

COMPOSING THE WAR:
NATION AND SELF IN NARRATIVES OF THE
ROYAL NEW ZEALAND AIR FORCE'S
DEPLOYMENT TO THE 1991 GULF CONFLICT

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Dedicated to the men of 40 Squadron who served in the
Gulf

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Abstract

Self and nation, popularly considered to be of natural origin in the Western world, are in fact constructed through social processes. One of these processes is narrative: the stories that purport to describe the nation and the self actually bring them into being. This thesis argues that national identity and the individual subjectivity of citizens are mutually and simultaneously constitutive, as the stories that construct both phenomena draw on the same discourses. Nations are constructed through narratives told about their citizens, whilst individuals draw on shared discourses within the national domain in order to narrate their identities. According to scholars like Dawson (1994) and Summerfield (1998), who use the term “subjective composure” to describe this process, narrating life experiences allows people to construct an “acceptable” version of their past and their selves that can be comfortably lived with. When a person’s stories are authorised the identity produced by those stories is socially validated. In this thesis I explore the processes of the simultaneous construction of self and nation via an analysis of the narratives told about one event: the deployment of the Royal New Zealand Air Force’s 40 Squadron to the coalition force that fought Iraq in the 1991 Persian Gulf War. 40 Squadron’s own narratives of the event, collected in interviews in 2007, as well as media representations and government statements from the time of the Gulf War, are analysed in regards to their various identity projects, alongside memoirs and histories of both the Gulf War and earlier wars in which New Zealand has taken part, in order to illuminate the shared discourses against which New Zealand narratives of the Gulf War must find affirmation. I find that the identity project of the nation is at odds with those of individual 40 Squadron members; so that the same discourse cannot be used to achieve both projects. This results in several different definitions of 40 Squadron’s deployment. Whilst the government and media categorise it as a peacekeeping mission, members of 40 Squadron construct it as an instance of their either being “at war” or “on holiday.” Because only the peacekeeping categorisation circulates in the public sphere, 40 Squadron struggles to find affirmation for the stories they tell about their experience and therefore for the identities they narrate through those stories. National discourses may not always be workable for citizens attempting to compose acceptable selves.

Key words: 1991 Persian Gulf War, New Zealand, national identity, narrative, life history.

Chapter 1

Introduction: Stories

The Auckland War Memorial Museum is a site of patriotism, sacrifice, dedication and glory. Visitors walk around the classical columned building craning their heads to read, carved into its stone walls, the names of battles and battlefields at which New Zealand soldiers have fought.



Figure 1: Outside Wall of the Auckland War Memorial Museum, commemorating the Battle of the Somme, 1916.

Inside, on the floor dedicated to War, stained glass, flags and the names of the dead proliferate.



Figure 2: Stained glass, Auckland War Memorial Museum.



Figure 3: Names of the dead, Auckland War Memorial Museum.

They whom the inscriptions on these walls commemorate
 Are those from the provincial district of Auckland who
 at the call of King and Country left all that was dear to them
 endured hardness faced danger and
 finally passed out of the sight of men
 by the path of duty and self-sacrifice
 giving their lives that others might live in freedom
 let those who come after see to it that their names
 not be forgotten

reads a typical display.

I came to the museum in 2007 looking for information on the subjects and informants of this thesis; men who served in the 1991 Persian Gulf War with the Royal New

Zealand Air Force's 40 Squadron. I did not find much. Their war is dealt with in a small section located after displays on the New Zealand Wars, the Boer War, World War One and Two, Korea, Borneo, Malaysia and Vietnam. It does not have a display of its own, but rather is one of a large category of operations. There are small windows and video giving some detail on a selection of these operations, but the Gulf War is not one of them. The category is *New Zealand Peacekeepers around the World*, and in it, the war is not even named as a war. Rather, the place "Persian Gulf" is marked on a map of the world and listed on a scrolling screen with other places such as Bosnia, East Timor, and Bougainville. Compared to the majesty of the rest of the floor, it is rather prosaic.

