an open prison when available places allow. In its most recent inspection carried out in 2014 by HMIP, Brixton had been found to have adequate housing facilities for work, education and resettlement support but concerns were raised over the levels of violence, availability of drugs, overcrowding and offender management (HMIP 2015b). Here a member of prison staff was kind enough to facilitate my visit just days before leaving the Prison Service. While this did not impact the nature of the interviews themselves which were conducted in the visits section of the prison, it did limit my ability to get a 'feel' for the nature of the prison environment as I was unable to move around the establishment and interact with the staff and prisoners; something I was able to do in other research sites. It also left me without a lasting contact to facilitate further visits.

The fourth research site was HMP Wandsworth, a category B local prison in south London. Built in 1851, HMP Wandsworth is one of Europe's largest prisons holding up to 1,877 prisoners, principally drawn from the local area which includes

areas of substantial social deprivation and high crime rates. The prisoners housed at Wandsworth were typically either on remand, serving shorter sentences or recently sentenced to longer sentences but awaiting relocation to an establishment suited to housing longer-term prisoners. As a local prison with higher turnover in population, Wandsworth had a somewhat more transient and less settled population than the first three research sites and offered limited opportunities for education, training and employment (Ministry of Justice 2016b). In its most recent inspection conducted in 2015 by HMIP, Wandsworth had been reported to be clean with effective reception processes and reasonably good resettlement management. However, concerns were raised over prisoner safety, bullying and levels of violence as well as lack of activities and association time for inmates (HMIP 2015c). After speaking to a support worker at the veteran's charity, SSAFA, I was put in contact with a member of medical staff at HMP Wandsworth who was very receptive to the study and proactively organised and facilitated my repeated visits there to conduct interviews over a number of months.

The fifth research site was HMP Thameside, a category B local prison located in East London. Opened in 2012, and managed by Serco, HMP Thameside was the only privately run prison included in the study. Thameside held a maximum population of 900 adult male prisoners, principally drawn from the East London area. Similar in some respects to HMP Wandsworth, as a local prison, Thameside held sentenced prisoners, many of whom were serving shorter sentences, as well as a substantial number of prisoners on remand. This resulted in a relatively high prisoner population turnover, and a more transient and less settled population, with limited access to activities and to education and work opportunities. In its most recent inspection conducted in 2014 by HMIP, Thameside had been reported to have made substantial improvements since a previous inspection in 2012 had highlighted numerous issues across most areas of the prison's operations. It was found to have a respectful staff culture, with good staff-prisoner relationships, and offered a very good environment and facilities. However, the inspection in 2014 still identified high levels of violence and bullying along with gang-related activities and expressed concerns around use of force by staff and over-use of disciplinary procedures (HMIP 2015d).

The sixth research site visited was HMP Wymott, a category C men's training prison in Lancashire. Opened in 1979, HMP Wymott is a relatively large public sector prison spread over a large site, housing up to 1,176 prisoners. As a designated working prison, Wymott held many mainstream prisoners but also a substantial

population of sex offenders and other prisoners considered to be vulnerable. These were typically accommodated in protection wings or in the therapeutic community located within the prison. Despite its past history of two large scale riots, at the time of study, Wymott was a relatively calm, orderly and safe institution with a focus on work, education and building employment skills. In its most recent inspection by HMIP in 2014, Wymott had been described as reasonably safe with some very good work and training outcomes and low recorded violence, albeit with some evidence of bullying (HMIP 2014c).

3.2.3. Sampling and recruiting participants

Once access to individual prisons had been gained, I worked with my assigned contact within each prison to arrange my visits and recruit my sample of participants. The criteria for inclusion in the sample was that an individual had served a minimum of one day in any branch of the UK Armed Forces – the official definition of a veteran used by UK government and veterans' organisations – and was now being held in a prison, either on remand or serving a sentence.

I had initially hoped to recruit participants to the study independently, through placement of posters and distribution of information leaflets around each prison. However, this proved to be impractical as I could not access the prisons in advance to disseminate the documents and my staff contacts invariably advised me that it would be ineffective and unnecessary. Instead, I advertised my study by 'word of mouth', using veterans co-ordinators to help with recruitment. In taking this approach I was careful to stipulate the kind of participants I wanted to recruit in order to ensure a representative sample. For example, I was often asked which participants I would prefer to interview from those who had indicated their willingness to be involved, and this allowed me to ensure that as broadly representative a sample as possible was recruited, ensuring a range of participants across length of military service, age, offence type and sentence length. My requests for a broad range of interviewees were accommodated at all research sites, and I took pains to emphasise that no pressure should be applied to prospective participants so that all participation was genuinely voluntary. On a number of occasions my sample was bolstered by participants recruited through opportunity sampling, whereby veterans unknown to staff came forward to participate. This had the additional benefit of including the voices of those veterans in prison who were reluctant to disclose their previous military service, which

can result from feelings of embarrassment or shame about being in prison or fear of reprisals from other prisoners who are hostile towards military veterans (Howard League 2011; Söderström 2019; Wainwright et al. 2017). It was important to the study to include these veterans to ensure as broadly representative a sample of participants as possible.

Managers and staff at all but one of the research sites were either already aware of (at least some) prisoners within their population who had previous military experience or were able to find out this information. In the establishment where such knowledge was missing or unavailable, the lead for a veteran's charity in London prisons who I had developed a relationship with was able to provide me with details of prisoners within the prison who were willing to be interviewed. I was then able to recruit further interviewees through snowball sampling, a useful sampling technique when attempting to recruit from hard-to-reach populations (Lee 1993; Vogt 1999). It also had the additional benefit of confirming that those recruited into the sample from the three London research sites were in fact veterans, as the organisation carried out checks to confirm their military service with the Ministry of Defence. While this additional benefit was not the case in the three other research sites, both the prison staff and I were satisfied that there were no suspected pretenders in the sample, having excluded a number of suspected frauds.¹⁵

3.2.4. Rapport and recruitment

Given my dependence on prison staff and managers to help recruit my sample and ensure continued access to the research sites, I found that maintaining a good rapport with staff was essential and was greatly enhanced by my own background in the military and the Police, especially when my contact was either ex-military or had other military connections. As a result of this relationship-building, one off visits often yielded invitations to return and, in one instance, an open invitation to return whenever and until whenever I needed.

While building rapport with prison staff proved important for site access and sample recruitment, building rapport with prisoners also assisted in recruiting

¹⁵ It is not uncommon for prisoners to pretend to have served in the military but it is reasonably easy to detect due to the specific knowledge, language and terminology associated with military experience.

participants through snowball sampling. While adopting a purposive sampling strategy, on a small number of occasions during an interview (or in discussion following an interview), a participant informed me of an ex-military prisoner they knew within the prison and offered to ask them if they would be willing to be interviewed. These prisoners were almost always unknown to my staff contact and proved a valuable means of recruiting participants who had not declared their previous military service to the authorities. 'Word of mouth' between prisoners following research interviews also proved to be fruitful. On one occasion, I was approached in a prison accommodation block by a former soldier who asked me whether I wanted to interview him. He had initially declined to be interviewed when approached by the veterans coordinator but had changed his mind after talking to another interviewee post-interview with whom I had built a rapport. The following note of the individual's comments taken from my research diary illustrates the importance of rapport-building in assisting with snowball and opportunity sampling:

"I wasn't going to bother 'cause I don't really like speaking to people and that, but [other participant] said that you're actually alright so I thought I'd see if you still want to speak to me." – Research diary 8th August 2015

The addition of these participants may go some way to mediating some of the bias that could result from deriving a sample through only purposive sampling from a list of ex-military prisoners known to staff. Such methods allow the inclusion of the voices and accounts of veteran prisoners who were less open or vocal about their previous military experience.

While the topic of rapport with participants is detailed below (see interview process), it is worth noting here that when talking to and recruiting participants, discussion of my occupational background was limited to my military service and academic work, with my previous service as a police officer usually being omitted, although I resolved not to lie about this if ever asked by participants (which did not occur). This was due to concerns I had, based on previous conversations with prison officers, about the negative perceptions of the police amongst some prisoners. Early on in the project, however, I did accidentally disclose my policing background to a relatively well-dressed prisoner who was introduced to me as the prison's Veterans Liaison Officer (VLO) in a part of the prison that I mistakenly believed only staff had

access to. Eager to impress and build rapport with someone who I believed to be a member of prison staff who I needed to convince to assist with my study, I recounted my professional background as I explained the reasons behind my conducting the study. I immediately discerned a shift in the demeanour of both the VLO and the Prison Officer sat with him who became nervous. As I realised my mistake, I continued on to describe the rationale and aims of the study and later left the prison concerned that I had compromised my recruitment efforts at that particular research site. This anxiety turned out to be unfounded.

3.2.5. Challenges in sample recruitment

Working on the assumption that between three and a half and six percent of the prison population in England and Wales was likely to be ex-military personnel (DASA 2010; HMIP 2014a), I had expected when first embarking on this study that a sample of approximately 15 participants could be drawn with relative ease from an establishment housing around 800 prisoners or more. This would require me to access only two or three prisons, each of which would only be expected to be aware of roughly a quarter of its ex-military population. However, early on I became aware that ex-military prisoners were under-identified within the populations of each establishment I had accessed. For example, HMP Brixton had a population of 800 prisoners, five percent of whom had identified as veterans when surveyed by HMIP, yet I was informed that no ex-military prisoners were known within their prisoner population. My veteran's charity worker contact who occasionally worked in the establishment was aware of three ex-military prisoners who I was then subsequently able to interview.¹⁶

The under-identification of veterans in prison results from a combination of factors, which include institutions' failure to survey and record veterans within their populations (Howard League 2011; Phillips 2014) and the reluctance of veterans to disclose their status, typically due to embarrassment or shame but also fear of reprisals from other prisoners perceived to be negatively disposed towards military veterans (Söderström 2020; Howard League 2011). Due to this under-identification, a greater number of research sites (six) had to be accessed to recruit a sufficient sample of participants.

¹⁶ By contrast, in another prison (HMP Wandsworth) a member of prison medical staff had pioneered a programme to identify ex-military personnel and had identified over 25 within that prison.

Below is a table summarising the research sites and research participant samples drawn from each site:

Research Site	Security category	Public/ private	Estimated percentage veterans	No. sampled (n=35)
HMP Standford Hill	D (open)	Public	3%*	5
HMP Brixton	C/D (closed)	Public	5%*	3
HMP Swaleside	B Training/Resettlement	Public	5%*	7
HMP Wandsworth	B Local	Public	6%*	8
HMP Thameside	B Local	Private	6%*	4
HMP Wymott	C Training/Resettlement	Public	12%*	8
* Based on HMIP inspection reports published around the time of fieldwork.				

3.2.6. Sample composition

While the study sample included a range of participants from across the different branches of the UK armed forces, most participants had served in the British Army (n=27), with a smaller number having served in the Royal Navy (n=6) (some of whom had been Royal Marines, n=4¹⁷) and two in the Royal Air Force (n=2). Proportionally, this corresponds with the composition of ex-military prisoners found in UK prisons by The Howard League (2011) and HMIP (2014a). Although the study recruited only ex-military personnel who had served in the UK military, one participant reported having also served in the French Foreign Legion following his UK military service.¹⁸

During their military service, the majority (n=25) of participants reported having served in combat roles,¹⁹ with most of these being former Army (n=23). Most of these (n=19) reported having been deployed on active operations overseas, mostly in Northern Ireland during The Troubles but also in Bosnia, Kosovo, Serbia, Afghanistan,

¹⁷ One participant had served in two branches of the UK military, first serving two years in the Royal Marines, followed by 19 years in the British Army.

¹⁸ The French Foreign Legion is a fighting force of the French military composed of mainly foreign soldiers from across the world. (Lyons 2009).

¹⁹ Combat roles are those in which one is tasked with fighting the enemy. The most common of these are infantry, armour and artillery but can also include other roles such as weapons operators in boats and aircraft.

Kuwait and Iraq. Of this number, 12 reported having experienced some form of hostile engagement or other potentially traumatic event (e.g. being wounded in combat, discovering a mass grave, witnessing a death or serious injury). Furthermore, seven participants reported experiencing some form of psychological trauma and mental health problems (e.g. PTSD) resulting from their military service, although this was only discussed when the subject arose naturally in interviews and was not specifically asked of all participants, meaning that a higher actual frequency is possible.

Most (n=33) participants in the sample had served as non-commissioned ranks, mostly as private (or equivalent) (n=19) but with a number of junior and senior non-commissioned officers (JNCOs and SNCOs) ranging from Lance Corporal to Staff Sergeant (or equivalents) (n=14). Only two former commissioned officers were present in the sample. The overall length of previous military service ranged from six months to 21 years and the majority of participants had been out of the military for over two years before entering prison. Overall, the majority of participants had left the military over five years prior to the time of interview, the longest having left 40 years prior. Twenty had left the military voluntarily, nine had received a medical discharge and six had been (or were due to be) discharged for misconduct. Two of those subject to misconduct had been convicted and sentenced for offences while in the military and were therefore technically still serving members of the military who would be returned to military custody on completion of their sentence and then discharged from service.

The study sample proved to be a somewhat diverse group demographically, with participants aged from 23 to 72 years and coming from England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and The Republic of Ireland. The majority of participants were white (British, Irish or European) (n=32) with one who was of Black Caribbean descent and two of south Asian heritage. While participants were not asked about their sexual preferences, at least two participants voluntarily reported being gay. Most interviewees reported little by way of formal education, with ten reporting that they had achieved GCSEs and/or A-Levels (or equivalents) and a further four reporting that they completed an undergraduate degree or higher.

Participants' offences ranged from relatively low-level crimes, such as shoplifting, to more serious offences, such as large-scale drug importation and murder. Of those willing to disclose their offence, 13 were in prison for violent offences (including five for murder), five for drugs offences (all of which were supply or importation), four for acquisitive offences (two for pre-planned robbery, two for fraud),

four for sex offences and two for driving offences. This wide range of offences was reflected in the varied sentence lengths that participants had received, which ranged from eight months to life. Three participants were serving indeterminate sentences and three were on remand pending trial or extradition. Twenty were serving their first prison sentence. Annex a outlines individual features of participants in the sample.

3.3. Researching veterans in prison

Some sub-groups in society are not readily apparent. Their invisibility, their separation or isolation from mainstream society or their unwillingness or inability to engage with researchers out of fear, suspicion or antipathy can all compound to make accessing and researching such populations difficult (Chamberlain and Hodgetts 2018). This is particularly the case with military populations and, by extension, veteran populations. While veterans are not typically separated from mainstream society along geographical, racial or religious lines, veterans are not readily apparent in society. Penetration of such groups can be difficult but even more crucial to conducting successful social research is the ability to relate to and understand the group under study. This is necessary to both gain engagement from participants and thereby extract good quality data and also to interpret the meaning and nuance in the data extracted, thereby ensuring correct analysis and accurate reporting of findings. With veterans identifying as part of a particular community – a ‘military family’ – with specific features that civilians neither share nor understand, for those with no prior experience of the military or of veteran populations, the language and terminology used can be confusing and disorientating (Williams et al. 2021). This can present difficulties in collecting, analysing and interpreting data from a social world different to mainstream society with its own military-specific language, culture, customs, values and social mores which are altogether unfamiliar to outsiders (Harrison 2003; Woodward 2003; Higate and Cameron 2006). Similar to veterans, prisoners can also be difficult to access for research purposes and also possess their own language, culture, customs and social mores which can make navigating the research process within the prison social world similarly disorientating (Crewe 2009).

3.3.1. Positioning the researcher

Researchers’ identities and perspectives are inevitably shaped by their knowledge, experiences and cultural values as well as the location and context in which the

research is conducted (Serrant-Green 2002; Dwyer and Buckle 2009; Karstetter 2012). It is therefore necessary when conducting social research in any context to consider the position and perspective of the researcher in relation to that of the community or population under study (Merton 1972; Dwyer and Buckle 2009). Much has been written on the merits and limitations of both being an 'insider' and an 'outsider' to the group being studied and this is often presented in terms of a strict dichotomy; the *insider doctrine* and *outsider doctrine* (Merton 1972).

The outsider doctrine holds that only the researcher who is an outsider to the community they are researching can be truly neutral, objective and unbiased in their inquiry (Merton 1972; Simmel 1950). Conversely, the insider doctrine asserts that only the researcher who is a member of the subject population, and is acquainted with its customs, traditions and culture, can truly understand the accounts and experiences of those in the subject community (Merton 1972). However, this dichotomised view overlooks some of the ambiguity, ambivalence and complexity surrounding the insider-outsider positions and perspectives in social research, which are in practice more dialectal than binary (Dwyer and Buckle 2009; Karstetter 2012).

3.3.2. Insider or outsider to the criminal justice system?

Having held several positions within the UK legal and criminal justice system and as a former member of the UK military, I occupied a less than simple position on the insider-outsider identity spectrum. For the duration of the time I was conducting fieldwork, I also worked full-time as a government researcher, initially at the Ministry of Justice, where I conducted research mainly on prisons,²⁰ and then at the College of Policing, where my research focused on policing and crime prevention and where I stayed for the remainder of the data collection and analysis phase of the study. Following analysis of the data, I moved out of criminal justice organisations into the UK Department for International Development and subsequently the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. Prior to my work as a government researcher, I had spent five and a half years as a front-line police officer in a deprived part of North-West England, and two years with Greater Manchester Police, where I compiled prosecution files for criminal courts. This gave me an insight into the lives of

²⁰ While at the Ministry of Justice I was not employed by the Prison Service or by NOMS and so did not and do not, consider my position to have been one of an 'insider' to the world of prisons.

criminal offenders as well as some of the professionals working within the criminal justice system.

3.3.3. Managing conflict of interest

In discussing conflict of interest, Moore et al. (2010) argue that judgments are easily influenced by affiliations with interested parties, including those judgements made where there are clear incentives for objectivity. As an employee of the Ministry of Justice and other UK civil service departments during different stages in this research project, I had to manage a number of potential conflicts of interest. The first of these was around applying for ethical approval through NOMS while personally knowing some of the committee's members through my role at the MoJ. In this dual role as both a prospective researcher and an employee and occasional member of the NRC committee, I was careful not to discuss my research proposal with other members of the committee prior to my application, so as to avoid influencing their orientation towards it. I also ensured that I was not sitting on the committee on the two occasions that my application was considered for approval. The fact that my application was rejected on the first submission indicates that I was successful in managing this conflict and avoiding any bias in favour of my application.

The second conflict of interest I encountered was during fieldwork. As an employee of the Ministry of Justice, I had to guard against the perception that I would skew my findings to avert any embarrassment to the Prison Service or Ministry of Justice. To guard against this, I ensured that my interview schedule was faithfully followed in all interviews with all topic areas covered, including areas of inquiry that might be somewhat uncomfortable for the Prison Service (for example on how its management operated or its staff treated prisoners). In later stages of the fieldwork phase, I was employed as a researcher at the College of Policing (an agency of the Home Office). Here the potential conflict was less pronounced as I was no longer affiliated with the Ministry of Justice but, as a public servant conducting doctoral research on a public institution, I remained aware of its possibility. Finally, as my project reached its latter stages of writing up my findings, I moved to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office where the link to the Prison Service was considerably less direct and therefore of lower potential to influence the study. At no point have I been aware of my research or my full-time employment influencing each other inappropriately.

3.3.4. Insider or outsider to the military 'family'?

Of greatest relevance and importance to this study is my previous military service which preceded both my doctoral studies and my civilian employment experience. This involved initially enlisting in the Territorial Army (now Army Reserve) in 2001 at the age of seventeen as a private soldier in the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, an infantry regiment.²¹ The following year, I was mobilised for full-time regular service on an operational deployment to Afghanistan, followed by an operational deployment to Iraq in 2003 where I was employed in front-line infantry roles as a rifleman and machine gunner. Following my return from Iraq I was demobilised and returned to reserve service until completion of my three-year term of service when I did not re-enlist in order to pursue a career in policing. My previous military service therefore placed me in the 'insider' camp of UK military veterans for the purpose of this study.

3.3.5. Staff and Management perceptions of the researcher

To prison managers and staff I was an outsider, having never worked in prisons, but with some form of relevant insider features or insight as a result of my policing experience which gave me a knowledge and understanding of the world of criminal offenders (Smith 1999; Karstetter 2012). While conducting fieldwork I did not openly discuss the fact that I worked for the Ministry of Justice with prison staff²² to avoid the potential for being viewed with suspicion as someone 'from HQ', which I was concerned could lead to guarded and 'on message' responses from staff. Nevertheless, my role at the Ministry of Justice was known to those who organised my access to each prison and, as a result, it was mentioned occasionally by them when giving introductions to other staff. I did, however, often disclose in conversations with staff my previous role as a police officer which was well-received and helped to build rapport. Even to those aware of my role as a Ministry of Justice researcher I was framed as an outsider to the Prison Service, with little or no connection to those conducting the day-to-day running of the prison. As a former police officer, I was considered something of an insider to the world of offender management on 'the

²¹ Infantry are ground forces which operate predominantly on foot to engage the enemy in close quarter combat.

²² Nor did I conceal the fact but disclosed this whenever I was asked.

ground floor' or 'front-line', with some degree of understanding of the pressures and challenges facing those dealing with offenders.

This is illustrated by one occasion when the member of staff who was facilitating my fieldwork in one establishment allowed me to interview a prisoner who could "be a bit difficult", seemingly due to my previous occupational experience and an assumed familiarity with and confidence in handling potentially 'difficult' offenders. After initial hesitation in allowing me to interview this prisoner, my facilitator quickly changed her mind saying, "in fact, *you'll* be alright with him; you know what you're doing. Just watch him. Don't let him take advantage of you. He'll try all sorts." (fieldwork notes, 11th May 2016). The situation at the time did not allow me to follow up on why she considered me to 'know what I was doing'²³.

3.3.6. Outsider to the veteran prisoner community

While an outsider to the prisoner social world, as a former member of the UK military, I was, to a substantial degree, an insider to the community of military veterans. Again, this put me 'somewhere between' (Karstetter 2012), in what Kanuha (2000) terms "researching at the hyphen".

Another factor important to consider in researching military persons is the issue of rank, a feature of crucial bearing on the social organisation of military populations. The social gulf between the enlisted ranks and the officer cadre in military institutions is substantial, with very little interaction between the two and relationships typically being oppositional and formal (Hockey 1986). The fact that I had spent my military service in the lower, enlisted ranks, rather than as an officer, provided me with more insider credibility and knowledge than a researcher who had served as an officer might achieve, as one participant illustrated: "*obviously when you get up to Captains and those educated ones it gets a bit- that's obviously a rank that gets in the way*" (Graeme). The fact that this was important for participants is demonstrated in the following exchange with a participant in a brief pre-interview chat while he was signing his consent form:

Participant: "So, was you officer material, were you?"

²³ This prisoner actually did try (unsuccessfully) to trick me into letting him use the phone in the medical office we occupied for the interview.

Researcher: *“No, I was in straight out of school so joined as a Fusilier.”*

Participant: *“Ah, ok. What rank was you then?”*

Researcher: *“Just a Fusilier – A private.”*

Participant: *“Oh right! I assumed that because you’re doing this you’d have been one of those educated officers. A Rupert²⁴”.*

One final consideration is that of military branch and unit. Higate (Higate and Cameron 2006) describes his surprise when interviewing Navy personnel that he was treated as an outsider, despite his own previous service in the British Army. While the vast majority of my participants were former British Army and therefore considered me an insider to this part of their community, it is possible that participants from the Royal Navy and RAF may have considered me an insider to the broader world of the military but an outsider to their specific military institutions. Like Higate and Cameron (2006), I found that one’s branch of service was important in shaping a participant’s perception of the researcher. One participant who had served in the Navy, seemed to identify more with his Naval identity than any broader military identity, referring to me and other ex-soldiers as “you” or “your lot” and referring to Naval personnel as “us” and “our lot”. This was not the case with all former Navy and Air Force participants, however.

3.3.7. Pros and cons of the insider status

My own reflexive assessment is that I was mostly viewed as an insider to the overall veteran community, with varying degrees of nuance depending on the individual participant’s previous military branch and unit, but as an outsider to the specific veteran *prisoner* (sub-)community and an outsider to the prison. Participants spoke freely and openly about sensitive issues that they may have been reluctant to discuss with a non-ex-military researcher, describing, for example, the unpleasant realities of discovering a mass grave at a Bosnian orphanage or the enjoyment derived from routine fist fights in bars in Germany. This insider advantage became particularly evident during two interviews in which, as a result of somewhat hurried introductory discussions, I forgot to disclose my previous military service. After five minutes or so of interviewing, I noticed that some of the answers to my questions seemed more guarded than in previous interviews. On correcting my omission, the demeanour of

²⁴ Rupert is slightly demeaning military slang used to refer to an officer.

the participants shifted to being more open and forthcoming, and the subsequent responses to my questions became more detailed and elaborate.

While the insider position and perspective can bring many advantages to the collection and later interpretation of data, it also carries a number of possible disadvantages. As discussed above, aspects of military culture can make it difficult for its adherents to openly discuss certain sensitive issues. When conducting research with ex-military populations, Ailsa Cameron found that, as an outsider to the ex-military community, she had an advantage over her ex-military colleague in discussing topics of a more private, personal and emotional nature during interviews with ex-military personnel (Higate and Cameron 2006). While an ex-serviceman may be more willing to discuss with another ex-serviceman the feelings experienced during combat or following the act of killing, for example – feelings perhaps acceptable within macho military culture – they might be less willing to discuss the emotional impact of stressful and traumatic experiences or more intimate feelings about themselves or their family in order to avoid appearing weak and ‘un-soldier like’ (Higate and Cameron 2006; Harrison 2003; Woodward 2003).

3.3.8. Personal reflections

Another matter for consideration as an insider to the military community is the potential impact that conducting such research can have on the researcher. Etherington (2007) highlights the potential harm that can be caused to those charged with transcribing interviews of traumatised individuals and the need to be aware of this when conducting such research. Although this had not occurred to me prior to commencing this study, I did find that interviewing veteran prisoners about their experiences of war had an unexpected impact on me psychologically, triggering memories, thoughts and reflections from my own service in Afghanistan and Iraq. This included remembering unpleasant events that had been up until then forgotten or dismissed, which I would then reflect on, sometimes for several days. These episodes could become mentally consuming and distracting and were typically accompanied by disturbing dreams which could be distressing and disrupt my sleep. While this effect was not serious enough to warrant professional help and mostly faded away after the period of fieldwork and transcription ended, it is an aspect of insider research with military populations that I had not anticipated prior to commencing the project, and is seemingly absent from the existing research literature.

3.3.9. Reflexivity, subjectivity and objectivity

Reflexivity refers to the process by which the researcher acknowledges and examines his or her own beliefs, judgements and practices during the process of conducting social research and how he or she considers and assesses the extent to which these might impact upon the research study. These impacts resulting from the researcher's position in relation to the group under study and the study itself can influence the ways in which data is generated and collected, as well as how that data is subsequently analysed and interpreted. This is typically due to inherent, and usually unconscious, biases the researcher likely holds (Finlay 1998). To be reflexive requires the researcher to acknowledge and understand that the data collected is constructed mutually during dialogue between both the researcher and the participant, rather than something that is objective. This data is then given meaning by the researcher through a subjective process of analysis and interpretation which is inevitably shaped by the researcher's already existing views, values and beliefs (Finlay 2002; Ponterotto 2005). Finlay (2002) warns against the temptation to shy away from reflecting on one's own position and the ways in which this might impact the research study when facing challenge or accusation of being subjective, but instead to confront it, acknowledge it and practically address it where possible.

Liebling (2001) asserts that it is impossible to remain neutral when conducting social research and that researchers inevitably enter research settings with at least some pre-existing opinions, expectations and political views. I was no exception and took practical measures to guard against this, by ensuring that interviews would be guided by questions centred around prominent themes that had been identified in previous research literature and would not be guided excessively by my own pre-conceived thoughts, views and beliefs during the interviews. This ensured that my views, opinions and beliefs did not unduly influence the collection of data and its subsequent analysis (Finlay 1998).

Kanuha (2000) highlights the difficulties faced by researchers who have similar experiences to their participants in keeping separate their own experiences from those gathered from participant accounts. I was mindful of this when analyzing aspects of participants' accounts relating to their military service in order to avoid unintentionally projecting my own thoughts about my own experiences onto the interpretation of those recounted by interviewees. I ultimately sought my academic supervisor's insight and

opinion on findings drawn from the raw data to check and quality assure my own analysis to ensure that the findings reported were accurate and unbiased (Serrant-Green 2002).

3.4. The interview process

The fieldwork phase of the study was to consist of 35 ex-military prisoner interviews and was initially anticipated to take nine to twelve months. Ultimately, due to the need to access a greater number of research sites than initially expected, interviews were conducted over an eighteen-month period from August 2015 until February 2017. Saturation point was reached after around thirty interviews had been conducted, however, I decided to continue with the five interviews that I had already scheduled in the final research site. While not producing any novel themes, these interviews still proved useful in corroborating data already captured in previously completed interviews.

Interviews took place one-on-one in private, either in offices on the residential wings, in prisoners' cells or in prison visits rooms. In more than one establishment, my insistence on privacy was met by resistance from staff facilitating my visits who expressed concern at leaving me alone with prisoners. These instances required careful explanation of the necessity for the interviews to be private and their content to be confidential. Delicate negotiations often followed, in which I made minor concessions in order to show understanding of their position, alleviate their concerns and ultimately maintain their co-operation. One example of this was when my staff contact told me that he was under strict instructions from the establishment's security unit to sit in on each interview to "monitor what they say" (field notes - 14th November 2015). After some awkward discussion, we agreed that he would not sit in on the interviews but that, for the first few, he could enter the room unannounced at regular intervals to check that everything was okay. Whenever this happened, both the participant and I would cease talking, inform the officer that all was well and wait the few seconds until he had left the room before resuming the interview. After two uneventful interviews, the officer became more comfortable with the process (and with me) and ceased entering the room at all.

3.4.1. Structure of the interviews

Interviews with participants took the form of qualitative interviews, each lasting around

fifty minutes on average with the shortest taking twenty-four minutes and the longest being one hour and thirty-four minutes. In social research, Pawson (1996) argues the merits of avoiding structured interviews in order to limit the influence of pre-conceptions on the collection, analysis and interpretation of data and better understand the meaning of participants' accounts. Incorporating areas for discussion already identified from the literature, I decided to conduct semi-structured interviews, using an interview schedule to guide the course of the interviews (see Annex b) but not to specifically direct them along a predetermined course. This allowed all dominant themes and main areas of interest to be covered during discussions and ensured consistency between interviews, while also maintaining sufficient flexibility to allow for unanticipated themes to emerge from participant responses and be adequately discussed (Rubin and Rubin 1995; Robson 2002). Questions and probes were loosely arranged around themes emerging from the literature review and served more as a series of prompts than as a strict set of pre-defined questions. Adopting this approach encouraged participants to fully communicate their experiences through open, free-flowing accounts which were then probed with further questions and prompts. This avoided inadvertently leading or influencing participants in their responses and allowed the study to gain a nuanced understanding of the issues under investigation (Bryman 2012).

During interviews, participants were encouraged to give their own free-flowing accounts in response to open prompts such as, "tell me about your childhood", which covered areas and themes contained in the research schedule. These accounts were then followed up with carefully phrased questions which were open but direct, for example, "why did you join the army?", thereby limiting any ambiguity and encouraging complete, elaborated responses. Closed questions such as, "so your mother wanted you to join?", were then often used to clarify responses and probe to obtain specific required information (Robson 2002). This approach worked well, allowing participants to initially discuss aspects of the topic area that they considered relevant and important before moving on to discussing the broad themes more directly and then moving on to specific details and clarifications.

As I became increasingly comfortable with the interviewing process and more familiar with the content and structure of the interview schedule, interviews progressively developed a more conversational form. While still maintaining focus on the relevant themes and issues detailed in the interview schedule, this format

accommodated digression onto other issues that participants deemed important to discuss or otherwise felt were of relevance and interest to the study. These unanticipated areas of discussion could then be pursued by further questioning and probing and, if relevant, incorporated into a revised interview schedule for exploring in subsequent interviews.

This also helped to make sure that participants did not experience the interview as a one-way data extraction process but as a two-way personalized interaction (Bachman and Schutt 2011). It was important (to me) to make the interview a positive experience for participants and so I always sought to leave five minutes at the end of the interview, after the recorder was switched off, for brief informal conversations to develop, which I believe made the process more personable. It also had the added benefit of acting as a short period of decompression following discussions which often included sensitive and emotional subjects and allowed me to both gauge the interviewee's wellbeing and end the interview on a lighter note.

The interview schedule guided the interviews through a chronological life narrative which focused on the following areas: childhood; life between childhood and military service (if any); life in the military; life between the military and prison; and life in prison, with most time and attention devoted to the areas of life in the military and life in the prison. Elliot (2005) asserts the importance of gathering, analyzing and reporting the narrative of participants' life-courses in order to evidence the lived experience of research subjects and their perspectives about and interactions within their social world. She also highlights the beneficial effects that this can have in helping to redress some of the power differentials inherent in the research process.

By including the collection of life-course material, the study was able to situate data within participants' life narratives. This was particularly important as the life trajectories of veterans had a crucial and direct impact upon how they framed their time spent in the military and their ultimate experience of imprisonment. For example, those who had grown up in care institutions often framed their institutional lives as somewhat normal compared to those who had not, while others who grew up in violent homes found institutions involving violence to be less difficult to live within than those from more stable backgrounds.

Typically, I began interviews by asking participants to provide a brief overview of their military career which served as an 'ice-breaker', i.e. something they were both likely expecting (given the title of the research project) and were likely to be

comfortable talking about. This opening prompt was phrased as a broad, open-ended question or prompt resembling more the beginning of a conversation than a formal interview, for example “So, tell me about your time in the military”. This always seemed to be well-received and put the interviewee at ease by, in essence, handing control of the conversation to the participant.

Interviews were typically audio recorded, using a digital recorder, which assisted greatly in the interview process by facilitating free-flowing conversation and by reducing note-taking, which can inhibit communication flow (Bryman 2012). There were only two exceptions to this: once when a participant asked not to be recorded from the outset of the interview, and another occasion when an interviewee directed the researcher to turn off the recorder temporarily during parts of the interview when discussing certain criticisms of prison management. On both occasions, these requests were immediately satisfied without any question, and I instead took handwritten notes.

3.4.2. Building rapport

Each interview was preceded by a brief discussion explaining the study and what participation would involve, as well as providing an opportunity for participants to ask questions. During these discussions, I also explained my own motivations for the study, and disclosed my own previous military service, which assisted in building rapport (Higate and Cameron 2006; Carreiras and Castro 2012). Presenting to participants a shared history helped to reduce ‘social distance’ and created a more level, two-way interaction that facilitated communication and thus also data collection (Jorgensen 1989).

I found that discussing my own previous military experience helped to build rapport with participants. It facilitated communication and allowed me during interviews to create more of a level, conversational dynamic of two former military persons conversing rather than that of an academic researcher interviewing a research subject (Jorgensen 1989). Throughout the interviews, acronyms, abbreviations and jargon were used by both interviewer and interviewee with little need for explanations or clarifications and participants clearly considered me to share their military veteran identity. Occasionally the interview discussions would give rise to my sharing a short personal anecdote about my own life or military experiences which seemed to enhance the feel of a level, two-way interaction and help the interviewee to

open up (Karstetter 2012). This was made particularly evident in comments made by participants which expressed disdain for non-veterans as *“fucking civvies,”* (Phillip, participant) alongside others which included me in descriptions of ‘us’ and ‘we’ when referring to military or veteran personnel. By way of illustration, remarks such as, *“you know yourself... it wouldn't even register to what we've been through”* (Dennis, participant), and *“I can't explain it but obviously you've been there and know what it's like”* (Martin, participant) were not uncommon.

3.4.3. Reducing social distance

During the interviews I adopted a relaxed, casual and friendly conversational approach to questioning, using language with which participants were likely familiar and trying to exhibit patience, tact and discretion throughout, finding like Crewe (2009), that sincerity and respect made the most valuable research tools. I made no efforts to conceal my distinctive northern English accent, typically associated with lower socio-economic backgrounds, and I also sought to reduce the symbolic elements of the power differential between us. Ways in which I sought to do this included, for example, asking permission before entering a prisoner's cell, asking permission to sit before doing so and, when occupying a room or office together, claiming the chair of the lowest height and in the least good state of repair. However, I still maintained an awareness that, despite my best efforts, power dynamics would inevitably remain at play. This was made especially clear early on in the interview process when, on concluding an interview, the interviewee asked me *“how did I do? Did I do OK?”* (participant). While initially surprised by this, it was a useful reminder that participants – or at least some of them – felt that they were subjects in a process that I was in charge of and in which I was judging their performance.

3.5. Data Analysis

As this study investigated an under-researched section of the prison population, a flexible, inductive approach to data analysis was adopted which allowed data to be continually analysed throughout the data collection process and permit the identification of dominant and recurring themes as they emerged (Corbin and Strauss 1990; Noaks and Wincup 2004). This allowed for unanticipated emerging themes to be incorporated into the interview schedule and to be included in the questioning in subsequent interviews with participants, and also helped me to create an initial

analytical framework (Creswell 2009; Glaser and Strauss 1967; Ritchie and Lewis 2003).

3.5.1. Transcribing interviews

Following completion of each batch of interviews, I personally transcribed each of the audio recordings which proved to be a lengthy and time-consuming process. This did, however, prove to be valuable in terms of interpreting the data during analysis as it allowed for me to pick up on nuances in participants' accounts, expressed, for example, through intonation of speech or use of pauses, that might not have been readily apparent in reading a transcript typed by a third party.²⁵ With so much of the meaning in human communication transmitted in *the way* that things are said in addition to *what* is actually said, I found that listening actively to each interview's audio recording allowed me to gain a fuller, richer, more nuanced appreciation for and understanding of the data.

3.5.2. Coding the data

I analysed the content of the transcripts using the framework method of data analysis (Ritchie and Spencer 1994). This involved analyzing the data within each transcript thematically with reference to an analytical framework constructed using themes emerging from the literature review as well as those that emerged during the interview process (Ritchie and Lewis 2003; Noaks and Wincup 2004). This process of open coding involved reviewing and organizing the data contained in the transcripts and then interpreting and coding these data according to the relevant, expected or otherwise emerging, themes. These codes were then indexed by entering them into a spreadsheet matrix with individual cases (each of the interviewees) arranged along one axis and prominent and emerging themes along the other. Data summaries and relevant quotes were then charted into the matrix at the cross-reference point of case and code thereby collating relevant data together by theme.

²⁵ By way of illustration, one participant described his passion for violence by saying "I [pause] *love* [pause] to *fight* [pause]". By hearing this sentence spoken, I was able to deduce that this was something that he had a genuine passion for and which was central to his narrative. Had I simply read this in a transcript as "I love to fight", I would have been unaware of the significance of this to his narrative.

3.5.3. Thematic analysis

Organising the data in this way allowed each participant's data relating to each separate theme to remain connected to other aspects of their account within the matrix so that inter-relationships between data and overall context were not lost (Ritchie and Spencer 1994; Ritchie and Lewis 2003; Gale et. al. 2013). Finally, to ensure correct interpretation of the data and to reduce the possible impact of bias, I consulted with my academic supervisor on the collection, analysis and interpretation of the data.

