"Backlash of the 'betrayed' squaddies": the framing of veteran anti-investigation activism on British news websites

Hannah K. Richards

Published online: 21 Nov 2023.

Submit your article to this journal ⤤

Article views: 65

View related articles ⤤

View Crossmark data ⤤

"Backlash of the 'betrayed' squaddies": the framing of veteran anti-investigation activism on British news websites

Hannah K. Richards ⓘD

Department of Politics and International Relations, Cardiff University, Cardiff, UK

ABSTRACT

This article examines how particular frames of military violence emerge, solidify, and fracture around popular media representations of veteran-led protest in response to the Northern Ireland legacy investigations. Curious about how popular 'pro-militarist' media navigate unsettling incidents of extreme and unlawful military violence that anti-activism draws attention to, this article uses a discourse analysis of the news coverage of the activism to interrogate how boundaries, distinct to those of formal legal and truth-seeking mechanisms, between 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' violences, are drawn. Based on an analysis of 372 photographs and their attendant texts from 72 online news articles, I argue that the coverage is organized around an understanding of military violence as natural and necessary, (re)producing a largely untroubled fantasy of a homogenous national community betrayed by the investigation of its 'squaddies'. In allowing only partial ruptures in an otherwise smooth narrative of military heroism and betrayal by the state, these stories of military transgression inhibit the disruptive potential of state-led investigations by obscuring the violence they supposedly seek to address.

Introduction

Since 2017, campaigners have taken to the streets across the UK to protest the continued state-led investigation into the conduct of certain British military personnel during the Northern Ireland conflict. Making a highly visible statement against the inquiry into past military violences, this veteran-led movement has attracted media attention, predominantly among British online tabloids.[1] Such publications are often considered unambiguous sites of support for military objectives and priorities in which figurations of British military personnel emerge through gendered and racialized narratives of heroism and sacrifice that are inextricably bound to noble conceptions of national self-image (inter alia Dixon 2018; Hearty 2020). However, coverage of the opposition to the Northern Ireland legacy investigations risks unsettling these narratives by implicating certain British soldiers in the use of extreme and lethal violence that is ordinarily hidden from view or carefully contained within media stories of war (Butler 2009; Hoskins and

CONTACT Hannah K. Richards ✉ richardshk@cardiff.ac.uk ⬚ Department of Politics and International Relations, Cardiff University, Cardiff, UK

Shchelin 2023; Parry 2011). Acknowledging this disruptive potential, this article asks how particular frames of state violence emerge, solidify, and fracture around stories of anti-investigation activism across popular news outlets? And consequently, what do these stories reveal about the broader cultural context in which public inquiry into military transgression operates?

The existence of veteran-led anti-investigation activism has been acknowledged in discussions of accountability for state violence in Northern Ireland, which have compellingly shown this form of activism to be the product of a complex negotiation of violence, memory, and belonging (see Hearty 2020; McGovern 2019; Partis-Jennings 2022). However, attention to the stories that coalesce specifically around the figure of the veteran activist in relation to military transgression and the responses such stories mobilize features only briefly in these discussions. Animated by a curiosity about how popular 'pro-militarist' media tell stories about unsettling incidents of extreme and unlawful military violence and the responses that such stories invite through their focus on the figure of the veteran activist, this article attends to this gap in the literature. Drawing together research from critical military and media and cultural studies, this article thus contributes to the debate on how members of the public are invited to make sense of, normalize, and attach value (or not) to the various forms of (un)lawful violence carried out in their name (inter alia Hearty 2020; Johnson, Basham, and Thomas 2022; Woodward, Winter, and Jenkings 2009). By paying attention to the broader cultural context in which the investigation of British military personnel operates, this article thus offers insight into how the legitimacy of violence is established away from formal legal and truth-seeking mechanisms through the figure of the veteran activist.

This article uses a discourse analysis of the visual and discursive dimensions of the news coverage of veteran anti-investigation activism to interrogate how boundaries between 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' violences are publicly drawn. It contends that the news reports 'perform a dance of knowing and not knowing' (Parry 2018, 1101) that simultaneously serves to expose certain elements of the stories of violence perpetrated by some members of the British armed forces whilst concealing others. By allowing only partial ruptures in otherwise smooth narratives of military heroism, the framing of these news reports inhibits the disruptive potential of state-led investigations by obscuring – or sanitizing – the violence they supposedly seek to address. I contend that the stories of anti-investigation activism reproduce a largely untroubled fantasy of a homogenous national community betrayed by the investigation of its 'squaddies'. In examining what the momentary ruptures, exclusions, and absences reveal about the fragility of these stories, I also explore how they reflect broader anxieties over the potentiality of future public inquiries on the conduct of British troops, beyond those related to Northern Ireland.

I begin by situating the article conceptually within the critical military and media and cultural literature studies that focus on how the figure of the soldier (and the veteran) contributes to the normalization and valorization of military violence within British society. I then introduce the case study of anti-investigation activism and my methodology before moving to the body of the article. The article proceeds in two key argumentative sections: first, I consider the veteran activists as a group, examining how they are rendered intelligible as heroes of the nation through the news reports. In drawing out the political work of this specific form of veteran activism, this section considers how the

activists are aligned to broader societal narratives – and values – of 'protecting our boys', drawing clear lines between supposedly legitimate and illegitimate forms of violence that are distinct from those drawn by formal legal and truth-seeking mechanisms. This boundary work positions the current functioning of the liberal state, and its associated accountability processes, as a betrayal of a preconfigured imaginary of British national identity that is dependent on post-imperial conceptions of civility, superiority, and exceptionality (see Hearty 2020).

The second section explores how the violence subject to scrutiny is reconstituted as a calamity of war (see Millar 2016, 22) that, while regrettable, is a natural part of warfare and does not require further investigation. Through the focus on one individual veteran, the reports question the value of state-led investigative processes, thus revealing limits on the acceptance of – and trust in – the institution of inquiry. This article ultimately argues that, within the news reports, instances of extreme military violence are obscured and contained through an understanding of this violence as natural, necessary, and benevolent; placing violence 'worthy' of investigation as 'belonging elsewhere' (Peplow 2022). Such understanding sits uneasily alongside the potentiality of future public inquiries into the conduct of British military personnel by calling into question the justificatory premises of necessity, truth, and accountability that underpin the act of public inquiry.