This could perhaps be explained by the fact that no New Zealanders died during the Gulf War. One might expect that the Air Force Museum in Christchurch, as it specifically focuses on the arm of the Defence Force that deployed 40 Squadron, would provide more information. However, the story there is much the same as in the Auckland War Memorial museum. In an atmosphere set by epic aerial music like the theme songs from *2001: A Space Odyssey* and *Star Wars*, the Gulf War is once again found as just one example of a category, this time entitled *Keeping the Peace*. On a card with this same title and the subheading "Major recent RNZAF peace operations have included", "1990-1991 Operation Desert Storm (Gulf War)" is the third "peace operation" listed, between two United Nations observer missions.

Thus, New Zealand's involvement in what is internationally recognised as a war is conflated with and thus categorised as a peacekeeping mission. These museum displays are consistent with the official line on the deployment to the Gulf. For example, shortly after the war it was announced that 40 Squadron veterans would not receive a war pension later in life, indicating that they were not seen as war veterans¹. A 2007 article published in the Christchurch *Press*, which reported on comments made by Warren Cooper, the Defence Minister at the time of the war, explained that New Zealand had sent a medical team to the Gulf but never once mentioned 40 Squadron, as if they were never there (Eaton, 2007a, p.A7). Many of the members of

¹ However, this appears to have been quietly rethought; a Royal New Zealand Air Force magazine in 2001 reported that the Gulf Conflict was recognised for war pensions, as are peacekeeping missions in Bosnia, Sierra Leone and East Timor ("Are you Eligible for a War Pension?" 2001, p.27).

40 Squadron I spoke to felt undervalued or ignored whilst they were in the Gulf. One said, *our guys were at times working 20 hour days, working very hard yet... the government didn't want to acknowledge that*. This, he explained, *got up most of the contingent's noses*. Another said:

[I] think the government was a bit worried about how the public perceived [New Zealand's participation in the war] and so they pulled the humanitarian thing, the angle that they were pushing in public, so, we pretty much got forgotten for a while there, even though we were the biggest contingent.

A third said that if the peacekeeping spin was *just to appease bloody people that don't think you should be there, then [I would be] quite pissed off about that* - especially since *I remember the CO saying that...one of the scenarios painted to the government [was] that there could be the loss of a crew in a C-130, and that was an acceptable loss on their part*.

New Zealand sent 40 Squadron to Riyadh, in Saudi Arabia, and a medical contingent to Bahrain, as part of a coalition force approved by the United Nations and commanded largely by the United States of America under General H. Norman Schwarzkopf. This force was deployed to the Gulf region in order to liberate Kuwait from Iraq, which under Saddam Hussein had invaded and quickly subdued the sovereign nation on 2 August 1990. On 8 August 1990 Iraq annexed Kuwait, declaring sections of it to be part of the Iraqi province of Basra, and the remainder to be another, 19th, province of Iraq. This was based on Kuwait's historical relationship with Iraq; sections of the two nations had been united under the Ottoman Empire. Further, Iraq was heavily indebted to Kuwait as a result of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War, and its economic problems had been exacerbated by a collapse in oil prices caused by Kuwait's decision to produce more oil than mandated by OPEC quotas. The West was concerned that Iraq might next look to neighboring Saudi Arabia, another rich oil-producing country to which Iraq was even more heavily in debt. If Iraq were to conquer Saudi Arabia as it had done Kuwait, it would control a third of the world's oil supply. At the request of Kuwaiti and American delegates, the UN Security Council met within hours of the invasion and passed Resolution 660, condemning Iraq's actions and demanding a complete troop withdrawal. On August 7,

Operation Desert Shield, a defensive mission to protect Saudi Arabia, was launched and United States troops moved into that country. Economic sanctions against Iraq were also quickly implemented. In the months that followed, the U.S. worked to assemble a multinational coalition to oppose Iraq, as concurrently the UN passed further resolutions on the conflict. The most important of these was Resolution 678, passed on November 29 1990, which gave Iraq a deadline for withdrawal of January 15 1991, and authorised the coalition to uphold Resolution 660 by all necessary means. By the time the deadline passed unheeded by Iraq, 35 nations had joined the coalition, including Middle Eastern, African, European, Australasian and Asian nations. The second stage of the war effort, Operation Desert Storm, an offensive mission to liberate Kuwait, was launched on January 17 1991. Operation Desert Storm was composed of an air phase and a ground phase that began on February 24. Kuwait was retaken shortly thereafter on February 27.