The framework analysis method proved to be an effective means of analyzing the study's large qualitative data set. It provided a clear structured way in which to summarise and organize the data, allowing me, with relative ease, to systematically, sequentially and methodically compare and contrast the data generated by each participant, both between and within individual accounts. I made constant use of comparisons to identify similarities and differences between participant accounts which enabled me to identify patterns and variations within the collected data. By way of example, in one of the first interview transcripts analysed, I identified a participant's frustrations with the disorganised regime and inefficient systems in prison from his comment: *"the organisation is shocking... it's run like a circus"*. I therefore created a new line within the matrix spreadsheet termed 'frustrations with organizational regime' and recorded the occurrence of this within the case for that particular participant, accompanied by the supporting data (i.e. relevant quotes). In subsequent readings of other transcripts where this featured again (which were many), I recorded these in the analysis matrix, along with relevant supporting data (quotes from the transcripts). I could then compare these data with each other to establish that the fact that veterans experienced this as a particular hardship was a clear, consistent theme across participants' accounts, supported by clear, unambiguous data. I followed the same process for each new, emerging theme. It also allowed me to achieve precision and consistency in the analysis and ultimately obtain a comprehensive, holistic overview of the entire data-set which facilitated the identification of dominant themes and associations between data in different participant accounts.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

Throughout this research study, the British Society of Criminology's (BSC) Code of Ethics was strictly adhered to (BSC 2015) to ensure that the welfare of all participants and others who might be impacted by the research activities were safeguarded.

3.6.1. Ethics approvals

Prior to commencing fieldwork, or even accessing research sites, ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Institute of Criminology Ethics Committee at the University of Cambridge and also from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) National Research Committee, a necessary requirement for accessing prisons for research purposes in England and Wales.

While no major ethical problems were encountered in the carrying out of this study, a small number of minor ethical issues did inevitably arise. The first of these was around confidentiality. On a small number of occasions I was asked by my facilitating staff contacts what participants had said during their interviews. This seemed always to be out of curiosity and concern for the individuals rather than anything sinister. As I had built a strong, trusting rapport with these staff members who had been open and forthcoming with me in providing personal and often confidential information about participants, I found it sometimes awkward to decline to reciprocate. However, on each of these occasions I carefully and tactfully explained that I could not answer their questions in order to maintain the confidentiality of my participants. On every occasion this decision was respected and I did not discern any change in the nature of our relationship or the level of help I subsequently received.

Another issue that arose related to concern for a participant's welfare. On one occasion I interviewed a participant who told me that he had recently contemplated committing suicide. After asking him whether this was an ongoing issue, to which he responded that it was not, I informed him that I would still let the staff member facilitating my visit know about this (who was a mental health nurse) to make sure he was getting the help he needed. He raised no objection to this and I subsequently informed the nurse who was already aware of the issue and was managing his care.

No further ethical issues arose during the course of the study and no complaints or concerns were raised by any participants or any of the prisons' staff and management.

3.6.2. Informed consent

Prior to attending each research site, a two-page information sheet was provided for each prospective participant to my contact at each establishment. This information sheet (see appendix c) contained information about the nature and purpose of the

study and included my contact details and information about what participation in the study would involve. These information sheets were intended to be distributed to each participant prior to my attendance at each research site and were intended to ensure fully informed consent. In practice, however, despite my best efforts in repeated polite requests for this to be done, only a few participants reported having received one of these information sheets, most having learned about the study verbally from staff or other prisoners. Consequently, an information sheet was provided to each participant prior to conducting an interview and all prospective participants were given time to read through this before continuing to discuss the study with me.

Every interview was preceded by a private, one-on-one discussion with the prospective participant about what the study was about and what participation would involve, which included the opportunity to ask questions. Most participants did ask questions about the research which indicated to me that this mode of communication was suitable for allowing participants to fully understand what their involvement would be before agreeing to participate. Once all questions were satisfied and participants felt that they were fully informed about the study, participants were asked to give their expressed consent to be interviewed and were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time up to the expected date of data analysis commencing. Without exception, this written consent was recorded on a printed paper consent form (see appendix b) which was signed by each participant (Bryman 2012; Noaks and Wincup 2004). On conclusion of the interview, participants were again asked whether they had any questions or concerns regarding the study or their participation and were again reminded that they could withdraw from the study and were provided with contact details to do this if they desired.

3.6.3. Confidentiality and anonymity

Participants were advised prior to commencing the interview the circumstances in which confidentiality would have to be breached, for example providing me with information about previously undisclosed serious criminal offences committed or any intention to harm themselves or others. Furthermore, participants were informed that they could decline to answer any questions asked during the interview, and this was reiterated during certain lines of sensitive questioning. The fact that this option to decline an answer was taken up by a number of participants at various points of the interview process, usually when discussing their offences or family circumstances,

assured me that my explanations were clear and sufficiently understood.

In accordance with professional codes of ethics and the Data Protection Act 1998, all sensitive and personal data collected from participants was kept confidential. All hand-written notes were typed up into electronic format and stored, along with all audio and any other information, electronically on secure password-protected systems. The identities of participants remained anonymous throughout the study and continue to be so throughout the reporting and presentation of findings. Pseudonyms have been assigned to each participant and any features of their narratives which could lead to their identification, such as military units and previous prisons, have been omitted (Noaks and Wincup 2004; Bryman 2012).

3.7. Chapter summary

This chapter has outlined the research design employed in this study and the research methods used in selecting and recruiting the 35 veteran prisoners who formed its sample. It also described the make-up and composition of the sample to demonstrate how it is representative of the population under study. It has given an account of how the six research sites for this study were selected from across the country to include both privately and publicly run prisons from across the security category spectrum, before recounting the arduous process followed to ultimately gain access to these establishments and their populations. It has described the process of collecting data through the use of semi-structured interviews and has recounted the process of transcribing the audio-recorded data and of its coding and ultimate analysis. It has considered the ethical implications of this study, with particular reference to the safeguards taken to ensure participant confidentiality and anonymity and the emphasis placed on the voluntary participation and fully informed consent of all those involved in the study, including those facilitating the research process – not just participants. Most importantly, this chapter has discussed and highlighted the importance of reflexivity in the research process, especially in the researching of military and veteran populations, and has situated me, as the researcher, in occupying a hybrid position on the insider-outsider axis, thereby giving the reader an understanding of the perspective with which the study's findings are interpreted and reported in the following chapters.

Chapter 4: Pathways from the Military to Prison

Ex-military prisoners have much in common in terms of their military service, while also differing in other life experiences. In order to illuminate the effect and importance of these other significant life experiences on later imprisonment and to provide a fuller understanding of the population under study, this chapter provides an exploration of participants' life pathways and routes into prison, highlighting some of the commonalities across their accounts and their approaches to life in prison. This includes accounts of childhood experiences, military service experiences and experiences of civilian life after service, all of which impacted upon the course of participants' lives, their later offending and ultimately their experiences of imprisonment.

The chapter begins with an illustration of some of the typical life pathways taken by ex-military personnel, starting from participants' childhoods and following them ultimately through to their current imprisonment. It does this first through a series of case studies before moving on to map out the different stages of the life-course for veterans in more detail, examining how they transitioned from childhood, into the military, out into civilian life and ultimately into prison. This provides important context and background picture which will form a framework for understanding veterans' experiences of imprisonment which are later detailed in the subsequent chapters.

4.1. Example case studies

Crewe (2009) outlines the hazard in attempting to categorise prisoners into typologies, which can produce oversimplified categories without empirical basis. However, he also highlights the utility of such categorisations in providing clarity of analysis and a guide to the group under study and its social setting (Crewe 2009). While acknowledging that each participant had their own story of how they arrived in prison, with no two accounts the same, there were some broad similarities that allows for some degree of categorisation. Crewe (2009) divided the prisoners in his study into five distinct typologies: 'enthusiasts', 'pragmatists', 'stoics', 'retreatists' and 'players'. In Crewe's (2009) typological terms, veteran prisoners in this study were almost exclusively 'pragmatists' and 'stoics', with a small handful of 'enthusiasts'. Crewe describes 'Pragmatists' as men who were compliant with prison regime due to reasons that were

“instrumental and fatalistic rather than normative”, and were settled into passive routines while not dwelling on their moral status nor pursuing projects of personal transformation. Likewise, ‘stoics’ were also regime compliant but less for the pursuit of personal gain, such as earned privileges, and more out of fear of halting their own progression through their sentence, and the prison system. ‘Stoics’ therefore suppressed their frustrations and resigned themselves to the prison’s regime, coping well under austere conditions and seeking a quiet existence. While ‘pragmatists and ‘stoics’ formed the bulk of the study sample, there were a small number of ‘enthusiasts’ who were characterised by their moral alignment with the authorities, good relations with staff, eager compliance with the prison regime, and desire to progress through the system. However, these participants were, in this study, somewhat milder ‘enthusiasts’, with none of the interviewees framing their prison sentence as a “righteous intervention” saving them from themselves, nor expressing the prison’s motives as moral and virtuous, as Crewe (2009) found. While most participants in this study aligned somewhat with the typologies of ‘pragmatists’ and ‘stoics’, there were further sub-divisions within the veteran prisoner community which seemed to derive from the different pathways that veterans took to prison.

Below are five examples to illustrate four primary pathway narratives recounted by participants, whose features were shared by others. The first narrative tells of a lifetime of institutionalisation, beginning as a child in the care system. The second involves joining the military to avoid trouble with the police and involvement with the criminal justice system, and subsequently falling into substance misuse on discharge. The third narrative describes a relatively stable childhood, trouble-free military service and then ultimately the employment of skills acquired in the military to pursue criminal enterprises. The fourth and final narrative illustrates a pathway with only tenuous links to military service.

4.1.1. A lifetime institutionalised

Lee was placed in the care system from a young age. Throughout his childhood in care he was physically and sexually abused by his carers and learned to “*take care of myself*”, by which he meant that he learned to fight and defend himself with violence. He described himself as having been institutionalised by the care system and, at the age of sixteen, left the care system to go into the British Army. Lee joined an infantry regiment, describing the move from a care home to the military as a natural

progression. He recounted how, on reflection, his lack of preparedness for independent civilian life and his need for institutional structure clearly directed his decision to enlist and that he did not seriously consider other careers or life paths.

Lee greatly enjoyed his time in the military and described close friendships with his peers: *“we all got on very well”*. He became immediately accustomed to life in the military and did not suffer from the problems experienced by some of the other young men, such as home-sickness and difficulties adapting to a defined and structured routine. Nor did Lee experience problems with discipline, insisting that, *“I was never in any trouble. Never AWOL. Never in front of the OC or CO. No. Never any trouble”*. During his time in the military, he was deployed on operational service in Northern Ireland where he patrolled the streets on foot and was occasionally attacked by mortar fire.

After five years in the Army, Lee decided to leave due to changes in the structure of his regiment and a desire to move into civilian life while he was still young enough to pursue a non-military career. However, on leaving the military, he struggled to adjust to civilian life. He found it difficult to live independently without a regime of routinized structure to dictate his daily life and without a hierarchy to direct him in what to do. He also found it near impossible to relate to civilians who he described as being *“a different breed”* and struggled to make friends.

With no family and no home to return to, Lee moved every year or two between different cities, failing to settle, working *“a few odd jobs”* and failing to form the kinds of friendships he had valued in the Army and longed for again. He struggled to hold down any job for long, describing them as lacking in excitement and meaning, and he came to deeply regret leaving the military. He also struggled to retain housing and pay bills and ended up on the streets, sleeping rough. While (atypically) not experiencing problems with drink or drugs, Lee’s inability to hold down a job left him short of money and, with a disinclination to ask for help, he started to steal from shops and eventually progressed on to robbery of shop cash tills.

After a few years of offending without being caught, Lee accidentally (and unusually) learned about help available through the Royal British Legion and was assisted in finding accommodation and obtaining funding for training to operate tower cranes for skyscraper construction projects which paid well and, with the dangerous heights involved, met his desire for some kind of excitement and thrill.

Lee was ultimately arrested for his previous offending and was imprisoned for five years. He described prison as an environment in which he operated well and found it relatively easy to conform to what was “*quite a stringent, quite a strict regime*” laid out for him by the prison. His background of growing up in care, followed by progression into the military, had prepared him for institutional life within prison where his daily regimen was ordered by institutional authorities and directed by authoritative staff. He recounted comfortably navigating the prison social world, where he shared his living space with others and managed social relations well, just as he had done in the military. Applying his military mind-set to the world of the prison allowed him to cope well with the hardships of imprisonment and he had little problem being cut off from the outside world where he had no family and few friends anyway. Lee found prison “*easy*” and demonstrated what might be best described as resignation and submission to prison authority and its regime, but with a willing acceptance, somewhat resembling the behaviour of Crewe’s (2009) ‘pragmatists’. He got on well with staff, especially ex-military staff, and described unwavering compliance with the prison regime, preferring those which were more disciplined and highly structured. On leaving prison Lee hoped to resettle back into civilian society and resume his employment as a tower crane operator.

The experience of Lee, and others with a similar background narrative, differed from other groups of participants in that the experience of growing up in childhood care homes had laid the foundations of institutionalisation which were then compounded in the military and ultimately facilitated a smooth transition into the familiar institutional environment of the prison (Browne 2017). While the majority of participants in this study, regardless of their life pathways prior to prison, coped well with imprisonment, those who had spent their lifetime institutionalised adapted particularly well, even going as far as to describe prison as “*an institution which I’m comfortable in*” (Dennis), a sentiment not apparent in the accounts of interviewees with other life pathways.

4.1.2. Joined up to avoid being locked up

Adrian grew up in a poor area of London and witnessed violence from a young age. With his father imprisoned for murder when he was one year old, Adrian grew up knowing his father only through a prison visit screen and he described having little parental supervision from his mother, “*so I was always out running riot from a young age and I knew that my Mum would never do anything to me*”. As a boy, he grew to

enjoy violence and would seek out fights with older boys to test and develop his fighting skills. He had no problems forming and maintaining social relationships with other boys, stating that *"I've always had friends because I can fight"*. At age fifteen, he *"fell in with the football lot"* (a football fighting gang) and started to get arrested for offences such as assault and criminal damage. Describing himself as a thrill-seeker and believing that his life of violence would likely lead to prison, he decided to join the Army to *"keep me out of trouble"*.

Adrian enjoyed his time in the Army and described fitting in well and making good friends. He enjoyed the arduous regime, explaining that *"I like being beasted"*, and he found that the military culture in which fighting was not uncommon suited him well. Sometimes Adrian's fighting got him in trouble. Initially he was channelled into boxing but disliked it because there was an insufficient element of danger and risk: *"When I first started getting in trouble in the Army, they put me in the boxing team but it wasn't nearly the same. Because there wasn't that danger. He can't hurt you. He's got gloves on"*. Adrian served overseas in Kosovo and in Afghanistan where he had experiences that others might find traumatic but claimed not to have been adversely affected by them:

Participant: *In Afghanistan I saw someone tread on a landmine and he literally disappeared. Just literally disappeared. This was a soldier. Someone I knew.*

Researcher: *Did that affect you much?*

Participant: *Not really... I'd seen shootings before I went into the Army so it wasn't that bad...No, it's never affected me. (Adrian)*

Eventually, Adrian's passion for fighting resulted in an act of violence that could not be dealt with informally by the military, when he assaulted a civilian in a fight in Germany, breaking the victim's jaw. This incident resulted in imprisonment in the Military Corrective Training Centre in Colchester and ultimately led to his discharge from the Army. Adrian returned to the area of London where he had grown up but described how he had always retained a military mind-set: *"I don't think I've switched off. I'm still in that same state of mind as I was in the Army"*. He struggled to adjust back to civilian life and began drinking and using cocaine with his friends, while continuing to engage in acts of violence, fighting in bars, pubs and the streets.

Eventually Adrian committed an armed robbery with some friends and was caught by the police. At the time of interview Adrian was on remand awaiting trial.

Adrian coped reasonably well with prison life, applying the military mind-set that he had retained since his discharge from the military to quickly and readily adapt back to institutional life on entry to prison. He managed his life in prison well and described prison as “easy”, coping well with its adversities which he did not find particularly difficult to bear. He successfully applied his social skills learned during childhood and the military to navigate the prison social world – engaging in banter, facing down threats and fighting when required. All of this he did with confidence while expressing an element of disdain for other prisoners and not allowing them to threaten, intimidate or bully him. Adrian was perhaps less enthusiastic about prison authority than many of his veteran peers such as those who had been institutionalised, aligning more closely with Crewe’s (2009) ‘stoics’. While retaining a belief in the need for authority and an acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the state, he erred from full compliance with the rules of the regime by engaging in fights and keeping mobile phones in his prison cell, behaviours that in the military might have been officially proscribed but were acceptable within the bounds of the informal culture (Hockey 1986). Nevertheless, Adrian described cordial relations with staff, although on a somewhat more conditional basis than other veteran prisoners. Similar to findings by Hulley et al. (2011), this required respectful treatment to be shown towards him by staff members in order for him to reciprocate, again echoing the characteristics of ‘stoics’ (Crewe 2009).

Other participants who had similar narratives to Adrian were typically less rebellious, expressed somewhat more positive attitudes towards authority, and described themselves as more compliant with prison regime. Some of these prisoners were, however, more likely to express dissent against the regime than those of other pathways and more often engaged surreptitiously in activities which were formally proscribed by the institution but deemed acceptable within the prison’s informal social code. However, such prisoners still outwardly presented themselves to staff as compliant prisoners. Similar to Adrian, some of these prisoners recounted conditional, dependent or transactional relationships with prison staff which did not feature so heavily within others’ narratives, echoing Crewe’s (2009) observations of ‘pragmatists’ who “expected respect to be offered before they would return it” (2009:177).

4.1.3. Transferable skills: From military to criminality

Kevin grew up in a poor area of England within a relatively stable, working-class family. From childhood, Kevin decided that he wanted to join the Royal Marines and thus spent little time and effort on his studies in school. He described misbehaving in school but not coming into significant contact with the police or criminal justice system. At the earliest opportunity, aged 16, he enlisted in the Royal Marines. Kevin described fitting in well with his peers and enjoying his time in the Marines: *"You know what, I absolutely loved it... there is absolutely nothing about the Marines that I didn't like"*. He spent six years in the Royal Marines, including six months on operational service in Bosnia in the mid-90s, and was never in any trouble with military authorities.

Kevin left the military on getting married and decided to pursue a career in carpentry and building: *"I got married and so I thought it would be best to come out while I was still young enough to do something else"*. When the opportunity later arose through friends to work for an organised crime group, he found that his ability to operate effectively under pressure, block out fear of threats and his ability to follow instructions and operate with self-discipline within an organisational structure were assets both to him and to the group. He worked within the organisation for a number of years until a police operation ended its operations and Kevin was sentenced to thirteen years in prison for conspiracy to supply class A drugs.

Despite his criticism that prison life was not sufficiently strict, Kevin found it relatively easy to live within the regime of prison, for which he credited his time in the military, describing this as *"setting me up for it"*. Like others, he adopted a military mind-set and applied this to his time in prison which helped him to cope with the arduous of imprisonment but this did not come as naturally as it did for those who had been institutionalised from childhood. He was able to live within the social world of the prison reasonably well but did not mix much with other prisoners, except for other veterans. Kevin was accepting of his sentence, considering it to have been a known occupational hazard for his criminal activities, and his pro-authority attitudes fed into his compliance with the prison regime. This also allowed him to develop and maintain relations with prison staff which he described as *"brilliant"*, especially ex-military staff.

There were few participants with similar life narratives to Kevin but those who did share such back-stories tended to approach their time in prison in a very structured way. They described few problems in adjusting to the prison environment, drawing on their military backgrounds to ease the transition and fit into the structured regime. They

managed social relations with other prisoners well but were particularly disparaging of many other non-veteran prisoners who were less able to cope with prison. They typically complied with the prison regime but with a distinct willingness to use violence as a means to defend themselves in the face of insults, threats and attacks, regardless of the disciplinary consequences. This is not unlike Hockey's (1986) description of soldiers' attitudes and behaviours surrounding the use of violence within the informal culture of the military, while formally demonstrating compliance with the institution's regime (See also: Higate 2003).

4.1.4. No military links

David had what he described as a typical upper-middle class upbringing with professional parents. He attended an independent school and did well in his studies, experiencing no trouble in school nor with the police, before attending university. Following university, David was accepted into the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst, passing out as a Commissioned Officer and was attached to an infantry regiment. He enjoyed his time in the military: *"I loved it. I loved it, I did"* – he fitted in well and was successful in his role. During his six years of service, he spent time on combat operations in Afghanistan and started the arduous selection process to join the SAS.²⁶ During this period, he also married and had two children. However, whilst undergoing the selection process for the SAS, David's wife became mentally unwell and required care. David decided to resign his commission and leave the military to pursue a civilian career as a corporate lawyer in the City of London, a career which would allow him to be at home to care for his wife. After a number of successful years working as a lawyer, David murdered his wife during an altercation at home and was later charged, convicted and sentenced to life in prison. David adamantly denied any link between his offence and his military service and maintained that the killing of his wife was self-defence.

David operated well in prison under the structured regime, explaining that *"there's nothing hard about regime"*, while also complaining that it was too lax and recounting that it took a while for him to settle into prison on initial entry. He expressed frustrations at what he perceived to be the prison's disorganisation and inefficiency relative to the British Army but nevertheless described being compliant with the prison

²⁶ The Special Air Service (SAS) is a British Special Forces regiment.

regime and having good relations with staff. David was able to manage social relations with other prisoners but harboured a dislike for the majority, selecting his company carefully and keeping largely to himself, explaining "*I avoid most of them. I keep to myself... I just don't have a lot to do with most of the prisoners*". Nevertheless, David was able to cope well with the hardships of imprisonment and was a good example of a 'stoic' prisoner (Crewe 2009).

Stuart grew up in what could be described as a normal working-class family and recounted no trouble in school or with state authorities throughout his childhood, finishing school with GCSEs and having "*lots of friends*". He left school to become a chef and was then a gabler before joining an infantry regiment in the British Army, uniting with his brother who was already serving. He enjoyed his time in the military, integrated well and "*made good friends. We all stuck together and we had some good times*". Stuart had no disciplinary issues in the military, served no time on overseas operations and witnessed no traumatic events. During a training exercise, he suffered an injury and was ultimately given a medical discharge. On leaving, Stuart found employment as an outdoor training instructor for a few years until he was arrested on charges relating to possession of child pornography on his computer. At the time of interview, he was on remand.

Like David, Stuart conformed well to the prison regime and coped well with the hardships of prison, explaining that "*It's easier for myself than it is others because they're not used to this sort of thing*". While complaining that prison was too easy, he described being compliant with the prison regime and having positive relations with prison staff, attributing this to his military service: "*I think the military has helped. With discipline, and with taking orders*". Like David, he got along with other prisoners when he needed to but often kept to himself and did not hold very positive views of other, non-veteran prisoners,

Those participants with similar narratives to David and Stuart, who appeared to have no link between their military service and their offending, were less embracing of institutional life in prison than their counterparts from other narrative backgrounds. Some of them described a less smooth entry to prison and less easy initial adaptation to prison life in which they struggled to adapt for the first year or so, as Phillip described: "*the first year and a half was really hard*". After these initial difficulties, such men were able to tap into their previous military experience and draw on this to help them to adapt and live within the institutional environment and cope with its hardships.

These participants also felt more acutely the frustrations associated with the inefficiencies and disorganisation of the prison's regime, perhaps due to many of these participants having experienced relatively settled civilian lives in somewhat stable civilian employment which contrasted more starkly with institutional life in prison. Finally, a significant number of these veterans, while still able to navigate the social world of the prison, chose to keep themselves somewhat separate from the rest of the prison population, often disparaging other prisoners by referring to them as: "*animals*" (Jonathon) or "*just scumbags*" (James).

These narratives have presented case studies to illustrate the more typical life courses of participants and their pathways into prison, grouped into broad sets of circumstances surrounding the lives of ex-military prisoners. Not all accounts fitted perfectly into the four life pathway categories above, with some overlap of features across accounts which often contained elements from others. However, despite differences in the experiences recounted across the sample, each narrative inevitably contained distinct stages in the life course that ultimately led to participants' present circumstances in prison where they almost always adopted a 'pragmatic' or 'stoic' approach to their imprisonment (Crewe 2009).

The below analysis walks through each of these life stages to lay out the journey of ex-military personnel from childhood to prison. This serves to elucidate the life experiences of interviewees prior to imprisonment to establish a base of understanding of the point of departure for the exploration and analysis of the experience of imprisonment amongst this prison sub-population. These distinct life stages have been broken down into: childhood upbringing; motivations for joining the military; military service; life after military service; and criminal offending leading to imprisonment, all of which had important implications on the lives of interviewees, their routes into prison and their ultimate experience of imprisonment.

4.2. Mapping out pathways

Wainwright (2016) identified a number of features of veteran prisoners' life narratives which had contributed to their eventual imprisonment, including childhood adversity, operational deployment, alcohol use, drug use, mental health problems and transition issues when moving from the military to civilian life. The findings in this study corroborate many of these which are detailed below.

4.2.1. Upbringing and motivations for joining

A number of interviewees described difficult or troubled childhoods. These troubled childhoods often featured problems with school attendance and behaviour, including low academic attainment, suspensions and expulsions and also criminal behaviour which brought them into contact with the police and the criminal justice system:

Researcher: *How was your upbringing? Did you have siblings?*

Participant: *Yeah, there were seven of us all together.*

Researcher: *What did your family think of you going into the military?*

Participant: *Err, never really bothered them really. It was another less mouth to feed. Just let me go.*

Researcher: *Were they proud of you at all?*

Participant: *I don't know mate. I never went back. When I joined the army, that was the last they seen of me. I never went back. I never went back to the place.*

Researcher: *So you went to school up in north Scotland as well?*

Participant: *Well, that's where I was supposed to go to school. I never went.*

Researcher: *Never went?*

Participant: *Nah, I never went. Just one of those things.*

Researcher: *So you didn't get any quals at school?*

Participant: *No. (Jonathon)*

I didn't like school. I'm not going to lie, I was a naughty one because I wasn't really interested in school. All I wanted to do was join the marines. That's it... we'd get in trouble with the police a few times but not a great deal... Fighting, smashing windows, fucking vandalism. Things like that. That was it. (Jonathon)

Some of participants who had experienced troubled backgrounds described joining the military as a means to escape from environments in which they felt they would get into more serious trouble. Joining the military was a way to avoid ending up in prison:

It was difficult because my dad was in prison through my whole time growing up. For twenty odd years. So I only joined the Army to keep me out of trouble... I enjoyed it. It just saved me from coming in here... I joined to keep me out of trouble. (Adrian)

Researcher: *So why did you join up?*

Participant: *It was either come here [prison] or go into the military... [After school] I bummed around doing odd jobs. A bit of drug dealing. A bit of this, a bit of that... Oh yeah. Just minor things. Well, I say minor things, assault, robbery. Stupid little things. Not going to school. Breaking into people's shops. Things like that. It was a case of if I don't join the Army, I'm going to end up in the prison system. And just thought, you know what, I'm tired of this. Join the army, see a bit of the world, do a bit for Queen and country. Travel a bit. (Anthony)*

Many accounts of participants' childhoods featured neglect and abuse at the hands of parents or guardians and these experiences clearly shaped participants' formative years and subsequent lives. Those participants who had grown up in the care system also recounted traumatic abuse:

I was straight in care [as a baby]. But I was still too young to listen until I was five years old. I was obviously being abused and all the shit that you read about these days. (Dennis)

...we [my sister and I] were very close as we spent five years together in Dr. Barnardos... Memories? oh yeah, bad ones. Really bad ones. There was a lot of abuse. It was really bad. Kids were beaten all the time... the amount of times I dived on my sister to take a beating... it was, without exaggeration it was brutal... the abuse we used to get- sexual abuse I never had to go through but I experienced my younger sister going through it. Some of the 'uncles' and 'aunties' would come into the rooms and take the children out and you knew what was happening... yeah, bad bad experiences. Really bad experiences. (Jeffrey)

These forms of neglect or abuse were often contributing factors behind decisions to join the military. Participants described themselves as being a burden on their family, being left to their own devices, or not really feeling part of a family unit. They often described childhood circumstances in which they did not feel they had been equipped with the knowledge, skills or ambitions that might otherwise have been provided in more typical childhood settings. Joining the military was often a means to escape undesirable home circumstances or to pursue a productive life in adulthood in absence of these. For others, the military simply presented an opportunity to remove oneself from an abusive environment, as Karl explained: *“I was in care from age 11 until I left school and then met an ex-army lad in my first job and realised I should get away and join the forces.”*

Participants who had been brought up in the care system invariably described joining the military as a natural progression from their early lives. Having been raised in a formal institution whereby life was routinised, and activities were largely organised by others, many felt that they were not prepared for independent life in society and that the military provided the familiarity and reassurance they needed on leaving their care institution. Having been institutionalised in the care system, the military was a familiar institution, whose terms and expectations were known and understood, as Karl continued: *“Maybe being in [care] homes, being in the military, being in prison, it's all sort of a bit the same. A bit of an institution really. I suppose my whole life has been a bit like that. One has prepared me for the other”*. Often this was coupled by a desire to escape abuse or to move away from environments in which they had been previously abused:

I didn't have the best of upbringings. I was, err-. I stayed away from the house as much as possible from a young age. I guess from the age of about nine or ten onwards I've been very much independent. My mum was an alcoholic. I was sexually abused by her and she'd beat me on a day to day basis, along with my father... The military was, and still is my family. (Michael)

For many men from these kinds of backgrounds, the military provided a sense of belonging and a feeling of family which had been absent in their childhood and which they had longed for:

I loved it, yeah. It felt like for what was the first time in my life I've got family. (William)

Before I went in. I had no life at all and then I joined the forces and that was it. The first time in my life I had something. (Jonathon)

A smaller number of interviewees described their motivations for joining the military as deriving from being raised in a military family, by parents who were serving or former military personnel and who had influenced and encouraged them to enlist:

...my proper- my biological father died when I was about five and then my step-father stepped in and he was ex-military. He was Kings Regiment and he was Sergeant Major in the Kings Regiment. So basically he- I wouldn't say he pushed me but he encouraged me into the army. (Christopher)

Researcher: *What made you join in the first place?*

Participant: *That's a very good question, that. My father was in the forces before me, and his father was, and I think I was the only one- we had four lads- and I was the only one who decided to go into the forces. I just wanted something different. (Thomas)*

Family pressure to join the military was not solely the domain of serving or former military parents, however, and sometimes derived from cultural values. One participant described his father as having objections to the existence of the military as an instrument of state oppression of the working class. However, on returning home from work to find his son (the participant) in bed in the late morning, he immediately took him to the Army recruitment office and made him sign up, reasoning that permitting laziness in his child was worse than allowing him to serve in the military:

Researcher: *So what made you want to join the army then?*

Participant: *I'd always wanted it. For as long as I could remember all I'd wanted to do was drive a truck and join the army. You know, that was*

my biggest ambition and I couldn't think of anything else I wanted to do. My Dad didn't want me to join.

Researcher: *Why's that?*

Participant: *It was political really. My Dad was a Communist... he was very political. But that was one of the reasons. He came home one day about ten o'clock and found me still in bed and went nuts and said, get down and sign up. So that's what I did. I rolled down and he came down with me to sign me up and the rest is history. (Shaun)*

Despite many life narratives featuring forms of neglect and abuse, some participants had decided to join the military for more conventional reasons, including the desire to test oneself, to pursue a legitimate and meaningful career in absence of other opportunities, and to advance socially from a poor and disadvantaged background:

Researcher: *So what made you want to join up then?*

Participant: *I was working odd jobs and I wanted to do something else in the world. Something a bit more exciting so I joined up. (James)*

I joined for the challenge and I joined the Marines because I wanted to be the best. It was the Commandos. (Jeffrey)

While only cited by a small number of interviewees, patriotism was also a contributory factor in the decision of some participants like Christopher: *"When I joined the military, I signed up for Queen and country"*. For one group, in particular – those few participants who had joined and served as commissioned officers – joining the military was a simple career choice made on graduating from university, and therefore differed from the reasons given by most of those who had enlisted into the lower ranks:

Researcher: *How did you find your service on the whole?*

Participant: *I enjoyed it. There was nothing wrong with it... I just considered it a job. (Arnold)*

4.2.2. Military Service

Participants overwhelmingly and consistently expressed positive sentiments about their time in the military and remembered this time with fondness, even when they had suffered trauma and lost friends during operational service overseas. All described fitting in well in the military units that they joined, with few problems settling into the routine of military life and the social structure of the institutions. This was especially true for those who had grown up in the care system:

I grew up in care... A lot of the guys when we was in training had difficulty. Obviously home sickness and everything but I never suffered from any of that. That didn't affect me at all... I was kind of used to- the culture of it was normal to me. (Lee)

I was in care from age 11... I conformed to [the military] pretty well. It wasn't a burden to me at all and I fit in pretty well... there's an order about things. The routine, you get used to it... I had a good laugh. I had some great mates. (Karl)

For some participants, military service had been relatively trouble-free and was not reported to have resulted in any lasting impact on later life as a civilian. However, many others did experience problems whilst in the military, including excessive use of alcohol, engagement in violence and experiencing traumatic events. Having problems with alcohol abuse was the most common problem cited by participants:

Researcher: *Did you enjoy your time in the military?*

Participant: *I did enjoy it but got the drink on me.*

Researcher: *Sorry? You hit the drink?*

Participant: *Yeah.*

Researcher: *You enjoyed drinking?*

Participant: *No. I didn't really enjoy it. I was alcoholic.*

Researcher: *Alcoholic? OK. Is that what finished the military for you?*

Participant: *Yeah, coz, erm. I wouldn't say- I was getting in all sorts of scrapes and so I was asked to, erm, put my papers in... I loved the*

military. I deeply regret that, erm, I couldn't get a rid of the demon drink.
(William)

Echoing findings from MacManus et al. (2012, 2013) and Wainwright (2016), problems with alcohol commonly co-manifested with violence, often leading to disciplinary and criminal proceedings by the military:

Researcher: *Did you ever get into any trouble in the military?*

Participant: *A little bit. I got done for fighting in the Falklands with another guy in the RAF. We were playing cards for money and drinking a lot... He ratted me out to the RAF police in Port Stanley. I just got fined by the CO or something.* (Karl)

Whilst the majority of those who encountered problems in the military engaged in alcohol abuse and violence, others were affected by having experienced traumatic events which they described as having had a lasting impact on their well-being and mental health, such as Anthony's experience of losing a friend: "*One of my mates got killed. We all used to go drinking together. He was a good lad, he was. Dave Jones²⁷ his name was. Got shot in the back of the neck with a 50 caliber²⁸*". This echoes findings by Williamson et al. (2019a) who found that trauma exposure had long-lasting effects amongst UK veterans.

Issues with alcohol, drugs, violence and trauma sometimes led to the end of military service, either voluntarily or through being forcibly discharged. This most commonly occurred as a medical discharge due to alcohol misuse or mental health problems, or as part of criminal proceedings emanating from drug use or violent offences committed whilst under the influence of alcohol. These patterns and events generally had lasting effects on individuals:

²⁷ Pseudonym used to protect participant's identity.

²⁸ *50 caliber* refers to the size of round fired by a heavy firearm. In the context of Northern Ireland operations, this is likely a heavy sniper rifle such as the Barrett M82 which was used by IRA snipers against British forces. It is a large, powerful round that would cause heavy damage to a human body. Hence, by mentioning the round size, the participant is conveying to the interviewer the devastating injuries that would have been sustained by the victim and the likely consequent trauma this would have had on the individual's friends.

[On return from Northern Ireland] I started to drink chronically... and I'm a drug user... I got done for doing drugs. They said they found cannabis in my blood... I did smoke but-. (Dennis)

After the death of my friend who was killed on a patrol, I started drinking more than normal and eventually they had to give me a medical discharge. (Michael)

I got a dishonourable discharge.... I got in a fight with someone and then I went to Colchester and got discharged. (Adrian)

While a number of participants described being forcibly discharged from the military, the majority of participants had left the military voluntarily for more conventional reasons:

Researcher: *So was it your marriage that led to you leaving?*

Participant: *Well, no I'd had an accident. I fell off a cliff. I was down in Plymouth and one of the jobs they decided to give us was to train these public schoolboys. Give them some adventure training... so anyway I fell and broke both my arms and a leg. (Shaun)*

For several participants, leaving the military was a rational decision to pursue other career opportunities, having come to feel that the military no longer suited their goals, as Hamish explained: *"I just decided to leave. Wanted to do something different. So, I went to do youth work and then to attend university"*. Regardless of their reasons for leaving, participants overwhelmingly regretted their decisions to leave the military, expressing wishes that they had stayed in the military for longer than they had:

I enjoyed it. Really enjoyed it. Worst thing I ever did was come out... I'm happy I joined, I was sad when I left. I wish I'd never left. (Jonathon)

I wish I'd stayed in.... So yeah, regrets that I left early. (Lee)

It's one of the worst mistakes, when I look back on my life. It's one of the worst mistakes I ever, ever made. (Richard)

I just regret coming out. I wish I'd have stayed in and done the full 22 because I did love it. (Shaun)

I should have stayed in. I really should have stayed in. (Phillip)

I miss it. I'd go back tomorrow. (Adrian)

I wish I'd done more. I wish I'd stayed in. (James)

For many, the decision was taken for family reasons, often due to a partner wanting them to leave or having a family member who needed to be cared for:

I got married and- It wasn't really for her... she wasn't really happy with it. I'd been in six years and thought, 'well it's time to do something else now'. (Karl)

I had to come back because of her mental health issues so I was going to be lodged in an office space in the army and it was a choice between office space in the army for x thousand a year or being in an office space in the city as a lawyer on seven times x a year. (David)

A small number of interviewees had been discharged from the military on medical grounds, following injuries sustained during their military service:

Researcher: *So did you see much action?"*

Participant: *Yeah.*

Researcher: *In both of those [Kosovo and Bosnia]?"*

Participant: *Yeah. [pause] I mean I was shot in Kosovo. Three times... and that's when my time ended. That's because I was shot in the leg. I was shot in the back twice. It came out the front. That's the exit wound*

[pulls down shirt to reveal scar on chest, then pulls up shirt to show scars on back].

Researcher: *Ah, yeah.*

Participant: *And I was shot in the leg where I now have Titanium. From ankle to knee.*

Researcher: *Did it shatter bone?*

Participant: *I haven't got any bone. It took the tibia and fibia away.*

Two participants had technically not yet left the military, having been convicted before ever being discharged from service. One had been convicted of offences committed in the military and was due to remain in the military until his release, when he was to be returned to the MCTC for discharge. The other had gone AWOL from his unit to help his father run his organised crime business which was encountering problems and so had never been formally dismissed from service.