Making sense of military violence through the figure of the veteran

This article follows numerous critical military and feminist scholars in contending that war is not solely an activity of the abstract state. Instead, the study of everyday lives, practices, and discourses has effectively demonstrated that the ability to wage war is reliant upon the multi-layered diffusion of military interests and agendas that work through gendered, raced, and sexualized hierarchies of difference to obscure and reproduce multiple forms of violence that normalize militarism as 'the character of society' (Åhäll 2016, 165; see also Enloe 2000; Lutz 2002; Henry and Natanel 2016). In the United Kingdom, public understandings of the military are significantly shaped by cultural and popular portrayals rather than 'personal interaction with or connection to, "our boys"' (Hearty 2020, 218). As a result, the way in which military activities are communicated – be it through choral concerts (Cree 2020), or symbols of commemoration such as the poppy (Basham 2016) – provides important insight into how members of the public are invited to interpret and respond to the institution, the individuals within it, and its inherent violences. Within this context, news media – both its visual and discursive dimensions – can be understood as a 'primary site for the negotiation and articulation of civilian discourses seeking to ascribe meanings to soldiers and their activities' (Woodward, Winter, and Jenkings 2009, 211; see also Tidy 2015). Notably, the 'factual accounts' of such media simultaneously 'disguise their implication in the workings of power through claims to represent objective knowledge of reality' (Millar 2016, 13), playing an important role in promoting and privileging specific stories of military violence.

In considering how these stories are publicly negotiated and articulated, critical military scholars have sought to unpack the particular politics of the figure of the soldier. For example, Victoria Basham (2013), Kevin Hearty (2020), and Alice Cree (2020) each show how the idealized soldier – through his association to a valorized masculine role of

protectorship – acts as an anchor of militarism that is routinely used as a substitute for the nation. Drawing together this literature on the figure of the soldier, Katharine Millar has demonstrated how the mapping of an individual onto the nation conceals the state's exposure of its citizens to violence and how 'the potential tension and trauma of war is reconstituted into an affective relationship with the figurative soldier, whose death is not only accepted, but lauded' (2019, 206; see also Zehfuss 2009) in a way that metaphorically legitimizes militaristic violence. Moreover, when considering the collective figuration of military personnel – for example as veterans, soldiers, and 'squaddies' within the UK, or, in the US context, the troops – Millar has further demonstrated how the troops as a group are routinely configured as 'passive, dependent and at risk of suffering harm' (2019, 203), which in turn enables violence to be 'presented as incidental to war, as something that "happens" to the vulnerable troops, rather than an active practice of the political community' (203). The proximity of military figures to – but significantly not as perpetrators of – violence enables the use of lethal force to be constituted as something 'belonging elsewhere', obscuring its centrality to sustaining the military institution and, more broadly, the liberal state (see Basham 2018).

To better understand the stories told about anti-investigation activism, the specific politics of veteran figures and, in particular, how this group is situated in relation to affective appeals to compassion and care, must also be acknowledged. Ex-service personnel are routinely framed as deserving heroes that bestride the categories of both victim and warrior. Through the exploration of this figure within charity campaigns, sporting events, and commemorative practices, numerous studies have demonstrated how 'the veteran' has become 'a highly prized figure in public culture' (McVeigh and Nicola 2013, 6; see also Millar 2016; Cree and Caddick 2020; Browning and Haigh 2022) that occupies a complex 'space between military and civilian life, war and peace, and the domestic and the international' (Bulmer and Eichler 2017, 162). Agatha Herman and Richard Yarwood have shown how this liminality can be co-opted by veterans' charities and, more broadly, by the liberal state, to position 'the veteran' as an authoritative figure that straddles the categories of both hero and victim, and can thus be deployed to encourage sympathy and support for '"deserving" veterans while muting criticism of the wars that caused this need' (2015, 2632; see also Bulmer and Eichler 2017; Cree and Caddick 2020; Millar 2016). Indeed, these discourses of support create a 'smooth narrative of war' (Achter 2010, 47) that separates both soldiers and veterans from the politically contentious aspects of war (see also Tidy 2015). This disassociation of current and former military personnel from their active engagement in warfighting enables these individuals to be constituted as a 'notionally apolitical social "cause"' (Tidy 2015, 221), the support of which becomes a 'matter of morality rather than politics' (Millar 2016, 13).

Yet when focussing on Northern Ireland, Kevin Hearty (2020) and Mark McGovern (2019) recognize that the legacy investigations and the violence they seek to address risk unsettling these smooth narratives. Indeed, Hearty (2020) explores how the soldiers accused of human rights violations are reconstituted as victims, rather than perpetrators, within the British public's imagination. In 'misrecognising the victims' (Hearty 2020, 226) of violence, the civility of the British state is emphasized, in turn promoting a culture of impunity surrounding the military figure (McGovern 2019). This culture serves to foreground a specific historical narrative in which the experiences of 'inherently good but hard-pressed' (Hearty 2020, 226) British soldiers are juxtaposed with implicit

constructions of a savage 'other' to demonstrate the supposed legitimacy of state sanctioned violence (Hearty 2020; McGovern 2019). Such narrative constructions are thus used to rationalize and justify the excesses of violence, avoiding any engagement with broader questions of 'militarized violence and its brutalizing effects' (Woodward, Winter, and Jenkings 2009, 221). Engaging with the material and affective dimensions of anti-investigation activism, Hannah Partis-Jennings shows how support for the movement is evidence of 'curated, community militarism, that obscures extreme violence (including against unarmed civilians)' (2022, 125). In examining the tensions and contradictions of responses to the Northern Ireland legacy investigations, these studies provide important insight into the nuances of anti-investigation activism, highlighting it to be the product of a complex negotiation of violence, memory, and belonging. Yet, within these conversations, sustained attention to the public figure of the veteran activist is absent. By focussing specifically on the stories that coalesce around this figure therefore, the present article responds to this absence, showing how specific responses, affects, and political actions are mobilized in response to military transgression through the figure of the veteran.

Reading photographs of anti-investigation activism

Before introducing my methodology, it is first necessary to provide a brief overview of the context in which news coverage of the activism was produced. Throughout the conflict in Northern Ireland, British security forces faced scrutiny over their repeated use of excessive force, repressive tactics, and lethal violence (inter alia Dixon 2008; Drohan 2018; O'Leary 2019).[2] Although conflict-related deaths were investigated at the time by military and civilian police forces, various 'truth-seeking' mechanisms – including public inquiries, historical investigation teams, coroners' inquests, and judicial reviews – have established that the efficacy, independence, and fairness of many of these historic investigations was inadequate (Rolston and Scraton 2005; Lundy 2012). Consequently, rather than signalling the end of investigations into British military personnel, the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 instead ushered in a new era of scrutiny over the actions of British state agents that endure to this day (see Lundy 2012; Mills and Torrance 2020).