No. 40 Squadron, established in 1943, is the Royal New Zealand Air Force's transport force, operating C130H Hercules and Boeing 757-200s. On 23 December 1990, the RNZAF deployed two Hercules, a cargo aircraft capable of short takeoffs and landings on unprepared runways, to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Initially 46 personnel accompanied the aircraft; these numbers eventually grew to 60. Attached to the Royal Air Force's No. 70 Squadron based at King Khalid International Airport, 40 Squadron were assisting with the build up of supplies to the frontlines, which has been characterised as moving the equivalent of Oklahoma City to the Saudi Arabian desert (Fox, 1995, p.143), and as "a logistical exercise of historic proportions" (Taylor, 1992, p.135). Veteran Greg Pryce wrote "we were supporting the British, primarily the 4th and 7th Armoured Brigades, which were building up in Qaisumah, a Saudi airfield 70km south of the Kuwaiti border" (2001, p.31). A British pamphlet on the operation collected by a member of 40 Squadron at the time reveals that an estimated 400, 000 tonnes of freight were moved to the Gulf, including about 80, 000 tonnes of ammunition and some 15,000 vehicles. Pryce wrote that over 98 days, from 27 December 1990 to 4 April 1991, 40 Squadron undertook 159 flying tasks. They carried mostly freight but during the ground war their emphasis changed to ferrying troops into Jubayl, a Saudi airstrip on the Gulf coast 200 kilometres south of Kuwait (Pryce, 2001, p.31). Members of 40 Squadron in the Gulf worked as aircrew- pilots,

navigators, loadmasters- and ground crew- avionics and aircraft technicians, who carried out maintenance on the Hercules.

Making War Stories

The main sources of data and central focus of interest of this thesis are the narratives that 40 Squadron tell of their experience in the 1991 Gulf War, and the problems they encounter in establishing these narratives as war stories. These problems stem from two sources: the public discourse that defines their deployment to the Gulf as a peacekeeping mission, and their role as support troops. Studies that focus on the stories of support troops are relatively uncommon:

personal narratives by male non-combatant military persons- white males especially- are easily the most neglected of all military life writing in Anglo American criticism, because they are ignored both by scholars who concentrate on the combat memoir and by those who focus on historically marginalised voices (Vernon, 2004, p.3).

According to Vernon, “military and veteran culture tends to judge its members according to a hierarchy not of military rank but of proximity to and experience with the enemy” (2004, p.2). In the American defence forces, rear support troops have been known by the derogatory term “REMFs” (Rear Echelon Mother-Fuckers) since the Vietnam War. One Vietnam veteran, Sossaman, states that rear echelon troops form “a subculture within the military” (1989, p.76). Sossaman wrote to the *Journal of American Folklore* to correct an article on the wearing of personalised jackets during the War. He wanted the public to know that it was not combat troops who wore jackets with sayings such as “I’ve spent my time in hell”, as the article implied, but rather rear troops, who had access to tailors, and who “perhaps sought to dramatise their service” (1989, p.76). Similarly, Moskos writes, “the notion that danger was equally widespread throughout Vietnam regardless of station was one, as would be expected, that was fostered by many rear-area American servicemen” (1972, p.81). It is entirely possible that in these examples authors with prejudices are denigrating support troops, but some rear echelon veterans do appear to be defensive about their war-time activities. Two books written about experiences in World War II

by non-combat troops (one from New Zealand) contain the phrase “we also served” in the title (Ingham, 1991; Stuart, 1994) and one is called *We made the Headlines Possible: The Critical Contribution of the Rear Echelon in World War II* (Havens, 2002). These books appear to be attempts at self-affirmation and suggest that the authors believe the public do not recognise their contribution. One Vietnam support veteran writes “to [the public’s] way of thinking we are war veterans in name only. And I think it’s because the day-to-day life of the average REMF just does not fit the Hollywood stereotype image” (Wheatley, 2005).