4.2.3. Life after the military

On leaving the military, some participants had settled into civilian life without problems and were able to obtain civilian employment, which ranged through Ambulance driving, youth work, crane operating and plumbing. Many of these individuals described the adjustment from military to civilian life as not easy but manageable:

Researcher: *How did you feel once you were out of the military, about the military?*

Participant: *I just moved on. I wasn't there anymore, I just moved on.*

Researcher: *Did you have any problems adjusting to civilian life?*

Participant: *No. I just got on with it. (Jonathon)*

Yet, reflecting findings from Higate (2000), Ashcroft (2014) and others, many reported that adjusting to civilian life had been difficult. This included participants who had reported no problems during their military service and was particularly prominent amongst those who had served on operations in overseas conflicts. As Lee recounted: *"No major issues at school... [In the military] I was never in any trouble... And it was when I left that I got into difficulties. That's when all my troubles started for me"*. The problems encountered by participants after leaving the military were often related to

difficulties in adjusting to a way of living that was unfamiliar, and to the absence of comforting institutional structures and close, trusting relationships with peers. As a result of such difficulties, many interviewees described feeling lost or adrift, and unable to settle effectively into civilian society:

Researcher: *And so how did you find civilian life once you left?*

Participant: *It was hard... I just couldn't settle into it for years. I was lost basically.* (Christopher)

Researcher: *So when you got out you struggled a bit to settle into civilian life?*

Participant: *Yeah...I felt lost. Because you get used to that environment, and the camaraderie, and the mates.* (Jeffrey)

This feeling of being lost or adrift was often exacerbated by feelings of disconnect between a former military life and a civilian life, including an inability to appreciate a seemingly mundane civilian life:

It was so difficult to adjust. It wasn't so much paying bills and stuff like that. It's because I had no structure and I had nothing to- I wouldn't say that I was waiting for somebody to tell me what to do, but I just didn't know what to do with myself and I couldn't find anything that was interesting me. I couldn't find anything that was tying me down to a place so I just found it very easy just to up sticks and move to the next place... I just found it so difficult to adjust... I don't know whether it's the humdrum of civilian life. It was quite boring. I just thought, 'Jesus! This is no way to live your life'. (Lee)

These feelings of detachment from the military world and inability to relate to the civilian world extended to the people encountered in civilian society. Many participants experienced an inability to relate to civilians who did not share their outlook and view of the world:

Researcher: *So when you left, you felt some kind of loss or detachment from the lads?*

Participant: *Yeah. I've never had mates like them again. I haven't got anyone that I would call a friend now. I still call the lads up from time to time. They're close friends. They'll always be close friends. The ones I've met outside [the Army] are just acquaintances as far as I'm concerned. You know what I mean? I'll never get as close to people as they were. We had each other's back and that.*

Researcher: *And you missed that when you left?*

Participant: *Yeah. Oh, yeah did I?!*

Researcher: *And did that contribute to the drinking?*

Participant: *Yeah, I think you drink more to try and make friends. But they're not like the lads. Not like your Army pals. (Christopher)*

For a number of participants, echoing findings from Higate (2000), the inability to resettle into civilian society and related problems of substance misuse and feelings of being lost or adrift led to homelessness and rough sleeping, as Michael found on leaving the Army: *"Once I left the Army I came here to mainland UK. The alcohol was getting considerably worse. During the first part of the 80s I was drifting around the UK. I was totally homeless. I spent some time sleeping in a cave for nine months between Dover and Folkestone"*.

Notably, two participants who were involved with organised crime groups prior to military service returned to these organisations immediately following their military service. These organisations had formal hierarchies, clear goals, strong camaraderie between members and an appreciation for the skills held by participants which had been gained in the military, such as discipline, motivation, courage, organisation and the willingness and ability to employ violence. In this respect, the structures of these organisations aided the transition from military to civilian life, but also involved criminal offending:

Came out and got back involved with the wrong people, doing the wrong thing. Then I ended up getting sentenced in 1989 to five years imprisonment. (James)

My Dad's business [organised crime group] was having a bit of trouble with some others that he needed some help with so I had to go off and help him out. (Steve)

Some of those who ultimately failed to settle into civilian life resorted to alcohol and drug use as a response to managing the process of change and transition, a phenomenon previously documented in veteran prisoners by Howard League (2011). This often led to a downward spiral of behaviour which, in some cases, led directly to criminal offending:

So I came back here towards the end of '96 and I went back drinking again, you know. And then that led to a load of crime; shop-lifting, ABH, GBH. Fighting in pubs, on the street. (Michael)

When I left the Army, I just went drinking all the time. And then I ended up in here. You know, lost my wife over it. Got divorced over it, drink. (Christopher)

I struggled about a year after. A lot of people struggle when they come out but because I just fell into work [with my Dad], I just floated and it was alright. But it was after that that I struggled. You know drugs and then selling that for, you know, financial gain... I fell into a bad way. I was drinking a lot. That was when I was kind of struggling. You know what I mean. In 2013 I was arrested and went to prison. (Graeme)

For some, this inability to adjust and reintegrate successfully into civilian life was a direct result of trauma experienced in the military for which effective treatment seemed not to have been provided prior to discharge, and which those outside of the military family could not understand or relate to:

I suffer pretty bad with PTSD myself. I think there's a total lack of empathy or understanding. (Dennis)

I'm on anti-depressants because I sometimes have problems with what I saw out in Northern Ireland. (Paul)

Talking to a civvie and talking to someone in the military is totally different because they haven't got an understanding of what you've gone through. Yeah, they can show empathy and all that but they haven't got an understanding. You know, speaking to a civilian about seeing someone splattered or- you know... they don't realise about the smell, about what you've seen and how it affects you. I can't eat bacon. It makes me sick. Bacon and gammon because it reminds me of flesh. (Owen)

As a consequence, some participants had used alcohol and drugs to mask the symptoms of trauma or self-medicate:

When I came out of the Army, I was struggling a hell of a lot. I turned to alcohol and cocaine to forget about things. I couldn't sleep at night. And I couldn't speak to someone. I was too embarrassed to speak to someone to tell them that I was suffering and I tried to take my own life because of this. I couldn't cope. My head couldn't cope with it. I didn't want to speak to my family because I didn't want them to see me and perceive me as being weak because I was suffering and I tried to take my own life. I spoke to a psychiatrist. I'll never forget it, a psychiatrist in the Army, Mr. Adebajo, and I just opened up to him and since that day I felt better to speak to someone when I'm suffering and that. (Owen)

For some, the substance misuse and symptoms of trauma experienced following military service contributed to further problems with violence (see also: MacManus et al. 2012). Sometimes this was expressed through interpersonal violence in drinking establishments, as with Adrian, while for others, like Edward, it manifested as serious domestic violence for which he was ultimately convicted:

I found it very hard to switch off. When you've been trained up to be this fighting machine and then not take that out on to civvie street, you know.

Not to get stressed or get upset with someone who challenges you. I couldn't help it. (James)

Researcher: *What kind of difficulties [on discharge] are we talking about?*

Participant: *Depression, drugs, suicidal tendencies. You know... Sometimes, I mean, I used to have flashbacks and I used to freak out. Sometimes I used to [nervous cough] just fight people just for no reason. I started taking heroin. I started really bad on that. (Timothy)*

I kept having full blown, sweating, crying, nightmares, going for walks, I just wanted to be by myself. Then I started drinking. I never drunk before because I played rugby all the time. Then I started drinking and then I'd come home and start smashing things... gradually it was downhill from then on. Went the doctors, two suicide attempts... was put in a mental health ward in XXXX University hospital. Came out of there... then I assaulted my wife and came to prison. First time I've ever been to prison in my life. (Edward)

4.2.4. Criminal offending

Not all offences committed by ex-military personnel appeared to be linked to military service. However, while participants almost unanimously asserted that their offence was not associated with their criminal offending, it was apparent that some of the behaviours picked up during military service, or disruption caused by the transition from military to civilian life, had impacted on their later offending, even if indirectly. For example, Michael, who had experienced the death of a friend during his military service, resorted to alcohol in an attempt to cope with this traumatic loss. He was ultimately discharged as a result of this and became homeless before starting to offend. While a link can be drawn between Michael's experiences in the military and his ultimate criminal offending, he insisted that these two aspects of his life were completely unconnected:

Researcher: *Do you think your time in the military is any way linked to your offence?*

Participant: *Nah, not really.*

Researcher: *But I guess you could argue that if those earlier things didn't happen, like losing your friend, resorting to alcohol and all that, you might have gone down a different path.*

Participant: *Well yeah, maybe. But that's not the Army's fault, is it? I'm responsible for my own behaviour, aren't I. They didn't make me come in here.* (Michael)

For other participants who claimed no connection between their military service and their offence, indirect links between the two were discernible. As noted above, for example, on return to civilian life, a number of participants had gone on to join (or re-join) organised criminal groups where the skills and capabilities they had developed while in the military - including self-discipline and organisation, and the ability and willingness to employ violence – were regarded as strengths. As Steven described: *“It's not all that different really, to be honest. Well it is a bit... but those same things that make you a good soldier are what help you to survive in this business too”*. However, for many participants, the links between military service and their offending were unclear. Such narratives resembled those of non-ex-military persons, with crimes often having been committed many years – often decades – after the end of military service and with no obvious link to this period of life. Notably, the majority of these cases involved murder (of a partner), sexual offences and high-level drugs supply or importation; those same groups of offences that DASA (2010) found to be most prominent amongst veteran prisoners.

Overall, then, difficulties in adjustment to civilian society following military service were a common feature of life narratives, resulting in an array of difficulties and maladaptations. Some of those struggling to reintegrate went on to seek out criminal pathways that satisfied the perceived deficiencies of their new civilian lives, most notably the lack of group cohesion with peers, weak conception of life purpose and diminished social status, and this ultimately led them all to the same destination which was prison.

This chapter has outlined some of the typical life pathways and routes to prison that veterans have taken and has highlighted a number of commonalities across participants' life narratives. An understanding of these pathways situates the subjects

of this study, furnishes an appreciation for the challenges and difficulties they encountered on exiting military institutions and provides insight into how they attempted to process and address these difficulties. It has also given an initial overview of the ways in which veterans experienced imprisonment, showing how they acquired a distinct military identity and mind-set which they employed to manage their lives within prison and to cope with some of the pains of imprisonment. It illustrates how veterans drew on their previous military experience to effectively navigate the prison social world, build and maintain effective relationships with staff and operate within the structure, routine and rules of the institution's regime.

While early-life experiences of veterans varied, it is notable that many participants recounted childhood experiences of abuse and neglect, both at home and in state care; experiences that might be expected to have impacted on later life, especially for those brought up within institutions (Gooch et al. 2022). These findings are not readily apparent in the existing literature on UK military veterans (Higate 2001; Ashcroft 2014), particularly where it concerns pre-enlistment factors (see: MacManus et al. 2011; Wainwright 2016). It is also remarkable that all participants framed their military service as an overwhelmingly positive experience, even those who during their service were brutalised, bereaved, traumatised and even badly injured and permanently disabled. As a result of military service, problems with reintegration back into civilian society were commonplace, with loneliness, homelessness, substance misuse – particularly alcohol – and mental health problems not uncommon, echoing findings from Higate (2000), Ashcroft (2014) and others (e.g. Rhead et al. 2022; Murphy and Busuttil 2019).

An appraisal of veteran prisoners' life narratives has produced a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of this unique group of prisoners which helps to situate and frame the findings and conclusions to follow. The following chapters explore in more detail the different aspects of the prison experience for this specific sub-group of prisoners and how they frame, perceive and experience their lives in prison.

Chapter 5: The Enduring Military Identity

The notion of a particular military identity was woven through all interviewees' accounts and this identity underpinned and shaped each stage of participants' lives. It played a crucial role in defining who they were, as well as how they framed their life events following military service, up to and including their experience in prison. As previously found by Wainwright (2016), participants considered themselves to belong to an exclusive group of ex-military persons, often described as a family, who shared a history, background and set of character traits (see also: Burdett et al. 2012; Brewster et al. 2020). They believed that having served in the military provided an identity of which one should be proud, characterised by physical and mental strength and an ability to withstand difficulties (Woodward 2003). This was accompanied by a particular military mind-set characterised by self-discipline, motivation and resilience to physical and mental hardships (Matthews 2009; Hall 2010; Firmin et al. 2016).

Veteran prisoners felt a certain duality of identity, seeing themselves as both prisoners and military veterans at the same time (Murray 2013, 2015). The veteran identity had been constructed during military service as a result of constant training, socialization and prolonged exposure to a particular military culture which conditioned and acclimatised individuals to life within the total institution of the military. This process of socialisation involved the internalisation of military culture which emphasised group cohesion, celebration of strength, disdain for weakness and a resilience to physical and psychological ardour (Hockey 1986; Higate 2001). Exposure to and absorption of this military culture led to the inculcation of mores, habits, mannerisms and language, as well as the breaking down of certain moral boundaries and the generation of a certain 'can do' mind-set characterized by confidence, discipline, courage, personal organization and suppression of fear (Matthews 2009; Hall 2010; Firmin et al. 2016). James recounts this process and how it fundamentally changed who he was: *"You were a civvie and then they drum this into you and they make you do this and do that and then you're a completely different person to who you were"*.

5.1. Dual identity and stigma

All of this resocialisation within the military institution culminated in the formation of a particular military identity. After leaving military service, this identity was carried forward into civilian life where it continued to be a part of veterans' conceptions of themselves right through to, and during, their time in prison (Ashcroft 2014; Howard League 2011). This was the case for the majority of participants regardless of military service length, method of discharge from the military or what they had done in their civilian lives following their military service. Murray notes that "[f]or the 'veteran offender' there is an inherent tension between the stigmatic identity of being an offender and the traditional celebration of the veteran identity" (2013:21) and this was very evident in this study. Veteran prisoners were well aware of their duality of identity and status in prison as both a military veteran and as a prisoner and the tensions and conflicts between these two identities, what Everett Hughes (1945) describes as *status dilemma*. Neither identity seemed to take primacy over the other in terms of participants' self-conceptions. However, they were acutely aware of their status as prisoner over-shadowing or indeed altogether over-riding their status as a military veteran when considered by others, both inside and outside the prison, and by society as a whole.

Interviewees believed that, to others, their label of prisoner took primacy over their label of military veteran, thereby becoming their *Master Status* (Hughes 1945; Becker 1963). Meanwhile, participants still considered their military identity to be a core part of their being and was of greater importance to them than that of being a prisoner. Departing, however, from Becker's (1963) labelling theory, which proposes that people adopt the behaviours and characteristics associated with their given labels, veteran prisoners did not express such resignation. They accepted that they had been labelled as prisoners but did not resign themselves to accepting this label nor to adopting the traits, characteristics and behaviours expected of those assigned this label. While recognising that their offending records would follow them throughout their lives after prison, veterans considered their prisoner label to be a temporary status which had not displaced their veteran identity and did not define them. In contrast to the temporary prisoner status, participants held that their veteran status and identity was permanent and irrevocable with positive traits, behaviours and characteristics which they were unwilling to dispense with. On release from prison, veterans anticipated that their current label as prisoner would be shed allowing them

to reassert their more 'true' veteran identity and recover their master status (Hughes 1946) as a military veteran in society. This reflects findings by Firmin et al. (2016) who found that one of the prominent features of veterans' attitudes in mental health treatment programmes in secure facilities was the desire to retain the primacy of their veteran identity and to resist or shed stigmatising labels. However, previous research by Feinstein (2013) found that US veterans leaving a mental health facility felt a persistent sense of stigma from their mental health patient identity which overshadowed their positive veteran identity.

Veteran prisoners saw themselves as belonging to a wider veteran community, an exclusive group in society to which all people who had served in the UK Armed Forces, past and present, belonged. The members of this community possessed distinct characteristics, attributes and value systems as well as a sense of shared heritage, history and culture that could not be fully understood by those outside of the group. Speaking of their identity and status as a veteran with pride, participants consistently described their membership of this community as providing them with a sense of belonging with other members of the community, regardless of whether or not they personally knew them (Wörtzel 2009; Hollingshead 1946). This was frequently likened to notions of family or brotherhood.

This sense of belonging and identification came to the fore in particular when encountering other veterans in the unfamiliar and potentially hostile environment of the prison. Ex-military personnel evidently still ascribed to military notions of cohesion with peers. They described how their military identity had persisted throughout their post-military lives, continuing to shape their beliefs, attitudes and values and helping to form a large part of their self-conceived identity, even in prison. Participants talked about this enduring military identity and the effect this had on their experience of imprisonment, describing a certain mind-set which they attributed to their service, and which helped them to live within the prison environment:

I'm still very military minded about how I organise my life... I think it's the mentality you get when you're in the forces. (Lee)

It's still a big part of my life. I'm a clean person, I'm organised. That all comes from being in the RAF. (Karl)

This echoes findings by Firmin et al. (2016) who found similar enduring military identity conceptions in veterans in severe mental health treatment centre settings who described the importance of their military mind-set in their handling of their treatment and coping with their conditions.

5.2. Belonging, family and attitudes

This sense of an enduring military identity came with a corresponding feeling of belonging to an exclusive group of serving or former military personnel, a group that necessitated completion of the rite of passage through military training and subsequent service. This reflects previous research which has found a sense of familial or communal belonging amongst veterans to be integral to the formation of a military identity (Guerrero et al. 2021; Brewster et al. 2020). This collective identity was regularly framed in terms of family which, regardless of whether members had met previously, was characterised by a sense of fellowship, familiarity and bonding. This was facilitated by shared experiences, and the ability to instantly understand and relate to each other (Woodward 2003). Participants were adamant that membership of this military family was lifelong:

You kind of build a bond like brothers and sisters. (Timothy)

The army thing, once it's in you, it's in you. It never goes, does it? And we're all the same. Even if you haven't met someone, as soon as you start, the banter has just started and you're ripping it out of each other. And even if you don't know them, it just starts within minutes. (Phillip)

The military was, and still is my family. (Michael)

You never lose that camaraderie and that approach. You never lose it, ever. (Jeffrey)

This sense of shared experience and identity was also juxtaposed to a corresponding inability to fully understand, identify with and get along with those who had not served in the military. Consistent with existing findings (see: Brewster et al. 2020; Söderström 2019; Castillo et al. 2019), participants perceived that, having not experienced military

life, civilians did not share the same outlook on life and this made the forming of relationships with civilians difficult, as Lee described: *"I found it very difficult to make civilian friends. I still do today. The vast majority of my friends are ex-forces, basically. I just think that they have such a different outlook on life"*. This created a degree of othering of civilian populations and profound separation between military personnel and civilian society:

Researcher: *How did you feel about other people when you were in the military?*

Participant: *[Laughs] Yeah, there was a fairly standard them and us mentality which was standard throughout the Army. (David)*

5.2.1. Pride and sense of superiority

The idea that civilians were different to serving and former military persons was couched in terms of differences in character, behaviour and mind-set, with those of the military deemed superior to those of civilians:

Researcher: *So you say that military people are different to civilians, what are some of the differences?*

Participant: *Discipline and self-respect. I think I'm a better person, to be honest. (James)*

Reflecting findings from previous research with veteran populations (see Hockey 1986; Higate 2003), this sense of belonging to the military family and inability to relate to civilians often extended to deriding civilians and regarding military personnel as superior. This derogation of civilians had been fostered intentionally within military institutions, as part of the process of disculturation (Goffman 1961) intended to create the perception of military personnel as superior to civilians and part of an elite sub-group:

Participant: *The military made me into a strong- not an animal but a hard person, you know. Violence wasn't a problem to me... you're a completely different person.*

Researcher: *And so what did you think about civilians then?*

Participant: *They're second class aren't they. That's how I felt at the time.*
(James)

Researcher: *And what was the thinking around civilians?*

Participant: *There was a big dislike for them. It was 'Oh, bloody civvies.' and they stand there with their long bloody hair.* (Jeffrey)

I had no training to reintegrate into civvy life... in my day they said, "right lads, fuck off and get out of the regiment. Go off and become a civvy you fucking wanker! Go and join the wankers out there. Take that off!" So the lowest thing to be was a civvy. (Dennis)

This fostering of a sense of superiority and elitism amongst military personnel served to create feelings of pride at serving in the military:

Researcher: *When you were in, did you feel proud of yourself?*

Participant: *Of course I did... everyone was proud of me. Proud. Because I was the only one that went down that road in the Army...*

Researcher: *What did you think about civilians?*

Participant: *It's a big thing isn't it between military and civilians. It's a different outlook on life, isn't it. When you're in the Army that little garrison is yours isn't it. That Tesco and all the little pubs and- it's all military. Every single man coming in and out is military. And you know when you get home that people are different, because they're all tramps aren't they? You know, how they sit and slouch and you just know who's been the Army and who's chatting shit.*

Researcher: *How did you feel about yourself when you were in? Were you proud of yourself?*

Participant: *Oh yeah! Definitely!*

Researcher: *Did you feel proud of yourself?*

Participant: *Yeah. Like when I passed out and you're in your uniform... I've got pictures up in the house and I like how they look and something I feel proud of.*

Often, civilians were seen as not having been instilled with the morals, self-discipline and wholesome cultural values that military personnel had. Civilians were perceived as weak, lazy and slovenly, in contrast to the military attributes of discipline, self-motivation and pride in appearance. As a result, veterans considered civilians to be inexperienced, unworldly and naïve people when compared to ex-military personnel. Or as Shaun put it, to express the different standards applied to military and civilian persons: *"I'd like to think that, you know, we're in a different league to everybody else"*, something which Lee also explained: *"Not long after I'd been out was, you know, it's quite disrespectful, but I kind of looked down on them. They just wasn't up to my standards and they just- I found it very difficult to make civilian friends. I still do today."*

Such a sense of elitism was particularly pronounced amongst those in combat units whose training instructors and NCOs instilled an even greater sense of superiority into them as members of fighting units deemed tougher and better than non-combat units. Siebold (2007) outlines that instilling in military personnel a belief in their abilities to defeat an enemy is necessary for military units to be effective in their role to protect the nation. Furthermore, Hockey (1986) points out how this process creates a sense of confidence bordering on arrogance and invulnerability amongst combat soldiers. Even within combat infantry units an additional level of elitism was further layered onto military persons' psyches: *"I felt good. I felt special because we were the best. No offence to your regiment but we were known as the cream of the cream. The Green Berets. The Commandos"* (Jeffrey). Such prideful feelings were often related to how they were perceived by others, typically by friends and family members whose own pride reinforced participants' belief in an elevated status:

Researcher: *So how did you feel about yourself when you were in the military?*

Participant: *I was proud. After my passing out parade, I could see with my father. I could see the pride in his eyes... my father was a decorated war veteran. (William)*

Researcher: *So were your family proud of you?*

Participant: *Yes, very. My Dad was in the War, in the Forces. So he was very, very proud of me, and so was Mum to be honest.*

Researcher: *What did your family think?*

Participant: *Oh, they were proud. Very proud.*

In addition to not having the same qualities and standards, civilians were also viewed by ex-military persons as lacking the same morals and scruples as military personnel. Ex-military personnel considered themselves to be morally superior, exemplified in their patriotism and selfless willingness to give their service to their country:

I'm generalising but [civilians] have no self-worth. They just have no empathy for anyone else. They're all out for themselves and don't care about anybody else... I just think that civilians' empathy for everyone else apart from themselves is very low... People in the military, they've got morals, they've got scruples, they've got self-worth and they want to do something for the country. (James)

Furthermore, participants described how experiences of hardships encountered in the military had provided them with an extraordinary ability, above that of civilians, to deal with adversity and hardships in life:

It's the mentality you get when you're in the forces and the mentality of being a civilian. We seem to- ex-military guys can take a lot more weight on your shoulders before it becomes a problem, whereas a civilian thinks everything is a problem half the time. And you think, 'Jesus. Come on now. It's not really a problem'. And things that would annoy them don't really annoy me... Some of the things they talk about, or start panicking about or worrying, it seems very trivial to me. (Lee)

5.3. Masculinity

Amongst ex-military personnel there was a belief that military institutions and the experience of military service had caused them to grow up, embody masculine ideals

and ultimately 'become a man', as Matthew recalled: *"In the forces, I was there from 20 through till 30 and, you know, you grow a lot from 20 to 30. the Air Force made me the man I am, in many ways"*. For veteran prisoners, 'being a man' reflected notions of masculinity rooted in stoicism, physical strength and mental resilience (Arkin and Dobrofsky 1978; Belkin 2012; De Bere 2003; Green et al. 2010; Hopton 2003), conveying notions of the warrior protector of the family and the state (Woodward 2003). This fed into ideas of duty to family and country in which a man was expected to serve his country militarily:

Researcher: *So how did you find being in the military?*

Participant: *It was good, you know? I was a man. I served my country.*

(Mark)

For many participants, notions of duty to one's family were made more prominent when parents and siblings considered veterans' status within the family to be elevated as a result of military training and service, and were therefore consulted for guidance and advice: *"I'm perceived as, you know, the big man of the family. People came to talk to me, 'oh, I've got a problem with this'"* (Owen).

For those who had served in combat units, this sense of masculine pride was particularly pronounced, with non-combat veterans considered lesser men (Hockey 2003): *"They weren't infantry... They were boys who couldn't do the BFTs²⁹ so, not real men are you? Again, we're talking Alpha males"*. (Dennis)

While veterans carried forward these notions of being a man, replete with military notions of masculinity (Woodward 2003; Arkin and Dobrofsky 1978), for one participant, the act of committing a criminal offence and going to prison had impacted his self-conception as a man. Believing that a real man would not find himself in prison, Jack explained how *"the military made me the man I was. Not who I am now but who I was"*, implying that the act of being imprisoned had caused a reversal in both his masculine and wider social status. Nevertheless, for the vast majority of veteran

²⁹ BFT is Basic Fitness Test which all recruits wanting to join the infantry are required to pass. Once in the infantry, completing and passing the test is a routine requirement. Non-infantry units have lower fitness requirements and thus less difficult fitness tests.

prisoners, notions of masculinity were carried over from the military into their civilian lives and persisted throughout their life course.

This was advantageous to veterans on entry to prison as their familiarity with a social world with a pervading masculine culture allowed them to adapt more readily to this similar culture in prison. Military culture had embodied hyper-masculine ideals (Woodward 2003; Higate 2003) which corresponded with a particular form of hegemonic masculinity (Correll 1987; Jewkes 2005) – namely physical toughness, aggression, risk-taking, self-discipline and emotional control (Hinojosa 2010) – and were dominant in the prison (Jewkes 2005). Veterans' ability to apply their experience of operating in such masculine environments in the military allowed them to fit into the prison's social hierarchies where they were able to gain and maintain acceptance from their peers (Jewkes 2005; de Viggiani 2012; Bengtsson 2006). This allowed them to avoid many of the problems encountered by those unable to conform to hyper-masculine culture, such as being exploited or bullied by others (de Viggiani 2018):

"It's like in here. I don't care how big you are, six foot, seven foot, twenty stone or ten stone, I don't back down. I'll stand my ground." (Martin)

"In some parts of the prison you'll get bullying from the younger ones. But if it happens on the landing I'm on, it wouldn't work... I say, 'look, we'll have none of that'." (Thomas)

Some veterans were able to capitalise on their military service by using banter and telling anecdotes which demonstrated their traditional masculine credentials and which de Viggiani (2012) identifies as being routinely required to establish and maintain status within prison (see also: Ugelvik 2014):

"I can have banter with anybody. It's just the way the forces have brought me up" (Peter)

"It's all blokes together... and I'm used to it, aren't I? I fit in pretty well." (Thomas)

Their ability to adapt quickly to the masculine environment and slot into the existing hierarchies helped veterans to avoid much of the emotional and psychological damage that can otherwise result from the inability to conform to this hegemonic masculine culture (Jewkes 2005).

5.4. Social status

For participants, social status and the impressions of ex-military personnel held in society more broadly was important to them. Interviewees felt that the military had afforded them high social status and their previous roles in the military were a source of personal pride to them, whereas being in prison was a source of shame and represented a fall from grace to a very low social status. As a result, feelings of self-disappointment and embarrassment, not otherwise uncommon in prisoner narratives (Crewe 2011a), were prominent in participant accounts and constituted a particularly painful aspect of the prison experience for veterans:

The Army got me onto the straight and narrow. In the Army, I started getting respect from all the local people in my village. It changed everything... The school was asking me to go back and speak to people and that. It was brilliant. Going home for two weeks and going into the school to speak to people. Brilliant. Going recruiting round my local town in my 95s and that. Beret on, parachute regiment wings on my arm. People around town looking at me, "wow", you know. I was a little shit when I was 14-15, drinking and now they're pulling me and saying "well done". Brilliant. Old people tapping me, "well done. We're proud of you". You know, because I was from that little village they were proud of me because I came out of there. It's turned to this now, which is an embarrassment! ... it is embarrassing. I was in the Army for nine and a half years... and I've come under. High profile selling heroin and that, and it's not good. Because I'm from that little village, they've gone from being proud of me and speaking highly of me to becoming a scum bag, a heroin scumbag. (Owen)

Lee explained how veteran prisoners often felt that they had also let others down, including family and friends, or the broader military community: "A lot of them feel a bit

embarrassed... I think it's the shame. They've let themselves down", something that William attested to also: "I felt that I've let the military down more than my family". This embarrassment was often expressed as feelings of shame and disgust:

I'm embarrassed about what I done... we met the Chelsea pensioners and I was embarrassed, so embarrassed. I should be proud to have served my country but now I'm on the other side of the coin... I'm embarrassed. I'm disgusted with myself. (Kevin)

I'm ashamed of myself for being here in the first place. But I can never change that. (Christopher)

Feelings of shame were exacerbated by the sense that, as an ex-military person, with a particular mind-set and set of skills, they had no excuse for their present circumstances and should be leading productive and law-abiding lives. Karl's dejection as he recounted, *"Now look at me. I've got nothing to be proud of now"* was also expressed in Lee's anger and disappointment with himself: *"I can look back on my own life and think, 'Jesus Christ', you know. I feel like I wasted that period of my life where I feel- I don't feel sorry for myself, I feel quite angry with myself sometimes that I let myself get to that position. I think, 'you were an ex-soldier. You should have been dealing with that a lot better than you was"*.

Such feelings of self-disappointment, embarrassment and shame had led some participants to lose confidence (Crewe 2011a), with Edward explaining that: *"Your self-esteem goes out of the window doesn't it"*. This was coupled with a feeling of being de-valued by society as a result of having fallen from the high-status position of serving military member to the low status of prisoner, with Christopher insisting that *"It's a step down. There's no two ways about it"*. This sentiment was echoed in other participants' accounts:

Researcher: *Do you feel in any way devalued by society?*

Participant: *Of course, yeah. Yeah. I don't because of my ego, I suppose. But I know that's how society views me. Trash. Absolute trash.*

While interviewees felt that they had fallen from a high status to a low status in society, there was something of a resignation and acceptance of this fact:

Researcher: *How do you feel about going from serving the state to going to prison?*

Participant: *Yeah, you go from being valued as a person to being the lowest form in society.*

Researcher: *How does that feel?*

Participant: *Well it's obviously not a nice feeling but it's something you've got to get used to. You can't change it so you might as well just get on with it.*

Researcher: *So you don't feel bitter about it?*

Participant: *No. I don't feel bitter. (Peter)*

This chapter has explored how the distinctive military identity plays a fundamental role in veterans' self-conceptions (Higate 2003; Woodward 2003). It looked at how this shaped veterans' outlook on life and created a unique mind-set characterised by discipline, motivation and resilience to physical and mental hardships (Matthews 2009; Hall 2010; Firmin et al. 2016). This defined how veterans view others and the world around them and ultimately shaped their experience of prison and the prison social world. The chapter covered how veterans view civilians and how they expressed condescension towards them through a certain sense of superiority (Woodward and Jenkins 2011), while also managing the contention in their own identities as both military veterans and prisoners.

Veterans belong to a so-called military family, a group of people in society with military backgrounds whose members defined themselves as having personal standards, character and morals superior to the civilian population (Woodward 2003; Higate 2003). However, this proud identity and sense of status was in tension with their current identity as a prisoner and they lamented the diminished social status that this imposed. This was hard for veterans to endure and clearly constituted an additional disaggregated pain of the prison experience which they felt particularly acutely (Haggerty et al. 2020; Crewe 2009). While veterans felt disappointment, embarrassment and shame at their present predicament and accepted that wider society now considered them criminals and prisoners, they were loath to accept or

internalise this label (Huniecutt 2022; Walker 2012). Instead, they drew on their residual identity as military veterans to counter or deflect a label that they considered undesirable and stigmatising (Hughes 1945). While accepting that they would carry their prisoner label until the end of their sentence, veterans declined to conform to the expected character and behaviours of the archetypal prisoner or criminal. They looked forward to their day of release from prison when they could shed their unwanted criminal label and continue on with their lives without the stigma that this label carried (Firmin et al. 2016; Howard League 2011).

While veteran prisoners accepted their current duality of identity, veterans very much conformed to their military identity, which they considered indispensable (Burdett et al. 2012; Brewster et al. 2020), and defined themselves by the views, attitudes, mores and beliefs that this identity brought (Higate 2003; Martin 2022; Hughes 1945). Veterans' military identity and the mind-set they carried (Matthews 2009; Hall 2010; Firmin et al. 2016) clearly impacted the ways in which they approached their time in prison and shaped their perceptions of and their attitudes and behaviours towards the prison world and their fellow prisoners (HMIP 2014a; Logan and Pare 2016). Their identity impacted how they endured the pains of prison life, influenced their interactions with other prisoners and staff and was pivotal to how they approached their lives in prison overall (Logan et al. 2020), which the next chapter will explore.

Chapter 6: Life in Prison

This chapter compares the prison and military institutions and explores the ways that their similarities and differences shape the experience of imprisonment for men who had previously lived within the military. In line with Goffman's (1961) analysis of the 'total institution', the great majority of ex-military prisoners perceived close similarities between the prison and the military. This was most prominent when discussing the structure of the prison as an institution, in particular when considering physical premises and environment, ordered and routinized regimes and organisational cultures (Moran and Turner 2022a; Jewkes and Moran 2017). However, participants also consistently described some notable differences between the two institutions that are not identified by Goffman but which served to distinguish the experience of imprisonment from that of military service. These differences centred on the goals and purpose of the institutions, inter-personal relations with other prisoners, the prevailing social world and culture in prison and the perceived incompetence of the prison and its staff.

6.1. The prison structure

Two prominent features of the total institution are the physical structure and environment of the establishment which contains and controls the individuals within its bounds, and the highly ordered and regimented regime of the institution which governs the daily lives of those under its charge (Goffman 1961; Moran and Turner 2022a). The extent to which, and the ways in which, this is felt by subjects can vary between institutions. For example, a nunnery might feel less controlling and oppressive, both in terms of physical environment and the regime, than a maximum-security mental health facility. Similarly, this can be true also between prison establishments where different security categorisations, institutional histories, cultures, management styles, and other factors can lead to more or less oppressive environments (Ellis 2021; Schliehe 2020). Depending on the features of these institutions, the experience of imprisonment can feel lighter or heavier (Cohen and Taylor 1972; Downes 1980; Marquart 1986), deeper or shallower, with associated variations in the physical, emotional and psychological burdens endured in these institutions (King and McDermott 1995; Liebling 2011a).

The same can be said for military institutions, where one's experience of military service can feel lighter or heavier, deeper or shallower depending on the branch of service and the unit in which one serves (Higate 2003; Emsley 2013). To illustrate by example, someone in a British Army infantry regiment or Royal Marines battalion (of which there were many in this study's sample), in which members are expected to maintain constant combat-readiness, might have a somewhat deep and heavy experience of military service, within a highly-ordered regime enforced by strict discipline in a base dominated by large communal barrack blocks. As Dennis (a former paratrooper) asserted *"it was a tough regime"*. Meanwhile, someone who served as an administrative clerk in the British Army or in the Royal Air Force, enjoying relative freedom and autonomy to move around and organise his or her daily life, on a military base predominantly consisting of houses and more closely reflecting civilian life, might experience a relatively lighter and shallower experience of military service. This is illustrated by Matthew, who served as a translator in RAF Intelligence and recounted that *"it almost felt like I was outside it [military regime], we had so much freedom to do what we wanted"* (Matthew).

The vast majority of ex-military prisoners described palpable similarities between the prison and the military. This was particularly the case when discussing the physical buildings and environment of the two institutions and also the organisational structure of them, particularly the clear staff hierarchies (Moran and Turner 2022a). Many participants even found a certain degree of comfort in the familiarity and relatability of these to their previous military institutions.

Another area of similarity identified by participants was in the organisational culture of the two institutions, especially when it came to the highly-routinized regime in prisons and in staff-prisoner interactions. However, while interviewees identified similarities in these areas and believed that the prison should, at least on paper, operate in a manner somewhat similar to military institutions, participants described what they saw to be stark differences in how this actually worked in practice, frequently expressing lamentation and frustration over perceived ineffectiveness, inefficiencies and incompetence on the part of the prison and its staff and management.

6.1.1. Physical environment

One of the first similarities between the two institutions mentioned by most participants was the physical environment. Participants described the feeling of being imprisoned

within their establishments as similar to the feel of being billeted in a military camp. Being held in enclosed premises, with limited communication with the outside world and being subjected to restrictions of movement was experienced similarly in both institutions.

This is perhaps unsurprising given the fact that some prisons in the UK are indeed former military premises such as army camps, air force bases and military hospitals (Jewkes and Moran 2017), repurposed as prisons following the end of World War II (Moran and Turner 2022a). This was the case for some of the research sites included in this study. In prison, the physical presence of walls and fences topped with barbed wire, communal eating areas and shared showers reminded participants of their previous lifestyles and circumstances in the military and, for many of those interviewed, this sense of familiarity lessened the shock of imprisonment on entry and helped them to adjust to life in prison.

Similarities were not confined to the external appearance and architecture of the prison sites but also extended to the physical fabric, facilities and everyday living conditions (Jewkes and Moran 2012). For example, communal living with other men in a male-dominated environment, sharing living space with other men, using communal showers and being served meals from kitchen hotplates all resonated with their previous experiences of military service (Hancock and Jewkes 2011; Moran and Turner 2022a). The limited nature of contact and communication with the outside world, specifically with family and friends, was another similarity.

For some of those who had served in the Army, it was telling that they even used the word 'camp' rather than 'prison' to describe their current place of living, likening their accommodation on their prison wing to a military barracks:

This is a lot like being in the army being in this camp, to be honest. It used to be an old RAF camp so it's a lot like it... Except I haven't got my phone and the internet and I can't just go out when I want but there's not a lot of difference. (Peter)

Researcher: *Do you see any similarities between the military and the prison?*

Participant: *You know what, it's like being confined to barracks. I've got a kettle, I've got a tele, I've got people telling me what to do; same as I*

had in the Army. I've been confined to barracks. It doesn't bother me. It doesn't bother me being here. (Christopher)

It's quite a closed wing. It's very similar to being housed with your company. (Graeme)

Even for those who had not been land-based in the military and spent the majority of their military service at sea in the Royal Navy, they still saw very close similarities between the physical infrastructure and environment of the prison, and being aboard a Navy ship, as Palvinder recalled: *"It's very easy to adapt because the small windows, the close confines. It's like a ship so I think for ex-Navy it's very easy to cope with"*. Some also described the system of being moved around the different establishments as similar to the system of time-bound postings in the military:

[military life] was exactly the same as J wing... The only thing that's missing is the bar. Even when you go down for your food, it's exactly as it would be in the mess. The chefs there would put it on your plate. It's just exactly the same. And the barbed wire, I never went out Monday to Friday. I went home at the weekends so the only thing I'm not doing is going back to [home town] at the weekends. So my mind-set is that I'm still living the same life as I always have. The barbed wire, instead of keeping the IRA out, is now keeping me in... Everything is the same. No different at all. So that's the way I look at it. And you move every so many years... and so it's like a three-year posting, a three-year posting, a three-year posting. And that's my mind-set again. (Edward)

6.1.2. Organisational structure

Further similarities were identified in relation to the organisational structure of the personnel who governed and staffed the two institutions. The formal rank structure of the prison was frequently likened to that of the military whereby the 'suited' governor grades of the prison were likened to the officer corps of the military, while the prison staff who held power and authority over the prisoners, with their multiple grades and ranks, were considered akin to the non-commissioned officers (NCOs) of the military. The function that these staff and governors performed and the processes that a

prisoner was required to go through in order to access and engage with them, i.e. through a 'chain of command', were also seen as the same:

Researcher: *Are there any similarities in the hierarchy?*

Participant: *Well there is obviously a hierarchy. They have some sort of rank structure so I can sort of relate to that and I realise you've got to go through the chain of command. You can't just go straight to the governor.*

(Peter)

Use of the term 'chain of command' by participants to describe prison staff structures was not uncommon, and some participants drew parallels with the military rank structure of NCOs, with Owen claiming that "*in prison there is an NCO structure, and that's how I see it in jail. As an NCO structure*".