In addition to the continued investigation of British military personnel, the 'piecemeal approach' (McGovern 2019, 444) to dealing with crimes committed by other parties to the conflict has contributed to perceptions among certain elements of the military community and its supporters that state-led truth recovery processes constitute a 'witch hunt' that forms part of a wider landscape of 'vexatious legal claims that undermine our Armed Forces' (Conservative Party 2019; see also Williams 2018; Hearty 2020). Consequently, in January 2017, a small number of ex-service personnel founded the campaign group 'Justice for Northern Ireland Veterans' (JFNIV) in an attempt to shield former service personnel from further investigation, prosecution, or inquiry. This movement has since attracted a substantial following from within the veteran community, resulting in the formation of additional campaign groups such as 'Million Veterans March' and 'Rolling Thunder for Soldier F' that, at the time of writing (July 2022), continue to mobilize online and in person. Rather than examining the material produced by these groups, this article takes seriously the interpretive space

occupied by popular media outlets in relation to Northern Ireland.[3] In addition to the conceptual significance of this media discussed in the previous sections, it is important to note that during the Northern Ireland conflict popular news media were, and remain to this day, significant sites in which the negotiation, articulation, and contestation of memories of the conflict, particularly those aligned to British state discourse, were transmitted (Rolston 2010; Hearty 2020; Leahy 2019).

This article's claims are based upon a discourse analytical reading of 372 photographs and their attendant texts from 72 online news reports published between 2017 and 2020 across popular British news websites. Due to the cost associated with the use and reproduction of copyrighted photographs, the present article does not contain images; visual material is accounted for through textual descriptions and image captions, links to original sources are provided in the references. The reasons for choosing to analyse online reports as opposed to print news media are threefold. First, digital technologies have significantly altered the way that information about war and military activities is communicated (see Hoskins and Shchelin 2023), with the move away from print media towards online content over the past decade being acknowledged both within industry and academia (Kleis Nielsen 2015; Ofcom 2019). Second, the visual dimensions – the significance of which is discussed in detail below – of this type of media are important; the short time spent by most readers online has led to headlines and images being used more prominently to capture viewers' attention (Stone and Socia 2019, 332). Third, the majority of research for this present article was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, a time in which my access to 'physical data' from outside of my own home was severely limited.

Accordingly, I searched for articles published on the 10 most accessed news websites in the UK between 1 January 2017 and 31 July 2020, reflecting the dates in which JFNIV was formed and lockdown measures that placed limits on public assembly were introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the inclusion of sites such as the BBC, The Guardian, and the Independent in the search criteria, most articles were published on news sites such as The Daily Express, The Sun, and MailOnline. The extant coverage of the movement across these historically 'pro-militarist' (Dixon 2018, 21) publications encouraged me to interrogate how such media themselves constitute 'modes of military conduct' (Butler 2009, 29), the analysis of which required attention to how different forms of social and state power are embedded within the discursive and visual frames of the reports.

Following Mackie (2012) this article contends that a discourse analytical reading need not be restricted to 'language' or 'talk' but is also compatible with visual representations (see also Shepherd 2008). Whilst the language of popular news articles is routinely found to highlight the media's complicity in military 'mythmaking' (Dixon 2018, 21; Hearty 2020), the politics of the images included in the articles must also be acknowledged (Bleiker 2001; Butler 2009; Shepherd 2008). Indeed, the performative function of a social movement's 'visual products' (della Porta 2013, 142) is central to their public mediation, with these movements seeking 'out media coverage for wider dissemination and legitimation of their aims and claims' (Cottle 2008, 867). Moreover, photographs provide a supposedly authentic and immediate depiction of external realities (Joffe 2008, 85). Despite their assumed 'truth-value', photographs do not simply serve as authenticating devices for the stories presented in texts. Instead, there is a delicate political process of

interpretation involved in their (re)production and reception across different media (Butler 2009; Shepherd 2008; Woodward, Winter, and Jenkings 2009).

Once the photographs were located, they were then 'read' at multiple levels; first at the compositional; second alongside their accompanying texts; and third within the context of the other reports and broader societal discourses (see Parry 2011; Shepherd 2008). Acknowledging the interpretive nature of discourse analysis, such an approach does not suggest that a definitive reading of each individual photograph can be provided, favouring instead a 'genealogical approach' (Mackie 2012, 117) that places each image within the context of other photographs and texts. During these readings, themes were identified through a process of 'open coding' (Hutchison, Halley Johnston, and David Breckon 2010, 289), the categories of which were established by continuously moving back and forth between the theoretical and empirical material to help identify patterns, inconsistencies, and omissions in the material. In what follows, I present and expand on two of the key themes – protecting 'our boys' and calamities of war – that emerged through this coding process; each section begins by introducing common characteristics across the reports, before exploring specific examples in detail, asking how each contributes to a framing of the investigations as a form of national betrayal. Despite quantifying certain findings – such as the number of photos that contain a specific material symbol or individual – the study remains interpretive; any quantification is intended as a way of mapping the data and to assist the reader in navigating their way through the material presented.

'Betrayed' squaddies and 'legitimate' violence

This section considers the veteran activists as a group, exploring how their activism is collectively aligned to broader societal narratives – and values – of 'protecting our boys'. It demonstrates how clear lines are visually and discursively drawn between supposedly legitimate and illegitimate forms of violence that position the legacy investigations as a betrayal of a preconfigured imaginary of British national identity.

Across the news coverage of anti-investigation activism, campaign medals, Union Jack flags, and military uniforms – consisting of berets, regimental ties, and blazers – abound. Although not the central focus of the articles, images of both individual campaigners and larger groups are cropped to ensure that they cannot be viewed, even fleetingly, without encountering these affective symbols of military service (see Martin 2019). In particular, military decorations are a powerful material artefact of war that institutionalize the otherwise subjective concepts of heroism, sacrifice, and bravery (Powel 2018, 19). Although not explicitly describing the activists as heroes – a word that appears in only 17 of the 72 articles – the unremarked presence of the medals, alongside the uniforms and supportive crowds, tacitly distinguishes the figure of the veteran as an 'institutionalised hero [. . .] through which desired behaviour is exemplified' (Powel 2018, 19). Through implicit connotations of the 'brave' and 'noble' nature of their past service, the prevalence of these symbols distances the social movement from the lethal violence under investigation. Moreover, within many of the articles the distinctive attributes of each medal and uniform – including the medal's campaign clasp or ribbon, or the regimental badges on blazers and ties – are difficult to discern. For instance, in one *Express Online* article a photo in which only a decorated lapel and an elderly, white-skinned hand holding

a walking stick are included within the frame is captioned as: '[a]n old soldier proudly shows of [sic] his campaign medals' (see Murray 2018). Instead of implicating the activists within the specificities of the Northern Ireland conflict, such images thus seamlessly merge the countless, multi-layered experiences of military service into a single, bounded, and comprehensible activity that, when paired with the pervasive inclusion of the Union Jack, invokes a sense of collective service associated to a broader history of national protection. This temporal dislocation thus elicits a sense of inter-generational solidarity among the veterans pictured and, importantly, enables 'the veteran activist' to be constituted as an 'ahistoric and apolitical "hero"' (Tidy 2015, 226; see also Kelly 2012) that is inextricably bound to the nation and its past victories and sacrifices. Indeed, the images are predominantly captioned with reference to generic groups of 'veterans' or 'protestors' with few in-text references to the medals, uniforms, or flags, thereby providing a 'convenient visual shorthand' (Mackie 2012, 123) to the continued, and ostensibly noble, service of the activists.