Hynes writes that whilst World War II produced many romantic adventure stories of aerial dogfights, no such stories came out of Vietnam: “it was too late in the history of aerial warfare for that: the planes were too fast, the electronic weapons were too automatic, the distances between planes were too great, to make their combats war stories” (1997, p.216). Hynes is suggesting that not all experiences that take place during a war can be made into what society at large would consider “war stories”- they do not have the formulaic or stereotypical content that people expect these to contain. He says of Vietnam that “mass killing and defensiveness don’t make heroic war stories” (1997, p.215) and fixing planes and transporting supplies does not seem to have much potential either.

Their rear support role is thus the first of two factors working against 40 Squadron’s narratives of their Gulf deployment being recognised as “war stories”. However, if we follow Vernon’s military hierarchy, 40 Squadron tops the New Zealand Defence Force in terms of the Gulf War, as they had the most experience of the enemy (in the form of coming under Scud missile attack, whilst the medical unit remained largely unneeded in Bahrain). Only around 100 New Zealanders served in the Gulf, and all were in support roles. Thus the transport team and the medical team must fill the role of representatives of the country, because there were no frontline soldiers who might otherwise be favoured to do so. The second thing working against 40 Squadron in narrating their experiences as war stories is the way in which they are deployed in the national identity project. For, as the museums show, in the public sphere they have been defined as not having been at war at all, but rather on a peacekeeping mission.

Focus and Method

This thesis is not about the Gulf War itself per se but is rather about the stories that have been told about that war in New Zealand. These narratives provide information on the war but they also do much more. Two phenomena are constructed through them: the nation of New Zealand, and the subjectivities of those who were involved. It is because 40 Squadron construct their subjectivities through narrative that it matters whether or not they can make war stories out of their experience. This thesis then is also about this process of identity construction through storytelling.

I could not undertake traditional participant-observation, in that there was no field in which I could live for an extended period of time. Yet even if by some double miracle of time travel and gaining military permission I could have done fieldwork at the Gulf War, it would not have been particularly helpful for this topic. Because of the focus on narrative, my method consisted largely of listening to and reading, and then analysing, stories. In order to examine the construction of New Zealand's nationhood, I collected stories about New Zealand's involvement in the Gulf War told in the public sphere. I primarily examine articles from two of the country's major newspapers that chronicled the events as they occurred; the museum displays mentioned above are of course also examples of public narratives of the Gulf War. In order to examine the construction of individual subjectivities, I analyse the stories that New Zealand participants tell about their experiences in the Gulf. Because I argue that these two types of stories and two forms of identity construction are not unconnected, I analyse public and individual narratives against each other. Participants' narratives are also analysed against narratives that have gained public recognition as "war stories".

The Gulf War stories of individual participants were obtained through interviewing ten 40 Squadron Gulf War veterans over the summer of 2006-2007, and taking copies of three photo albums assembled by some of these same men shortly after they returned home from the war in 1991. Informants showed me newspaper clippings, old gear such as gas masks and rifle handbooks, and mementos such as shells and small pieces of scud missile picked up off the ground. I even got a few demonstrations of

the correct procedure during a gas attack. In a way, these interviews could be said to be participant-observation. I was a participant in the act of story-telling; veterans were telling their war stories to and going through their war albums with me. I acted as an audience, and stories may be seen as products of the interaction between narrator and audience (Malson, 2004, p.157; Tonkin, 1992, p.2).

Because I was interested in the informants' identity construction rather than in seeking any particular specific information or data about the war, I tried to encourage the informants to direct the interview as much as possible themselves, and to set the content and structure of the discussion. Thus the interviews were semi-structured, and I tried to make most questions as general as possible, so that they would act as jumping off points rather than directives. Most informants did use the questions as stimuli, with only one informant giving short, direct, undeviating answers to the questions. In at least one case an informant began telling his story to me before I had even begun to think about asking a question, and it was clear that others had thought about what they wanted to say before my arrival. There were a few more specific questions; these came out of a conversation that I had with an informant before I began the interviews proper.