While the rank structures of staff within the prison were seen to be very similar to those of military institutions with which participants were familiar, some ex-military prisoners actually considered themselves to be a part of this 'chain of command', rather than separate from it:

Researcher: *Is there anything that you've taken from the military that helps you in here?*

Participant: *Yeah, being told what to do and accepting it. And accepting that people are higher than you. Think about it, the prisoner is the lowest in the jail, isn't he? Then you've got the staff, then you've got the deputy governors and then the governors. You've still got that chain of command there.*

Researcher: *So you see prisoners as part of that chain of command?*

Participant: *Yeah, of course they are. You say, right I'm on the bottom and the shit only rolls one way and it stops here doesn't it.* (Christopher)

Within this chain of command, participants often considered themselves to be issued orders which necessitated immediate, unwavering compliance, similar to what they had experienced in the military, with Jack asserting that: "*If somebody gives you an order, you have to follow it. There's no discussion*".

Participants felt that having previously experienced living in military institutions, with its similar infrastructure, environment and deprivations, they were better prepared for entry into prison where they encountered familiar organisational structures, staff hierarchies and other life circumstances:

...I will say this, being in the forces has set me in good stead for everything I've done in life, including prison. I've never been to prison before and when I come here I was alright... it's helped me through this experience. Do you understand? That's how it is. It's helped me. It's helped me with my time in here. (Kevin)

It's all blokes together, and stuff like that. So the forces helped me a lot when I first came into jail. (Thomas)

6.1.3. Organisational culture

When initially asked about similarities and differences between the prison and the military, responses often seemed to be inconsistent and contradictory with some interviewees professing many close similarities and others insisting on no similarities at all:

Researcher: *Do you see any similarities between the military and the prison?*

Participant: *It is very much like the military. A lot of it is. (Jack)*

Researcher: *Do you think there is any comparison with being in the military... what about the structure, the regime?*

Participant: *No. Honestly. How can I put it, there's nothing logical about this place. (Shaun)*

However, participants often went on to summarise prison as sharing many of the negative aspects of life in military institutions but with a distinct lack of those aspects considered positive, as Karl stated directly: *"It's not like the military but it's along those lines... I definitely see similarities. It just hasn't got the good side of it. Just the shit side of it."* On further inquiry, it became apparent that the "shit side" was mostly in reference

to a lack of social bonding and cohesion amongst men in prison as compared to the military. Already identified in the literature as one of the most positive aspects of life in a military institution (King 2006; Kirche 2009; Siebold 2007), bonding and cohesion with peers was highly prized by participants as one of the most appealing aspects of military service. Meanwhile, the main similarities between the two institutions concentrated around the organisational structure and the culture of the institutions, something which was often couched in terms of frustration or resentment.

In affirmation of Goffman's (1961) analysis, the main similarity between the two different institutions that featured early on in most accounts from participants was the structured, disciplined nature of the two institutions' regimes and the hierarchy of personnel that permeated them. The structured, timetabled regime that dictated the rhythm of daily life in prison was found to be similar to that of the military, with some participants even using military terminology such as *reveille* (meaning wake-up call in military parlance) to refer to and compare aspects of the regime:

It's still run as a fairly strict regime so [inaudible] your door's opened and you're told to go to work in a similar kind of way as reveille is. Everything is at set times so similar. There are similarities in terms of a fairly set regime. (David)

Researcher: *Are there any other similarities?*

Participant: *The physical environment. The regime. You know what's going to happen from one day to the next pretty much. (Karl)*

Notwithstanding the similarities in organisational culture between the prison and the military, there was equally wide recognition that the efficiency in organisation of the military was not matched in the prison. While such frustration with lack of organisation in prison is not uncommon amongst the general prison population (Crewe 2009), this was particularly acute for ex-military personnel who had experienced a prior institutional regime deemed to be more efficient and organised. This frustration surfaced repeatedly in participants' accounts, in which interviewees expressed a strong desire for the prison to be better organised, along lines similar to the military:

You're used to coming from a well-oiled organisation and system and you know when a system is working correctly and you can see when another one, HMP, isn't. I used to work for the MoD and that works.
(Dennis)

I would say that some of the officers are not very helpful and that's something I find very frustrating. The way the processes work is just really frustrating because you just can't get anything done. You've just got to wait till it happens which is really frustrating because the military is just not like that at all. (Peter)

In addition to describing these organisational deficiencies, participants expressed limited understanding of the institution's goals and overall purpose. Siebold (2007) identifies the need for military institutions to have a clear, defined purpose with collectively shared goals across the organisation which have backing and endorsement by all of those who are part of those institutions. Such shared goals are necessary when establishing and maintaining cohesion within military institutions which is crucial to ensuring operational effectiveness in difficult circumstances (Dandeker and Gow 1999; Siebold 2007). Participants recounted how, in the military, they had understood the overall purpose of the institution, and how their own position in the institution contributed to its goals, resulting in relative contentment, team-working and a degree of respect for the institution.

In the prison this was not the case. In their research with veteran prison officers, Turner and Moran (2023) revealed frustration and lamentation over the lack of defined purpose, un-cohesive culture and ineffective leadership in the prison, compared to their participants' previous experiences in military institutions, which hampered commitment to the institution and its goals. Similarly, in this study, participants talked openly about their confusion over the purpose of prison and communicated suspicion about the true objectives of imprisonment. Few believed that the aims of imprisonment were rehabilitation or training, including Hamish who asserted that: *"prison is a waste of time because it's purely about punishment, about containment"*.

With veteran prisoners overwhelmingly of the view that prison did not have clarity of purpose, and that the institution was not focused on their interests and welfare, participants mostly expressed no commitment to the institution or its loosely

defined goals. Consequently, veterans lacked the same unifying collective sense of purpose in prison that they had experienced in the military, and this created tension between prisoners on the one hand and the institution and its staff on the other. As a result, prisons exhibited a confused, inconsistent, divisive and fragmented organisational culture rather than a united and cohesive one (Turner and Moran 2013).

Notwithstanding the creation of a somewhat oppositional culture pitting prisoners against their institutions, some participants expressed their desire for greater discipline within the institution, both in terms of staff executing their duties more consistently and in terms of the behaviour of prisoners being more strictly controlled and ordered:

Researcher: *What other differences do you see?*

Participant: *The military has got better discipline. I think some of the military discipline would be useful in the prison service.*

Researcher: *In what way?*

Participant: *Just, so that everybody actually does what they're supposed to do and things actually get done. You know what I mean? (Hamish)*

Participants did not necessarily see these similarities in organisational structure to be positive but nevertheless expressed a high degree of acceptance towards them. This acceptance was considered to be an advantage on entry into prison and in coping well with life in prison:

Researcher: *What about staff? Do you get on with staff in here?*

Participant: *I understand that they've got a job to do. Maybe I don't agree with everything that goes on and that, but it's rules isn't it. I'm used to rules. I'm used to being told what to do and that. That's what's helped me a lot with the army. I'm used to being told what to do. Do this, do that... that's what's helped me. I'm used to it all aren't I. (Owen)*

While the hierarchical staff structure seemed to offer some degree of familiarity and predictability to ex-military prisoners, some claimed with frustration that this did not function as effectively as in the military (Turner and Moran 2023):

Researcher: *Do you see any similarities and differences between the prison and the military?*

Participant: *Yeah, I would say the military is better run... in the military, orders got passed down and got carried out, otherwise there were consequences for it. But in prison there doesn't seem to be consequences for it unless you're a prisoner [laughs].*

Researcher: *So that discipline and that obedience to directives doesn't seem to—*

Participant: *Doesn't seem to apply, no [laughs].* (Thomas)

This sense of being part of but not committed to an institution seemed to shape the nature of social relations between ex-military prisoners and their peers. Participants asserted that there was a marked difference between the types of people in prison and in the military, expressing contempt for many of those they encountered in the prison. In line with previous findings by Higate (2001; 2003), the claims made by participants were that those who enter the military already have a certain degree of self-motivation and desire to be part of a team which was seen to be lacking in many prisoners, thereby preventing the kind of bonding and cohesion amongst prisoners that was so prevalent in the military.

6.2. The prison social world

The social world of the prison was seen to be markedly different to that of the military. Some participants did identify some similarities between the two environments, for instance the need to maintain peaceful relations with others and to negotiate the dynamics of a male-only environment in which power is often expressed through physical strength, with violence and aggression relatively commonplace. However, the prison was not considered to have the same culture, spirit or ethos as the military. Participants described the military as being more cohesive as a result of voluntary recruitment and the existence of collective institutional goals towards which all members were working. A prison culture defined by selfishness, greed and lack of care and consideration for one's peers was contrasted with the military social world characterised by selflessness and collaboration in pursuit of common goals. The exception to this was amongst ex-military prisoner groups where elements of this mutually supportive military culture still featured. Conversely, interviewees often

expressed a contempt for non-ex-military prisoners and had sometimes experienced tension or conflict with certain groups of prisoners, such as Islamic extremists or Irish Republican groups.

Most participants in the study had served full-time in the military, the majority of whom had spent most of their service in and around military camps, bases or on ships. While not constantly confined to these spaces, with permitted movement out of camps and taking leave reasonably common, they had each spent prolonged periods of time in closed male-dominated (if not male-only) environments under the watchful eye of superiors scrutinizing their movements and conduct. During their military service, veteran prisoners had lived within their military institution's social world and been immersed into a specific military culture which, despite some variations across units and regiments, applied across military institutions and included the six main features previously documented in the research literature: perpetual order and organisation; strict discipline and compliance with authority; commitment to achievement of objectives; dominant masculinity; particular language, practices and customs; and group cohesion with camaraderie amongst personnel (Hockey 1986; Higate 2003; Siebold 2007).

6.2.1. Social world and culture

One aspect that ex-military prisoners felt was fundamentally different between the prison and the military was the social world, inmate culture and value systems held by those within each institution. Most participants felt that this was the aspect of the institutions in which the prison differed most profoundly from the military and there was consensus amongst participants that they were in direct contrast. On an individual level, perceived shortcomings in prisoners were seen to promote an environment of individualism, selfishness and self-preservation amongst inmates, and in direct contrast to ex-military persons who were regarded as more selfless and considerate of others, thereby creating a culture in the military of community, camaraderie and cohesion.

On an institutional level, interviewees spoke of the military propagating a particular 'bond', sense of 'brotherhood' or 'family culture'. This was said to generate integration and interdependence, promoting order and good relations between peers. Conversely, in the prison, an absence of camaraderie, lack of trust and the need for perpetual vigilance against potential exploitation or attack from peers was blamed for

a prison culture that lacked cohesion, camaraderie and a sense of community. These differences dominated participants' accounts and were an evident source of anxiety.

When participants were asked about whether they saw any similarities between the social world of the prison and that of the military, initial responses were direct, frank and unequivocal:

Researcher: *Do you see any similarities between the military and the prison from a social perspective? So, the way people act, the way they talk, the way—*

Participant: *No. Nothing. Not one bit of it is anything like the military.*
(Jonathon)

Researcher: *Do you see any similarities in terms of the social side of prison?*

Participant: *Not that I can think of, no.* (Stuart)

Ex-military prisoners were seen positively by their peers as self-disciplined, respectful, caring and trustworthy while other prisoners were seen to be selfish, uncaring, individualistic and untrustworthy. There was a prevailing view that veterans were not 'real criminals', with the offences they had committed typically deemed to be mistakes or accidents rather than the intentional criminal acts committed by non-ex-military counterparts, due to a lack of discipline, selfishness and untrustworthiness:

Researcher: *Do you think ex-military prisoners are different?*

Participant: *Yes. Definitely. They're 100% more different. Because of what I just said. They've got the discipline and all that. Because they are only in here because they made a mistake. Unless they're a criminal, like they've done a burglary or drugs or things like that. That's different.*
(Richard)

These views were based on a set of presumptions about the superior character of veterans compared to the immorality and irresponsibility of non-veterans.

Ex-military prisoners singled out several features of non-ex-military prisoners for derision, including weakness, selfishness, lack of discipline, a culture of drug use,

a culture of theft and the absence of an acceptable moral code surrounding acts of violence. As a consequence, ex-military prisoners felt that they had little in common with other prisoners, found it difficult to relate to them and held them as objects of denigration:

Researcher: *Is [bonding] something you don't find with others?*

Participant: *They're just- they're a different fucking breed. They're- 'oh what can I steal, what can I rip someone off for?'... Everything is about self-gain for them... you know what I mean? You only need to sit for a day to see the difference. (Phillip)*

For Philip, individualistic and exploitative behaviour contradicted the military principles of mutual support and selflessness which he shared with other veteran prisoners and he took comfort in the familiar social connections with fellow veterans who shared his values and moral code.

This value system and moral code included an aversion to habitual drugs use in prison, despite the admission amongst some that they had used drugs prior to coming to prison (which were largely framed as past mistakes). With a number of the more outspoken and judgemental members of the sample imprisoned for running international drug smuggling operations, this criticism and intolerance referred specifically to the use of drugs in prison. The latter was associated with mental weakness or moral deficiency, as opposed to the business of importing and distributing drugs which was seen as a business enterprise conducted by intelligent, enterprising individuals:

Researcher: *What about cultural similarities and differences, the social culture?*

Participant: *It's the mentality of the prisoners to some extent. It's the drugs culture which, in the army, was never there to the best of my knowledge. For many reasons which I won't go into we were drugs tested there more than here.*

The moral code of veteran prisoners also governed views on the acceptable use of violence in prison. This generally permitted violence as a means to resolve conflict

between two parties, reflecting the informal code of conduct around violence found in military institutions (Hockey 1986). However, this code prohibited bullying, did not allow for numerically unbalanced fights and emphasised acceptance of the outcome of any fight with finality, something which participants such as David lamented was not the case in prison: “...and the fights. Plenty of them. We all get into fights in Germany and have it out with each other and once that was over, that was the end of it. Whereas here it's held to be ten people on one person and that person [unintelligible] after work, so different cultural set-up”.

Issues of trust also featured repeatedly in participants' accounts, with prison continually cited as a place lacking in trust (Crewe et al. 2017; Flanagan 1980). Outside of the veteran community, interviewees did not have trust in their peers in prison and worried about theft from other prisoners. Veterans looked down on those who stole from other people, especially from people's homes, while theft from large corporations such as supermarkets was seen to be acceptable. This echoes accounts of the military social world whereby a certain degree of theft from the organisation, often done in pursuit of improving capacity or comfort for the group, is considered acceptable, while theft from peers is strongly abrogated and brings severe reprisals from the group (Hockey 1986; Graves 1969; Mason 1983). The tendency for other prisoners to steal from their peers led veteran prisoners to perceive them as morally inferior to themselves:

Researcher: *Just touching back on what you were saying about the people in here. You mentioned trust. Do you think that prison is a place where you can trust people?*

Participant: *No. No. It is- no. And there are people that deserve to be in prison. Do you understand? Let's not get this twisted. There are enough people here and this is exactly where they deserve to be. I can hardly trust some of these people with sugar or a tea bag, much less a thousand pound. Now don't get me wrong. It doesn't mean necessarily that I'm better than any single man in there. But... I don't burgle people's houses or rob down the bank. I only take things out of Tescos and Waitrose and Sainsburys.*

Researcher: *Do you think that people in here are a bit below you morally and socially?*

Participant: *Yeah. It might sound a bit arrogant but some people can't put a sentence together.* (Dennis)

As Dennis suggests, this sense of moral superiority also gave rise to a belief that, in addition to being morally inferior, non-veteran prisoners were also cognitively inferior and unintelligent:

Researcher: *And what do you think of those who haven't been in the military?*

Participant: *There's a lot of guys in here who don't have the IQ of a matchhead.* (Anthony)

Some of these idiots. I was talking to this young bloke and he's been here 39 times and I'm thinking 'this isn't a life, this is an existence'!... These people who've been here 39 times have just got no self-respect. (Kevin)

Interestingly, for veterans, these perceived flaws not only represented a low intelligence and low level of moral fibre but also immaturity, with non-veteran prisoners unable to fully control themselves and prone to emotional outbursts: *"There are so many people here who are, how can I put it, I don't think they've grown up fully. They throw dolly out of the pram far too quickly. It's senseless really"* (Arnold). These sentiments were echoed by other participants like Owen who insisted that *"they're all two-faced aren't they?! They're not 'men' like in the Army"*, thereby portraying non-veteran prisoners as less than 'men' for their perceived shortcomings (Connell 1987; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Exceptions to this included prisoners who were seen to have secured their masculine credentials through working with an organised crime group, or in traditionally male, working-class occupations like mining or shipping. Such prisoners expressed the typical traits of hegemonic masculinity, such as self-discipline and emotional control (Hinojosa 2010), which reflected those of military veterans, and were therefore not placed in the same category of immature persons by participants. Such views of masculinity harkened back to those ideals picked up during military service which demanded stoic acceptance of one's situation and resilience in dealing with hardships (Arkin and Dobrofsky 1978; Belkin 2012; De Bere 2003; Green

et al. 2010; Hopton 2003), rather than what they perceived to be unhelpful, immature emotional outbursts.

Prisoners who had not been in the military were seen to have low self-worth and little empathy for others, lacking the caring and mutually supportive ethos so central to the culture and values system to which veterans ascribed:

I've never thought of the military and the prison being similar, to be honest. Not to be disingenuous but most of the people you meet in here are just scumbags. Obviously I'm generalising but they have no self-worth. They just have no empathy for anyone else. They're all out for themselves and don't care about anybody else... People in the military, they've got morals, they've got scruples, they've got self-worth... Whereas people in here just want to steal and burgle and rob. Not all of them. I've met about six or seven people along the way that I've sort of connected with but they're all for high value frauds. People with a purpose... I can't relate to burglars, thieves, drug addicts. What can I talk to them about!? I've got nothing in common with them... I think they're scumbags. (James)

The resentment of other, non-veteran prisoners and impatience and intolerance for their perceived desire to appear 'hard' produced in many veteran prisoners a profound indifference, bordering on hostility, towards other prisoners and an aversion to developing relationships with them:

Researcher: *How do you find prison?*

Participant: *What here? Well it's easy but it's full of cunts. Everyone's jostling for position or being a plastic hard-man. So you're like "fuck off". It's just- not interested. I can't be arsed. I really can't be arsed to deal with them. Idiots... Oh, it's easy! It's a piece of piss. There's nothing hard about it. Like I said, the hardest thing about it is not reacting to the plastic fucking hard-men around the prison. (Phillip)*

Participants derided other prisoners for their perceived inability to cope with and navigate the prison regime, largely owing to their lack of experience of similar systems

such as the military. Anthony recounted how, *“You can always tell. An ex-squaddy has a completely different attitude to all this. He’ll know to just go with the flow, whereas the civvies won’t. They’ll just kick off and make theirself worse. They hope they can change the system but you won’t. They’ve just not got the right attitude. Whereas an ex-squaddy has just got it. You see it all the time. It’s different. It’s completely different”*.

A lack of empathy and care for others was seen by ex-military prisoners to inhibit or prevent any form of bonding in prison and to generate a diffuse, fragmented and individualistic prisoner culture lacking in any camaraderie. Martin outlined how this differed to the military: *“...people in the army, they’re more closer... it’s just a different atmosphere. I can’t explain it. A strong bond”*. While Owen explained that this prevented mutual support between prisoners:

Researcher: *Do you think there is any camaraderie amongst prisoners like there is in the army?*

Participant: *No. You come through that door by yourself and you go out through that gate by yourself.... in the Army, you’re close-knit aren’t you? They’re your mates, they’re your muckers. They’re your everything... You’ve got each other’s backs. It’s not like that in here is it?! Maybe I’ve got your back but you haven’t got mine. You know, it’s not like that.*
(Owen)

This absence of bonding and camaraderie was also seen to be responsible for feelings of physical insecurity amongst interviewees, who felt a perpetual threat of attack from peers without being able to rely on any others for mutual support and defence (Crewe et al. 2017; Warr 2016). This contrasted with participants’ experiences in the military and was responsible for producing a constant state of anxiety and vigilance amongst veterans in prison:

They’re just completely different when you’re in the Army. In the Army you know that the guy you go out drinking with has got your back. With civvies it’s completely different... In the Army you know that the person next to you is willing to die for you, but in here the chances are that the person next to you is the one that’ll try to kill you. So there’s no relaxing in here. I found that it’s a lot more like brothers in the Army than it is in

here... One day you can chat to someone and they'll be fine. Then the next day he's trying to get you. You just never know where you stand. You're on guard 100% all the time. (Adrian)

As a consequence of all of these judgments, ex-military prisoners expressed a distinct preference for keeping company with other ex-military prisoners, a sentiment previously documented by Brewster et al. (2020) who noted the exclusionary nature of the military veteran identity. Despite the process of disculturation taking place in prison which socialised veteran prisoners into compliance with the institution's regime, rules and regulations and staff direction, veterans resisted socialisation into the inmate culture. Veterans consciously chose to keep a distance from other prisoners and avoided being fully absorbed into the prison social world with its undesirable language, attitudes and behaviours. While some veterans did associate with other prisoners, many chose to keep a distance from non-veteran prisoners wherever possible, choosing rather to be alone with no company than be in bad company: *"I just keep myself to myself. I don't really try and associate with them"*. (Martin).

For those who had fellow veterans on their wings, they held a strong preference for keeping company with other veteran prisoners over other non-veteran prisoners and were happy to encounter other veterans in the system, as Phillip explained: *"No matter where you go, you're bumping into ex-military all over. The same in [other prison]. Brilliant"*. Participants were glad to be around people they felt they could identify with and with whom they shared common ground: *"I've met a few ex-military people in here and I've warmed to them because you've got something in common"* (Karl).

6.2.2. Bonding between ex-military prisoners

When asked about their perceptions of and relationships with ex-military prisoners, most participants claimed to be able to discern those who had been in the military from those who had not by way of their mannerisms and conduct:

Some of them you can look at them and say 'he's ex-military him'. I don't know what it is. They just seem to stand out. I think it's their attitude and that. I don't know what it is, it's just when you look at them. I think the way they talk to people and the way they treat people. I mean, [other

participant] is a big lad and you would think he'd throw his weight around but he doesn't. He has respect for people. He seems to respect other people and gives them a chance. You know what I mean? You're all the same in the Army, aren't you. You always give people a chance first before you judge them. (Christopher)

Researcher: *So in all the time that you've been in these three prisons then, have you come across many prisoners who are ex-military?*

Participant: *Yeah.*

Researcher: *Lots?*

Participant: *Yeah.*

Researcher: *How did you come across them?*

Participant: *You know what, it's quite funny because sometimes you can spot them a mile away. They're generally not in the drug culture. They're not into the gang culture. They kind of keep themselves to themselves. You normally find them in the gym. So you can kind of spot them. (Lee)*

When asked about what made ex-military prisoners different to other prisoners and why they got on with them, interviewees put this down to a particular outlook and attitude, which included positivity, organisation, motivation, self-discipline and treating one's peers with respect and care (Hockey 1986; Higate 2003):

Researcher: *What else is there about ex-military prisoners that you think is different to others?*

Participant: *More respect. Better disciplined. More positive. A lot of them have still got that motivation even though- It's crap in jail, don't get me wrong... but they're more positive. Have a better outlook. And they've always got the next step in their head. They've got it planned. They're not sitting there moping. (Edward)*

Participant: *I think the way they talk to people and the way they treat people. They have respect for people.*

Researcher: *Why do you think ex-military prisoners are more respectful?*

Participant: *Because it's taught to you isn't it? You're taught to be respectful in the military. When you first join the military you're 'yes sir, no sir' and that's teaching you respect. And you carry it with you. Once it's drummed into you, it stays with you.* (Christopher)

These traits were said to give rise to a shared understanding between ex-military prisoners which fostered feelings of trust otherwise largely absent from the prison social world (Warr 2016; Crewe 2011; Crewe et al. 2017). Ex-military prisoners believed that their peers were more trustworthy and safer to be around than prisoners who had not served in the military:

They're [ex-military prisoners] a lot more trustworthy. I know I can trust [name] to go in my cell and get books. (Jack)

Researcher: *Do you feel a bonding or connection with the guys who've been in the Army?*

Participant: *Yeah. It's that little bit extra isn't it. You feel a little bit safer. You know, they've been through what you've been through.* (Owen)

This apparent trust between ex-military prisoners contrasts with the lack of trust prevalent across the prison social world, whereby prisoners do not typically trust their peers with their personal belongings and do not permit them to enter their cell unaccompanied (Liebling and Arnold 2012; Crewe 2009). Conversely, ex-military prisoners trusted other ex-military persons based solely on their defined identities as veterans, and the assumptions they therefore made about moral character. Such credentials were acknowledged and valued regardless of personality:

Participant: *You make friends with them [veterans]. You can immediately trust them. If he asks you for a fag you just give him one without even thinking.*

Researcher: *So is there a bond between ex-military prisoners like there is with-*

Participant: *Absolutely. Yeah, absolutely.* (Richard)

This mutual understanding and bonding between veterans in prison reflected the notions of a military family, so prominent in the veteran community outside of prison:

Well, it's like in the Army, in your platoon, you look after each other. You've got each other's backs. You are- it's that family in the military. In here, with SSAFA and military people, you have that thing again. (Jack)

Some participants struggled to articulate the nature of the relationship between ex-military prisoners, but this can be best identified as 'bonding' (Siebold 2007), forged through a sense of shared experience and a mutual understanding of the hardships and feats of endurance that military service entailed:

Participant: *I prefer being around military lads.*

Researcher: *Why's that?*

Participant: *Because we have plenty more to talk about. You've got more in common... You've got a different way of talking to each other. I don't know how to say it... You've got a different attitude towards things. You just get on with them better. (Christopher)*

There are a few lads on the wing who, because we're all ex-services, we all get on with each other. Take the mick out of each other... We went through the same hardships. We went through the same- what's the word- personal struggles to work as a team. A shared background. We all get on together. It's good. And that's the way it should be. It's that shared experience that we all have together and we respect each other for that. (Hamish)

This bonding resulted in ex-military personnel having positive relationships with other veteran prisoners which were characterised by camaraderie and mutual respect, much like the nature of peer relationships within the military (Siebold 2007; Hockey 1986):

I think the cameraderieship is awesome... even now when you bump into someone who's ex-military in the prison, you hit it off with them straight away [...] and so all the barriers had come down and immediately you

were back talking to ex-squaddies and I think that's what you find everywhere. As soon as you find out somebody is ex-military... We'll all tend to sit together as well. You'll talk more to ex-military than you will to other prisoners because of what you've been through, for one, but it's just the comradeship. You feel closer to them because you've all done the same thing. (Edward)

I think that if you know somebody has been in the military and you're a similar sort of age, you're like a magnet drawn together... it's easy to get on with them. There's that sort of bonding, even if you don't know the person. (Peter)

Participant: *...the ex-army boys, we all click.*

Researcher: *So do you have a lot of army mates here?*

Participant: *There's about ten of us that go to the reunion about once a month... There are only a few of us who are quite close.*

Researcher: *Why do you think you get on with the other ex-army guys?*

Participant: *Because we're all the same. There's something that you're taught in the army that just changes everything about you, doesn't it... The army thing, once it's in you, it's in you. It never goes, does it? And we're all the same. Even if you haven't met someone before, as soon as you start, the banter has just started and you're ripping it out of each other. And even if you don't know them, it just starts within minutes which is good.*

Researcher: *Like a shared bond?*

Participant: *Yeah.*

Researcher: *Is it like that with all the ex-army?*

Participant: *Yeah. (Phillip)*

This confirms findings from previous research whereby a sense of bonding between ex-military persons entails veterans looking out for each other, protecting each other and supporting each other in times of difficulty and hardship (Söderström 2020; Brewster et al. 2020). As Brewster et al. (2020) also found, in describing the nature of

these relationships, participants used metaphors of family, similar to those found in military institutions:

Researcher: *What qualities do you think ex-military people have that's different?*

Participant: *Motivation, trustworthy. You know you can trust somebody who's ex-forces more than you can trust a civilian in here because the ex-forces guys in prison, they kind of stand out from the rest of the population. We all get on with each other. If one's got an issue, we help each other out. We kind of go out of the way with each other and make sure we're OK. (Lee)*

For some participants, these loyalties entailed a desire or obligation to physically fight to protect other members of the group, thereby putting themselves at risk. This again contrasts with findings from previous studies (see: Crewe 2005, 2009; Liebling and Arnold 2012) where such camaraderie in prisons is largely absent and a prisoner is unlikely to face personal physical risks on behalf of another prisoner who they are not particularly close with:

Participant: *If you put twenty [ex-military] people in a prison then they'd all like knit together and if there was a fight they'd back each other up.*

Researcher: *The ex-military ones would?*

Participant: *Yeah. It's just like- It's not like they want to have a fight. It's just that you feel like you have to.*

Researcher: *Do you think that ex-military guys would stick up for each other in prison?*

Participant: *Yeah. Well the guy that I talked to in Brixton. He said that he'd feel like he'd have to. There was never any trouble but he said that if there was that he'd just feel like you have to because he's ex-military and he thinks he should do. (Peter)*

This desire or sense of obligation to protect other prisoners from harm was never extended beyond members of the military community:

Researcher: *What about with other ex-military prisoners?*

Participant: *I know a few in here... I've got close-knit friends in jail. [Non-veteran prisoners] are not friends, they're associates. People I talk to and that. I wouldn't do anything for them or watch over them the way I would some people in the Army. (Owen)*

6.2.3. Tensions with other prisoners

Some previous research into ex-military personnel in prison has highlighted tension and conflict with other prisoner sub-groups, particularly prisoners who are current or former members of militant organisations, most notably Irish Republican and Islamist militant organisations (Packham 2013). In turn, this has given rise to concerns surrounding their safety and security (see Howard League 2010; and Phillips 2014). Some participants in this study had experienced such issues, but this was far from widespread:

Researcher: *So you've never encountered animosity or hostility from anybody, like Irish people or Muslims or anything like that?*

Participant: *There was a bit of a Muslims thing in Altcourse but that's because an ex-military lad had been threatened by quite a high-powered Muslim on one of the wings in Altcourse. So he'd been moved off that wing for his own safety and came onto our wing. (Edward)*

Few participants described such experiences personally, despite having regular contact with such persons:

Researcher: *Never encountered any animosity from any groups?*

Participant: *I haven't actually. No. No, not at all. That's something I thought in the beginning that I might have had but no. Never had.*

Researcher: *Have you ever had any issues with groups like Islamic extremists or Irish Republicans?*

Participant: *No. I don't know whether it's because it's a D category or what but, obviously, there's a high Muslim community in this prison. They all know what job I do in here because I walk around with a green T-shirt*

on so they know what I'm doing. But I've never had any issue with them in this prison. (Lee)

Researcher: You've never seen any trouble because of [military service]?

Participant: Not at all, no.... I've witnessed loads of trouble. More than I care to remember but none with ex-military (Kevin)

There were, however, a small number of accounts which did report veterans becoming the victim of abuse due to their status as ex-military personnel. Timothy recounted one of his own experiences “*Yeah, I've had abuse for it before. ‘You murdering bastard! Do you think it's OK to kill women and children?’*”. Some of these accounts also included instances in which victimisation escalated to targeted violence:

Researcher: So what happened there then?

Participant: ...he was Asian but he was from Afghanistan or somewhere like that, and he found out I was in the Army. And that I was in Kuwait and was part of the teams that were working there, you know. He tried to attack me with a knife in the kitchen. It was a pretty big one. It was about six to eight inches. A proper kitchen knife. I took it off him in the kitchen and broke his arm, but I got punished for it. I ended up doing another 48 days in prison... he blamed me for his family's loss. He blamed all British soldiers... this guy found out and thought, well I'm going to attack him.

Participant: In [previous high security prison], you can't tell people you've been in the Army because, um, there's a lot of, um, [pause] there are a lot of Muslims who don't like people who've been in the Army and they cause a lot of problems in jails. To be fair, this jail is alright but other jails you go to, like [high security prison], they cause a hell of a lot of problems, so people tend to keep it quiet.

Researcher: Did you ever experience problems with any particular groups in prison?

Participant: In Bullingdon, yeah.

Researcher: *What happened in Bullingdon?*

Participant: *Erm, I can't say that.*

Researcher: *OK, that's fine. Was it some kind of conflict?*

Participant: *Yeah, I was just chatting to someone and he clocked on to the tattoos and he says, 'have you been in the Army?', I said, 'yeah' and then about an hour later someone come to my cell and tried to stab me. So we got into conflict.*

[...]

Researcher: *Is that something you've seen in other prisons?*

Participant: *Yeah. I've seen that happen to other people. Like people beating the crap out of other people for no other reason than they've been in the Army. (Adrian)*

Although such occurrences were said to be infrequent, there was still a wariness amongst most interviewees around disclosing their previous military service due to fear of reprisals, reflecting recent findings by Söderström (2019) who found a similar form of caution amongst veterans relating to concerns about personal security:

Researcher: *Do others in here know that you're ex-military?*

Participant: *No, it's best not to tell people, I've been told.*

Researcher: *Why's that?*

Participant: *There are terrorists in here. There are three terrorists in here and two of them are from the Belgium bombings. So they're pretty hard-core criminals- hard-core terrorists and so I was told by the service person in here just not to tell anyone, basically. You never know, if someone knows someone out there and they know someone in here, there's no telling what they might do to you... I just think the rise in terrorism in the last- In the past you had the Irish threat but did they have people in prisons like the Muslims, no. (James)*

Researcher: *Do staff know that you're ex-military?*

Participant: *Some of them do but that's only if it comes up in conversation. To be honest with you, I try to keep it to myself. Obviously I don't have to explain about today's society with terrorism and all the*

rest of it because there is terrorists on our wing so I've got to be quite careful. Prison can be a nasty place, you know, if word gets around and so I try to keep that to myself... I'm not going to advertise the fact. (Kevin)

Participant: You keep things hidden in here because people have been taken and beaten up for wearing these things, on the wings. [gestures to rubber bracelet that represents the Help for Heroes veterans charity].

Researcher: So that's happened here on some of the wings has it? People getting beaten up for wearing Help for Heroes bracelets?

Participant: Yes. Because it's seen as something really bad... You're putting a target on your back aren't you. (Jack)

While Jack claimed to be in fear for his safety as a consequence of being seen to support the military, he was still openly wearing the bracelet, suggesting that these concerns and anxieties over personal safety might not be accurate.

While interviewees were less reluctant to disclose their military service to other prisoners, some did feel differently when in higher security category prisons:

Researcher: Do you think that there is any fear attached to not wanting to let it be known.

Participant: I don't know. I'd say certain prisons, yeah. Places like [names category B prison] I'd say are places where you wouldn't want them to know you was ex-forces because there's a big population of Muslims. Extreme Muslims with a strong gang culture. So you wouldn't let on too much that you were ex-forces in there. Whereas places like this or [names category C prison], it would be very different. (Lee)

Concerns around reprisals aside, some participants cited embarrassment or shame at now being a prisoner as a reason behind a reluctance to disclose previous military service:

Participant: A lot of time they [veterans] fly under the radar as well. There was a guy in [one prison] who, once he got to know a few of the guys who were ex-forces,... we found out he was an ex-marine. But a lot of

them fly under the radar. A lot of them feel a bit embarrassed and won't tell the prison authorities when they get in that they're ex-forces.

Researcher: *Why do you think that is?*

Participant: *I think it's the shame. They've let themselves down. A lot of guys won't mention they're ex-forces... people are quite ashamed that they've let themselves get in that position. (Lee)*

Söderström (2019) reported that military veterans were cautious in disclosing their previous military service out of fear of stigma and social isolation. Yet, in this study, some interviewees held no reservations around letting others know that they were ex-military persons. For some, this was because they did not fear harm from others, and felt pride at having been in the military:

Researcher: *Have you ever felt reluctant to let people know that you're ex-military?*

Participant: *No. I tell every bugger, me... Every bugger knows I'm ex-military because I'm proud of it. (Edward)*

Researcher: *You ever had any problems?*

Participant: *Not many. Some people have said don't broadcast it. There are a lot of Muslims in here. But a lot of Muslims in here are alright. There might be the odd one that takes offence to the ex-military so I don't put it about... I'm not frightened of them but what I done is what I done. It isn't now. (Karl)*

Researcher: *Do you ever find that you're reluctant to disclose the fact that you're ex-military?*

Participant: *I tell them all about it, the jihadis. I let them know I was in the Army.*

Researcher: *Let who know sorry?*

Participant: *Jihadis.*

Researcher: *So you let them know?*

Participant: *They want to know. They want to find out...*

Researcher: *How's that received when you tell them?*

Participant: *Don't say a word.*

Researcher: *Is that intentional? Are you worried?*

Participant: *I really don't care whether they- I really couldn't care one way or the other about what they think about me. Whether they think that because I was in the Army, whatever. I don't lose any sleep over what they think about me. I'm British. I was in the British Army. There's a young kid who got about six years for trying to join ISIS and- "what you do that for? Why didn't you just join the British Army and do it proper? Why go on the other side? To fire an Armalite or AK47 or something?" You know, I can't understand their world, who they are.*

[...]

Researcher: *You've never found yourself being threatened or intimidated because you've been in the Army?*

Participant: *No. No. Never. Not once... Nobody's going to intimidate me. I don't get intimidated in here. (Shaun)*

Some participants even reported that disclosing their ex-military status had, in fact, helped to establish or improve relationships with other prisoners who held respect or admiration for their past military service:

Researcher: *There's just a difference in culture?*

Participant: *I think so yeah. Once other prisoners find out you've been in the military, you do get a bit of respect, not from all people but a lot of people, they do respect you for being in the military. (Peter)*

Decisions around disclosure were therefore fraught with complexity, requiring prisoners to balance the potential benefits of identifying other veterans against the potential risks of stigma, embarrassment and threats to safety.

This chapter has illustrated the many similarities between the military and the prison, including their physical environments and organisational structures (Jewkes and Moran 2017). Veterans welcomed these similarities as their familiarity with a highly-routinised and organised regime with its hierarchical staff structure eased their transition into prison life and helped them to live within the prison regime. It has also

reviewed some of the differences in institutional cultures between these institutions, including some that are absent from previous analyses of total institutions such as the differences in the purpose of the two institutions and how they function. It looked at the two contrasting institutional cultures that these differences create, namely the organised, cohesive institutional culture of the military with its clear purpose and goals (Siebold 2007; Hockey 1986) versus the more fragmented institutional culture of the prison which seemingly lacked clear goals or overall purpose and which was perceived to be less organised (Crewe et al. 2014). These differences contributed to frustrations amongst veterans who desired more structured, disciplined and cohesive institutional regimes, similar to those in the military, with their culture of camaraderie and mutual support and with more trustworthy, respectful and caring peers (Woodward 2003; Higate 2003; Hockey 1986). They lamented the disorganised, ineffective and inefficient institutional regime of the prison with its fragmented and individualistic social world and its culture of theft and drug use, whose members they deemed to be weak, greedy, selfish, and untrustworthy and who also posed a perpetual threat to personal safety (Liebling and Arnold 2012; Crewe 2005, 2009; Warr 2016).

This chapter also outlined some of the bonding and camaraderie that exists between veteran prisoners as well as the conflict and tension that veterans had encountered with certain groups within the prison population. Having discussed how veterans experienced life within the total institution of the military, including its culture and social world, the following chapter will analyse how veterans drew on their previous military experience and utilised their veteran identity and military mind-set to cope with some of the hardships of imprisonment.

Chapter 7: Coping with Imprisonment

Ex-military prisoners described the difficulties encountered in prison remarkably similarly to some of the hardships they had encountered previously in the military. The hardships they described can be closely compared to the pains of imprisonment outlined by Sykes (1958) which arise from the deprivations of liberty, autonomy, security, heterosexual relationships and goods and services, as well as other pains described by more recent scholars (see: Flanagan 1980; Crewe 2011; Crewe et al. 2017; Haggerty 2020). However, while there were similarities in the nature of these hardships, these were often experienced somewhat differently in prison as compared to the military.