Importantly, when considering the bodies to which these symbols are attached, a particular gendered and racialized character of military service is idealized. Although women do feature routinely in the news articles, they are enlisted predominantly as civilian supporters (inferred through their clothingand placards) or as relatives of those individuals killed by British military personnel (as depicted by the captions and placards) (see Dinham 2017; McKinstry 2019). Only three of the photographs feature women wearing elements of military uniforms or medals. Women are thus presented as the necessary antithesis to the highly decorated and uniformly dressed male veterans that dominate the articles. They occupy only the margins of the frames and are characterized by either a patriotic (cheering supporters in the crowds) or familial (grim-faced relatives of the Northern Irish civilians killed by British forces) sense of feminine stoicism (Cree 2020). Furthermore, of the 372 photographs analysed, only four feature non-white individuals (all of whom are men) in military uniform. Whilst this is unsurprising given the historic under-recruitment, discrimination, and exclusion of ethnic minorities and women within the British military (Ware 2012), the diffusion of white, male bodies adorned with symbols of military service across the photographs serves to 'preserve the (imagined) whiteness' (Basham 2018, 36) of the post-imperial British nation, emphasizing the normalcy and utility of the white man as the archetypal protector and enforcer of 'good' (Basham 2013; Hearty 2020). Thus, through the deployment of positive material signifiers, the campaigners are rendered intelligible as part of a homogeneous community of heroes that can be mapped onto a particular imaginary of the armed forces, and by extension, the nation, as a 'force for good'.

Moreover, several news articles depict a highly militarized and masculine form of collective mobilization through the inclusion of images showing the activists in armoured personnel carriers (APCs), marching, and gathering on motorcycles (see Ingham and Knowles 2019). In certain contexts, these explicitly militarized mobilizations in a city centre could be perceived as lawless or intimidating behaviour, yet in only eight of the 72 articles is a police presence visually represented. The depiction of the police is often an important aspect of the media coverage of social movements (McCurdy 2012; Oliver and Maney 2000). Yet here, the recurring omission of uniformed police officers within the photographs seemingly infers that the campaigners are acting with restraint, discipline, and respect for the rule of law. Furthermore, the visible signifiers of military power such

as marching, uniforms, and APCs – a depiction that is remarkably consistent with the beginning of the Northern Ireland conflict – enable the activists to be positioned as masculine defenders of the nation, rather than as disruptive protestors that require containment by the state.

Yet, there are also tensions and cracks in this otherwise neat portrayal of national heroism, with many of the articles simultaneously positioning military personnel as the targets, rather than instigators, of violence in a way that foregrounds the vulnerability of this group. The articles routinely depict uniformed personnel on active duty throughout the Northern Ireland conflict. Despite the length of the military operation, only a selecti few images of the conflict are used across the articles. The most common photograph, appearing in 10 separate articles, depicts an Army barricade on Bloody Sunday in the moments prior to the shooting dead of 14 unarmed civilians (see Robertson 2019). Drawing attention to the most infamous incident of the British Army's campaign may initially appear to unsettle the dominant narratives of noble and heroic warfighting previously discussed. Indeed, when viewed as an isolated artefact, the photograph – portraying professional, well-armed soldiers set against an indistinguishable group of civilians – presents a reality in which the material power of the British armed forces clearly surpasses that of their opponents. Yet, a second reading of the image encourages a more nuanced understanding of the position of the military figures. Firstly, the image is shot from the standpoint of the British soldiers and thus conditions the reader's understanding of the fighting through the perspective of the British forces. Secondly, the white, male, uniformed soldier operates as a knowable figure that is directly juxtaposed to an indistinguishable enemy 'other'.[4] The captions accompanying this photograph make reference to the 'youths confronting' (Spillet 2019) British soldiers, 'the fight against Irish republican terrorism' (Drury 2017), and the 'tough assignment' (McKinstry 2019) faced by British troops. Instead of regulating the Bloody Sunday image through the frame of state violence, these captions bind the image to dominant narratives of agential heroism, emphasizing the risk assumed by military personnel on operations and their 'vulnerability to violence' (Woodward, Winter, and Jenkings 2009, 216; see also Millar 2016, 16–17). In framing armed forces personnel as a community under siege, this image plays an important role in repackaging lethal force as 'necessary action in the face of a serious threat' (Hearty 2020, 220). Clear lines are thus drawn, distinct from those of formal accountability mechanisms, around legitimate and illegitimate violence in a way that justifies and naturalizes the use of violence against civilians.

The other images of the conflict again present anonymous military personnel on the streets of Northern Ireland engaged in generic operational tasks. Unlike the photograph discussed above, however, these images rarely feature a visible 'enemy'. Instead, they depict well-armed British soldiers doing 'their duty' (see Ingham and Knowles 2019). Much like the medals and uniform, the reproduction of these generic 'soldier-on-operations' photographs homogenizes the complexities of the conflict (Woodward, Winter, and Jenkings 2009). The undisputed visual representation of the conflict consolidates and ostensibly evidences a specific narrative in which the experiences of 'inherently good but hard-pressed' (Hearty 2020, 226) British soldiers are centred, negating the moral complexities and divergent memories of the conflict (see Leahy 2019). That British military personnel were exposed to extreme violence and serious threats throughout the conflict is undisputed (see Dixon 2008; O'Leary 2019). Yet, this

selective representation again frames state-sanctioned violence primarily as legitimate and justifiable, ultimately constituting the British Army as an uncontentious 'force for good' and decontextualizing the military from its involvement in the conflict.

These photographs of the conflict invite the reader to connect the past experiences of certain Northern Ireland veterans to their present-day activism and are accompanied by repeated textual references to the perceived 'witch hunt' and 'hounding' of Northern Ireland veterans (see Dinham 2017; Ingham 2018a; McKinstry 2019). Thus, the activists are positioned as victims of an unjustified legal assault that can be situated within contemporary narratives that demonize the work of 'left wing activist lawyers' (Williams 2018, 468) and, more broadly, formal processes of truth recovery. Although the visual references to this legal assault are limited – only 13 photographs feature courts, prosecutors, or lawyers – these images nonetheless provide important insight into how the victimhood of the veteran activists is constructed within contemporary socially circulating discourses. Notably, these photographs allude to the threat faced by the veterans through images of heroic, collective action, rather than through explicit displays of vulnerability. The most pertinent example depicts 'uniformed' activists against a backdrop of the United Kingdom Supreme Court. Rather than being constituted as passive victims subject to a legal assault, the activists are pictured smiling, with fists raised victoriously in the air or gesturing with a Churchillian 'V sign'. In contrast to the text of the articles, the image depicts a defiant form of collective action that eschews notions of vulnerability and dependency commonly associated to the figure of the veteran (see Bulmer and Jackson 2016; Herman and Yarwood 2015). The composition of the image enables the activists to be constituted as seemingly empowered agents engaged in a just battle against an unseen threat. This framing, consequently, demonstrates clear continuities with the images of the conflict, positioning the activists as legitimate, virtuous, and imperilled actors. Indeed, through the establishment of this legal enemy, the news reports invite the public to question the applicability and relevance of the laws and normative expectations that govern conflict to 'our boys'.