It was of course inevitable that I influenced the narratives to some degree. If an informant stopped talking I would ask a further question in order to prompt discussion. Further, ethical considerations require that participants are given an information sheet which clearly outlines the nature of the project. As such, my informants came to the interview with an idea of what sort of topics I was interested in (See Appendix). Although these topics were broad and general, they were shaped by my preconceptions. At least once during an interview, my assumptions led me to make a comment that represented the discourse that support troops were "war veterans in name only" (Wheatley, 2005), when I assumed that fixing planes would be an anticlimax for a 40 Squadron member who had witnessed fighter aircraft converging for Operation Desert Storm. This comment carried an assumption that these fighters were more involved in the war than was the informant. The informant reacted by explaining that he too played an integral part in Operation Desert Storm, so although offensive, my blunder both yielded information and is a good example of

how 40 Squadron have to contend with public constructions of their role in attempting to tell war stories.

Potential informants were identified through the snowball method. I began the process with a personal contact who had served in the Gulf. This contact put me in touch with another veteran, who, because he was still in the military, had access to the military emails of several other veterans. Some of these men then directed me to other veterans with whom they were still in touch; most of them were not still in the military. Everybody that I approached had been told about me and my project by a friend or former colleague before I contacted them. In the case of those still in the military, I then emailed the potential informant at the address I was provided. In the case of the second group, the informant indicated to whoever had mentioned me to them that they were willing to participate in the project and that I could be given their contact details. There was no selection process as such; since the group of interest is so small (numbering only 60 people) and is now widely dispersed, I was eager to talk to anyone I could discover who was willing to tell their story. An unplanned result of this is that the majority of men interviewed served in ground rather than air crews. Many of those I began the process with were ground crew, and it was their colleagues on these same crews with whom they tended to stay in contact.

I was informed by a RNZAF Public Information Officer that informants who were no longer in the military had freedom of speech in talking to me about their experiences in the Gulf War, whilst those still in the military would have to seek permission to do so from their superior officers. One informant very kindly sought and was granted blanket permission for all veterans who were willing to speak to me. The interviews themselves took place in Auckland, Christchurch, and outlying areas (there are Air Force Bases or workplaces near or in both Christchurch and Auckland, and both cities also have major airports at which those no longer in the military continue to work in the aircraft field). Interviews took place wherever was most convenient for informants, most often homes and workplaces (Air Force and civilian). Most interviews took between one and two hours. The interviews were all recorded with permission. All informants were offered transcripts of their interviews, although only a few took me up on this, and none requested any changes or omissions. All informants were told that they would be given pseudonyms. The only names of

veterans that are real in this thesis are those that appeared in newspapers at the time of the war and were therefore publicly known.

The Narration of Nationhood

The Gulf War, like many of the wars of the last century, was in many ways about nationality. In fact, the UN's stated reason for becoming involved was to defend Kuwait's national sovereignty and thus the very concept of national sovereignty itself (Calhoun, 1997, p.2). The Gulf War was important to the nationhood of each country that participated, but not for the same reasons. The very nation of Kuwait was threatened, as it battled for independence. Iraq meanwhile saw Kuwait as part of itself. The United States was not at risk, but the war was still important as a chance to re-establish its military superiority and good international reputation after the disaster that was the Vietnam War. For New Zealand, the Gulf War had significance in that an ability to take part meaningfully in international conflicts had always been a key element of the national identity project.