In coping with these difficulties, ex-military prisoners overwhelmingly described being able to cope reasonably well with imprisonment and accounted for this with reference to their previous experience of similar such hardships in their past military lives, echoing the tentative findings of HMIP's (2014a) small scale survey and previous research with US veteran prisoners (Wright et al. 2005; Logan and Pare 2016). In describing their ability to cope in prison, ex-military prisoners drew heavily on their identities as military veterans and attributed their fortitude to their military mind-set acquired during their military service, echoing research by Guerrero et al. (2021) who found veterans' identity helped them to thrive in residential health facilities due to organisational similarities with the military. This mind-set helped veterans to deal with the hardships and rigours of imprisonment and helped them to navigate interactions with both prisoners and staff. The familiar, structured daily routine which resembled aspects of life in military institutions helped veterans to adjust to prison and lessened or eliminated forms of culture shock (Cohen and Taylor 1972).

While coping with many of the hardships encountered, however, veteran prisoners recounted frustrations around the perceived relative disorganisation and incompetence of the prison, as compared to the military as well as difficulties experienced in managing social relationships with prisoners who they found hard to relate to and considered to be of lower worth than peers in the military.

7.1. Military mind-set

As noted above, ex-military prisoners often talked of other prisoners with derision and disdain, believing them to be mentally or psychologically weak in comparison with themselves, and less able to cope with the rigours of imprisonment:

Participant: *It taught me to cope. I know some of the lads who are in jail now who haven't been in the military and they don't seem to be able to cope as much. They've got nothing to fall back on, I don't think, a lot of them.*

Researcher: *What is that then? Is it a mind-set?*

Participant: *It is, yeah. It's a total mind-set. (Thomas)*

Despite (in most cases) having never before been in prison, ex-military prisoners felt that their military service had given them the knowledge, understanding, skills (both physical and mental) and mind-set to enable them to cope relatively well with imprisonment.

Researcher: *Do you think that your time in the military helps you in here?*

Participant: *What!?! Without a doubt! With- out- a- doubt. (Dennis)*

Researcher: *How do you cope in prison?*

Participant: *I cope well. I'm alright. I've got it drilled in me, haven't I. I can cope alright.*

Researcher: *Do you think there's anything from the military that helps you cope in prison?*

Participant: *Everything.... You've got to adapt to prison life haven't you? Like in the Army, you've got to adapt to different things all the time, at the click of a finger... I can adapt to things very quick... You've got to be strong even though sometimes it's hard. (Owen)*

Some described simply flicking a mental switch to return to a state of mental being which had suited them in military life:

I think that once you've done any length of time in the army, you don't lose that. It's like a switch and it switches back on again when you come into this situation.... So you kind of slip back into your mentality... It's that kind of mentality to make sure that you keep yourself structured. And it's very easy when you've got a military background to keep yourself structured in prison. (Lee)

In particular, interviewees believed that the discipline and self-motivation that their military service had generated had prepared them for life in prison:

Researcher: *So how do you think you've found coping in prison?*

Participant: *Erm, some parts of having been in the military helps. Like the discipline side of it and being able to get on with people in a close environment. (Peter)*

Researcher: *Is there anything else that you've taken away from the military?*

Participant: *Just discipline really.*

Researcher: *Do you think that helps in prison?*

Participant: *It helps for me. It does help people, I think. Cleanliness, hygiene, all that. It teaches you all that. (Jonathon)*

You can lie on your bed all day and do nothing all day if you want, and refuse and play up and this, that and the other. But if you've got a bit of discipline about you, and you want to get through it, then that structure that you've had in the forces helps. (Karl)

Discipline was also considered advantageous in terms of controlling what participants said to other prisoners and staff, which helped them to get along with others and avoid conflict:

Researcher: *Do you think that there is anything that you took away from the military in terms of personal characteristics, attributes, behaviours that you adopted that carried on later in life?*

Participant: *Well yes, when to keep your mouth shut. And when to stop, you know, control your natural instinct, if you see what I mean.*

Researcher: *So, self-control?*

Participant: *Yes. (Arnold)*

Meanwhile, self-motivation assisted veterans in occupying their time in prison with useful and meaningful activities, including education, teaching, using the gym, volunteering as a counsellor, being a wing representative and working in various other roles within the prison:

Researcher: *What do you do in prison to occupy your time?*

Participant: *Well, I've got a job on this unit. It's mainly about working with clinicians and- but I have a bad time, as you saw. It's not a paid job, it's just- I do it to keep busy.*

It's important to keep active because it would be so easy to just sit there and turn into a zombie (Arnold)

Researcher: *Do you cope well in prison?*

Participant: *Yes. Because I know how to keep myself busy and keep my mind occupied. (Timothy)*

Participants also described how learning to cope with adversity equipped them for managing their life in prison and coping with its hardships, as Simon recounted: *"it's experiencing that kind of adversity that helps you in a place like this"*. This attitude included an acceptance of one's circumstances and a focus on just 'getting on with it': *"You just keep going. The military taught me that"* (Jack). Others emphasised the need to just knuckle down, carry on and focus on the end of the sentence: *"I just want to get on with my time, get out and get on with my life"*, an approach that was widely adopted by veteran prisoners, and attributed to their previous military service:

Participant: *It's no good, going, 'oh, what am I going to do?'... No, I'm afraid not. You do. You get on with it. You don't moan about it.*

Researcher: *Is that something that you find in here as well? To help you cope with prison?*

Participant: *Well I don't consider it, 'in order to cope'. I don't consider it 'coping' because coping implies that you're incapable and having to force yourself to cope, if you see what I mean. For me it's just 'get on with it'. It's got to be done so it's got to be done. (Arnold)*

For many, 'keeping going' was facilitated by familiarity with a daily regimen:

It's just routine. And that's one thing that the Army taught me was to get into a routine and just crack on with it. Just get on with it. That's the way I try to deal with it in here. (Adrian)

Participant: *I find it easy to cope with because it reminds me of when I was a single man in the forces, everything's about routine... I find it easy.*

Researcher: *So what is it about you that makes you find it easier to cope with than other people?*

Participant: *Mentality. My attitude towards the system is that life has got to go on. You can't let it beat you down. If you start letting the system get you down, that's when it's time to give up... But I find it easy. (Anthony)*

Participants detailed a number of features of military life that were mirrored in the prison which were therefore less of a shock and easier to cope with when encountered in prison. These closely resembled the pains of imprisonment (Sykes 1958).

7.2. The pains of imprisonment

When discussing the overall hardships encountered in prison, participants often referred to restricted access to goods and services. However, they felt that the goods and services that were available were similar to those in the military when away from a base or town, for example, when on exercise or operational duty abroad. As a result, they did not find this particular deprivation to be difficult to cope with:

Researcher: *And what about some of the finer aspects of the prison environment, like the services available in here versus outside and what you can buy and get hold of from the canteen-*

Participant: *Well, it's just the same as when you're on tour or on exercise³⁰, I guess. You learn to live without all your creature comforts and all that, don't you? So that doesn't really bother me, to be honest. I'm kind of used to it, I suppose. (Steven)*

The deprivation of heterosexual relationships was another aspect of prison life that seemed not to affect ex-military prisoners to a significant degree. The male-only environment of the prison was familiar to them, and they were acquainted with co-habiting, showering, eating, exercising and working with other men with limited contact with females. When discussing aspects of prison life that they considered similar to military life, this was often one of the first things to be raised and was invariably dismissed as of low concern:

I've never been to prison before and when I come here, I've been in an all-male environment and it's stupid little things like showering with loads of blokes and living in close proximity with loads of blokes. I've done that. Albeit in different circumstances but it's helped me through this experience. (Kevin)

I think being in the Army has helped me adapt to being in prison because of the way of life, you know what I mean? Being in an all-male environment... the discipline side of it. (Paul)

In relation to the deprivation of security, participants discussed two main aspects. First, they noted that the threat of serious physical injury was substantially lower in prison

³⁰ 'On tour' refers to being deployed overseas on an 'operational tour of duty'. Typically, in a war or peace-keeping context such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Northern Ireland or the Balkans. 'On exercise' refers to being deployed on simulated military operations away from populated areas usually for extended periods of time without access to population centres or military bases where goods and services can be accessed, for example in northern Scotland, Canada or Norway.

than in the military where individuals are sent into risky environments where they could be killed or seriously injured. Indeed, participants were dismissive about the risk to their security of being in prison:

Researcher: *How does it [military service] help you?*

Participant: *I ain't going to fucking die am !! [bursts into laughter] I ain't going to die... 'you're not going to kill us. You're not going to get killed here. In the army you might get killed, or worse still you might get your legs all bollocksed. (Dennis)*

While the risk to security posed by the institution was dismissed as very low, the second aspect of the deprivation of security was that of a perceived threat to personal safety from other prisoners. Many participants described being at an advantage in avoiding conflict and victimisation as a result of military service, which was believed to have taught them how to live amongst other men and given them an awareness of how to identify, avoid and diffuse potential conflict. However, they also described the prison population as being more volatile and unpredictable than the military, whereby “one day you can chat to someone and they'll be fine. Then the next day he's trying to get you. You just never know where you stand. You're on guard 100% all the time” (Adrian). Demonstrating Warr's (2016) analysis of the insecurity of prison life, the inability to trust many of their peers and a feeling that sentiments could change quickly gave rise to a constant sense of threat and insecurity (see also: Crewe et al. 2017), especially as veterans often felt that they faced added danger of being targeted by individuals and groups hostile towards military veterans (Söderström 2020) (see chapter 9 for further discussion).

The deprivation of security in prison was, then, different from the deprivation of security experienced during military service. Participants perceived the risk to life and limb in prison to be substantially lower than in the military, but this was accompanied by continuous feelings of unease, suspicion and hyper-vigilance against an ever-present threat which had not been a regular feature of military life. This was unfamiliar to veterans who were accustomed in the military to trusting their peers and not having to concern themselves with threats and possible attacks from this group.

The deprivation of liberty was the most keenly felt pain of imprisonment, and the one most difficult for ex-military prisoners to cope with. Ex-military prisoners were

familiar with restrictions around contact with family and friends and, unlike findings amongst non-veteran prisoners by Crewe et al. (2017) were able on one level to cope with this aspect relatively easily as a result:

I find it easier than most people. Perhaps because I've been away a lot from a young age, really. And the military. In a way it's set me up for it. In ways like being away from family and friends... It's easier for myself than it is others because they're not used to this sort of thing. (Stuart)

However, unlike prison, it is unusual in the military to be apart from family and friends for more than six months, beyond which one would likely be granted leave to return home from an overseas deployment. For some prisoners serving long sentences, this went beyond what had been experienced in the military and was less easy to cope with (Flanagan 1980). Karl described the most difficult thing for him as: *“being away from your family. Being away from my dog”*.

Another aspect of the deprivation of liberty in prison which is different to the military is its involuntary nature. With military service in the UK being voluntary³¹, participants had chosen to surrender their liberty to the state when they joined the military, submitting themselves to the direction of the military regarding where they would be required to reside, under what conditions and when they could visit home: *“Yeah, but I chose that [military service]. I didn't choose to come to prison.... So yeah, it's a bit more difficult to deal with. Maybe just because you're in a different way of thinking when you know you've not chosen it”* (Steven). This was not the case in prison where participants were being held against their will.

Participants also felt that restrictions on liberty were easier to bear when in the military due to a sense that liberty was restricted for a meaningful and valuable purpose, one that was appreciated by family, friends and wider society. In prison, by contrast, the absence of any noble cause made the deprivation of liberty more damaging and painful:

³¹ Notwithstanding that one member of the sample in this study was conscripted into the UK Armed Forces during the period that the UK operated a system of compulsory National Service, which ended in 1968.

Researcher: *Did you feel freer in the Army. Was there a difference in freedom?*

Participant: *Yeah, there is, yeah. At the end of the day... it feels different in the army. You're still doing time but it's something I wanted to do. It's something I enjoyed.* (Graeme)

The deprivation of autonomy, like the deprivation of liberty, was also keenly felt, but was not an aspect of imprisonment that heavily affected ex-military prisoners, as Stuart described: *"That side of it doesn't bother me all that much really. I'm kind of used to not having control over exactly what I can do, when I can do it, and all that from when I was in the Army"*. Nonetheless, the involuntary nature of imprisonment gave the experience of being deprived of autonomy in the prison a different feel from in the military:

It's a little bit different though, I think. Because you kind of signed up for it in the Army. You knew what you were getting into and you volunteered, and it was for a good cause. But here it's being imposed on you as a punishment and so it feels a little bit different. Like a bit more difficult to accept. (Stuart)

Well, when you're in basic training you can't really leave the camp so much but when you get to regiment you can go out and do whatever you want really within the regime, and here you can't. (Graeme)

Despite this difference in experience, participants talked about how their military service had prepared them to cope with the restrictions placed on their lives. Living within a strictly ordered regime which dictated what one could and could not do, where one could and could not go, when meals were to be taken and so on seemed to come relatively easily to those interviewed and few (if any) found this to be a particular hardship.

This familiarity also seemed to help veterans to cope with many of the other pains and hardships of imprisonment previously detailed in the research literature. Veterans did not describe feelings of loneliness (Flanagan 1980) or a longing for more privacy (Crewe et al. 2017). Nor did they express worries and anxieties over release

(Flanagan 1980). Rather they talked about how their familiarity with such total institutional environments had helped them to adapt to prison life and they instead yearned for their release so that they could continue on with their lives. Veterans also found little difficulty with the psychological intrusiveness that can feature in 'tight' prison regimes or in conforming to the expectation of perpetual self-governance in prison (Crewe 2011a), citing their military experience as having instilled into them the abilities of self-governance and self-control:

Researcher: *Do you think that there is anything that you took away from the military in terms of personal characteristics, attributes, behaviours that you adopted?*

Participant: *Well yes, when to keep your mouth shut. And when to stop, you know, control your natural instinct, if you see what I mean.*

Researcher: *So, self-control?*

Participant: *Yes. (Arnold)*

This was also the case in their ability to endure many of the ritual abasements of the prison regime which also resembled aspects of military regime (Crewe 2009; 2011a; 2015):

You get the bullshit which really does your head in. One day I had to sweep the parade square with a toothbrush and trim the grass around the parade square with nail clippers... Having to clean out the toilets all the time. Shit like that. But that helps you deal with all the petty shit you get in here. (Jack)

While the difference between the voluntary nature of military service and the compulsory nature of imprisonment gave a different feel to the pains and deprivations encountered in each institution, similarities between the two institutions still provided a degree of familiarity to the experience of imprisonment which impacted veterans' ability to endure these hardships.

7.3. Experience of prison conditions and regime

7.3.1. Coping with adversity

When reflecting on the regime of the prison and comparing this with the regime of the military, participants considered the military to be 'tougher'. The military was considered to have worse living conditions for prolonged periods, with a stricter structure, regime and hierarchy and, for many, levels of adversity that at times far surpassed those encountered in the prison, as Karl described: *"You're used to the environment and dealt with discipline far harsher than this. This doesn't really compare to the military. That was a lot more tough"*. Likewise, Ranjit and other interviewees felt that conditions could never be as bad as they were in the military: *"Well, I've lived in worse conditions, I've eaten worse food, I've put up with greater clowns than you messing me about. It ain't that bad! Particularly being a serviceman from the mid-80s"* (Ranjit).

For some participants, this perception that life in prison could never be as difficult and damaging as that experienced in the military took the form of fatalism (Downes 1980; Crewe 2009). The attitude of fatalism promulgated by military institutions (Hockey 1986) shaped participants' constructions of their prison experiences. This fatalistic military attitude drove interviewees to expect the worst possible circumstances and outcomes in their lives as prisoners, seemingly as a means to cope with the difficult circumstances in which they now found themselves and the uncertainty of life in prison and beyond, as James explained: *"I think that all I can do for myself now is to expect the worse and expect nothing and then it can only be ok"* (James). They anticipated with a high degree of acceptance that their lives were now destined to be difficult and that all they could do was to resign themselves to making the best of a bad situation: *"Once you're in it, you're in it. You can't do anything about it so just get on with it. This is what you've got so just try to make the best of it. That's all you can do"* (Karl). Furthermore, as a means of creating some degree of self-assurance or comfort around their own situation, interviewees told themselves that other people were in worse situations than themselves and so they should not complain about their circumstances: *"There are people in a worse place than me. You've just got to keep going"* (Jack).

Some participants described coping with their sentence by constructing it as a military posting:

Researcher: *How does prison compare?*

Participant: *It's like basic training. It's shit and you just want to go home, but you get through it. And that's what I left with from the Army, is that mind-set, I suppose.*

Researcher: *And does that mind-set help you in here?*

Participant: *Yeah, it does. (Adrian)*

It's a shitty job, in a shitty posting and it's a shitty place to be. But there you go. There's no time to start crying. Chin up and soldier on. (Dennis)

I used to say to my brother, I just treat it as if I was in the forces... And that's basically the way that I've always done it through jail as I've gone along. It's helped me a lot dealing with it that way. (Thomas)

7.3.2. Prison as a holiday camp

Overall, and in contrast to some prisoners (see: Crewe 2009, 2011; Liebling 2011a; Downes 1980; Flanagan 1980; Toch 1975), ex-military prisoners seemed to cope reasonably well with imprisonment, often describing it as somewhat 'easy':

It's easy, prison... here, now, in the situation I'm in, I can do this for the next 18 months. (Matthew)

I think I found it quite easy to be honest. The regime and everything. (Lee)

I find it easy. It's like a hotel. (Anthony)

Terms such as hotel and holiday camp were regularly used to convey the sense that prison was not a difficult environment to live within:

Researcher: *How do you find prison life, both at [prison] and here?*

Participant: *What, me personally?*

Researcher: *You personally, yeah.*

Participant: *I think it's a laugh. And that's being perfectly honest. I really think that prison in this country is a laugh. There's no deterrent from stopping anybody from coming back here at all... This here is like a holiday camp. I was saying to one of the governors the other day, what I thought about it. And I told him, 'I'm enjoying it'. They looked at me and she said, 'what?' I said, 'I'm enjoying it'... I don't want to sound stupid, being in prison, but that's the way I see it. (Jonathon)*

Researcher: *How do you find life in prison?*

Participant: *Just in itself, it's far too easy. Before I came into prison I was fairly right wing. I would have brought back the death penalty and flogging and we were giving it to prisoners far too easy and that sort of thing. Rehabilitation focus was too high and I largely believe that's still the case... Prison for people who don't have family, it's a holiday camp. They get as much gym as they want. They get their X-Boxes. TVs. Electricity, gas, water, food, all paid for. They're hanging out with their friends or gang mates or people from a very similar area back home until 11. It's not a hard life at all. In many ways it's probably an easier life in here than it is on the outside where they've got to deal with their life problems. So I think prison is far too easy and that's why people are not scared of reoffending and coming back because it's not that much of a hardship. (David)*

Aye, it's alright. It's not a bad place... this is like a holiday camp. (Mark)

As suggested here, participants often felt that prison regimes were too lax and needed to be stricter, harsher, and more disciplined.

7.3.3. 'Depth', 'weight' and 'tightness' of imprisonment

While coping well with many of the aspects of imprisonment, veterans experienced acute frustration with inconsistencies and unpredictability in the enforcement of the prison regime and expressed a strong desire to know where they stood when interacting with institutional processes, reflecting findings by Crewe (2011b) and Crewe and levins (2021).

In particular, veteran prisoners regarded lax and easy regimes (i.e. in lower-security establishments) as soft, disorganised and permissive (Crewe et al. 2014), and found these regimes hard to cope with because they lacked the levels of structure and discipline previously experienced in the military:

Because I've been in the army it should be easy in here but that's not really the case. It's nothing similar to this at all. It's childish. It's completely different. Everyone always says that to me but I don't find it similar at all. They say 'oh you must be used to it being strict and that. They're not strict in here. They just lock you up... there's no discipline in here whatsoever. Not one bit. There's nothing at all. (Graeme)

Instead, they expressed a strong preference for more strict regimes with consistent use of staff authority and the rigid enforcement of rules (Crewe et al. 2014). This was especially true of those who, during their military service, had spent time in the Military Corrective Training Centre (MCTC):

Researcher: *So did you ever go to Colchester?*

Participant: *Yes. I was in- [laughs].*

Researcher: *More than once?*

Participant: *[Laughs] Do you ever go more than once!? [Laughs]. Once was more than enough and also, you see - I'm glad you brought that up now - again, if you can do that, this is a breeze. This is an absolute breeze compared to that.*

Researcher: *How was it in the MCTC.*

Participant: *There was no big wall. No, literally, you worked by the roadside. You know they would just hunt you down.*

Researcher: *Was it a tough regime there then?*

Participant: *[nods]*

Researcher: *Yeah?*

Participant: *Yeah but- it was a tough regime. (Dennis)*

Civilian prison is a lot easier. In military prison it's a lot more disciplined and you know where you stand... [civilian] prison is a holiday camp. It's too soft. (Michael)

Participants believed that a stricter and more structured regime that gave purpose to prisoners' daily lives would be more likely to promote deterrence, often citing a military style of prison management and enforcement as an appropriate model to adopt:

Researcher: *Do you see any similarities between the prison and the army?*

Participant: *No, not really. What it should be like, prison should be like the army prison in Colchester in Essex. It should run on a regime like it was. Up in the mornings at six, bedsheets done, room done, similar to the army. If the whole regime was physical activities when everyone gets a shower in the end, bang up. I think it would give something positive and, obviously gives them something to do during the day because it gives them a bit of erm, what's the word I'm looking for, discipline. But this prison is all over the place. Half of them don't know what they're doing, people running round shouting their heads off. If it was as structured as how the British Army is, half the people wouldn't come back. Half the people here are running round the wings acting like gangsters. They're not gangsters though. If they did even a day in the army, a physical day, they wouldn't survive. But in the end they put on a different image. But it should be set up like the army. I personally think that half the people wouldn't reoffend and come back. They just wouldn't want to come back. (Martin)*

Participant: *if you put every prisoner in here through that basic training, and that's what they had to do when they're offenders, I'll tell you what, 96% of them wouldn't be here again.*

Researcher: *So it needs to be a stricter regime?*

Participant: *Of course it does. (Jonathon)*

Prison's got to be a lot stricter I think. You know, in the olden days it was more like military wasn't it. (Kevin)

This preference for a stricter regime reminiscent of the 'olden days' seemed on initial reflection to portray a desire amongst veterans for deeper (Downes 1992; King and McDermott 1995; Crewe 2015, 2021) and heavier (Downes 1980; King and McDermott 1995; Marquart 1986) prison environments. Interviewees talked about their preference for hard power, used to enforce discipline and exercise control in similar ways to the military regimes they had experienced. Veterans found such regimes easier to live within and lamented the erosion of hard power in the modern prison and the move towards softer modes of power which had, in their view, made the prison's regime too soft and permissive (Crewe 2011a, 2011b). However, previous research has revealed that such sentiments do not necessarily reflect a longing to be subjected to older, heavy and deep regimes with their reliance on hard power, restrictions on liberty and autonomy and physical assaults on the body. Prisoners rather have an underlying desire for regimes embodying structure, consistency, predictability and reliability which might not necessarily feel heavy (Crewe 2011b; Crewe et al. 2014; Crewe and levins 2021). Crewe et al. (2014), for example, found that prisoners were frustrated with the unpredictability and ambiguity of the prison's routines and inconsistent application of rules and processes by staff but that these were expressed in participant accounts as a desire to return to the days of harder, austere, brutalising regimes.

This seemed to be the case also in this study where participants' accounts featured similar underlying language to that found by Crewe et al. (2014), illuminating similar such sentiments. After talking of the need for more structured, strict and highly-disciplined regimes, participants went on to describe concerns centred more around structure, consistency, predictability and presence of staff to enforce discipline and other aspects of the regime, as comments by Michael illustrate: *"In military prison it's a lot more disciplined and you know where you stand... here the prison staff are afraid to enforce the rules"*. With their desire for structure, reliability and staff to consistently enforce the regime, veterans had a clear preference for institutions at the 'present' end of Crewe et al.'s (2014) heavy-light, present-absent quadrant and found such highly-structured institutional regimes easier to live within:

Participant: *It's quite a stringent, quite a strict regime in [previous prison].*

Researcher: *How did you find that?*

Participant: *I didn't find it difficult to be honest. It was very easy to live in that condition where you're locked up then, you're opened then. It was very, very structured. You was taken everywhere. There was no freedom of movement or freedom of making choices for yourself. And once you worked out the regime, it was very easy to live and work in that, obviously. (Lee)*

Notably, veterans did not describe the tension and insecurity brought on by the psychologically intrusive and restrictive environment characteristic of a 'tight' prison experience, with its continuous monitoring, surveillance, psychological assessments and self-governance (Crewe 2011b; Crewe and levins 2021). This seemed to be due to veterans' familiarity with a similarly paternalistic institutional regime which placed expectations on how an individual within its charge should think, speak and act (Crewe 2009, 2011b). Veterans were accustomed to policing their own thoughts, words and behaviour when it came to interacting with staff and other aspects of the institutional regime and were seemingly able to align these to the expectations of the institution, helping them to blend in and become "*the grey man*" (Karl), ultimately mitigating or negating altogether many of the pains associated with the 'tightness' of imprisonment (Crewe 2011b).

7.4. Institutionalisation

Participants often described a comfort with, and occasionally a dependence on, structured institutions and described the process of institutionalisation outlined by Goffman (1961). Participants therefore found it relatively easy to quickly fall in line with the prison regime where the process of institutionalisation continued and was further entrenched (Moran et al. 2019):

I conformed to it pretty well. It wasn't a burden to me at all and I fit in pretty well... there's an order about things. The routine, you get used to it. (Karl)

You've got to adapt to prison life haven't you? Like in the Army... I've got a little routine that I go through and that's what it's all about, routine... I do my own thing. I'm awake six o'clock in the morning. Up, coffee, shower, a wash, brush my teeth, do all my pad. So by the time I've done that it's eight o'clock, I'm on the cleaners. So I've got a little routine that I follow. (Owen)

Tactics learned in the military were employed to assimilate into the familiar institutional environment of the prison. One of these was to blend into the crowd so as to avoid unwarranted attention from staff, as Karl described: *"I've got to be here so I just be the grey man... Being in the forces is a bit the same"*. A second approach learned from military life was the futility of trying to fight the system. In practice, this meant exercising self-control in the face of aggravation by staff and frustration with institutional rules, being cordial to staff and following the directions of the regime closely enough to avoid attention:

Researcher: *So what is different about you?*

Participant: *My attitude towards the system... The system always wins, as you know. The system always wins. It's as simple as that. (Anthony)*

Goffman (1961) describes the ways in which inmates of total institutions can rebel against the institution and its regime through practices that are forbidden but which avoid direct challenge or outright hostility. These *secondary adjustments* allow inmates to exercise personal agency and retain aspects of their perceived self-identity.

While there was little evidence of such adjustments, participants provided some examples of challenging staff:

Researcher: *Do you ever find yourself in conflict with the staff?*

Participant: *No. I don't let it get to that far. But I can let them know how I feel without being impolite.*

Researcher: *So you've never had any issues with discipline? Any warnings, adjudications or anything like that since you've been in prison?*

Participant: *No. I don't intend to spend one more day here than I have to. (Arnold)*

Institutionalisation began for participants in the military with the initial process of disculturation (Goffman 1961) and was reinforced throughout military service. Mark recounted that, *“If you've been in the military then you find prison easy because you're institutionalised, you're away from family, you're put in the confines of this prison and you're told what to do. You know what I mean? It's no problem”*. For others, however, this process of institutionalisation had begun even earlier in life, in care homes or, in one case, boarding school:

Maybe being in [care] homes, being in the military, being in prison, it's all sort of a bit the same. A bit of an institution really. I suppose my whole life has been a bit like that. One has prepared me for the other. (Karl)

Researcher: *How did you find your service on the whole?*

Participant: *I enjoyed it. There was nothing wrong with it. It was like being back at school. The same way that I look at prison as being back at school. (Arnold)*

Some participants described the institutional nature of the prison as providing some degree of psychological comfort due to its familiarity, as Dennis described: *“Some of these things are hard to change when you don't know a lot different. And the worst thing is that it's an institution which I'm comfortable in... I was happy to get in here”*. Guerrero et al. (2021) likewise found that veterans in secure mental health facilities took comfort and even thrived due to the institution's organisational similarities with the military.

A few participants talked about the *need* for routine, structure and a desire for directed daily activity and external control over their lives:

I don't like grey. I like black and white. No grey bits. Just tell me what I'm supposed to do and I'll do it. (Shaun)

Researcher: *How do you feel about the prison having power over you?*

Participant: *Well, you have to get used to it... You cope with it. I cannot choose which way I turn. Maybe that's good for me. (Matthew)*

Veterans' need for, or even dependence on, the structure of total institutions such as the prison was predicated on a need for institutional regime to be efficiently organised and run by competent staff and management.

7.5. Staff and managerial competence

Participants expressed a frustration with the organisation of the prison regime, including the perceived levels of competence and proficiency of prison staff who they regarded as ineffective and inefficient compared to those in the military. In the military, they had been accustomed to an institutional regime characterised, in their accounts, by strict discipline, enforced by capable and competent staff operating within well-organised, established institutions. These sentiments of frustration echo those revealed by Turner and Moran (2023) amongst ex-military prison staff who also found disorganised regime, ineffective management and staff competence and commitment to be below their expectations following military service. Participants in this study expressed a high level of frustration at what they perceived to be light and permissive prison regimes, governed by incompetent and inexperienced staff operating under weak and poor managerial direction, further demonstrating a clear preference for 'present' regimes on Crewe et al.'s (2014) 'absent-present' continuum. In line with previous research findings, interviewees expressed a strong desire for better management and organisation, with more competent and professional staff directing the regime (Crewe et al. 2011; Crewe et al. in press):

Researcher: *So how is prison different?*

Participant: *The discipline is not as good. The organisation. In prison the organisation is appalling. It's terrible... Nobody knows what they're doing actually. (Mark)*

Researcher: *Do you see any similarities between the prison and the military, in terms of institutional similarities or differences?*

Participant: *Err, the professionalism... the professionalism of the management, the way in which [the prison] is run by senior officers and Pos is just shocking and that's really hard to cope with... It is run like a circus. Trying to cope with that, mentally, and having been in such well*

organised institutions, it's quite hard to understand how an organisation is so badly run. (David)

One interviewee described how this frustration about the relative disorganisation and inefficiency in prisons generated differing responses in ex-military prisoners: intentional disruption; adaptation and endurance; and struggle:

Researcher: So do you think it's benefitted you, having been in the military before coming to prison?

Participant: It's been a help and it's also been a hindrance. I've given some thought to this. Depending on the individual you probably have three outcomes: The person who uses his military background and is disruptive to the system because he can be; the person who just knuckles down and gets on with it; and the person who copes well with prison but can't cope well with the prison system not working well and doing what it's supposed to. And I fall into the latter category. (Ranjit)

Not every interviewee felt that they coped well with imprisonment. A few reported maladaptation to the stresses of imprisonment which included self-harm, as well as instances of contemplating and attempting suicide, reflecting previous findings by Flanagan (1980) and others (see: Liebling 1999):

I'm fairly strong but I didn't want to do [my sentence]... there was one occasion when I came very, very close to killing myself. It was when I thought it was better for my partner. So instead of being a cowardly thing to do, it became a noble gesture. Like I was some kind of hero. (Matthew)

I've had my own personal suicide attempts. I've tried overdosing. Recently, about three months ago, I set my cell on fire and refused to come out. I was quite willing to burn and die, to be honest, because I've got no family, I've got no hope. (Michael)

Despite these examples of participants encountering extreme difficulty with imprisonment, the majority felt that they coped reasonably well with the institutional

experience of imprisonment, despite frustrations encountered with the relative inefficiencies of the prison vis a vis the military.

However, a more significant difficulty was managing social relations within the social world of the prison which differed from those they had encountered in the military.

7.6. Managing social relationships in prison

Ex-military prisoners were able to draw on their familiarity with establishing and maintaining relationships with peers and authority figures in an institutional setting to replicate similar such relationships in the prison. Notwithstanding the prevalent attitudes of resentment and derision towards other prisoners (as discussed above), when asked about relationships with other prisoners, participants mostly recounted positive experiences: *"I get on well with everyone. I've never had a fight in prison"* (Christopher).

However, interviewees did recount being highly selective in their associations with other prisoners and described the relationships they established as fundamentally different from those in the military. Specifically, they contrasted 'friendships' in the military (see: Siebold 2007; Hockey 1986; Higate 2001, 2003) with 'acquaintances' in prison, with whom bonds of trust and friendship could never truly be established (Flanagan 1980; Crewe et al. 2017), as Stuart described: *"I do have quite a few friends in here now... although not that I'd really call friends, as such... they're not the same as what military friends are... it's just a different type of thing"*. Veterans avoided certain sections of the prisoner population who they regarded as undesirable people to associate with. Often, and like many mainstream prisoners (Crewe 2009), they expressed antipathy or hatred towards bullies, so called *plastic hardmen* and peers who had been imprisoned for certain categories of offences, particularly those with a sexual component, as Simon emphasised: *"I do not like being put with murderers and bloody perverts. It's bloody disgusting! Seriously disgusting"*.

While able to establish and maintain relationships with other prisoners, participants were often reluctant to get to know them well, preferring instead to spend time alone (Crewe 2009). Typically, they did not go to great lengths to try and make friends, demonstrating little need for social and economic support:

Researcher: *How do you get along with other prisoners in here?*

Participant: *I just keep my head down. I don't involve myself... I do talk to people. I'm not a complete loner.* (Karl)

Researcher: *Do you generally get on with other prisoners in here?*

Participant: *I avoid most of them. I keep to myself. Ninety odd percent of them are people I'm just never going to get on with so I don't come into contact with them. There are a few who I play chess with or train in the gym with or I will have a chat with now and then. I tend to keep pretty much to myself. So I just don't have a lot to do with most of the prisoners.* (David)

Researcher: *How did you feel about the other prisoners in here?*

Participant: *They're in for different charges. I just keep myself to myself. I don't really try and associate with them... Not everybody is bad, there are a few good people in here.* (Martin)

A few participants did recount having friends, but these were limited in number and carefully selected. Adrian, for example, said, *"I've got friends but I don't go out of my way to make friends"*. Similarly, Kevin explained that he had little desire to make friends in prison: *"I'll speak to people in here because you've got to speak to people, but I keep myself to myself. My friends in here I can count on one hand because I don't really want to get to know people"*.

While most veterans described an ability to restrain themselves from getting involved in violence, for some, not reacting to *plastic hardmen* had sometimes proved difficult. As a result, they had found themselves in violent altercations in which they had deployed military training to enact violence on their assailant:

Researcher: *How is prison for you?*

Participant: *It's OK, but sometimes it can get a bit hairy. Sometimes you can get idiots wanting to try and be big and tough, but they're not... there's been a few times in the past where I've used my Army training. And where I have done, I regret it.*

Researcher: *So what's happened there then?*

Participant: *People trying to attack me with knives and taking it off them. Break their arm in the process but I'm not willing to be stabbed, you know.* (Timothy)

This chapter has looked at how veteran prisoners cope with imprisonment. Many of the difficulties that veterans encountered were not unfamiliar to them. During their military service they had encountered similar hardships, corresponding with the pains of imprisonment outlined by Sykes (1958) and other scholars (Haggerty et al. 2020). They were able to manage well the institution's expectations of self-governance, with few concerns over psychological intrusiveness, and they expressed little concern over other previously identified pains such as loneliness, lack of privacy and worries about release (Flanagan 1980; Crewe 2011a; Crewe et al. 2017).

Veterans approached the difficulties encountered in prison in the same ways that they had in the military. However, some of the hardships encountered in prison manifested differently or were experienced differently due to the voluntary nature of military service and involuntary nature of imprisonment which consequently shaped how veterans perceived their confinement. These differences could make the hardships of imprisonment more difficult to endure but veterans were able to cope with these by drawing on their resilient military mind-set, reflecting similar findings by Wright et al. (2005) and Logan and Pare (2016) who found that pre-existing resilience in US veterans ameliorated the effects of the pains of imprisonment. Veterans were also able to employ their military experience to navigate the prisoner social world, where their familiarity with male-only, close-living environments helped them to establish and maintain reasonably good relations with other prisoners. This did not mean that they liked the company of other prisoners who they perceived as weak, selfish and lacking in moral worth (Higate 2003; Woodward 2003), and they held a particular dislike for certain types of prisoners, including those convicted of sex offences, drug addicts, burglars and 'plastic hardmen'. Veterans avoided these people as much as possible, preferring to spend time alone or in the company of other veterans who they felt they could relate to better, similar to the 'stoic' typology of prisoner described by Crewe (2009).

Participants' familiarity with the hardships of prison, combined with the physical and mental resilience they had gained during their time in the military, served to limit the culture shock typically encountered on entry to prison (Cohen and Taylor 1972;

Logan et al. 2020) and helped them to cope with their sentence. By and large, participants coped well and drew on their military identity and mind-set to get by. Some were evidently institutionalised and felt a certain comfort within the prison's strictly structured regime (Moran et al. 2019). However, for veteran prisoners who were used to the relatively well-organised, efficient and well-run regimes of the military, the lack of organisation, efficiency and purpose evident in the prison, coupled with concerns over staff incompetence, could be an extreme source of frustration (Crewe et al. 2011a, 2014, in press; Turner and Moran 2023). Veteran prisoners were therefore caught between familiarity and comfort of the total institutional environment on the one hand, and frustrations with the prison's inconsistent and permissive organisation and regime on the other. Nevertheless, veterans had learned to cope with this tension and therefore found that they adapted reasonably well to imprisonment.

Chapter 8: Authority and the State's Legitimacy to Punish

Authority can be defined as the legitimate use of power, typically with an unequal relationship between the power-holder and the person over whom the power is being exercised (Liebling 2011b). Legitimacy, by a similar token, can be understood as the rightful use of authority (Liebling 2011b) or the exercise of power within established rules which have a grounding in values and beliefs shared by both the dominant and the subordinate (Bottoms and Tankebe 2013; Beetham 1991; Sparks 1994). Beetham (1991) argues that legitimacy requires evidence of consent by the subordinate to the power being exercised over them, but this might not always be present in total institutions such as the prison and the military which, as Sparks points out, “operate as an autocracy within a democratic polity” (1994:15). While consent can be present in the military to a certain degree, since those joining the institution typically place themselves voluntarily under the authority of those military power-holders, Sparks (1994) points out that this is not always the case in prison. However, Crewe (2011a) asserts that power and authority in prison can be exercised to a greater degree of legitimacy through good staff-prisoner relations and treatment that is respectful and procedurally fair (see also: Liebling 2011b; Crewe et al. 2011). Veteran prisoners had particular views and attitudes towards authority in prison, how it was exercised and how they responded to it.

Ex-military prisoners held a generally positive view of authority and mainly expressed a sentiment of acceptance of authority throughout the life-course. This carried forward into prison where ex-military prisoners recognised and accepted the institution's authority over them. This typically extended to participants' acceptance of their sentence, with ex-military prisoners emphasising personal responsibility for their offence and often linking this back to a value system that derived from their military service (Logan and Pare 2016). This acceptance of their present circumstances and of the institution's authority over them generally generated compliance with prison regime (Wright et al. 2005; HMIP 2014a). This was paralleled with a recognition of state authority and of the state's legitimacy to govern and punish wrong-doing, also reflecting military values and beliefs. This was broadly consistent across the sample of participants regardless of their military service histories, offending histories or methods of discharge, including those who had been forcibly discharged from the military for misconduct.