The simultaneous negotiation of heroic autonomy and vulnerability in both the images of the conflict and present-day activism plays an important role in enlisting support for the campaign. The displays of vulnerability throughout the articles – be it through the visible frailty of some of the activists, the invocation of a legal assault faced by this group, or their exposure to violence on the streets of Northern Ireland – provoke specific affects and emotions that are inexorably linked to the idea that veterans should be cared for (see Herman and Yarwood 2015; Millar 2016) thus inciting a protective response from the reader (Dixon 2018, 11). This emotive discourse of care regulates the manner in which the social movement is understood by limiting critical discussions of the use of lethal force (Millar 2016, 22; Woodward, Winter, and Jenkings 2009, 221). Yet, the presentation of military figures solely as in need of protection would appear to imply weakness, passivity, and femininity (Dixon 2018; McCartney 2011). Such notions, however, are traditionally presumed to be irreconcilable with popular conceptions of military power (inter alia Basham 2013; Belkin 2012; Enloe 2000). Thus, the simultaneous accompaniment of these narratives of vulnerability by visual and textual references to heroism mitigates the contradictions in this framing by constituting the activists as noble exemplars of military service to whom society owes a duty of care (see Millar 2019). The heroic representation of the social movement, thus, reaffirms the legitimacy of military

violence, encouraging unquestioning support of the veteran activists as imperilled heroes (Hearty 2020; McGarry 2015; McGovern 2019; Millar 2019; Partis-Jennings 2022). This framing of state violence as legitimate performs an important function in contextualizing the act of public inquiry and investigation into such violence as a form of betrayal. Displaying the activists as both vulnerable and heroic enables this group to be considered as both belonging to (through their role in administering 'legitimate' violence) yet simultaneously abandoned (through the investigation of such violence) by the 'failing' liberal state.

Calamities of War

The article now turns to the significance attached to one veteran, Dennis Hutchings, across the news coverage and considers how this figure is used as a further affective anchor for the narrative of betrayal by the state. Rather than individualizing Hutchings' criminal responsibility, the focus on this lone veteran enables the reframing of instances of military misconduct as seemingly incidental 'calamities of war' (Millar 2016, 22), which erases the role of individual soldiers within the violence and bloodiness of the conflict. In so doing, instances of extreme military violence are obscured and contained through an understanding of this violence as natural, necessary, and benevolent, again calling into question the necessity of inquiry into such action and establishing clear boundaries about which violences are deemed worthy of investigation.

Prior to his death in October 2021, Hutchings had assumed a distinctive status as the only named veteran to be consistently represented, with a photograph focussing specifically on him included in over a third of the articles analysed. In 1974, Hutchings was implicated in the fatal shooting of an unarmed civilian, John-Pat Cunningham, in County Armagh (see United Kingdom Supreme Court 2019). Investigations into the killing were conducted in 1975 and 2011 but were dismissed on both occasions (Mills and Torrance 2020, 21–22). In 2015, fresh charges of attempted murder were brought against Hutchings, which remained unresolved prior to his death.[5] Whilst this tragedy risks exposing violent and unsettling aspects of the Northern Ireland conflict, it has nonetheless provided a central rallying cry for some of those veterans engaged in anti-investigation activism (see Ingham 2018a, 2018b). In the text of the news articles, the severity of the allegations against Hutchings and the vulnerability of Cunningham is largely acknowledged, with the latter's learning disabilities referred to even in the headlines of some articles (see Duell 2019). Despite this, the reader is not provided with visible evidence of Hutchings' alleged crimes, instead a series of visual inferences distance him from the events of 1974. The most notable example of this is the omission of visual references to Cunningham. An image of the victim is included in only three of the 72 articles which provide the same grainy black and white portrait of Cunningham. The quality of these photographs appears to substantiate the temporal distance of the event, dissociating the present-day Hutchings from the specificities of this past tragedy.

Further distance is placed between Hutchings and the death of Cunningham through visual inferences to the veteran's age and ill health. 'Unruly' (Achter 2010, 46) veteran bodies – those that display mental or physical vulnerability – are routinely reclaimed and recast as 'unconquerable heroes' (Cree and Caddick 2020, 258) within public discourse. Indeed, Hutchings is most commonly pictured as marching, flanked by other veterans,

atop an APC, or standing defiantly in front of the supreme court in displays that would appear to confirm the veteran's continued capacity to overcome adversity (see Duell 2019; Ingham and Knowles 2019). Nonetheless, there are visual ruptures in this framing that explicitly invoke the vulnerability of the veteran. One example appears in a *MailOnline* article in which an elderly, smartly dressed Hutchings looks forlornly at the camera whilst seated alone in an armchair in what is presumably his home (Dunphy 2017). This image provides a momentary glimpse into a realm not ordinarily linked to the heroic masculine soldier, the private and familiar space of the home (see Hyde 2016). This intimate photo 'unsites' (Hyde 2016, 863) the allegations made against Hutchings from an institutionalized courtroom setting and reinscribes them within the privacy of the elderly man's home. In doing so, he is not constituted as an unconquerable hero, but rather as a vulnerable figure in need of protection. Moreover, this intimate photograph is set alongside another that depicts a younger Hutchings, standing, and dressed in a scarlet tunic adorned with medals, thereby providing evidence of the noble, past service of the now vulnerable veteran. These two photographs simultaneously emphasize the veteran's frailty whilst reaffirming his position as a heroic exemplar of past sacrifice, rather than as a politically disruptive figure. Taken together, these distancing techniques simultaneously render Cunningham an abstract, invisible tragedy of conflict and Hutchings an ageing hero to whom a duty of care, rather than continued investigation, is owed.