Participants stated that their orientation to accepting authority had existed for as long as they could recall, with many reporting few problems in their childhood complying with authorities (Farrington 2005). Some of those who had grown up in children's care homes described this orientation as deriving from their experiences in these contexts. However, interviewees overwhelmingly recounted carrying over an acceptance of authority from their days of military service into later life, including the prison:

Researcher: *So you've never had any issues with authority?*

Participant: *I've never had any problem taking direct orders.* (Paul)

8.1. Authority in the military

Within the total institution, inmates might not readily accept all of the institution's rules without dissent (Sparks et al. 1996; Liebling 2011b). They might outwardly accept the authority of staff and comply with those rules necessary to avoid staff attention and disciplinary action, while simultaneously expressing resistance and defiance in other areas (Crewe 2009). Such behaviour, while contrary to the institution's formal code, might at times be tolerated or even encouraged by the authorities in what can serve as a parallel code of conduct. In military institutions this exists alongside formal institutional rules in what Hockey (1986) describes as an informal system of discipline. For example, Hockey (1986) notes that while fighting in the military is not formally permitted, it simultaneously receives tacit approval or encouragement from some institutional powerholders.

During their military service, participants had been generally accepting of military authority and compliant with the military regime. However, alongside this, participants had also ascribed to an informal code of conduct which permitted some behaviours which were culturally accepted within their military units but were also formally against the institutions' rules. For example, those who had served in fighting units such as infantry regiments more often recounted fighting and violence while in the military and considered these behaviours to be acceptable (see Hockey 1986). That is, the majority of participants had contravened military rules without considering these acts to be out of line with institutional expectations.

Most participants described having breached the formal code laid down by the military authorities, typically on multiple occasions. Most of these breaches were

considered by participants to be minor in nature, and not necessarily acts that would be considered criminal in civilian society, such as being drunk on duty, going absent without leave (AWOL) or using disrespectful language towards a superior:

I spent three weeks in a military prison in Londonderry for turning up drunk on duty. (Michael)

I went AWOL for three weeks when I came back on leave from Northern Ireland but nothing more than that, really. I was just scared to go back, you know? (Christopher)

Researcher: *Did you get in any trouble at any point?*

Participant: *Yeah. Yeah! [laughs] Err... just before we went to the Falklands we were supposed to go to the war museum in Victoria but we went on a pub crawl and we had 15 minutes. We downed 16 tequilas in 15 minutes and, err. But then it's rush hour and we all bought plastic police-mens' helmets and we were all stopping traffic in Victoria. The RPs from Chelsea barracks come down. The army police come down and threw us all in the cells... I was shitfaced and it was really starting to turn and I couldn't stand up and, err, he come and said, "get up, stand up." I said, "I can't stand up", he said- he rapped me off the wall and I seen all this blood and so I chinned him and then all these other army police come in and kicked the living fuck out of me. So, I went to Falklands under escort³² [laughs]... it was just stupid things really due to a pint. (Phillip)*

However, other behaviours were more significant and would be considered illegal in civilian society. Although to participants, these were still framed as trivial or acceptable within the informal code. Much of this related to alcohol consumption and violence (see Hockey 1986):

Researcher: *When you were in the military did you ever get in trouble?*

³² Under escort is military terminology for being transported under supervision of a guard

Participant: *Yeah! [bursts into laughter].*

Researcher: *Is that a silly question?*

Participant: *You're not a good soldier till you go to jail!*

Researcher: *So what sort of trouble were you getting into.*

Participant: *Oh, fighting, drinking, back late, just everything... then when I went to Belize it was fucking all the time. It was all the time. It was a six-month tour and it was constant. (Jonathon)*

I would always get in trouble for fighting when we was going out on the piss. All the time. But I never hit an NCO... just fighting. Just standard Army stuff. Fighting and getting pissed up and getting sick in the cab... everyone was always getting in trouble for the same sort of things. (Adrian)

Participant: *I knew the colonel very well, bless him. On a Friday I was a regular. I was up on report in front of the colonel quite a lot [bursts into laughter loudly].*

Researcher: *So did you used to get into trouble quite a lot?*

Participant: *All the time! [laughs heavily and jovially] I spent many a Christmas in the guardroom! [laughs] I was a lovable rogue!... I was a man of extreme violence, and I loved it. I loved it. Punch ups in garrisons would get you ten years out here. (Dennis)*

We'd usually have fights with other regiments. Especially in Germany. It was alright. (Phillip)

Participant: *I got in trouble a few times in the Army*

Researcher: *What was that for?*

Participant: *Fighting. I never got charged- Nothing heavy, you know. Never locked up. (Graeme)*

Despite such incidents often being considered by participants to be somewhat normal, often they led to formal disciplinary and court proceedings resulting in sentences being imposed and sometimes discharge from service:

I got in a fight with someone and then I went to Colchester [military prison] and got discharged... it was just a German. A civilian. (Adrian)

I just got drunk during a mess evening with a bunch of guys I was with [and attacked someone]. Got court martialled for it and taken to HMP Dowson, a military prison in Portsmouth. Did three months and then got discharged. (James)

While these kinds of incidents might be considered to be acceptable in some military institutions, particularly in fighting units such as the infantry, these accounts demonstrate a somewhat unconventional attitude towards authority. While engaging in behaviour that is technically prohibited by the institution, individuals remained within the unofficially accepted, informal institutional code of conduct. Furthermore, participants recognised that their culturally accepted behaviour was still officially prohibited by the institution and could still elicit formal punishment.

Notably, no participants expressed feelings of injustice or unfair treatment as a result of the punishments issued for their behaviour during their military service, even when this treatment involved a career-ending dismissal from service or being beaten up by military policemen. The prevailing narrative was one that recognised that rules are laid down by the authorities, and that, while some are culturally acceptable to break, one could not complain about the sanctions that resulted from being caught doing so, even when such sanctions were severe.

8.2. Authority in prison

Attitudes towards authority in the military were subsequently reflected in participants' lives and experiences in prison. Previous research has found varying perceptions and acceptance of authority amongst prisoners in the UK (Crewe 2011a; Sparks 1994), with Sparks et al. (1996) proposing that prisoners are more likely to be accepting of prison authority where their treatment by the institution and its staff are perceived as fair and relational, rather than overly controlling and restrictive. Furthermore, McNeill and Robinson (2011) argue that orientations towards authority can be unstable, with those subject to it constantly evaluating the validity of the authority expressed over them. With veterans, however, this did not appear to be the case. While often critical

of the ways in which authority was organised and exercised in prison – which was not always seen to be exercised fairly and respectfully – participants accepted, or at least tolerated, the authority of the prison over them and their lives regardless:

Participant: *When it comes to authority, that matters a lot. These screws telling you what to do. Telling you you've got to go behind your door, telling you you're not having any exercise. I'm used to it all aren't I...*

Researcher: *So you don't have any problem with prison authority?*

Participant: *Nah. Not one bit. I'm used to it. I just want to do my time and go home. (Owen)*

I've been taught that when there's someone in authority, like a prison officer, you accept it. I'm not going to start complaining about it. (Mark)

For some participants, this orientation towards authority originated in early life and was carried forward from childhood (Farrington 2005), into both the military and the prison system. This was especially the case amongst those participants who had grown up in care homes, like Lee who recalled: *"I grew up in care. In a children's home. So my life was always kind of regimented and in a set down way and then I joined the army at sixteen and, obviously it's the same"*.

Others recounted problematic behaviour in school and home during their childhoods but framed these mostly as pranks and mischief, rather than direct challenges to authority figures such as teachers. Martin's example was not atypical: *"I wasn't the best behaved... I got suspended once because we let off fireworks in the school... It was more like mischief really"*. Farrington (2005) outlines the link between attitudes and behaviours towards authority in younger life and those in adult life, arguing that adult delinquency is heavily influenced by several childhood factors. Participants in this study described many of these childhood risk factors in their own life narratives, including poverty, low educational attainment, parental neglect and parental abuse and, while participants often framed delinquent childhood behaviour as trivial, for some it had resulted in involvement with the criminal justice system:

Yeah, we'd get in trouble with the police a few times but not a great deal... Fighting, smashing windows, fucking vandalism. Things like that. That was it. (Jonathon)

Yeah, I had issues with the police from a young age. Nicking motorbikes. Just for boy things really. Nothing major. (Karl)

Despite narratives detailing disruptive behaviour in childhood and early life, for most interviewees, this period in life was not characterised by opposition to established authority and disruptive behaviour. Of those who had experienced such behaviour, the dominant theme was one of breaking school rules and engaging in low level criminal offending such as fighting, theft and vandalism without necessarily directly challenging authority.

For some participants, disruptive behaviour in early life had actually spurred their decision to join the military and direct their behaviour away from petty criminality:

Researcher: Were you ever in trouble as a kid?

Participant: Oh yeah. Just minor things. Well, I say minor things, assault, robbery. Stupid little things. Not going to school. Breaking into people's shops. Things like that. It was a case of if I don't join the Army, I'm going to end up in the prison system. And just thought, you know what, I'm tired of this. Join the army. (Anthony)

While early life experiences of and attitudes towards authority undoubtedly had a bearing on later attitudes, for most participants the acceptance of authority was largely attributed to the enduring impact of military service, generating a willingness to follow rules and regime (Logan and Pare 2016):

I haven't got a problem with national authority, see... Maybe I don't agree with everything that goes on and that but it's rules isn't it. I'm used to rules. I'm used to being told what to do and that. That's what the Army's helped me a lot with. I'm used to being told what to do. Do this, do that. (Owen)

Because of the training. It's still there in the background. Some of these, they want to argue and stuff like that. But if you've been in the military... you don't argue. You know, you can't afford to argue can you? You'll get your arse kicked in. So they've been through that. So they all get it... whatever you think stays in your head doesn't it. (Simon)

Researcher: *How do you feel about prison authority?*

Participant: *You've just got to accept it. In the Army they've got power over you. In the prison they've got power over you. I don't see any difference. It's just the same. You've got to respect that. (Timothy)*

While authority in prison was accepted and considered legitimate by veterans, it was not generally welcomed. As Christopher explained: *"I've had it all my life... with staff and all that, if they're telling me to do something. If I don't like it, it's the same as in the Army. Alright I don't like it, but I'll do it. That's my attitude"*. Christopher's conditioning in the military had left him with a lasting attitude in which state authorities such as the prison were considered to be legitimate and whose directions were complied with, even when he did not agree with them (Sparks 1994; Beetham 1991; Crewe 2011a). Participants did not question the legitimacy of the prison's authority, and seemingly took it for granted, perhaps due to having previously been part of the state apparatus in the military and, for many, in positions of power and authority (as NCOs, for example).

Veteran prisoners' begrudging acceptance of authority often manifested as resignation:

A lot of the lads get angry and stuff like that, whereas I don't. They all say to me, "I can't understand how you're so calm and quiet and nice." I say, "well, you're in prison. Is there anything you can do about it? There isn't. So why worry about it? There's nothing you can do about it. So just do your sentence and do what they want you to do". (Thomas)

There were some notable exceptions to this theme, with some participants indicating that having an authority overseeing them was not particularly troubling for them and

was easy to work under. A level of familiarity with authoritative environments was considered helpful in this regard:

Researcher: *So how do you feel about the prison having authority over you and having power over you?*

Participant: *Well in the forces you've got to do as you're told otherwise it's just not going to work [laughs]. So again, I fall back on the forces. They're the ones in charge and I'm just the lower ranking one so you just go with the flow, do what you're supposed to do. (Thomas)*

Prison's alright. That doesn't affect me really. Obviously if you do certain things it affects you like, obviously, there are people here that do drugs and are in debt to a lot of people. But I don't drink, smoke, nothing. I don't get myself in bother with things like that. So I stay away so otherwise it's alright. It's - how can I say it? It's prison isn't it? It's not supposed to be nice. (Martin)

Others went as far as to say that they believed they actively needed forms of authority in their life:

Researcher: *How do you feel about the prison having power over you?*

Participant: *Well, you have to get used to it... I cannot choose which way I turn. Maybe that's good for me. Maybe I needed a good slap. I don't know. (Matthew)*

An acceptance of authority established or entrenched in the military translated into an acceptance of authority in the prison, characterised by a comfort with, an acceptance of and in some cases a need for an authority governing veterans' lives.

8.3. Acceptance of sentence and compliance with regime

Participants described a prevailing culture in the military that demanded a high degree of personal responsibility, where failure to adhere to institutional rules invariably led to punishment which had to be borne, regardless of mitigation or excuse (Beevor 1990). Participants recounted how military culture allowed little room for wrong-doing,

contravention of the rules or simply errors, and how proscribed behaviour was punished without exception (Hockey 1986; Siebold 2007). This previous experience formed the basis for values relating to the acceptance of punishment which translated into an overwhelming acceptance of one's sentence. This, combined with interviewees' established acceptance of authority, brought with it a belief that any acts against formal rules or laws required a corresponding punishment from the authorities. Anything less than a strong punishment was considered to be weak, permissive and irresponsible. It followed, then, that these beliefs and their previous experiences of living within structured and disciplined military regimes, resulted in a broad compliance with the prison regime, as noted in previous research (see: Logan and Pare 2016; Wright et al. 2005). The main exceptions to this compliance centred around behaviours that, while technically in breach of prison rules, were believed to fall within the informally accepted code of conduct for prisoners, namely the resolution of interpersonal conflict through violence (Crewe 2009; Hockey 1986).

8.3.1. Personal responsibility and just deserts

With a general acceptance of authority, veterans placed a high emphasis on the need for individuals to take personal responsibility for their actions, in particular those which had led to their imprisonment. They subscribed to a normative belief that criminal offending was unacceptable and deserved to be punished, with the state being the rightful and legitimate instrument of authority to administer such punishments (Bottoms and Tankebe 2013; Beetham 1991). As a consequence, veterans largely displayed an acceptance of their sentence as just punishment for the offences they had committed (Logan and Pare 2016):

Participant: I've done wrong. This is what they done to me so, as the paperwork says, I'm getting punished.

Researcher: So you just accept it?

Participant: I just accept it. Do the time and then get out and carry on with my life again. (Jonathon)

Researcher: Do you think it's fair that you're here?

Participant: Yes. Yes, because I've done what I did. I regret what I did but I can't turn back the clock. And I can't take back the damage that's

been done... if you do a crime then you've got to do the time... You've got to respect the law. (Timothy)

Researcher: *Do you think it's fair that you're in prison?*

Participant: *Yes, I do actually, yes. Oh yeah. I've got no quibs about being in prison. I've done what I've done. There are always reasons for these things. But I've done what I've done and I've been punished for it. (Thomas)*

Indeed, this recurring belief that punishment was necessary to address wrong-doing manifested in an over-riding belief that those who contravene the law *deserved* to be punished, regardless of motive:

I deserve to be here for what I've done. It's as simple as that. I'm totally responsible for my actions and I deserve to be punished. It's as simple as that. (Anthony)

Researcher: *Do you think you should be in prison?*

Participant: *I deserve every last day I get in here. I've done wrong, I've got to be in here. (Kevin)*

I've got to do my sentence. I made a mistake. I deserve what I got. So, I'm paying my price. (Christopher)

Likewise, even where a participant felt that their particular offence should not be considered criminal, there was still an evident acceptance of the resulting sanction:

Participant: *The drinking got worse and took hold of me. Then I got in trouble with it and ended up in prison with it. Fighting with other blokes again. I never gone down the road of being a criminal- I know I'm classed as a criminal but I don't think of fighting as criminal. With an Irish upbringing, fights are just normal but in the eyes of the law it's a big thing.*

Researcher: *So what was your offence?*

Participant: *ABH. It involved drink. It was my fault (Karl)*

The language used by veterans in such statements suggested a somewhat macho form of acceptance, implying that to accept one's sentence and get on with it was a marker of masculinity. They evidently held a clear respect for the law and for legal authorities, expressing a normative acceptance of authority (Bottoms and Tankebe 2013).

Veterans therefore held the unequivocal notion that regardless of circumstances, if someone commits an offence they are the sole person at fault for their actions and they must accept the consequences: *"If anyone comes to prison, it's their fault... It's like- I fucked up"* (Phillip). As Kevin also explained, *"Prison's not designed to be easy. If you don't like it, don't break the law. That's the way I think of it"*.

With punishment considered a necessary response to a criminal offence to ensure deterrence, alternative responses were often dismissed out of hand or derided as weak and permissive. Even when participants recognised that a sentence might have little purpose beyond punishment, they still regarded it as a just response to a legal breach. This view, which reflected the conservative attitudes towards authority held in military culture (Kirche 2009; Hockey 1986), prevailed even amongst those serving long prison sentences, such as Peter: *"Obviously I don't want to be here but I understand why I'm in here and I'm not denying the fact that what I did was wrong... I don't think it's doing me any good. I don't think- It's not going to change me from what I was before to what it is now but I understand that I've got to be punished"*.

8.3.2. Compliance with regime

A familiarity with structured and ordered regimes from previous military service, along with an acceptance of authority and accompanying willingness to follow rules and regulations appeared to be the main bases of compliance with the prison regime:

Researcher: *So you see similarities in how you cope with it and how you conduct yourself?*

Participant: *I'm on my 11th year now. I haven't had one negative IEP against me. Never been in any trouble with any staff. They're only doing their job. I just take it and get on with it. When you're in the Army you're always told what to do. You just flow with it. If someone tells you what to*

do, you just flow with it. You're conditioned to it and it sticks with you. It's something that never leaves. (Christopher)

I've never had any fights. Never had any trouble or anything like that. (Mark)

In some cases, participants described their compliance with considerable pride, resembling those prisoners described as 'enthusiast' in Crewe's (2009) typologies of prisoners:

My prison record's been excellent so I've had no issues. I've followed what they've told me to do. I've followed the regime which is how I got here [privileged wing of the prison], basically. (Lee)

I've never been disciplined. If someone tells me to do something, I'll do it. If I'm told to go behind my door, I'll go behind my door. (Kevin)

Interviewees invariably accounted for their willingness to comply by invoking their experience of military service, which had evidently conditioned them to obeying authority:

I think the military has helped. With discipline, and with taking orders. When they say, go back to your cell, you see people wandering around and that, whereas I'll just go straight back. (Stuart)

An officer tells me to do something, I've had it all my life. Since I was 18. I don't have to fight with staff and all that, if they're telling me to do something... alright I don't like it, but I'll do it. [unintelligible] but I'm not going to get in trouble for it am I? That's my attitude. (Christopher)

Participants – like Christopher – distinguished their attitude towards compliance with that of other prisoners, for example: *"I think they [staff] know that if they talk to you, they're going to get respect back. I think there are so many little scotes- when they*

talk to them it's, 'oh, you're always picking on me', but you don't get that from an ex-squaddy. An ex-squaddy says, 'oh right boss' and off he goes".

Some participants qualified their acceptance of authority with exceptions that were formally against the institutional rules but which they considered acceptable within the prisoner normative system (Crewe 2009). This behaviour most frequently took the form of inter-personal violence amongst prisoners, and reflected a similar culture in the military (Hockey 1986):

I've had two nickings on this sentence. The first was when I had a fight in [other prison]. (Paul)

Participant: I like being beasted. That's why I like fighting and stuff. How can I put it? When you take a good pasting, or when you get battered to within an inch of your life, that makes you feel alive. Or knowing that the person you're punching is trying to take your head off, that makes you feel alive. And that's why I joined the army...

Researcher: Do you get in trouble for fighting in prisons?

Participant: Depends if you're caught. You'd think with the cameras and how open it is that you couldn't fight but there's plenty of places. You can go in a cell on association when it's really noisy. (Adrian)

8.4. The legitimacy of the state

As discussed above, legitimacy is the rightful use of power or authority within established rules based on shared and accepted values and beliefs (Liebling 2011b; Bottoms and Tankebe 2013; Beetham 1991; Sparks 1994). Veterans believed in the state as the rightful holder of power and authority over its citizens and therefore believed the state to be the agent responsible for the policing of society and the enforcement of its rules and laws, including the punishment of those who break them.

In line with their discourse of personal responsibility and their beliefs in the state's legitimacy, participants mostly contended that they did not feel in any way let down or betrayed by the state:

Researcher: Do you feel let down at all, either by the military or the country?"

Participant: *"Nah. I've always said that everything I do is on my own back. I make my own decisions and I made those decisions and I ended up here. (Graeme)*

This echoes previous findings based on research with veterans in the US justice system, which identified links between a veteran identity and state legal legitimacy (Gallagher 2016). In fact, many veterans in this study felt that they had let down their country as well as themselves:

Researcher: *Do you think it's fair that you're here?*

Participant: *Yeah, because I took a life. I've got to pay the penalty... I wish I could turn back the clock but I can't do that.*

Researcher: *How do you feel about the state? Do you feel in any way betrayed or abandoned?*

Participant: *Because I'm in prison? No. No, I brought this on myself. I can't blame anyone for it. It won't do me any good blaming anyone for it. I can't blame the military, I can't blame the drink. Nobody forced me to drink. I can't blame the country for giving me a sentence. I wouldn't do. It's a lovely country. I'm a royalist through and through. I support the royal family and everything. When I joined the military I signed up for Queen and country and I still feel the same even though I'm out of the military. I used to go to remembrance days every year in [home city]. When I'm out and back in [home city], I'll still do the same thing. I'll still go to Remembrance days.*

Researcher: *So you were patriotic all through your life and coming to prison hasn't changed that?*

Participant: *No, and that won't change. (Christopher)*

While the majority of interviewees did not feel let down by the state, with some expressing patriotic sentiment and citing support for the British monarchy, there were some notable exceptions. Some participants felt that they had been let down by the state following their military service and prior to being imprisoned (Ashcroft 2014):

Researcher: *How do you feel about the state? Being imprisoned by the state?*

Participant: *I'm not angry about having to pay for my crimes. I was very angry a long time ago that I was in that position and just felt I've been let down a bit by the army, after I left.*

Researcher: *Why was that?*

Participant: *I just felt, 'hang on a minute', you know, my formative years I've given to the military and there was no help back then, as such. There was no help for heroes. There was none of these charities. It wasn't a big thing to help soldiers then. So I felt very let down by it. (Lee)*

When I got kicked out of the army, that was like the second time in my life that I found that it's hurting. Abandoned. My family have kicked me out again. (Dennis)

Some participants contended that the state not only let down ex-military persons or failed them following discharge from service but that it actively discriminated against them, especially within the criminal justice system and the courts (Ashcroft 2014). This lends weight to claims by Cooper (2018) that some veteran offenders may be considered higher risk by the criminal justice system simply as a consequence of the skills they are assumed to have gained during their military service, which could be employed in criminal behaviour. For example, Adrian described his experience of perceived discrimination by the justice system as follows: *"I joined to keep me out of trouble but it kind of works against you. If you go to court outside for fighting, as soon as they know you've been in the Army, that's it. There's no- it's twice as bad when you go to court"*.

Some participants also subsequently felt let down by the state due to being imprisoned and felt that the state should be doing more to help imprisoned veterans:

Researcher: *What do you think about your country now?*

Participant: *It's alright. I feel like I've been let down a bit. (Owen)*

In some cases, participants described feelings of betrayal by the state that they felt they had loyally served during their time in the military, believing that military service

entitled them to better treatment than had been received. This was sometimes accompanied by anti-patriotic sentiment deriving from feelings of disappointment and betrayal:

Researcher: *What do you think about the country? Having left the military and then come into prison?*

Participant: *I've been Queen and Country all my life. First office I had, I had a picture of the Queen on the wall. I'd stand up for the National Anthem, listen to the Queen's speech every year. This has made me a criminal. I have absolutely no loyalty to my country now... really, it's gone. I feel betrayed.*

Researcher: *Betrayed by your country?*

Participant: *Yes....so it's undone all the childhood conditioning. Your belief in Queen and Country. It's gone. It's kind of sad but maybe it's realistic. That's how it really is and you were a fool to ever think otherwise. (Matthew)*

Researcher: *How do you feel about the state? About your country now?*

Participant: *I'll be very honest here. I've been in the forces and I said to my brother a few months back, "you know when I was in the forces, I was a dedicated person. I was there, I would have fought and died for my country." I said, "If it was today, I wouldn't. There is no way I would sign up today to fight for this country because it's gone to rack and ruin.*

Researcher: *So, you feel like your loyalty to your country has gone now?*

Participant: *I would say yes. Yeah, I would say yes. (Thomas)*

However, despite such feelings of betrayal, most participants did not believe that military service should lead to favourable treatment by the state, as Karl enthusiastically asserted: *"You're not given the right not to come to prison just because you were in the military. If you do something wrong and break the law then you come to prison"*. This sentiment of acceptance and compliance, with no expectation of favourable treatment typified the majority of veteran prisoners' views overall.

This chapter has explored the broadly positive attitudes veteran prisoners held towards authority, both in their lives prior to prison and while in prison. Veteran prisoners often held pro-authority views from younger life (Farrington 2005) which for many had become embedded during the socialisation and conditioning that had taken place during their military service and which had embedded a particular military identity and mind-set (Matthews 2009; Hall 2010; Firmin et al. 2016). The values, norms and ethos accompanying this identity included a belief in the legitimacy of the state as the authoritative body vested with the rightful power - and indeed the responsibility – to punish criminal behaviour and, by extension, govern their current lives in prison (Bottoms and Tankebe 2013; Beetham 1991; Liebling 2011b).

These pro-authority attitudes had not waned following their service and continued to resonate through their post-military lives into the prison where they aided veterans in living within the bounds of the somewhat familiar regime (Logan and Pare 2016; Brooke 2018). Participants emphasised the importance of personal responsibility for one's actions and the necessity of punishing every violation of institutional rules, values which derived from their military service (Higate 2003; Hockey 1986). Similar to the military, certain formal rules could be broken where considered acceptable by the institution's informal code and as long as one accepted, without complaint, any sanction that might derive from this (Hockey 1986).

Participants accepted personal responsibility for their offences and for their current predicaments in prison, with an overwhelming insistence that the military was in no way responsible, even where there did seem to be indirect links. Echoing findings from Logan and Pare (2016) and tentative findings from HMIP (2014a), this sense of personal responsibility, combined with a broader acceptance of authority, generated a high compliance with the prison regime (see also: Brooke 2018). This compliance in turn allowed veterans to operate more comfortably within the bounds of the institution's regime and to build and maintain positive relationships with staff (Turner and Moran 2023; HMIP 2014a). This made for a smoother experience of imprisonment with less tension and conflict with those holding power and authority and it ultimately helped them to cope with the experience of imprisonment (Logan et al. 2020). Correspondingly, veterans held a firm belief in the state's legitimacy to govern and to punish violations of the state's laws and rules and they mostly did not feel let down by the state for their being in prison (Howard League 2011; Ashcroft 2014). Conversely, veteran prisoners often felt that they had let down the state, their military family and

themselves feeling, as a result, disappointed, embarrassed and ashamed of themselves for their present circumstances as prisoners.

Chapter 9: Services, Treatment and Staff Relations

Little research has been conducted into the specific needs of veterans in prison, but some findings have indicated that these might be different from other prisoners (Phillips 2014; Yerramsetti et al. 2017; Slattery et al. 2013; Burke et al. 2019). Lyne and Packham (2014) found that while many prisons provided services that were tailored to ex-military personnel (e.g. PTSD treatment and post-release resettlement support), knowledge and awareness of these services was low and therefore relatively few of those people eligible accessed the support available. Likewise, limited research has been conducted into relationships between prison staff and veteran prisoners. However, some limited findings do suggest that veteran prisoners might find little difficulty in developing and maintaining productive relationships with prison staff (HMIP 2014; Turner and Moran 2023). They also suggest that veteran prisoners might also perceive ex-military staff more favourably and be more inclined to develop and maintain productive relationships with them (Packham 2013; Howard League 2011).

This chapter explores the treatment of veterans in prison and analyses how veteran status can sometimes elicit favourable (but also occasionally unfavourable) treatment from prison staff. It then describes the relationships between veteran prisoners and prison staff, exploring their generally positive views and relationships, alongside some of their frustrations with less experienced staff. It reveals a clear preference amongst veteran prisoners for veteran staff members who they believed to be more professional, caring and consistent in their approach to their work with prisoners and with whom they sometimes felt a military bond. It ends with a look at the services available to veterans in prison and how veterans engaged with these services, as well as considering how veterans felt about such treatment and services.

9.1. Treatment of veteran prisoners

While a large proportion of those interviewed reported that they had not received favourable treatment as a result of previous military service, a minority claimed that they both received and deserved preferential treatment, due to their previous service and sacrifice:

Participant: *If you're ex-military, they help you that little bit extra, these ex-military staff... you do get these little perks, which is good.*

Researcher: *And that's just because you're ex-military?*

Participant: *Yeah. We deserve it though. We deserve that little bit of a perk and that little bit of a, you know, bit of leeway. We deserve it.*

Researcher: *Because of your service?*

Participant: *Not just- Yeah. You know, we deserve it. We've done everything. I went out to Afghan, I went to Iraq. I could have been killed for this country. Didn't deserve it. Wasn't on top wages were we?! Shit wages. Even when I was out there I was still paying for my room in London. We deserve them little things. (Owen)*

Participants perceived favourable treatment mostly in the form of elevated levels of respect by staff. In their research with ex-military prison staff, Moran and Turner (2022b) found that personnel sometimes provided additional help and support to veteran prisoners out of a feeling of obligation and respect for their status as veterans. This favourable treatment was evident in interviews with participants in this study who recounted receiving greater respect from prison staff. This was exhibited by use of prisoners' first names and communication styles adopted when passing instructions, processing 'applications', and the allocation of desirable jobs. Owen explained how this worked in practice and how it was received by other prisoners: *"There's a big officer called Smith, ex-Black Watch³³. When I got down the laundry he goes, 'are you ex-army' and that. I said 'yeah, Paras' and he says 'right I've got a top job for you'. And caused a big fuss because you're supposed to have been on the wing for three months and I'd only been there three days but Mr. Smith had put a word in for me"*. As suggested in Owen's account, such favourable treatment was often provided by ex-military staff members:

Researcher: *Do you think that ex-military prisoners are recognised by staff?*

Participant: *I'd say more so by ex-forces officers than the others. Definitely. I wouldn't say- I'd say a lot of officers just see everybody as a*

³³ Black Watch is a Scottish infantry regiment of the British Army.

prisoner. Simple as that. But maybe, in my experience, if they're ex-forces, you'd get a little bit more respect out of them.

Researcher: *How does that work?*

Participant: *Well basically, you're getting a straight answer, you're not getting fobbed off, basically. If you go into the office and you ask for something... they don't give a monkeys really, half of them. But I know there's a few ex-forces in here who I know would give you a straight answer. 'OK Lee', bang. Done. And that's another thing, ex-forces officers generally call me by my first name. (Lee)*

In addition to elevated respect, veteran staff were also said to have a greater understanding of the needs of veteran prisoners and were more willing to sit down and listen to them, and then help them to work through problems they were encountering. This supports findings by Moran and Turner (2022b) who found more professional and compassionate attitudes amongst veteran prison staff and also Gade and Wilkins (2013) who found that veterans perceived substantial differences in staff behaviours and higher levels of satisfaction if their rehabilitation counsellor was known to also be a veteran (see also: Desai et al. 2021; Iverson and Greenberg 2009):

Researcher: *...and what about ex-military staff?*

Participant: *They treat me better.*

Researcher: *Do they?*

Participant: *Yeah, they treat me differently than the staff that are not ex-services. I don't know why that is. I think it's because they know the way that my mind is. Because they've been through it. They've seen it. They take a little bit more time to talk to you. If you've got a problem, they'll sit down and listen to you and they'll try to work that problem out for you. (Timothy)*

While the majority of favourable treatment involved ex-military prison staff, participants also recounted favourable treatment from staff who were not ex-military, as Peter recounted: *"They do seem to help you out a lot more than they would do anybody else... they would go out of their way from what they would do normally... I think it's*

like they feel that they have to. That it's something that they should do. Not all of them do because some just think that you're a prisoner".

Favourable treatment was often believed to result not simply from military service, as such, but as a certain kind of behavioural sensibility which derived from the military, characterised by respect for staff, reliability, obedience to authority and compliance with regime (Howard League 2011). This supports previous findings by Logan and Pare (2016) who found that veterans' previous military service reduced the likelihood of conflict with those in positions of authority (see also: Brooke 2018). This aided veterans in developing and maintaining positive relationships with staff which, to them, justified favourable treatment:

Researcher: *Is there still any of that preferential treatment today?*

Participant: *Oh, absolutely. It's even better now... You automatically get trust. Because you're ex-Royal Navy they know that you're not going to lie, you're not going to cheat, you're going to act reasonable because you had discipline to start with. (Richard)*

The ex-Army lads are more disciplined, even in jail. The majority of people I've met, ex-military, have been more disciplined and respectful to the staff. And because of that respect, I think the staff give you that respect back. (Edward)

Researcher: *"Do staff treat you any differently in here because of it [military service]?"*

Participant: *"Not really. They might be more likely to give you a good job or something but no more than that."*

Researcher: *"Why do you think that is?"*

Participant: *"Because they know that you're ex-military and you're going to do a good job." (Paul)*

However, not all veteran prisoners felt that they had received favourable treatment as a result of their previous military service, with Jeffrey arguing that: *"Staff recognise it but they're not interested. They might know that you're ex-forces but they never ask about it. They never talk about it, unless you get an ex-forces officer".*

Indeed, some participants felt that they had been subjected to worse or stricter treatment owing to the fact that staff expected them to adhere to higher standards of behaviour than other prisoners, as a result of their military experience (Moran and Turner 2022b):

Researcher: *And do they [ex-military staff] treat you any differently?*

Participant: *They can be a bit stricter with you, I think.*

Researcher: *Really? Why do you think that is?*

Participant: *Well, they have something in common with us, but then on the other side of the coin, they must look down at us and think, 'you know what? What a complete waste of space you lot are'. (Kevin)*

This, however, was not universal with most participants having positive experiences of how veteran prison staff treated them and other prisoners. In their research with prison officers, Moran and Turner reported ex-military prison officers “treating others decently whilst having a good sense of discipline and fairness... a certain degree of confidence... [which] in turn enabled ‘order’ to be kept through engendering respect, and without use of the physical prowess” (2022b:409). Similar to Moran and Turner (2022b), participants in this study found ex-military staff to be on the whole more professional, believing them to be less averse to confrontation, and more helpful and more caring to those under their charge, as Thomas had experienced: *“I think they're [ex-military staff] more helpful to everybody. Yeah, I think they're more helpful to everybody. They seem to be more understanding”*.

9.2. Relations with staff

Perceptions of prison staff amongst ex-military prisoners were mixed. Most respected authority-holders in general (see: HMIP 2014a; Logan and Pare 2016), and described having generally positive relationships with prison staff (Brooke 2018):

I don't have a problem with discipline or anything like that. I respect all the officers. (Andrew)

I've had no problem with staff. (Paul)

Participants understood that staff had a difficult job to do, often sympathising with their position and accepting that this could sometimes result in undesirable behaviour towards prisoners:

Researcher: *And how do you find the staff to be in here and other prisons you've been in?*

Participant: *Brilliant, yeah. No problems. 99.9% of the staff in here are OK. You're always going to get the odd one but that's life isn't it. They're just doing their job. They're just trying to pay their bills and they don't deserve to be treated the way they get treated out there. (Kevin)*

These officers are just human beings as well and sometimes things will annoy them and get them angry and stressed out. (Lee)

As a result of the relatively positive perceptions of staff and an acceptance of their position, participants described broadly positive relations with prison staff, reflecting similar findings by Turner and Moran (2023) on perceptions and relationships with prison staff (see also: Brooke 2018). At their worst, relations were described as neutral, with very few of those interviewed reporting negative relationships with staff:

Researcher: *How do you find your relationships with the staff in here?*

Participant: *Fine. I'm polite to them and they're polite to me, most of them. I've never had a run in with any of them. (Karl)*

Researcher: *How do you get on with staff?*

Participant: *If their attitude is alright then I'm fine. They'll [the staff] back me up on that. I'm reliant, respectful and compliant. (Shaun)*

In some cases, though, participants described a more transactional approach to relations with staff, engaging with them only when necessary:

Researcher: *What about staff? Do you generally get on with staff?*

Participant: *I speak to them if I have to get something but I won't stand there and have a conversation with them. (Martin)*

Researcher: *How do you get on with staff?*

Participant: *I get on alright with them. I have minimal contact with them. I only talk to them when I need something. (Shaun)*

This patience and acceptance, however, was by no means universal. As highlighted by Crewe et al. (2014), some participants believed that some staff engaged in disrespectful practice, such as lying or bullying, and abused their power:

Researcher: *“What about staff? Do you get on with staff?”*

Participant: *Staff? Alright. One or two of them. A couple of them are, what can I say, a couple of them are alright, a couple of them are on power trips. They have a thing, authority over you and they just get a bit carried away. I don't really give a reply back. Like a cheeky comment, it doesn't really affect me. I just walk off... Half of them will get rude to you... But for them it's like a power thing. (Martin)*

Relationships between staff and prisoners were dependent on mutually respectful behaviour, facilitated by a certain predisposition for discipline and respect (Moran et al. 2019). James described his quid pro quo relationship with staff and his dislike for disingenuous behaviour: *“If they're alright with me, I'm alright with them. I don't like the officers that bully you or lie to you”*. Maintaining personal discipline and treating staff with respect was key to maintaining productive relationships with staff, and this came somewhat naturally to veterans (Moran et al. 2019):

Researcher: *So, it's shared history?*

Participant: *Yeah. It's that the ex-Army lads are more disciplined, even in jail. The majority of people I've met, ex-military, have been more disciplined and respectful to the staff. And because of that respect, I think the staff give you that respect back. (Edward)*

It was also felt that the attitudes towards staff and the predisposition for amicable relationships with prison staff was largely a result of values, attitudes and behaviours carried over from previous military service, similar to those identified by Moran et al.

(2019) as being carried over by ex-military staff. For some, positive relationships with staff were a source of pride:

The staff are fantastic. I've never had an argument with a member of staff, I don't think. There have been a couple of times when I've thought, "oh, that's a bit strong isn't it?" but then you just walk away and come back ten minutes later and everything's chilled out. (Edward)

I'm always polite. Officers always say, 'I wish everyone was like you'... All the staff I get on with. They seem to all know me. (Stuart)

Even with members of staff who were found to be difficult to get along with, for example where they were considered untrustworthy, veterans reported being able to maintain good relationships:

Researcher: *How do you get on with staff in here?*

Participant: *Alright with staff. Yeah. Even with those that I don't trust, I'm still fine with them. Very respectful. I'm not a troublemaker. I never have been, ever in my life. (Simon)*

Yet many participants expressed reservations about the extent to which they could trust staff, based on concerns about their levels of training and professionalism. These views were framed by past experiences in the military and participants regularly compared the conduct of prison officers to that of their previous NCOs in the military. All recounted that staff in military institutions had been considerably more caring, trustworthy and professional than prison staff in undertaking their duties and, consequently, were more deserving of respect (Packham 2013):

I respected the guys [NCOs] in the military, whereas the people in here, they may have had a couple of weeks training or a month training and then been here five months and now they're in charge of your life. I don't think they command the respect that I had for the COs and the NCOs in the military. A lot of these people are like six months in and you've got

some woman of 21 telling you how to run your life. Alright you're a prison officer but I don't really respect you, as such. (James)

This gave rise to a clear preference for veteran prison staff who were believed to have carried forward positive traits, values and characteristics from their previous military service, as previously identified by Moran et al. (2019). Veteran prisoners therefore felt that members of prison staff who had a military background were more reliable, trustworthy and professional than those who did not (Turner and Moran 2023; Moran and Turner 2022b). This resonates with previous observations by Gade et al. (2013) who found a preference for veteran support worker staff in a vocational rehabilitation support programme, due to perceived differences in behaviours. Participants claimed that they could identify such staff based on the ways they presented themselves, spoke to others and interacted with confidence, which was considered to show an overall degree of competence and professionalism:

Researcher: Do you see any similarities between NCOs in the military and staff in the prison?

Participant: Not really, as such. There are some ex-forces officers in here, actually. You can sort of tell. The way they are and the way they talk. That sort of thing. You can sort of tell.... They're more aware and things like that. (Stuart)

Researcher: Can you tell the difference between ex-military staff and non-ex-military staff?