This duty of care is further emphasized through the association between Hutchings' image and the collective experience of military service. Rather than identifying Hutchings as anomalous to military service, he is also presented alongside war memorials (see Hughes 2017) and, in one *Express Online* article, poppies (Ingham 2018b). These symbols of remembrance form a part of the '"connective tissue" through which Britons can orient present practices of war remembrance to those of the past' (Basham 2016, 884), constituting a powerful symbol through which the population collectively comes to understand and react to military interventions (inter alia Basham 2016; Dixon 2018; Kelly 2012; Partis-Jennings 2022; Zehfuss 2009). The inclusion of such symbols within the images, thus, draws upon dominant discourses of military action that convey 'the knowability of the soldier as the untainted fallen hero' (Partis-Jennings 2022, 131). These allusions to the collective and historical continuity of Hutchings' military service play an important role in conditioning the intelligibility of the veteran and consequently the investigation of Cunningham's death. Most notably, the inclusion of other veterans in addition to symbols of remembrance orients the reader away from the individual experiences of Hutchings and towards the broader sacrifices of British military personnel; meanwhile positioning British military figures as 'the central loss in war' (Partis-Jennings 2022, 131). Accordingly, the death of Cunningham is reduced to a seemingly incidental and abstract calamity of war that does not appear to qualify as 'publicly grievable' (Butler 2004, 34) as the lives of British military personnel. Although the presence of highly regulated symbols of remembrance emphasizes the apparent value publicly attributed to the lives of military personnel, it simultaneously conditions the public to anticipate military deaths as a 'matter of course' (Zehfuss 2009, 439).

In foregrounding the risk to life voluntarily assumed by Hutchings and other veterans, the tabloid coverage of anti-investigation activism contributes to a conception that the British armed forces 'do not kill, but are killed' (Zehfuss 2009, 437). This separation of military personnel from the perpetration of violence positions them as 'untainted'

(Partis-Jennings 2022, 131) heroes, thus serving to erase the 'bloodiness of actual warfare' (Basham 2016, 892). These allusions to the heroic sacrifices made by military personnel serve to mitigate and contain counter-hegemonic narratives of this group of veterans as politically disruptive or the potential criminality of some members of the armed forces, transforming the movement instead into a deserving social cause (Millar 2016; Tidy 2015). In so doing, Hutchings and the activists are situated within a broader, timeless tapestry of British military operations that positions armed forces personnel as 'the chosen protectors and/or enforcers of good' (Hearty 2020, 222). Such figurations sit uneasily alongside the potentiality of public inquiry into the conduct of British military personnel by calling into question the desirability and necessity of the truth and account-ability supposedly delivered by such mechanisms.

Conclusion

The gendered and racialized displays of nationalism captured within these photographs and their attendant texts render popular media coverage of anti-investigation activism an interesting opening to explore how certain frames emerge, solidify, and fracture around representations of the state-led investigation into British military violence. This article has provided insight into how the stories told about anti-investigation activism shape (and are shaped by) our understanding of military figures and their proximity to supposedly legitimate forms of violence. It has argued that the disruptive idea of extreme violence introduced by the legacy investigations is disciplined and obscured through gendered and racialized narratives of heroism, vulnerability, and betrayal. This framing of anti-investigation activism (re)produces smooth narratives of past conflict that position the activists as a deserving moral cause, betrayed by continued scrutiny over their actions, thus extracting British military personnel from discussions of accountability and lesson-learning in the aftermath of conflict. By paying attention to the broader cultural context in which the investigation of British military personnel operates, this article has provided insight into how the legitimacy of military violence is established away from formal legal and truth-seeking mechanisms through the figure of the veteran.

Notes

1. The title "Backlash of the 'betrayed squaddies" is taken directly from one such article (Devlin 2018).
2. It is worth noting that allegations ranged from comparatively minor (yet persistent) abuses of the Catholic population in cases that were often settled outside of court (Bennett 2013), to those of murder that provoked multiple large-scale public inquiries (Rolston and Scraton 2005).
3. An examination of the movement itself and its situation within the broader context of veteran activism both within the UK and further afield (see Bulmer and Jackson 2016; Leitz 2011; Schrader 2019) would provide an interesting avenue for future research. However, the present article is concerned with the relationship between representations of this activism and socially circulating discourses of British militarism.
4. Of the 50 'conflict' photos, only six do not feature a British soldier within their frames.
5. In the weeks before his death, Hutchings (assisted by solicitor Phillip Barden) was still seeking to clear his name.

Acknowledgments

Disclosure statement

Funding

ORCID

Hannah K. Richards http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6609-8149

References

Achter, P. 2010. "Unruly Bodies: The Rhetorical Domestication of Twenty-First-Century Veterans of War." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 96 (1): 46–68. https://doi.org/10.1080/00335630903512697.

Åhäll, L. 2016. "The Dance of Militarisation: A Feminist Security Studies Take on 'The Political'." *Critical Studies on Security* 4 (2): 154–168. https://doi.org/10.1080/21624887.2016.1153933.

Basham, V. M. 2013. *War, Identity and the Liberal State: Everyday Experiences of the Geopolitical in the Armed Forces*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Basham, V. M. 2016. "Gender, Race, Militarism and Remembrance: The Everyday Geopolitics of the Poppy." *Gender, Place & Culture* 23 (6): 883–896. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2015.1090406.

Basham, V. M. 2018. "Liberal Militarism as Insecurity, Desire and Ambivalence: Gender, Race and the Everyday Geopolitics of War." *Security Dialogue* 49 (1–2): 32–43. https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010617744977.

Belkin, A. 2012. *Bring Me Men: Military Masculinity and the Benign Facade of American Empire, 1898-2001*. London: Hurst.

Bennett, H. 2013. "'Smoke without Fire'? Allegations Against the British Army in Northern Ireland, 1972–5." *Twentieth Century British History* 24 (2): 275–304. https://doi.org/10.1093/tcbh/hws006.

Bleiker, R. 2001. "The Aesthetic Turn in International Political Theory." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 30 (3): 509–533. https://doi.org/10.1177/03058298010300031001.

Browning, C. S., and J. Haigh. 2022. "Hierarchies of Heroism: Captain Tom, Spitfires, and the Limits of Militarized Vicarious Resilience During the COVID-19 Pandemic." *Global Studies Quarterly* 2 (3): 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1093/isagsq/ksac026.

Bulmer, S., and M. Eichler. 2017. "Unmaking Militarized Masculinity: Veterans and the Project of Military-To-Civilian Transition." *Critical Military Studies* 3 (2): 161–181. https://doi.org/10.1080/23337486.2017.1320055.

Bulmer, S., and D. Jackson. 2016. "'You Do Not Live in My Skin': Embodiment, Voice, and the Veteran." *Critical Military Studies* 2 (1–2): 25–40. https://doi.org/10.1080/23337486.2015.1118799.

Butler, J. 2004. *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. London: Verso.

Butler, J. 2009. *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?*. London: Verso.

Conservative Party. 2019. G*et Brexit Done Unleash Britain's Potential: The Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto 2019*.