Participant: Yeah. Straight away.

Researcher: How do you see that?

Participant: The way they are. The way they talk to you. If a screw says scoff³⁴, you're like ex-army. Right, I'm on him. Just little words. How they conduct themselves, you know who's who. You just look down on their shoes. You just look at them. He's ex-army he's got nice shoes, he's presentable, his shirt's tucked in. You know right away. I always look for the little badge, shoes. (Owen)

³⁴ "Scoff" is military slang for food or a meal.

Compared to prison staff with military backgrounds, non-veteran prison staff were perceived to be less relaxed, to have less developed people skills, and to be less professional:

Participant: *For a lot of the staff who have never been in the forces, it's just a job to them. It pays the bills. And so they're always like 'well, I'm only here until my time's up and then I can clock off'.*

Researcher: *So the ex-forces staff seem to be-*

Participant: *They seem to help you more, I think. More professional and know what they're doing. It's not just a job to them, it's a career.*
(Thomas)

[Staff with military backgrounds are] more positive. Certainly the ones I've met. They're much more positive. They want to be involved with you, they want to know you and they actually take extra steps. (Hamish)

These skills included an ability to handle well the day-to-day stresses and demands of the role and to remain calm in the face of challenging situations. These attitudes were often described in terms of self-confidence and security in oneself and one's role (Moran and Turner 2022b; Turner and Moran 2023). Tankebe refers to this as self-legitimacy, that is "power-holders' self-confidence in the moral validity of their own claims to power" (2014). The confidence brought by this self-legitimacy resulted in a reliability in the treatment of prisoners which participants perceived to be more consistent and less authoritarian, in line with Crewe et al.'s (2014) typology of the 'traditional-professional' prison officer:

I just think that the ex-forces officers can deal with it a lot better... They're a lot more relaxed in what they're doing and they seem to deal with the pressures a bit better, I'd say. (Lee)

Participant: *They've [ex-military staff] got nothing to prove. They've been there and done that. They don't need to start banging on and shouting and getting you running around like an idiot, you know?*

Researcher: *So you think they operate a bit differently?*

Participant: *Hell yes. I think they do. You know where you stand with them.*

Participants also considered ex-military staff to be more caring, understanding and helpful towards prisoners than non-veteran prison staff, echoing similar sentiments found amongst veteran prison officers found by Moran and Turner (2022b):

I think they're more helpful to everybody. Yeah, I think they're more helpful to everybody. They seem to be more understanding. (Thomas)

Researcher: *Do you see any difference between ex-military staff and non-ex-military staff?*

Participant: *A lot of the staff who I know are ex-military, the majority of them, they try and help people. Not just ex-military prisoners, but others. They have a different outlook, a different view on things compared to ones who have just left school and haven't had any life experience. (William)*

Researcher: *Do you see a difference between ex-military staff and non-ex-military?*

Participant: *Yeah, the ex-military staff do have a bit more leniency and little bit more help towards you. (Mark)*

Consistency of treatment – ‘knowing where you stand’ – was mentioned repeatedly in discussions about staff, and ex-military staff in particular (Crewe et al. 2014; Crewe and Levins 2021). Participants valued certainty, rather than ambiguity, and regarded ex-military prison staff as more likely to provide this, echoing findings from Turner and Moran (2023) (see also: Tait 2011):

Participant: *Some of them shouldn't be officers. Some should, yes. There are ex-military who have had one or two stripes, or even three stripes or more and you know immediately. You've got that feeling.*

There's one person here, an ex-Red Cap³⁵. Brilliant. Absolutely brilliant. You know where you are with him. There's no- you're either doing right or you're doing wrong and that is brilliant. You don't have to tread on eggshells. You can just go up and say things to him and you're just, 'yep, OK'. You might not like it, but you'll accept it and he'll look into it. But if you try and bullshit him, he'll give you a verbal slap down.

Researcher: *And do you think that's because he's ex-military?*

Participant: *Yes. Without a shadow of a doubt.* (Jack)

Ex-military staff were also said to be less likely to resort to the use of force or formal sanctions, and more likely to resolve problems through communication and negotiation, while projecting a calm, confident and capable demeanour. This follows similar findings by Moran and Turner (2022b) and has been identified by Crewe et al. (2014) as crucial to effective prison work and positive prisoner experiences:

Participant: *You know that they are confident people. They might not be. They might be bricking themselves but, because they're calm, cool and collected, they're not going to wade in and give adjudications left, right and centre. But if they say something, you're going to respond to it because of that demeanour.*

Researcher: *So that compares to non-ex-military staff because they're more likely to give formal sanctions?*

Participant: *They [ex-military staff] will resolve it verbally whereas the others, it's all paperwork. I think, because they've been through it in the army with squaddies trying to pull one over on them, they know we're kids but they make allowances for it. So I think they make better officers.* (Christopher)

Researcher: *Do you see any differences in staff members who are ex-forces and those that aren't?*

³⁵ Red-Cap is the slang term used for a member of the Royal Military Police, in reference to their wearing of a distinctive red beret.

Participant: *[Ex-military staff] are alright, they're nice staff and you get on. They're not in your face.* (Shaun)

Ex-military prisoners also had a preference for ex-military staff due to a sense of mutual understanding, based on shared experiences:

The ex-forces prison officers, you tend to have more of a relationship with than the other ones. There's a few here that are ex-forces and they're more approachable than the other officers, for me. I can relate to them a lot more. (Lee)

Researcher: *Have I asked you whether you've encountered staff in here who are ex-military?*

Participant: *Yeah, there's a couple. One's a guardsman upstairs. He's a senior officer. The second one I don't know.*

Researcher: *Is there a difference in how you get on with them?*

Participant: *There is a difference. Yeah, there is a difference. You've got something to talk about. You've got some empathy towards each other. I was talking to one S.O. about what I've been on and where I've been and all that. He'd pretty much been following me up behind me, a year later. More or less the same stuff. So I get on alright with him. There's another one. He was in Afghan and all that. He was in an infantry regiment and I get on with him alright.* (Shaun)

Consequently, participants felt that they were better able to make connections with ex-military officers, sometimes suggesting that normal barriers between prisoners and staff were dissolved, similar to that found by Gade and Wilkins (2012) in counselling intervention programmes:

Again, as soon as they find out you're ex-military, the boundaries come down. We still respect them because it's not their fault I'm in jail is it. We still respect them but, likewise, you can have a bit of banter. You're on first name terms with most of them... if I went back to Altcourse, some

of the staff used to call me Sergeant-Major. The officers as a bit of banter and I'd call them riff raff and all kinds of stuff like that. (Edward)

They never talk about [military service], unless you get an ex-forces officer. They're completely different. Because regardless of prison, they know what you've been through in the forces. I wouldn't say they're different but they look differently at you because they're ex-forces and you're ex-forces and it's that camaraderie thing coming out. (Jeffrey)

There's one of them on my wing actually. He was in the Grenadiers actually. That's how we- And he comes down to have a chat with me now and again. (Graeme)

Due to the better relationships that ex-military prisoners were able to make and maintain with ex-military prison staff, many actively sought them out within the establishment:

As soon as you find out somebody is ex-military. The same with the staff. With all the staff in the jail, as soon as you- I use it as an ice-breaker. As soon as you see the veterans badge and you talk to them about the military, you have a different relationship with them immediately. (Edward)

I very quickly learned to say that I was ex-forces myself because then I'm kind of making a bond with the prison officer. I would walk along the landing and talk to an officer and say, 'oh, were you in the forces? I was in the forces too. I was in the Royal Navy'. (Richard)

Veteran prisoners described how they sought out ex-military staff members to elicit favourable treatment by exploiting commonalities and building a relationship with them:

Participant: So I target certain officers that I know I can trust and that I've got a little bond with. They can understand what I've been through.

Researcher: *Are those officers always ex-military? The ones you target?*

Participant: *Yeah.* (Owen)

While the vast majority of those interviewed held a clear preference for ex-military staff and many recounted receiving favourable treatment, this was not always the case, with some participants describing ex-military staff as more strict, uncompromising and dictatorial:

Researcher: *Do other people in prison know that you were in the military?*

Participant: *Yeah.*

Researcher: *Nobody has ever had any problems with that?*

Participant: *No. I've had more problems with staff that are ex-military than prisoners.*

Researcher: *What kind of problems?*

Participant: *More dictatorial. Strict. 'I'm telling you, get this done'. I liken them to jobs-worths in the military with a little rank... some ex-military prison staff try to strut around and come across as someone who used to wear the hats, slash the peak as though they're ex-guardsmen. All strutting around as though they're Mr. Self-important.* (William)

Participant: *Alright, yes, there are a couple of overboard military types but again you avoid them.*

Researcher: *What do you mean by overboard?*

Participant: *They enjoy saying no for no's sake. Whether you've got them on side or not, they just say no so you just avoid them.* (Christopher)

Nevertheless, these experiences of stricter, more dictatorial staff were very much in the minority with most participants describing positive experiences and positive relationships.

9.3. Services for veteran prisoners

When asked about the particular needs of ex-military prisoners, most interviewees did not suggest a need for distinct or specific treatment services. Participants identified a

number of services dedicated to helping those who had served in the military, such as the Royal British Legion, SSAFA³⁶ and a range of other charities, some aimed at specific issues such as mental health or homelessness on release, others aimed at providing more general assistance such as mentoring and financial support once out of prison (Howard League 2011):

Researcher: *Are there any specific services in here for ex-military guys?*

Participant: *Yeah, the veterans service, they're brilliant.* (Karl)

I didn't know I could go to the British Legion. I didn't know I could go to SSAFA. I didn't know SSAFA existed... But since finding that in here, I've used them and got a diploma out of it. But I'd like to pay them back as much as I can. They were brilliant. Absolutely brilliant. The support was there. (Jack)

Despite the availability of such services and echoing previous findings (Phillips 2014; Lyne and Packham 2014), there was an evident lack of knowledge about their existence and availability. Many participants - like Christopher - adamantly believed that no such services existed: *"I'll tell you one thing. There's no support inside for ex-servicemen. Nothing at all."*

Amongst potential specialist services for veterans in prison, a review of former members of the Armed Forces and the criminal justice system (Phillips 2014) considered the idea of ex-military only wings or units in prisons, similar to those founded in the USA (Edelman and Benos 2018). Such specific, identity-based interventions have proved effective with military veterans in other fields such as healthcare and education, and work by "influenc[ing] individuals by associating healthy behaviors with in-group membership" (Hack et al. 2017:727). In 2019 the first UK veterans prison wing was opened at HMP Berwyn in Wales but has yet to be fully evaluated.³⁷ Such wings or units are based on the notion that ex-military prisoners share characteristics that make them well-suited to co-habit and that such a set-up could provide an environment that is both supportive to prisoners and easy to manage

³⁶ UK Armed Forces charity previously known as Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association

³⁷ This unit is currently being studied by Dr. Kate Gooch at the University of Bath.

for staff, tapping into positive notions of military identity (Murray 2014). Several participants advocated for such units:

There should be a jail for ex-military or, in one jail there should be a wing for ex-army lads. So we can all go there and it would be much better... There would be no fighting there would there? It would be much better. We all know what we were going through. We could all speak to each other. Any time you can go to any pad and speak to them about anything. There would be no drama would there. Like a little community. A little garrison by yourself. It'd be much better. And I bet you any money you could fill the space with 90 people like that [snaps fingers]. No matter where that would be in the country, I bet people would go there. A million percent. They all want to be together. Right now they all congregate on C wing. There's a few of them on there. They all seem to attract each other. They all want to be with each other. (Owen)

Despite previous research suggesting that veterans' well-being can be better supported by tapping into veteran identities and encouraging mutual support (Thompson et al. 2017), many participants in this study feared that such units could be counter-productive and even potentially dangerous:

Researcher: Do you think there would be any benefits to the prison in keeping ex-military people together?

Participant: Erm, I don't think so... I think creating that ex-forces gang culture in prison could be very dangerous for everybody else... Because if we was all put together like that I think we'd find, yeah, it's us against them now, basically. (Lee)

In addition to creating potential divisions within the prison population, interviewees felt that a dedicated ex-military prison or prison wing would be perceived as preferential treatment and warned against this. Veterans believed that the mere fact that someone had served in the military did not justify providing preferential treatment to ex-military prisoners:

Researcher: *Do they [prison staff] treat you any differently because of that [previous military service]?*

Participant: *No, they treat you the same. Which is the way it should be. They should be professional. (Anthony)*

While there was some support for such veterans-only units in prison amongst participants, most interviewees were not in support of such measures.

This chapter has explored the treatment that veterans received in prison. This included favourable treatment from prison staff due to their status as military veterans which participants felt afforded them an elevated level of respect due to their respect for and compliance with prison regime (Turner and Moran 2023). It also included occasional unfavourable treatment borne out of apparent feelings of disappointment that veterans were in prison. While some veterans felt that they were deserving of better treatment than other prisoners due to having served in the military, most were against favourable treatment on the grounds of fairness and equality, particularly when this came to veterans-only prisons or prison units.

The military identity and mind-set brought with it a set of norms, beliefs and values as well as a number of character traits which shaped their outlook and their approach to their time in prison (Matthews 2009; Hall 2010; Firmin et al. 2016). These included a strong sense of personal responsibility, acceptance of authority and a disposition towards regime compliance, all of which served to shape their approach to and experience of imprisonment (Logan and Pare 2016; HMIP 2014a; Logan et al. 2020). These qualities eased veterans lives in prison and helped them to handle many of the aspects of institutional life, a life they were familiar with from their previous military service experience.

Perceptions of staff amongst veteran prisoners was mixed but there was a general acceptance of the authority of staff and an appreciation for the challenging nature of their work (Wright et al. 2005; Logan and Pare 2016). There was a universal preference for ex-military staff over those who had no previous military service, echoing previous findings from other public service contexts (Hack et al. 2017). Reflecting similar findings by Moran and Turner (2022b), ex-military staff were considered to be more confident, caring, calm and professional, while other staff were regarded as inexperienced and unprofessional. Ex-military staff were held to be more

caring and consistent in their approach and less likely to resort to use of force (Moran and Turner 2022b). This mattered a great deal to veteran prisoners who valued consistency (Crewe et al. 2014), and often viewed other, non-veteran prison staff with contempt for their apparent failings in these regards.

Regardless of this, veterans were able to establish and maintain neutral and often positive relationships with prison staff (Logan and Pare 2016; Moran and Turner 2022b) This was facilitated by traits they had developed in the military, such as a disposition towards accepting authority and complying with the regime and the ability to maintain relationships with peers and those in positions of authority (Moran et al. 2019). This was particularly the case with ex-military staff with whom participants felt they could often bond. Such bonding across the prisoner-staff divide appears to produce positive outcomes, in terms of veteran prisoner perceptions of staff, respect for authority, compliance with regime and even staff behaviour towards prisoners (Hack et al. 2017; Desai et al. 2021; Gade and Wilkins 2012). This, and other findings presented in this and previous chapters, could have important implications on policy and practice relating to the management of veterans in prison, which the next and final chapter will now consider.

Chapter 10: Conclusions

10.1. Achieving the research objectives

With limited previous study of UK veterans in prison in England and Wales, this research study sought to address this research gap through a qualitative exploratory analysis of this under-studied sub-group of the prison population by answering the following over-arching research question:

How do UK ex-military personnel experience imprisonment?

In doing so this study also aimed to address the following research sub-questions:

1. To what extent does any persisting military identity, including internalised cultural norms, values and beliefs, carry over into civilian and prisoner lives, and how does this shape the prison experience?
2. To what extent does previous military service shape a prisoner's perceptions of, and attitudes towards, institutional authority, power and legitimacy of the state, and what implications does this have on the prison experience?

To address these questions, this study employed a qualitative research design and used semi-structured, in-depth interviews with a sample of 35 serving prisoners who had previously served in the UK Armed Forces from across six prisons in England.

10.2. Conclusions from the study's findings

This research study has provided novel findings and important insights into the experience of imprisonment amongst military veterans, thereby making a significant contribution to the body of research literature in the fields of criminology, penology and military sociology. It commenced by establishing the theoretical framework that this study is based on, using Goffman's analysis of the total institution, complemented by Sykes' analysis of the pains of imprisonment. This has proved an effective framework through which to establish and conduct this study and ultimately frame its findings. Goffman's (1961) definition of the total institution continues to be relevant to the prison and the military today. He correctly identifies similarities in structure, organisation and

culture across these total institutions, similarities that were palpable to those interviewed in this study who had experienced life in both the prison and the military. Goffman's account of the total institution is not without its limitations, however, and this study has illustrated apparent differences between the social worlds of the prison and the military and the cultures they inhabit, which featured little in Goffman's original analysis.

Goffman describes the process of disculturation which takes place on entry to these institutions and involves the unlearning of previous, outside culture and the inculcation of habits, mannerisms and language. This leads to the internalisation of a culture specific to the particular institution, and the breaking down of previously held moral boundaries and rebuilding of these in line with life in the total institution (Goffman 1961). While prisons in England have undergone reforms over the past 50 years, moving away from the hard, militaristic regimes with strict enforcement of discipline towards a lighter, shallower model of control today (Crewe 2011), the process of disculturation is still a feature in the contemporary prison. Similarly, the process of disculturation is still heavily relied upon in the military, where such a process of lightening and softening of institutional power has been less pronounced over the past 50 years. Disculturation is still used to shape military recruits into inmates with the social and cultural mores and norms conducive to obeying authority and operating within military institutions' highly ordered, structured and regimented institutional regimes. This study corroborates previous research findings which show that this process, combined with ongoing socialisation, also cultivates in military persons an ability to withstand and endure the physical and mental hardships associated with life in such institutions which can then endure throughout the life course after leaving the military (Siebold 2007; Hockey 1986). This study did, however, find a certain resistance amongst ex-military prisoners to some aspects of the disculturation process in prison, with a disposition towards regime compliance accompanied by a disinclination to assimilate into the prisoner community demonstrated in an aversion to adopting the language, customs, cultural norms and behaviours of the wider prison population.

Some of this resistance, as well as other aspects of the prison experience, were illuminated in the accounts of individual participants' pathways through life and into prison (see chapter four). While veteran prisoners coped well with the arduous and hardships of imprisonment and were able to manage their lives effectively within the

familiar institutional regime, they were resistant to assimilating into the prisoner social world. Participants often held derogatory views of other prisoners and were very selective about their company, electing to spend much of their time alone. This was particularly the case for those whose criminal offending seemed to have little or no link to their military service and who had experienced settled civilian lives outside of formalised institutions following their military service. These prisoners were also somewhat less embracing of institutional life and were more sensitive to the frustrations experienced with the disorganisation and inefficiencies of the prison regime.

For those who, conversely, were more institutionalised (e.g. through time spent in care homes or boarding schools), their experiences had made them particularly suited to the institutional regime and environment. These prisoners described being comfortable in prison which allowed them to adapt more quickly to the ordered regime, which they were heavily compliant with, and also the prison's social world, which they were able to more seamlessly settle into. Those who had joined the military in order to avoid trouble with the criminal justice system in their youth were similarly pro-authority in outlook and compliant with regime but with a more transactional relationship with staff which came on the condition of mutual respect (Hulley et al. 2011). This was similar, also for those who had moved from the military into organised criminal offending. These veteran prisoners were positive about authority and compliant with prison regime to a point but, as is also the case within military institutions, some of these prisoners were willing to engage in certain behaviours such as fighting which were against the regime but acceptable within the prison's informal culture (Hockey 1986; Crewe 2009).

During military service, inmates are regularly subjected to physical and mental hardships and deprivations that mirror the pains of imprisonment outlined by Sykes (1958). Faced with varying restrictions and deprivations of liberty, autonomy, goods and services, hetero-sexual relations and security, the experiences of those having served in the Armed Forces are not wholly unfamiliar and dissimilar to their experiences of imprisonment. Individuals in the military are conditioned to operate effectively in closed social environments and gain the ability to navigate social relationships in a largely masculine world informally ordered by the threat or application of violence within relatively contained and confined social spaces. The findings from this study demonstrate that the acculturation and conditioning that

veterans were subjected to in the military, which generated a particular military identity and shaped certain attitudes towards authority, power and state legitimacy, resonated through into later civilian life and had a substantial impact on the ways in which veterans experienced imprisonment.

10.2.1. Identity

Military service was considered by veteran prisoners to have been a positive undertaking. They felt that military veterans were viewed favourably by society, due to an association with public service and notions of self-sacrifice for the nation and its people (Woodward and Jenkins 2011). As previously found by Burdett et al. (2012) and Brewster et al. (2020), those who had served in military institutions held a particular military or veteran identity; an identity which persisted beyond military service into civilian life and ultimately into prison. This positive identity conferred onto veterans certain favourably perceived personality and character traits that had derived from the training and conditioning integral to military life (Woodward 2003; Hockey 1986).

In line with previous research, these positively perceived traits were bound up with notions of masculinity and included: bravery, strength of body and mind, stoicism, selflessness, self-discipline, motivation, self-reliance, personal responsibility, diligence, and loyalty to one's country (De Bere 2003; Green et al. 2010; Woodward 2003; Matthews 2009; Hall 2010). Possession of these traits proved instrumental in ensuring the successful transition into prison and adaptation to the masculine prison social world (Jewkes 2005; de Viaggini 2012, 2018; Crewe 2014). Furthermore, the military veteran identity also carried notions of belonging to a family of ex-military personnel with shared traits and sense of mutual belonging (Brewster et al. 2020; Burdett et al. 2012).

While holding this positive military identity, veteran prisoners simultaneously held the identity of prisoner. In contrast to their veteran identity, this prisoner identity was considered undesirable (Murray 2013, 2015) and was laden with feelings of embarrassment, disappointment and shame. Veterans found this challenge to identity to be a particularly painful part of the prison experience to endure (Crewe 2021). This led to lower self-esteem and self-confidence and reduced the holder to a low social status in society, echoing similar findings by Feinstein (2013). While neither identity took primacy over the other for the holder, that of prisoner was considered temporary

and disposable on eventual exit from prison, while the military veteran identity was seen as permanent and irrevocable. The military veteran identity was regarded with pride and was promoted and deployed as a means to resist the prisoner identity and counter the stigma it brought with it, providing veteran prisoners with a means of differentiating themselves from other (non-ex-military) prisoners and elevating their social status within the prison, both in the eyes of staff and other prisoners (Goffman 1963). These attempts to resist the undesirable and stigmatising prisoner identity reinforces findings by Firmin et al. (2016) who found that veterans in secure mental health facilities championed their veteran identity as a means to counter the stigma of alternative labels that they considered temporary. While this benefited ex-military prisoners in their self-conceptions, it also created a sense of elitism amongst veteran prisoners, reinforcing negative perceptions held of other, non-veteran prisoners.

10.2.2. Prison structure and organisational culture

Goffman (1961) includes both the prison and military in his thesis of the total institution and identifies similarities between the two, including their physical infrastructure and environment and their organisational structure and regimes. However, despite many close similarities between these two total institutions, this study found that there were also some important differences between them when considering their organisational cultures and social worlds, many of which are not comprehensively covered in the previous literature.

Many of the similarities between modern prisons and military establishments illustrated by Goffman (1961) remain in place today, with veteran prisoners in this study identifying similarities between the prison and the military when it came to the physical infrastructure and environment. This included high walls, barbed-wire fences and guarded and controlled entrances (Jewkes and Moran 2012; Hancock and Jewkes 2011; Moran and Turner 2022a), as well as the closely-confined living quarters with communal ablutions and eating facilities. Veterans' familiarity with such living conditions somewhat lessened the shock of initial entry to prison and eased their subsequent adjustment to prison life.

In addition to the physical environment, participants identified similarities in the organisational structure of the two institutions. The strictly ordered and structured regime of prisons, was familiar to veterans from their previous military service, including the highly organised, formal hierarchical rank structure of prison staff with a

managerial class of governor grades which mirrored the non-commissioned ranks and officer corps of the military. Familiarity with these similarities assisted veterans in adjusting to prison regime.

When it came to organisational culture, there was a clearly perceived difference between the two institutions. Siebold (2007) identifies the need for military institutions to have a clear, defined purpose with organisation-wide goals that are shared collectively by all of those who are part of those institutions (see also: Dandeker and Gow 1999). This was keenly felt by veteran prisoners who described the military as an institution with clear aims and unifying goals which all of its members were united in pursuing. This resulted in the military fostering a collective and cohesive organisational culture which veterans lamented the absence of in prison (Turner and Moran 2023).

Furthermore, lower levels of perceived efficiency in the prison's systems and processes compared to those in the military, coupled with a perceived lower level of competence of prison staff compared to military officers and NCOs, were further evidence of differences in organisational culture and were common sources of frustration for veteran prisoners. Veterans were frustrated with a prison regime which they perceived to be too lax and permissive. They talked of the need for stricter, harder, more punitive prison regimes that resembled 'deeper' and 'heavier' forms of imprisonment (Downes 1980; King and McDermott 1995; Marquart 1986; Crewe 2015, 2021), more characteristic of older prison regimes and the military institutions to which they were accustomed. However, when interrogated more deeply, these frustrations reflected a preference for prison regimes which were more structured, predictable, routinised and consistent where staff were confident, authoritative, interventionist, present and available (Crewe et al. 2014). Such prison regimes more closely reflected military institutional regimes and made prison life psychologically more manageable for veterans (King and McDermott 1995; Liebling 2011a; Downes 1980; Marquart 1986).

10.2.3. The prison social world

The social world of the prison shared some important similarities with that of the military but also some important differences. Similarities between the two included the close quarters living arrangements with other men, which involved eating, showering and sleeping in close confines, as well as needing to navigate the masculine social

world of the prison with its informal social hierarchies (Jewkes 2005; Crewe 2014; de Viggiani 2018), competing and conflicting personalities and ever-present risks of violence (Crewe 2009; Warr 2016). It found that expressions of masculinities within the two institutions were similar, embodying traditional values of risk-taking, self-discipline, physical toughness, aggression, emotional control, and heterosexual desire and competence (Hinojosa 2010; Jewkes 2005; Woodward 2003; Higate 2003; Hockey 1986). Veterans' previous socialisation into a similar hyper-masculine environment in the military proved to be an asset, providing them with the knowledge, lexicon and behavioural attitudes necessary to transition somewhat smoothly into this familiar masculine environment of the prison and thereby gain the necessary recognition and acceptance from other prisoners (de Viggiani 2018; Bengtsson 2006; Jewkes 2005). This was vital to establishing their place in the informal social hierarchy of the prison so as to avoid becoming victims of bullying or exploitation and thereby ensure their emotional, psychological, and social survival during their time in prison (de Viggiani 2012; Jewkes 2005). Despite these similarities, however, there were some marked differences in the social worlds of the two institutions.

One of the main contrasts related to peer cohesion. Military institutions purposely foster a culture of cohesion amongst their members, which facilitates a culture of collective responsibility, mutual dependence and support (Kirche 2009; Siebold 2007). Interpersonal relationships in military institutions were characterised by trust, camaraderie and bonding between members who were united in their goals (Higate 2003, Hockey 1986, Siebold 2007). This contrasted with the prison where the social world was seen to be disintegrative, individualistic and uncaring (Crewe 2009; Liebling and Arnold 2012), dominated by self-interested individuals who cared little for their peers and sometimes posed a threat to them. This created a culture of fear, mistrust and self-preservation, giving rise to deep feelings of insecurity in veteran prisoners. Veteran prisoners resented their non-ex-military peers as selfish, untrustworthy, mentally weak and morally inferior, especially certain groups such as drug addicts and sex offenders, echoing Crewe's (2009) findings of other groups in the prisoner population who also disdain such groups.

Veteran prisoners felt able to navigate the social world of the prison well, effectively managing social relations with other prisoners and avoiding unnecessary conflict, attributing this ability to their previous military experience. Certain groups within the prison population were, however, broadly disfavoured by veteran prisoners

due to perceptions of them being negatively disposed towards veterans, for example Irish Republicans and Islamic Extremists. While participants did report some tensions with people from such groups, including some targeted violence, there was less direct conflict with or targeting of ex-military prisoners than documented in previous research (Packham 2013). Nevertheless, as found previously (Söderström 2019; Phillips 2014; Howard League 2010), some veteran prisoners were reluctant to have their ex-military status known amongst the prison population for fear of reprisals from such hostile groups.

While resenting and often avoiding relationships with non-ex-military prisoners, between veterans there was some evidence of bonding driven by feelings of trust, shared understanding and feelings of mutual responsibility. In some cases, this even manifested as expressions of mutual support within the veteran prisoner community and a willingness to fight for and defend one another.

10.2.4. Coping with the pains of imprisonment

There were some evident similarities in many of the difficulties, arduous and hardships encountered within the military and the prison. This study has shown that the deprivations outlined by Sykes (1958) and other pains of imprisonment (see: Flanagan 1980; Downes 1980; Crewe 2011; Crewe et al. 2017; Haggerty et al. 2020) are mirrored in military institutions. However, while these hardships are a prominent feature in both institutions, they are not experienced in the same way. In particular, the deprivations of security and liberty were felt somewhat differently in the prison versus the military.

In the prison, threats to personal safety and security were internal, emanating from within the prisoner community and were ever-present and unpredictable, with violence liable to manifest at any time and with little warning (Crewe 2009; Warr 2016). By contrast, threats to personal safety and security in the military mostly came from a defined external enemy during times of war and were thus in some ways more predictable and less constant than in prison. This provided a different experience of the deprivation of security between the two institutions of the prison and the military which veteran prisoners found unsettling.

The deprivation of liberty was also felt differently in the prison compared to the military. In commencing their military service, veterans had voluntarily elected to surrender their liberty to the state for a chosen, predetermined period of time and for

a purpose that was considered to be noble. By contrast, in prison their liberty had been forcibly removed from them for a period determined by the authorities and for an ignoble reason (Scott 2021). For this reason, the deprivation of liberty was a much more painful experience in prison than in the military (Liebling (2011a) and contributed towards feelings of resentment towards the prison as an institution which was not so evident in the military.

Veterans also encountered many of the other, more recently detailed pains of imprisonment (see: Flanagan 1980; Crewe 2011; Crewe et al. 2017; Haggerty et al. 2020) but many of these, for example loss of privacy and loneliness, did not form particular hardships given the familiarity with similar such circumstances in military institutions. Participants' familiarity with adversity and the mind-set that they had brought character traits of resilience, motivation and self-discipline (Castillo et al. 2019; De Bere 2003; Green et al. 2010) which helped them to cope with the arduous of imprisonment (Wright et al. 2005; Logan and Pare 2016). Veterans felt that regardless of what the prison would subject them to, it could never be as bad as the hardships that they had been forced to endure in the military. This was still true of those participants suffering from PTSD (or other trauma) who expressed the same ability to endure hardships and cope with imprisonment as those who were not. Prison was an institutional environment in which many veteran prisoners felt comfortable, especially those who had led their lives in institutions since childhood. The structured prison environment with its life of order, predictable regime and fixed routine, provided a familiar context in which they could operate effectively, with some participants evidently institutionalised (Cohen and Taylor 1972).

When it came to the 'tightness' of imprisonment, this did not form a prominent feature of participants' narratives. Veterans were less concerned about the psychological intrusiveness of the prison, difficulties around constant surveillance and assessment and difficulties around the need to perpetually self-regulate their actions, words or thoughts. Prior experiences of needing to regulate and monitor one's own thoughts, words and actions in military institutions (Hockey 1986; Beevor 1990) had prepared and conditioned participants for this so that such tight features of regimes were not keenly felt and therefore did not constitute a particular hardship (Crewe 2011b; Crewe et al. 2014; Crewe and levins 2021). It is also possible that the research sites used did not represent particularly 'tight' prison regimes at the time of the study.

10.2.5. Attitudes towards authority and legitimacy of the state

Veteran prisoners held broadly positive attitudes towards authority which was consistent across participants, regardless of offending background, military service record or method of discharge from the military. For most, this had been the case since childhood, with few difficulties in school and only limited involvement with the criminal justice system for minor offences which ceased on entry to the military. As found previously by Howard League (2011) and Phillips (2014), some even described their reason for joining the military as stemming from a desire to stay out of trouble with authorities. For many veterans, positive attitudes towards authority were established and cemented throughout their military service during which individuals had gone through the process of disculturation and socialisation within the total institution (Goffman 1961). Authority in the military had been largely accepted and the formal regime and mandates of the institutions were typically adhered to.

Like Hockey (1986), however, this study found that during military service, while ostensibly accepting the mandates of the institution, participants had simultaneously adhered to an unofficial code of conduct which was both tacitly permitted by those in charge and sometimes contravened official stated rules and mandates. This often revolved around excessive alcohol consumption and fighting, which featured in a number of accounts as seemingly trivial occurrences, even though they sometimes resulted in disciplinary action (Howard League 2011; Phillips 2014; Higate 2001; Hockey 1986). This was accompanied by a culture of readily accepting any punishment administered if one was caught, even if this punishment was considered to be disproportionately harsh for the offence or the behaviour had received tacit approval from the authorities. A heavy emphasis was placed on personal responsibility for one's actions, with little room for mitigation, blame-shifting or excuses. Veterans held an ardent belief that an offence deserved and indeed required punishment, even if the perpetrator considered this to be a momentary lapse in judgement or mistake or did not themselves consider the crime to be morally wrong.

These beliefs, values and attitudes persisted beyond military service into later life where positive attitudes towards authority were reflected in generally positive views of the British nation state and an acceptance of the legitimacy of the state to govern (Sparks 1994; Bottoms and Tankebe 2013). This was coupled in most cases by a strong sense of patriotism and feeling of loyalty to the nation, even amongst those who had been involuntarily discharged from the military for misconduct. The culture of

accepting one's punishment was then imported into the prison where the emphasis on personal responsibility for one's actions and perceived legitimacy of the state's right to punish gave rise to an acceptance of the sentence, even amongst those serving long prison terms. Punishment by the state for criminal offences was considered necessary to effectively deter offending and reoffending and any failure by the state to do this was considered weak, permissive and ultimately an abrogation of its responsibilities to society. Veterans were familiar with the workings of authority and how to operate under it, with some even recounting that they needed it. This culture of acceptance of one's sentence and the legitimacy of the state's right to punish brought with it an obedience to authority and compliance with prison regime (Logan and Pare 2016; Brooke 2018).

Despite favourable views of the state, some veterans felt somewhat let down by it for perceived deficiencies in supporting their reintegration into civilian society following their military service, which had in some instances been a contributing factor to their imprisonment. Some of these veterans felt that they deserved better treatment in prison to compensate them for this, although these views were in the minority with most veterans disagreeing with any notion of preferential treatment for veterans.

While veteran prisoners held mixed views of prison staff, they respected their role and, echoing findings by Turner and Moran (2023), they had relatively positive relationships with them, especially those with a shared military background. Ex-military staff were believed to be more confident, caring, trustworthy and professional than staff with no military experience and were therefore afforded greater respect (Moran and Turner 2022b). Participants were able to establish and maintain positive relationships with staff thanks to their ability to operate in authoritative institutional environments, and their understanding of how to effectively manage relationships with those in positions of authority. Participants were sometimes afforded a higher degree of respect by prison staff due to positive perceptions of veterans and the positive relationships they often had with them, occasionally translating into prison staff giving preferential treatment to veteran prisoners (Moran and Turner 2022b).

10.3. Overview of the thesis and its contributions

This study provides important contributions to the research literature in the areas of prison studies, military sociology and the study of veterans in particular. While corroborating findings from previous prisons research, it also provides novel

contributions to the academic literature base in previously under-researched areas, revealing new knowledge and understanding around the experience of sub-groups within the prisoner population, particularly veterans, and more broadly around total institutions.

10.3.1. Thesis summary and contribution to the literature

The findings presented in this thesis provide evidence that prior military service impacts upon the ways in which UK military veterans adapt to and experience imprisonment, building on limited previous research. As previously described by Hockey (1986), veterans were conditioned during their military service to adopt a specific military identity imbued with notions of traditional masculinity, pride and superiority over civilians. This was accompanied by certain values, ideals and beliefs, including stoicism, professionalism, personal responsibility and physical and mental strength (See also: Woodward and Jenkins 2011; Arkin and Dobrofsky 1978; Woodward 2003; Belkin 2012; Higate 2003).

This study corroborates previous research and adds to the literature by providing evidence of veterans continuing to hold their veteran identity following military service, carrying it through their life-course and ultimately into prison. Furthermore, it contributes to the literature by demonstrating the instrumental benefits of previous experience of life within a hyper-masculine total institution when entering a similarly hyper-masculine total institution such as the prison, where successful adaptation, and by extension physical, mental and emotional well-being, is dependent on the ability to conform to the prevailing culture, fit into the social hierarchy and be accepted into the social world.

During their military service, veterans had also been inculcated with a military mind-set characterised by discipline, self-motivation and resilience to physical and mental adversity (Matthews 2009; Hall 2010; Firmin et al. 2016; Green et al. 2010; Castillo et al. 2019). This helped them to cope with the pains of imprisonment, which often resembled many of the hardships already encountered in the military (Haggerty et al. 2020; Ugelvik 2014; Crewe et al. 2017; Jewkes 2005). This corroborates previous findings by Logan and Pare (2016) who identified resilience to hardship in US veteran prisoners (see also: Wright et al. 2005; Logan et al. 2020). UK veteran prisoners' experiences of such pains have been, until now, absent from the research literature.

The military identity which veterans carried with them into the prison (Burdett et al. 2012; Brewster et al. 2020) was mostly beneficial but did have its draw-backs. Veterans viewed their military identity with pride and considered it to be permanent and irrevocable (Burdett et al. 2012; Brewster et al. 2020). They were able to deploy this in attempts to resist the stigmatising label of prisoner and to protect themselves from some of the deleterious effects of this temporary undesirable identity which they were burdened with until release from prison (Firmin et al. 2016). However, holding this proud veteran identity accentuated the drop in social status that they experienced, from a revered military veteran to a socially maligned criminal or prisoner. This brought veterans pronounced self-disappointment, embarrassment and shame, reducing their self-esteem and constituting a particularly painful aspect of imprisonment (Firmin et al. 2016; Howard League 2011).

This military identity also shaped how veterans approached their social lives in prison, with its inherent sense of superiority often prompting derision towards other, non-veteran prisoners who they believed to be weak, selfish and greedy (Woodward 2003). Veterans largely avoided these prisoners and spent much of their time alone or with other veterans who they could better relate to, trusted and bonded with, thereby corroborating findings from other institutional settings (see: Firmin et al. 2016). Nevertheless, veterans navigated the social world with relative ease, typically maintaining peaceful relations and avoiding conflict, drawing on their previous experience from the military, during which they had lived in similar male-dominated, mass-living environments with shared living space, dining facilities and ablutions (Zurcher 1965; Hockey 1986). While able to operate in this environment, veterans resented the social world of the prison which lacked the military's collective culture of cohesion and instead had a more fragmented and individualistic culture characterised by selfishness, greed and self-preservation (Crewe 2009; Liebling and Arnold 2012).

Beyond the inmate social world, veteran prisoners were also able to build and maintain positive relations with prison staff, especially those who had also served in the military and who they felt they could relate to and even bond with. This sometimes led to favourable treatment, supporting findings from Turner and Moran's (2023) research with prison staff. This predisposition and ability to maintain good relations with staff evidently derived from veterans' military identity, military mind-set and associated beliefs, norms, values and customs (Logan et al. 2020). Veterans' positive attitudes towards authority, personal responsibility for one's actions and acceptance

of one's sentence, all fed into an overwhelming compliance with prison regime (Brooke 2018; Logan and Pare 2016; HMIP 2014a). However, similar to veteran prison staff (see: Turner and Moran (2023), veteran prisoners did express a substantial degree of frustration with the relative disorganisation and inefficiency of the prison as compared to the military and this was difficult for veterans to bear. Despite these frustrations and other hardships, pains and difficulties, on the whole veterans managed their lives in prison well and coped reasonably well with the experience of imprisonment.