Cottle, S. 2008. "Reporting Demonstrations: The Changing Media Politics of Dissent." *Media, Culture & Society* 30 (6): 853–872. https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443708096097.

Cree, A. 2020. "'People Want to See Tears': Military Heroes and the 'Constant Penelope' of the Uk's Military Wives Choir." *Gender, Place & Culture* 27 (2): 218–238. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2019.1615414.

Cree, A., and N. Caddick. 2020. "Unconquerable Heroes: Invictus, Redemption, and the Cultural Politics of Narrative." *Journal of War & Culture Studies* 13 (3): 258–278. https://doi.org/10.1080/17526272.2019.1615707.

della Porta, D. 2013. "What we can do with Visual Analysis in Social Movement Studies: Some (Self) Reflections." *Advances in the Visual Analysis of Social Movements (Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change)*, edited by Doerr N., A. Mattoni, and S. Teune, Vol. 35, 137–144. Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Limited. https://doi.org/10.1108/S0163-786X(2013)0000035010.

Devlin, K. 2018. "Backlash of the 'betrayed' squaddies." *Express Online*. https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/968876/northern-ireland-british-soldier-backlash .

Dinham, P. 2017. "Veterans Protest 'Witch hunt' Prosecutions of Troubles Veterans." *MailOnline* 14 April, 2017. http://www.dailymail.co.uk/~/article-4412308/index.html.

Dixon, P. 2008. *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace*. 2nd ed. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Dixon, P. 2018. *Warrior Nation: War, Militarisation and British Democracy*. London: Forces Watch.

Drohan, B. 2018. *Brutality in an Age of Human Rights: Activism and Counterinsurgency at the End of the British Empire*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Drury, I. 2017. "Thousands to March on Downing Street Over Plans to Re-Examine Every Army Killing in the Fight Against Irish Republican Terrorism." *MailOnline*. 16 September, 2017. https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4889918/Protests-probes-Arm-Irish-republican-killings.html.

Duell, M. 2019. "Former British Soldier, 77, Facing Prosecution for Shooting of Man with Learning Difficulties at Height of the Troubles in Northern Ireland Fights for Right to Have Trial by Jury." *MailOnline*. 14 March, 2019. https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6808787/Former-soldier-facing-prosecution-fights-right-jury-trial.html#.

Dunphy, L. 2017. "Army Veterans March on Westminster Against 'Witch-Hunt' Prosecution of Troubles Soldier Who Stands Accused of Attempted Murder After Shooting a Man with Learning Difficulties During the 1974 Conflict." *MailOnline*. 17 September 2017. https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4891858/Veterans-march-against-witch-hunt-prosecution.html .

Enloe, C. H. 2000. *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hearty, K. 2020. "Misrecognising the Victim of State Violence: Denial, 'Deep' Imperialism and Defending 'Our Boys'." *Crime, Law and Social Change* 73 (2): 217–235. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10611-019-09860-7.

Henry, M., and K. Natanel. 2016. "Militarisation as Diffusion: The Politics of Gender, Space and the Everyday." *Gender, Place & Culture* 23 (6): 850–856. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369x.2016.1164123.

Herman, A., and R. Yarwood. 2015. "From Warfare to Welfare: Veterans, Military Charities and the Blurred Spatiality of Post-Service Welfare in the United Kingdom." *Environment & Planning A: Economy & Space* 47 (12): 2628–2644. https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518X15614844.

Hoskins, A., and P. Shchelin. 2023. "The War Feed: Digital War in Plain Sight." *American Behavioral Scientist* 67 (3): 449–463. https://doi.org/10.1177/00027642221144848.

Hughes, R. 2017. "Former British Soldier Holds Vigil to End Prosecution for the Troubles." *Express Online*, 17 September, 2017. https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/855062/British-soldier-Northern-Ireland-Dennis-Hutchings-John-Pat-Cunningham-vigil-protest .

Hutchison, A. J., L. Halley Johnston, and J. David Breckon. 2010. "Using QSR-NVivo to Facilitate the Development of a Grounded Theory Project: An Account of a Worked Example." *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 13 (4): 283–302. https://doi.org/10.1080/13645570902996301.

Hyde, A. 2016. "The Present Tense of Afghanistan: Accounting for Space, Time and Gender in Processes of Militarisation." *Gender, Place & Culture* 23 (6): 857–868. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2015.1058759.

Ingham, J. 2018a. "Hounding of Ulster Veterans is a 'Breach of Human Rights." *Express Online*, 22 September, 2018. https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1021223/veterans-northern-ireland-soldiers-terrorists-good-friday-agreement.

Ingham, J. 2018b. "'Stop Witch-Hunt now' Outraged Ulster Veterans Tell Government." *Express Online*, 23 August, 2018. https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1007204/troubles-northern-ireland-historic-killings-good-friday-agreement.

Ingham, J., and M. Knowles. 2019. ""British Veterans Furious at Boris as PM May Drop Crucial Pledge from Queen's Speech." " *Express Online*. 14 October, 2019. https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1190321/Boris-Johnson-Queens-Speech-UK-Commons-Prime-Minister-veterans-British-army .

Joffe, H. 2008. "The Power of Visual Material: Persuasion, Emotion and Identification." *Diogenes* 55 (1): 84–93. https://doi.org/10.1177/0392192107087919.

Johnson, J. M., V. M. Basham, and O. D. Thomas. 2022. "Ordering Disorder: The Making of World Politics." *Review of International Studies* 48 (4): 607–625. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210522000183.

Kelly, J. 2012. "Popular Culture, Sport and the 'Hero'-Fication of British Militarism." *Sociology* 47 (4): 722–738. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038512453795.

Kleis Nielsen, R. 2015. "Introduction: The Uncertain Future of Local Journalism." In: R. Kleis Nielsen. edited by *Local Journalism: The Decline of Newspapers and the Rise of Digital Media*, 1–28. London: I.B. Tauris.

Leahy, T. 2019. "The Politics of Troubles Memories in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, 1998 to 2018." *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research* 32 (3): 293–314. https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610.2018.1517299.

Leitz, L. 2011. "Oppositional Identities: The Military Peace Movement's Challenge to Pro-Iraq War Frames." *Social Problems* 58 (2): 235–256. https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.2011.58.2.235.

Lundy, P. 2012. *Research Brief: Assessment of HET Review Processes and Procedures in Royal Military Police Investigation Cases*. Ulster: University of Ulster.

Lutz, C. 2002. "Making War at Home in the United States: Militarization and the Current Crisis." *American Anthropologist* 104 (3): 723–735. https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.2002.104.3.723.

Mackie, V. 2012. "The 'Afghan Girls': Media Representations and Frames of War." *Continuum* 26 (1): 115–131. https://doi.org/10.1080/10304312.2012.630146.