These detailed and nuanced findings provide a modest contribution to the existing research literature on prisons, the lives of military veterans and most pertinently on veterans in prison. Some of the findings and conclusions presented in this thesis merely corroborate previous initial or tentative research findings of previous scholars in other jurisdictions, but some also reveal novel, previously unknown insight into other more specific aspects of the lives of this particular under-researched sub-group in prison.

10.3.2. Broader contributions and implications

This study's findings have demonstrated the importance of acknowledging and examining prisoners' prior experiences in similar institutional settings when attempting to understand how they adapt to and cope with imprisonment and how they experience the world around them. An individual's experiences in one total institution clearly impact on the individual's ability to adapt and cope with life in another where there are similarities in the regimes and routines, as well as in the hardships and difficulties, encountered in these institutions. This could be equally true for those moving between other total institutions such as care homes, boarding schools and secure mental health facilities. Likewise, differences in institutional experiences within such institutions evidently impact on individuals' later experiences of institutional life, demonstrated by those veterans who had lived within the stricter, more structured military regimes being better able to adapt to prison regimes more similar to their previous institutional experiences. Investigation of such institutional trajectories and how an individual's previous institutional experiences, including for those individuals moving from one total institution to another, is currently not well documented in the existing research literature.

This study also provides findings relating to a sub-group of prisoners who identify themselves differently to other prisoners and set themselves apart from the

rest of the prisoner population. Similar to findings around certain religious groups in prison, the findings from this study show the importance of considering how certain groups of prisoners might choose to separate themselves off and prefer to associate with those who share their own identity, viewing others with derision, suspicion or even hostility (Phillips and Earle 2011; Thomas and Zaitzow 2006; Sullivan 2010). It also suggests that particular previous institutional and life experiences, such as that of military service, can enable certain forms of bonding between groups that might otherwise be expected to be divided, if not hostile, such as prisoners and prison staff. This could have important implications on how to consider staff-prisoner relations in prison, both with military veterans (Turner and Moran 2023) but also with other commonalities that might exist between certain prisoners and staff.

The findings from this study have also revealed a prisoner population that is particularly pre-disposed to accepting authority, an attitude which feeds into a tendency towards compliance with prison regime and favourable perceptions of the nation state and its legitimacy (Brooke 2018; Logan and Pare 2016). This pro-authority outlook could have important implications for the understanding of motivations for offending, as well as motivations for desistance amongst military veterans, and thereby the management of veteran offenders in the criminal justice system (Hall 2012). Facilitating opportunities for veterans to draw on their military identity and its associated positive character traits could be important in helping veterans to resettle into civilian society and rehabilitate after prison (Burke et al. 2019).

This study has made important contributions to the academic understanding of the impacts of military identity on the life-course of veterans after military service and specifically on their experiences in the criminal justice system. It has revealed how veterans perceive authority and the state, how they perceive themselves and others in the criminal justice system and how they interact with those individuals and institutions which hold power over them.

10.3.3. Contributions to the literature on total institutions

This study demonstrates the continued relevance of Goffman's (1961) account of the total institution today which still describes well many of the aspects of the structure, regime and social world of carceral and military institutions (Schliehe 2016; Crewe et al. 2013). However, this study has also illuminated some limitations to Goffman's

analysis; most notably around the social world of these institutions which differ markedly from each other.

The cohesive and collective nature of the military's social world is far removed from the fragmented and individualistic social world of the prison (Siebold 2007; Liebling and Arnold 2012; Crewe 2005, 2009). This raises the proposition that within Goffman's conception of the total institution, one might be able to categorise total institutions into those which are more 'cohesive' total institutions such as military institutions, characterised by common goals, collective purpose and tight group bonding, and less cohesive or 'disintegrative' total institutions such as prisons and secure mental health institutions, characterised by individualistic social relations and by diverging goals held by the institution and its members. Such a framework of more cohesive and more disintegrative institutions could further the analysis of total institutions and the impacts of individuals' experiences within these and when moving between them. Further studies in these areas could consider where other total institutions might sit on a scale of cohesion-disintegration to assess how this might impact upon one's experience within them, for example whether monasteries might have collective religious goals and whether they experience high degrees of group cohesion, or whether patients within secure mental health facilities might not necessarily share the goals of their institution and bond less with their peers. Such analyses could serve to provide a more nuanced understanding of the total institution where such differences exist in institutional and individual goals, variations in bonding and cohesion and restricted mobility between staff and inmate classes.

The illustration of the differences between the prison and the military laid out in this thesis, as well as the similarities found that corroborate Goffman's (1961) analysis, could assist future researchers investigating total institutions. This will be especially pertinent to those researching the experiences of persons who might move between total institutions, for example from the military to secure mental health institutions or from residential religious establishments to the prison. It could also have implications for future research on those leaving the military and moving into other quasi-military institutions as staff, for example veterans who choose to become police officers or prison officers, an already well-documented pathway for those leaving the military and seeking familiarity in new civilian employment (Turner and Moran 2023; Liebling et al. 2010).

One final additional contribution of this study is in demonstrating the applicability of Sykes' (1958) deprivations, as well as some of the other pains of imprisonment (see: Crewe, 2011a, 2020; Crewe et al. 2014; Flanagan 1980; Haggerty et al. 2020) to the analysis of other total institutions outside of the penal sphere. This thesis outlines above the similarities (and differences) identified between the pains of imprisonment and the hardships encountered during life within military institutions. The successful comparison of the two institutions using this framework highlights the potential utility of Sykes' framework in the analysis of deprivations faced in other total institutions. Future research could consider whether such a framework might be useful in analysing experiences in other total institutions, including whether those housed within boarding schools, monasteries and secure mental health facilities similarly experience such deprivations or how these might differ.

In addition to making an important contribution to the academic literature base by providing novel insight into the experience of imprisonment amongst veterans in prison in England, this study has also identified a number of gaps in the research literature which now illuminates further lines of inquiry to be pursued in future research. It also outlines a number of implications for policy-makers and practitioners to consider when making decisions around the management and support of veterans in prison and the wider criminal justice system. Many of these lines of inquiry could also address some of the limitations of this study.

10.4. Limitations of the study

This study involved interviews with 35 veteran prisoners in six prisons across England. While the number of research sites and sample size has allowed this study to produce reliable qualitative findings which give novel insights into this under-researched prison sub-group, without additional research it cannot be concluded that the findings presented here are generalisable across the whole of the prison population. Furthermore, while precautions were taken to limit subjectivity in the production and interpretation of findings by establishing and following a robust methodological process, it is possible that the researcher's perspective, previous experiences, beliefs and values could have influenced the interpretation of the data. It is possible that future studies using an alternative research design, different research methods or another researcher with a different background and perspective might produce different findings and conclusions to those presented here.

10.4.1. Generalisability of the findings

This study's findings are limited to the data collected and analysed from a relatively small sample of participants drawn from a small number of prisons in England. There are 117 prisons in England and Wales, holding at least an estimated 2,820 veteran prisoners at the time of study (DASA 2010; HMIP 2014a). Many of these were held in high-security establishments which I was unable to gain access to. Although some interviewees included were able to reflect on their time spent in higher security establishments prior to their progression to lower security institutions, this relies on participants' recollections of their time there to convey the experience of living within these regimes. Downes (1980) likens the deeper, heavier prison regimes more common in high and maximum-security institutions to life in a submarine. With veterans' preference for stricter, deeper and more controlled prison regimes, it would be of value to the body of research literature in this area to pursue this line of inquiry further in future research.

The inability to access higher security category prisons also has the potential effect of precluding from the study, those veteran prisoners who have likely committed the most serious offences or those who might be considered too risky or dangerous to be progressed through the prison system security categories. It is possible that the perspectives, views and attitudes of these veteran prisoners towards their lives, authority, state legitimacy and other areas of focus in this study, as well as their experience of imprisonment, could be different to those interviewed as part of this study. Further research is needed to investigate how veterans experience imprisonment in such high and maximum-security prison settings and how they adapt to and cope with life within these regimes.

10.4.2. Women and other demographic groups

A number of other exclusions from the sample pose further limitations to the generalisability of the findings. This study focused only on male veteran prisoners. Given that only 0.4% of the veteran prison population of England and Wales are estimated to be women (DASA 2010) – a total of approximately 11 nationwide – locating (and accessing) these women spread across the 12 women's prisons across England and Wales would have been very lengthy and time-consuming, and might not have yielded many interviews. With the focus of this study therefore directed at male

veterans in prison, there remains a need to complement this analysis with research on female veterans to obtain a fuller analysis of the experiences of veterans in prison. It would be important to know whether some of the themes that featured so heavily in the accounts of male veteran prisoners, such as a somewhat macho acceptance of one's prison sentence and enjoyment of violence feature as prominently in accounts of female veteran prisoners. As the number of women serving in the UK military continues to rise, coupled with the recent decision to accept women into the full range of combat roles in the UK Armed Forces, this could be an area of increased relevance in coming years.

Future research could also focus on how race, nationality, religion and sexual preference might intersect with veteran status and impact the overall experience of imprisonment amongst such groups. All of these proposed lines of research would allow for a fuller range of demographics to be included and more intimately analysed for demographic intersectionalities and the relevance and importance of these in the study of veterans in prison.

10.4.3. Geographical focus

Further limitations to the study resulting from the sample used include the exclusive focus on those having served in the UK Armed Forces. Early in the planning of the study it was decided to exclude the experience of imprisonment amongst veterans of other nations' Armed Forces in order to keep the parameters of the study relatively tight and to align with the researcher's specific area of knowledge, experience and expertise. However, foreign nationals account for approximately 13% of the prison population of England and Wales (Sturge 2021) and at least some of these can be expected to have served in the Armed Forces of their respective countries. While this study's theoretical framework might suggest that, as total institutions, previous experience of serving in foreign militaries might have a similar impact on the lives of foreign veterans and their subsequent experiences of imprisonment, this study can make no claims on foreign veterans' experience in prison.

10.4.4. Mental health and emotional difficulties

A further limitation to this study is the intentionally little emphasis of in-depth questioning on mental health conditions. MacManus et al. (2013) estimates that the incidence of service-related trauma conditions, such as PTSD, is relatively low

amongst veterans at approximately six percent. Approaching the study of this population from a sociological and criminological perspective, as opposed to a medical perspective, I included questions on mental health conditions more broadly but did not make this a focus of the interviews. This was advantageous in that it avoided unintentionally leading participants to frame their experience of imprisonment in relation to trauma and mental illness. Instead, it allowed interviewees to control how and to what extent this might feature in their narratives and thereby how important this might be in their account of their prison experience. However, this approach may leave lower coverage of the specific accounts of service-related trauma and mental health problems that veterans might experience than if this study had used trauma and mental health as the angle of approach to inquiry of this population.

Another important limitation to this study is the possibility of a lower level of disclosure by veterans of emotional and mental difficulties that they might be facing in prison, and a possible tendency for participants to overstate their ability to cope with imprisonment. In conducting research on military populations using a combination of male former military and female non-former military researchers, Higate and Cameron (2006) found greater disclosure of emotional and psychological difficulties to the female researcher who was not ex-military. Higate and Cameron (2006) emphasise the importance placed by military populations on psychological and emotional resilience and the importance of not being seen to be 'weak'. While my status as a former infantry soldier had some clear benefits for the collection and interpretation of data, it might conversely have limited the willingness of participants to disclose emotional issues or other psychological difficulties to the same degree that they might have done with a non-ex-military researcher.

10.4.5. Triangulation of data

This study focused on gathering and analysing the accounts of veterans themselves and so is limited in its reliance on their own perspectives, knowledge and understanding. Initial plans for the study had included the interviewing of civilian prisoners, veteran prison staff and non-veteran prison staff in an attempt to establish their views of and attitudes towards veteran prisoners. This could have provided a richer understanding of the population under study and would allow for the comparison, corroboration and triangulation of data gathered from veteran prisoners. Initially, I conducted a number of interviews with these groups at the first research site.

However, after conducting seven such interviews (civilian prisoners n=4, veteran staff n=2, non-veteran staff n=1), it became apparent that each one was eliciting only a small amount of relevant data and that the volume of interviews needed to obtain a meaningful data set would be prohibitive. As a result, I decided not to continue with these additional interviews and focus only on data collection from veteran prisoners. The claims made in participants' accounts were therefore the sole source of data in this study and, while analysed critically, were not triangulated by further data gained from other sources.

10.5. Recommendations for policy and practice

This study has highlighted a number of areas of interest for policy-makers and practitioners, relating to the management of veteran prisoners, with potential implications reaching beyond the prison to those managing veteran offenders in other parts of the criminal justice system. It has shown that veterans in prison retain a specific and pronounced military identity which shapes their perspectives, values, beliefs and behaviour.

10.5.1. Encouraging regime compliance

An understanding of veteran prisoners' predisposition towards acceptance of authority and compliance with prison regime could be useful to those managing veterans in prison. Likewise, the finding that veterans often favour more structured regimes could be useful to factor in when planning and managing establishments' routines and regimes. Ensuring that veterans are held in prisons that have established regimes which are highly structured, ordered, predictable and reliably routinised could limit frustration amongst veterans who struggle with less organised and regimented regimes (Crewe et al. 2014). This closer alignment with familiar military regimes could help veteran prisoners to better cope with imprisonment and further ensure their compliance. Furthermore, the findings in this study have illustrated the credence that veteran prisoners place on the status of those in positions of power and authority over them. Assigning veteran staff to manage veteran prisoners, for example targeted allocation of case work, could yield greater benefits for regime compliance (Moran and Turner 2022b; Turner and Moran 2023; Gade and Wilkins 2013; Desai 2021).

10.5.2. Veteran identification and service-provision

It is important for institutions to be aware of the number of veterans within their establishments and, where possible (as disclosure should not be mandatory), they should maintain a record of who their veteran prisoners are (Phillips 2014). This will help to ensure that any risk factors, for example military service-related trauma, are detected when conducting risk assessments, as well as help to safeguard veterans from being targeted by potentially hostile groups or individuals within the institution. It would also allow for the provision of appropriate care and support services, whether they be state service providers, outside charitable service providers or services organised within the prison through veteran's groups or networks (Murray 2014; Howard League 2011).

In some prisons in England, there is an established cadre of Veterans Liaison Officers – members of prison staff who are typically themselves veterans and who organise meetings between veteran prisoners and who also facilitate access to outside military support services and charities (Murray 2013). Thompson et al. (2017) argue that veterans can be better supported as civilians if service providers better understand veterans' distinctive identities and needs (see also: Iverson and Greenberg 2009). Such veteran-specific initiatives can tap into the military identity and the notion of membership of a 'military family' to bring to the fore some of its positive aspects and provide a space for mutual support amongst veterans within prison and the wider criminal justice system (Hack et al. 2017; Brewster et al. 2020; Desai et al. 2021), all of which have been shown to be important to successful service-provision in previous research (Thompson et al. 2017; Gade and Wilkins 2012; Brewster et al. 2020). Such initiatives should continue to be encouraged as they could raise awareness of, and facilitate access to, tailored support services for veterans on release from prison (Howard League 2011) and encourage uptake (Wainwright et al. 2017). Furthermore, allowing veterans to promote and reinforce their veteran identity and its associated positive character traits could increase both compliance with prison regime and later desistance from reoffending.

Prison establishments could go further with this concept by exploiting the positive aspects of the military identity and notions of the 'military family' by utilising their network of veteran staff to engage with veteran prisoners as their assigned case officers. This could elicit greater and more meaningful engagement across the staff-prisoner divide with benefits to regime compliance and service access (Gade and

Wilkins 2012; Hack et al. 2017). Depending on successful trials, this approach could have further applications outside of prison in other parts of the criminal justice system or social care system, for example with probation services, social services or mental healthcare services.

Furthermore, accurate identification and recording of veterans within individual establishments can also allow for charitable service providers such as the Royal British Legion and SSAFA to identify and reach veterans in prison who may require support for service-specific issues, such as PTSD counselling (Howard League 2011). It would also allow veterans to gain awareness of and access to broader support services which they may qualify for on release from prison, such as treatment for substance misuse or assistance with housing and employment, thereby assisting with their reintegration into society and subsequent desistance from offending. All of these initiatives would be of low cost and low risk to the prison but with the potential for positive returns and a leveraging of free-to-access, well-resourced and motivated veterans support services.

10.5.3. Veterans-only prison units

Another initiative for veterans in prison which have been introduced in the USA and were discussed by the Howard League (2011) is the idea of veterans-only prison wings or units. Given the bonding experienced between veterans which is evident in prison, there have been calls for the introduction of these in the UK prison system. Indeed, this has been trialled in the USA where their proponents claim positive benefits on veteran prisoners' experience of prison and ultimately on their rehabilitation (Edelman and Benos 2018). The first of these to be established in the UK was at HMP Berwyn in 2020. While research into such interventions in the UK context (and other jurisdictions) is ongoing, the body of reliable academic evidence on the efficacy of such interventions is too limited to make conclusions and thereby a recommendation cannot be made to implement such a measure. However, the promising findings from other jurisdictions that show benefits of such interventions that draw on a veteran identity could make such units a useful means to support veteran offenders, although his study found little support from veteran prisoners for such proposals. Nevertheless, further research should be conducted on the effectiveness of such units before a reliable judgement on their efficacy could be made.

Furthermore, this study found that many veterans encountered difficulties reintegrating into civilian society on leaving the military, recounting the inability to relate to civilians and build social relationships (see: Higate 2000; 2001). It is possible therefore that such an initiative could reintroduce feelings of superiority and derision of civilians, thereby creating divisions and exacerbating feelings of isolation which could ultimately prove counter-productive to veterans' reintegration if not carefully implemented.

10.6. Further recommendations for future research

As a broad exploratory study of the experience of imprisonment amongst veteran prisoners, this study leaves room for further, more targeted research to investigate in more detail specific aspects of veterans' lived experiences of imprisonment and also lines of inquiry into how particular sub-groups of veterans might experience imprisonment. For example, intersectionalities along the lines of race, religion, gender, sexual preference, military service branch and other factors might result in different experiences for some veterans within the prison and its social world. Furthermore, some of the findings from this study could benefit from additional, more focused scrutiny through studies which could provide triangulating data to confirm or negate this study's conclusions. In addition to those already outlined in the discussion above, there are several further areas of future prospective study.

This research study relied solely on veterans' personal accounts of their prison experiences. Further research is needed to build on this study's findings to further interrogate the level of prison regime compliance amongst veteran prisoners to go beyond veterans' own claims about their own behaviour. Such studies could seek to take a similar qualitative approach to this study by interviewing other groups in the prison such as prison staff who could provide a formal disciplinary perspective, building on the recent work of Moran and Turner (2022b) and Turner and Moran (2023). Further research could interview non-veteran prisoners to obtain accounts of informal or undetected measures of compliance or non-compliance with prison regime. The collection and analysis of prison officers' accounts of interactions with veteran prisoners would have the added benefit of shedding further light on the dynamics of staff-prisoner relationships involving veterans, collecting further data from the other side of the prisoner-staff divide and testing the findings from this study.

Alternatively, research could use quantitative methodologies to analyse prison disciplinary records to observe the frequency and severity of infractions and disciplinary judgements against veteran prisoners to assess whether veterans do, in fact, have a greater disposition towards compliance with rules, regulations and regimes in prison. Such an analysis could be complemented by qualitative analysis of such records to deduce the nature of infractions committed to establish recurring themes to suggest differences in the profile of infractions committed by veterans versus non-veteran prisoners.

As well as providing an insight into the types and severity of infractions, such analysis could reveal hidden vulnerabilities which might be disproportionately affecting this group such as substance misuse, mental health conditions, victimisation or recurring conflict with certain types of individuals or groups within the prison.

Researchers might want also to consider building on this study's findings to assess themes of compliance and adherence to authority within other parts of the criminal justice system, for example compliance with criminal court orders, probation conditions and with police officers during arrests (Murray 2013). This could be particularly pertinent given that these pro-authority orientations conflict somewhat with the previous actions of veterans whose legal non-compliance has ultimately resulted in their imprisonment for criminal offending. The results of such studies across the broader criminal justice system could have important insights into the lasting effects of institutionalisation on an individual's attitudes towards state authority and their propensity for compliance with that authority, long after their release from the total institution.

Additional research could also explore further which forms of authority are respected by veterans and which are not. For example, this could investigate the extent to which veterans might respect the authority of other state-appointed authority figures such as probation officers, social workers and mental health workers. It could also consider the veteran status of those supporting and managing veterans in society or the criminal justice system and whether this might affect the levels of respect and compliance afforded to them by veterans, especially given the tendency of veterans to often accept the authority of a fellow veteran but not necessarily that of a non-veteran (Firmin et al. 2016). Such future research could go further in exploring what factors (if any) might influence greater compliance and respect for authority from veterans towards non-veteran authority-holders. Findings from such studies could

have important and useful implications for the effective allocation of casework to maximise compliance, improve support and increase levels of service.

In addition to these recommended areas of further possible future research that have been identified as in need of concerted academic inquiry, other areas which might be worthy of investigation include studies to include foreign national veterans in prison, rehabilitation of veteran offenders and their rates of recidivism, and the prevalence of and support needs for mental health conditions, substance misuse and self-harm and suicidal ideation amongst veteran offenders. Ultimately, there are many directions for future research to follow in this topic area and an increasing number of researchers focusing on veterans in the criminal justice system generates a sense of optimism that some of the outstanding and pressing research questions above may be answered. This study merely makes a modest contribution to this journey of acquiring this important knowledge.

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Annex a.

Individual characteristics study participant sample

Name	Age	Ethnicity	Branch	Rank	Role	Service	Operational service or Combat	Discharge method	Years btwn military & prison	Offence	First sentence	Sentence length (years)
Lee	40-49	White	Army	Private	Infantry	5	N. Ireland	Voluntary	20	Robbery	Yes	3
Steven	30-39	White	Army	Private	Infantry	4	Afghanistan	Misconduct	8	Drugs importation	Yes	4
Jeffrey	60-69	White	Marines	JNCO	Infantry	6	N. Ireland	Voluntary	40	Death by careless driving	Yes	6
Jonathon	40-49	White	Army	Private	Infantry	4	No	Voluntary	25	People trafficking	Yes	4
Peter	30-39	White	Army	SNCO	Clerk	15	No	Misconduct	0	Fraud	Yes	3
Ranjit	40-49	Asian	Army	JNCO	Infantry	14	No	Medical	12	Attempt murder	Yes	7 (+IPP)
Michael	50-59	White	Army	Private	Infantry	5	N. Ireland	Medical	22	False imprisonment	No	1 (+IPP)
Phillip	40-49	White	Army	Private	Infantry	4	N. Ireland	Voluntary	20	Assault	Yes	11
Anthony	50-59	White	Army	JNCO	Infantry	10	N. Ireland & Gulf	Voluntary	18	Murder	Yes	14
David	30-39	White	Army	Officer	Infantry	6	Afghanistan & Iraq	Voluntary	4	Murder	Yes	Life
Jack	50-59	White	Army	Private	Infantry	0.5	Afghanistan	Medical	29	Murder	Yes	Life
William	50-59	White	Army	Private	Armoured	4.5	N. Ireland	Voluntary	13	Murder	No	Life
Paul	50-59	White	Army	Private	Infantry	4.5	N. Ireland	Voluntary	19	Drugs importation	No	5
Arnold	60-69	White	Army	Officer	Armoured	8	N. Ireland	Voluntary	37	Drugs importation	No	8
Dennis	50-59	Black	Army	Private	Infantry	8	N. Ireland	Misconduct	22	Declined	No	0.5
Adrian	30-39	White	Army	Private	Armoured	5	Afghanistan & Kosovo	Misconduct	12	Robbery	No	Remand
James	50-59	White	Navy	JNCO	Porter	3	No	Misconduct	26	Assault	No	Remand
Stuart	30-39	White	Army	Private	Infantry	2.5	No	Medical	10	Possession of indecent images	Yes	Remand
Karl	40-49	White	RAF	JNCO	General duties	6	No	Voluntary	19	Assault	No	1
Kevin	40-49	White	Army	Marine*	Infantry	6	Bosnia	Voluntary	21	Drugs supply	Yes	13

Martin	20-29	White	Army	Private	Signals	2	No	Voluntary	4	Fraud	No	3.5
Richard	70-79	White	Navy	JNCO	General	7	No	Voluntary	38	Declined	Declined	Declined
Shaun	60-69	White	Army	Private	Driver	6	N. Ireland	Medical	30	Child sex offences	No	3.5
Matthew	60-69	White	RAF	JNCO	Intelligence	12	No	Voluntary	35	Rape	Yes	5.5
Thomas	60-69	White	Army	JNCO	Engineer	5	No	Medical	40	Child sex offences	Yes	12
Christopher	50-59	White	Army	JNCO	Artillery	11	N. Ireland	Voluntary	18	Murder	Yes	14
Hamish	60-69	White	Army	Private	Infantry	11	No	Voluntary	31	Assault	Yes	12
Edward	50-59	White	Army	SNCO	Engineer	21	No	Voluntary	12	Assault	Yes	11
Andrew	50-59	White	Army	Private	Infantry	4.5	No	Voluntary	23	Declined	Declined	IPP
Owen	30-39	White	Army	JNCO	Infantry	9.5	Afghanistan, Iraq, Bosnia	Misconduct	0	Drugs supply	Yes	8
Simon	70-79	White	Army	Private	Infantry	1.5	No	Voluntary	39	Declined	Declined	4.5
Graeme	20-29	White	Army	Private	Infantry	4	Iraq	Medical	5	Dangerous driving	No	2
Mark	50-59	White	Marines	JNCO	Infantry	14	No	Medical	25	Criminal damage	No	2
Parveet	40-49	Asian	Navy	Seaman*	General	4	No	Voluntary	18	Fraud	Yes	2.5
Timothy	40-49	White	Army	SNCO	Artillery	10	Kosovo, Bosnia, Kuwait	Medical	16	Assault	Yes	2

*Equivalent to private rank in the Army

Annex b.

The Experience of imprisonment amongst ex-military personnel in England and Wales

Interview Schedule

Opening:

Introductions: My name is Daniel Packham. I am a postgraduate research student from the Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge. This interview is part of an independent academic research project being conducted as part of a PhD. Thank you for being willing to take part in an interview for this study. Can I first of all assure you that everything we discuss will remain confidential and that you will remain completely anonymous and no records of the interview will be kept with your name on them.

[Present and read through information sheet. Read through and complete consent form.]

I would like to ask you for permission to audio record this interview. The main reason behind this recording is to make sure I have an accurate set of data – your responses and opinions. Also it will facilitate the analysis of the data I have to conduct during the course of the study.

Do you have any questions or concerns before we progress onto the interview? *[Address any questions or concerns]*. If you don't have any further questions I would like briefly to introduce you to the subject of this interview. As you saw in the information sheet, this study is aimed at finding out more about the experiences of ex-military personnel serving prison sentences in the UK. In particular, how they experience prison and cope with prison life, what relationships they have with other prisoners and with staff, how they view the prison as an institution and how they think previous military service may affect these. I would like to ask you some questions about your experiences of your time spent here in the prison and before coming to prison, including your background and your military service. The interview should take around 45 minutes to one hour but we can stop for breaks whenever you want. If you decide at any point that you wish to stop and continue no further, just tell me and we can stop the interview.

[Transition: Let me begin by asking you some questions about who you are and where you come from]

Body:

Concentrate on: 'authority', 'power', 'control', 'identity', 'culture', perceptions of the state

1. Life before the military

- 1) How old are you?
- 2) Where are you originally from? Where did you grow up?
- 3) Family (/carers)? Family members in military (or other disciplined profession)?
- 4) How did you find school growing up?
 - a) How did you do academically? (quals)? College+?
 - b) Behaviour? Relations with teachers? Attitudes towards school as institution? Attitudes towards authority?
 - c) Socially? Relations with other pupils?
- 5) Interests? Sports & activities?
- 6) Substance misuse (drink or drugs)?
- 7) Trouble with police? Attitudes towards authority and authoritative institutions?

8) After school: work? Apprenticeship?

2. Military Service

Tell me about your military service

Prompts:

- 1) Which service were you in? Which **branch**? What was your **role**? **Rank**?
- 2) How long did you serve? How old were you when you joined? When did you leave? (age? And how long ago? Duration of time between discharge and conviction?)
- 3) Where did you serve? Any operational service overseas? Experience combat?
- 4) How would you describe your experience of serving in the military? What did you think of the military while you were in?
- 5) How do you feel about it looking back on it? (e.g. fond, proud, resentful, indifferent)
- 6) How did you conceive/feel about yourself when you were in the military? How did you feel about your comrades? Your family and friends? Other civilians in society? Criminals and prisoners?
- 7) Do you have any particularly good or bad memories of being in the military?
- 8) How would you describe the lifestyle? Did you enjoy the lifestyle?
- 9) Was your unit/service entirely/mostly single-sex? How did you find that?
- 10) How were your relations with other personnel? Had close friends? Socialise on leave?
- 11) How were your relations with your superiors? NCOs? Commissioned Officers? Did you respect them? Do you think they respected you?
- 12) How would you describe your behavior in the military? Did you ever get in trouble? Get arrested? Court Martialed? MCTC?
- 13) Why (and how) did you leave? Did these views change after you left?
- 14) What (if anything) did you gain or take away from the military, in terms of personal attributes, characteristics or experiences? Did they help or hinder later life in any way?
- 15) If you had your time again, would you join the military? Would you do anything differently?

3. Life between military and prison

- 1) What did you do after leaving the military and before prison (occupation)?
 - What did you **want** to do on leaving?
- 2) Who did you live with? Family (parents/partner)?
- 3) How did you feel about the military at the time?
 - About the state? Authority? Police/the law etc.
- 4) How did you feel about yourself?
- 5) How did you feel about civilians? Adjustment problems? Institutionalisation?
 - Substance misuse?
 - Anger issues? Trauma?
- 6) How long between discharge and offending/conviction?

4. Sentence

- 1) How long is your sentence? How long have you served? How long to go (date)?
- 2) What offence were you convicted of?
 - i) Was this your first offence?
 - ii) Were you in the military when you were convicted?
 - iii) What was the reason behind it? Was it in any way linked to your military service?
- 3) How much contact do you have with family and friends?

5. Experience of prison

Tell me about your life in prison

General Prison Life

- 1) How long have you been in this prison? Which other prisons have you been in?
 1. Any high security? How do they compare?
- 2) How do you feel about prison (this one and prison in general)?
 1. How do you feel about prison authority?
 2. How do you feel about the prison & its staff having power over you?
 3. Why do you do what the prison wants you to do?
- 3) How do you find prison life and regime?
 - i) How did you find adjusting to prison life and regime?
 - ii) How well do you think you cope in prison? What do you think helps you to cope?
 - iii) Do you feel like you have any personal attributes, characteristics or resources that help you in prison? Where have these come from? Military?
- 4) How do you feel about having been imprisoned? How do you feel about having gone from the forces to prison?
 1. *[Explore **identity** issues around having gone from state agent in position of power with authority to apply coercion and force to others, to being the object of such state coercion and force. **Shame?**]*
 2. *[Explore High **status** of military person, "above civvies", to low status of 'criminal' & 'prisoner']*
 3. (e.g. devalued, betrayed, embarrassed/humiliated, abandoned, ashamed, angry, powerless, / accepting, 'should have known better', deserving of prison)
- 5) How do you feel about the Nation state? About Great Britain?
 1. You were in the military. How do you feel about the country that you used to serve?
 2. Do you think it's fair that you're here?"
 3. *[probe views on the state and state power in prison including legitimacy of the state exercising power of veteran]*
- 6) What do you do in prison? Work? Training? Education? Gym?
 - i) Do you work/education more or less than other prisoners? How so? Why?
 - iv) How do you find work/education? Enjoy it? Take pride in your work? Why is that?

Prison Culture

- 7) Is life in prison strictly regimented? How do you find this?
- 8) Do you see any similarities between the prison and the military?
 - i) Is the regimented regime of the prison in any way similar to the military?
 - ii) Has being in the military made any difference to getting used to prison regime?
 - iii) How do you find living in an all male environment?
 - iv) Do you see any similarities or differences between the people you meet in prison and those in the military? How are they similar/different?
 - v) Is having prison staff and management in authority and control similar to having NCOs and officers in authority and control in the military?
 - vi) Which do you find easier, military life/regime or prison life/regime?
 - vii) Difference between public and private prisons? Respect one institution more than other? Have views on the staff in each other?
2. How often have you been in trouble in prison? What for? **Why?**

Prison Social Culture

- 9) Do you think that there is a prison culture? (way of life e.g. ways to act, behave; language e.g. language; customs; practices; traditions) – Is this prison culture at all similar to the military? How so?
- 10) Do other prisoners know that you were in the forces? Are you reluctant to have it be known? Why? Does them knowing affect how they view or treat you?
- 11) How would you describe your relationships with other prisoners? Is there any kind of

camaraderie? Do you experience conflict with other prisoners? Any particular groups you do or do not get on with?

- 12) Are there many other prisoners who are ex-military? How are your relationships with them?
- 13) Have you ever encountered any animosity or conflict because of your service? Ever received threats? Ever encountered Islamic extremism in prison?

Relations with Staff

- 14) How would you describe your relationships with staff?
- 15) Are veterans recognised and acknowledged in prison? Do you feel that staff (and management) are sympathetic towards veterans?
- 16) How do you feel you are treated by staff? Are staff aware that you are a veteran? Do you think that this influences how you are viewed and treated?
- 17) Do you ever/often conflict with staff? Do you get along with the staff? Do you generally follow their instructions? Do you respect the staff? Do you recognise their authority?
- 18) Do you feel any differently about staff in public or private prisons? Why? *[explore views on power & authority of the state]*
- 19) Is there a difference with ex-forces staff? Do you respect them any differently? Why?

5. Other questions to incorporate somewhere

- 7) What are your plans for the future after release? What is your outlook for the future? Aspirations? *[Explore outlook/aspirations e.g. optimistic/pessimistic, confident/destroyed, ambitious/defeated]*

Closing:

We've reached the end of the interview and those are all the issues I hoped to discuss and questions I hoped to ask.

- 1) Is there anything else that we haven't covered that you would like to talk about or that you feel is relevant to what we've discussed?
- 2) Some people previously have found that, having discussed sensitive or troubling issues, it has been beneficial to talk to someone e.g. member of staff, would you like me to get someone for you to talk to?

Annex: c.

Consent Form

Project title: The experience of imprisonment amongst ex-military personnel in England and Wales

Researcher: Mr. Daniel Packham, Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge,

Please tick the boxes if you agree with the following three statements.

		YES
1	I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for the study (or have had it read out to me and have understood it), and have had chance to ask questions.	
2	I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I do not have to answer any of the researcher's questions if I do not wish to, and that I can withdraw at any time, without giving reasons , until 1 st June 2013.	
3	I agree to take part in the study, which means being interviewed by the researcher.	

Please answer **YES** or **NO** to the following two statements by ticking the appropriate box.

		YES	NO
4.	I agree to our interviews being recorded.		
5.	I agree to let the researcher use quotes from our interviews and conversations, as long as this is done in such a way that I cannot be identified.		

Name of participant:

Date:

Signature:

Name of researcher:

Date:

Signature:

Annex: d.

Participant Information Sheet (P)

Research study: The experiences of imprisonment amongst ex-military personnel in prison in England and Wales

What the research is about

This study is being conducted as part of a doctoral degree at the University of Cambridge and aims to find out more about the experiences of former military service personnel serving prison sentences in England and Wales. Previous research has looked at how other sections of the prison population experience prison but very little has focused on ex-military prisoners, leaving their accounts largely unheard until now. The focus of this study will be on how former military personnel experience imprisonment and cope with prison life, what their relationships are like with staff and other prisoners, and how they think previous military service may affect these. It is hoped that this study will help prison authorities, military service charities and other researchers, understand more about what it is like for ex-military personnel living in prison.

This study is being conducted by a PhD student from the Institute of Criminology at the University of Cambridge who has himself previously served in the military. He does not work for the Prison Service and the study is funded independently from non-government sources.

What will participation involve?

Participation will involve an interview which should last between 45 and 60 minutes. This will follow only a loose structure and so, although there is a list of questions which will be asked, you would be encouraged to discuss anything that you feel relevant to the study. The main areas to be discussed will be your background and life before prison, any time spent in the military and your time spent in prison. You would also be asked about your views, attitudes and opinions of the prison and its staff and how this might compare to your experience of the military. Any areas that you would rather not discuss or questions you would rather not answer will be perfectly fine and you will not be pressed to discuss matters that you do not wish to. In total the study will aim to interview approximately 50 ex-military personnel in around six different prisons.

Do I have to take part in the study?

No. Your participation is completely voluntary. If you do not want to take part, you do not have to, and this will not disadvantage you in any way.

Are there any risks involved in taking part?

During the interview you will be asked to discuss your background, including your experiences of military service and time in prison. Some questions might prompt you to think about things you have not previously thought about, or choose not to think about. Depending on your circumstances, this might trigger some unhappy or upsetting thoughts. However, you do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to. You can stop the interview at any time and, if you find the interview distressing, the researcher can advise you on who in the prison you could talk to.

Are there any benefits in taking part?

You cannot be paid for taking part in the study and taking part in the study will not affect your privilege level or any decision about your parole or release.

You may, however, feel that talking about your experiences is useful or helpful to you. People who have been interviewed by researchers in the past have often welcomed the chance to speak to someone neutral, who is willing to listen to them. You will also be contributing to the understanding of former military personnel in prison.

Will what I say be kept confidential?

The information you share in the interview will normally be kept completely confidential. However, the researcher will be obliged to pass on to a member of prison staff any information regarding the following:

A breach of prison security

Any further offences you admit to that you have not yet been convicted for

Any breach of prison rules that occurs during the interview

Anything you say that implies a threat to yourself or to others

In all other circumstances, everything you say will remain confidential. The information you provide will be stored securely, until 2021 when it will be deleted and destroyed. The only person who will have access to your interview is the researcher and his supervisor.

Will my contribution remain anonymous?

If you agree to the researcher using quotes from the interviews, this will be done in such a way that you cannot be identified. The researcher will give you a different name and will change any details about your life which would 'give away' who you are.

How do I agree to take part in the study?

If you agree to take part, you will be asked to complete a consent form, confirming that you understand what the study involves and have had a chance to discuss any questions with the researcher. You will also be asked to state whether you are happy for the interview to be recorded.

What if I want to withdraw from the study?

You are free to stop an interview or refuse to take part in interviews at any stage during the research process, without having to explain why you want to stop. You can also insist that the content of your interviews so far is excluded from the study, without having to explain why. You may make this decision at any point up until 1st October 2017, when writing of the research findings will begin. If you make this decision, your interview recording and any associated material will be destroyed. Making this decision will not be held against you or disadvantage you in any way.

What will happen to the results of the study?

Your interview may contribute to a research thesis written as part of the researcher's degree requirements. This is a long piece of writing which is read and marked by members of university staff. It may also contribute to various publications written about the issues the researcher is interested in. These will mainly be academic articles and books. The findings may also be discussed in other

academic publications written by the researcher, and in presentations to members of the Prison Service or the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), as well as other university researchers. Again, this would be done in such a way that you could not be personally identified.

What if I want more information about the study, or want to complain about some aspect of it?

Further information about the study can be obtained from the researcher. If you want to contact the researcher, you should do so by first writing to the following contact:

Daniel Packham, Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge, Sidgwick Avenue, Cambridge CB3 9DA

The study has been reviewed by the Ethics Committee of the Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge. If you want further information about its ethics, or if you want to complain about some aspect of the research, you can write to the contact address above where your comments will be forwarded to the relevant person on the Ethics Committee.

Thank you for your time in reading this information. If you have any further questions at any stage of the research, please do not hesitate to ask me.

Daniel Packham