Martin, H. 2019. "British Veterans March to Protest Prosecution of 'Soldier F'." *MailOnline*. 19 April, 2019. https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6940369/British-Army-veterans-march-London-cities-UK-protest-prosecution-Soldier-F.html .

McCartney, H. 2011. "Hero, Victim or Villain? The Public Image of the British Soldier and Its Implications for Defense Policy." *Defense & Security Analysis* 27 (1): 43–54. https://doi.org/10.1080/14751798.2011.557213.

McCurdy, P. 2012. "Social Movements, Protest and Mainstream Media." *Sociology* 6 (3): 244–255. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9020.2011.00448.x.

McGarry, R. 2015. "War, Crime and Military Victimhood." *Critical Criminology* 23 (3): 255–275. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10612-015-9268-5.

McGovern, M. 2019. "State Violence, Empire, and the Figure of the "Soldier-victim" in Northern Ireland." *Journal of Labor and Society* 22 (2): 441–460. https://doi.org/10.1111/wusa.12421.

McKinstry, L. 2019. "Daily Express Wins Troubles Witch-Hunts – but the Fight for Justice Goes on." *Express Online* 16 May, 2019. https://www.express.co.uk/comment/columnists/leo-mckinstry/1128140/soldiers-bloody-sunday-prosecution-comment-leo-mckinstry.

McVeigh, S., and C. Nicola. 2013. "Introduction: Men After War." In *Men After War*, edited by S. McVeigh and N. Cooper, 1–17. London: Taylor & Francis Group.

Millar, K. M. 2016. "'They Need Our Help': Non-Governmental Organizations and the Subjectifying Dynamics of the Military as Social Cause." *Media, War & Conflict* 9 (1): 9–26. https://doi.org/10.1177/1750635215606867.

Millar, K. M. 2019. "The Plural of Soldier is Not Troops: The Politics of Groups in Legitimating Militaristic Violence." *Security Dialogue* 50 (3): 201–219. https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010619836337.

Mills, C., and D. Torrance. 2020. "Investigation of Former Armed Forces Personnel Who Served in Northern Ireland." *House of Commons Briefing Paper 8352*. London: House of Commons Library.

Murray, P. 2018. "Army Vets Planning 'Witch hunt' Protest". *Express Online* 21 October, 2018. https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1034420/army-vets-planning-witch-hunt-protest-uk-scotland .

Ofcom. 2019. *News Consumption in the UK: 2019 Report*.

O'Leary, B. 2019. *A Treatise on Northern Ireland*. vol. I. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Oliver, P. E., and G. Maney. 2000. "Political Processes and Local Newspaper Coverage of Protest Events: From Selection Bias to Triadic Interactions." *American Journal of Sociology* 106 (2): 463–505. https://doi.org/10.1086/316964.

Parry, K. 2011. "Images of Liberation? Visual Framing, Humanitarianism and British Press Photography During the 2003 Iraq Invasion." *Media, Culture & Society* 33 (8): 1185–1201. https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443711418274.

Parry, K. 2018. "Private Pictures and Public Secrets: Responding to Transgressive Soldier-Produced Imagery in United Kingdom News." *Journalism Studies* 19 (8): 1098–1115. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2016.1261633.

Partis-Jennings, H. 2022. "A Pint to Remember: The Pub as Community Militarism." *Critical Military Studies* 8 (2): 119–138. https://doi.org/10.1080/23337486.2020.1750261.

Peplow, S.2022 "'A Deadly Weapon Aimed at Our Hearts': The Scope and Composition of Lord Scarman's 1981 Public Inquiry." Paper presented at Making Sense of State Violence: Understanding Public Inquiries as Political Devices Special Issue Workshop Exeter, UK April

Powel, B. 2018. "Iraq, Afghanistan, and Rethinking the Post-Heroic Turn: Military Decorations as Indicators of Change in Warfare." *Journal of Historical Sociology* 31 (1): 16–31. https://doi.org/10.1111/johs.12175.

Robertson, A. 2019. "Soldier to Hand Back Medal in Protest at Bloody Sunday Prosecution." MailOnline, 15 April, 2019. https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6923721/Retired-soldier-hand-medal-protest-decision-prosecute-Bloody-Sunday-para.html .

Rolston, B. 2010. "'Trying to Reach the Future Through the past': Murals and Memory in Northern Ireland." *Crime Media Culture* 6 (3): 285–307. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741659010382335.

Rolston, B., and P. Scraton. 2005. "In the Full Glare of English Politics: Ireland, Inquiries and the British State." *The British Journal of Criminology* 45 (4): 547–564. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azi037.

Schrader, B. 2019. *Fight to Live, Live to Fight: Veteran Activism After War*. New York: SUNY.

Shepherd, L. J. 2008. "Visualising Violence: Legitimacy and Authority in the 'War on Terror.'." *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 1 (2): 213–226. https://doi.org/10.1080/17539150802184611.

Spillet, R. 2019. "A Bloody Outrage: Veterans' Fury as Former British Soldier WILL Be Charged with Murder Over Bloody Sunday Shootings While IRA Terrorists 'Are Cleansed of Crimes' - as Ex-Sinn Fein Leader Gerry Adams Holds Protest 'In Solidarity with Victims' Families'."

MailOnline, March 14, 2019. https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6807811/One-17-British-Army-veterans-face-Bloody-Sunday-charges.html.

Stone, R., and K. M. Socia. 2019. "Boy with Toy or Black Male with Gun: An Analysis of Online News Articles Covering the Shooting of Tamir Rice." *Race and Justice* 9 (3): 330–358. https://doi.org/10.1177/2153368716689594.

Tidy, J. 2015. "Forces Sauces and Eggs for Soldiers: Food, Nostalgia, and the Rehabilitation of the British Military." *Critical Military Studies* 1 (3): 220–232. https://doi.org/10.1080/23337486.2015.1011439.

United Kingdom Supreme Court. 2019. 'In the Matter of an Application by Dennis Hutchings for Judicial Review (Northern Ireland)' 2018/0040.

Ware, V. 2012. *Military Migrants: Fighting for YOUR Country*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Williams, A. 2018. "The Iraq Abuse Allegations and the Limits of UK Law." *Public Law* 3:461–481. https://librarysearch.cardiff.ac.uk/permalink/44WHELF_CAR/b7291a/cdi_thomsonreuters_westlawuk_I12204440691E11E8B674F14E19ED3FF0.

Woodward, R., T. Winter, and N. K. Jenkings. 2009. "Heroic Anxieties: The Figure of the British Soldier in Contemporary Print Media." *Journal of War & Culture Studies* 2 (2): 211–223. https://doi.org/10.1386/jwcs.2.2.211_1.

Zehfuss, M. 2009. "Hierarchies of Grief and the Possibility of War: Remembering UK Fatalities in Iraq." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 38 (2): 419–440. https://doi.org/10.1177/0305829809347540.