The world today is divided and organised by the category of nation. Nationalism is "embedded in our entire view of the world- organising citizenship and passports, the way we look at history, the way we divide up literatures and cinemas, the way we compete in the Olympic Games" (Calhoun, 1997, p.1) and other sporting events. Even those words and organisations that transcend national boundaries, like "*international*" or the United *Nations*, reveal how deep this categorisation runs. Nations so permeate our lives that they are taken for granted, perceived as an entirely natural or God-given state of affairs. However, geographers could tell us that the boundaries of the nations that we recognise today are not given by the character of the earth's surface (Calhoun, 1997, p.16). Nor are nations communities proper, in the sense of face to face interaction. Most citizens will never meet or even know of each other. Yet they may still feel connected to one another (Anderson, 2005, p.49). Nations, in other words, are constructed through social processes. "Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist" Gellner famously wrote (Gellner cited in Anderson, 2005, p.49). This is not to equate, as Anderson says, "'invention' to 'fabrication' and 'falsity'" rather than to "imagining"

and “creation” (2005, p. 49). A nation is not less real because it is created rather than natural, but it does have to be continuously brought into being and perpetuated. Thus, following Abu-Lughod, it must be realised that we cannot so much study “the nation” as a fixed object but rather “nations at particular moments in their histories. The dynamics within and the forces that shape a nation are always in flux, even if there are periods of relative stability” (Abu-Lughod, 2005, p.14).

One of the social processes through which nations are constructed is narration. Narratives of the nation, about whom and what makes it up and about its distinct identity, are told through many media: history, education, tourism, sports, arts, advertising, and news. All of those citizens who will never meet one another nevertheless hear the same stories, may feel personally connected to them, and imagine that their fellow citizen strangers are hearing and feeling connected though them too. The nation is naturalised by patterning the narratives that constitute it after the human life cycle. Danforth writes, “since nations are frequently personified [...] national narratives often assume biographical form. A narrative of national progress may begin with a nation’s birth, proceed through its coming of age, and end when it reaches maturity” (Danforth, 2001, p.363).

The Narration of Subjectivity

Subjectivity, like the nation, is something that needs to be brought into being, and again narrative is central to these processes. The term “personal narratives” is increasingly popular in the social sciences. Recently it has taken the place of those terms that indicate an individual’s sequential and coherent narration of their life, such as “life history” or “biography” (Caplan, 1997, p.14), and it is also taken to encompass diaries, journals, letters and autobiographies (Caplan, 1997, p.14), memoirs, legal testimony, medical history, eulogy, gossip and dinner table conversation (Ochs and Capps, 1996, p.19-20). Narrative is a “temporal sequencing of events” (Andrews et al., 2004, p.6), “a linking of different things together in some sort of order” (Craib, 2004, p.64). Thus, almost every statement we produce about ourselves “is, by definition, part of a narrative” (Craib, 2004, p.64). There are two forms of personal narratives analysed in this thesis: the stories orally related to me in

the interviews this past year, and the photo albums compiled 17 years ago. The interviews conducted broadly followed the life history method: the practice of asking an informant to tell the story of their life in their own words. What I collected however were not life histories proper, as my first question dealt not with birth or childhood but with the informants' induction into the military: *Tell me your reasons for joining the Air Force*. Having been told that my research was on the War, informants tended to take their narratives to the point of their deployment fairly quickly. I also asked questions about the post-war period, but these too were focused on their role in the Defence Forces: *were you deployed anywhere else?; why did you leave/stay in the Air Force?* Thus, what I collected could be said to be histories of, specifically, the informants' military lives. There are important differences between these histories and the earlier, visual narration of the war contained in the photo albums, and these differences will be discussed later. However, both share the common feature of all personal narratives: they are a process of the "construction of self, the evolution of subjectivity" (The Personal Narrative Group, as cited by Caplan, 1997, p.14).

By telling stories, either to other people or to oneself through daydreams, people construct their identities. Narrative "is radical, creating us at the very moment it is being created" (Andrews et al., 2004, p.77), meaning that the self "is a psychosocial, narrative production" (Denzin, 2004, p.xi). This is linked to the dominant Western concept of selfhood: a self that is separate from others, coherent, and which has continuity through time. Ochs and Capps, for example, say that between 8 to 18 months, "the normally developing child" "gains a sense of "me" as a coherent, continuous, and discrete being over time" (Ochs and Capps, 1996, p.29). What this implies is that if a child does not develop such a sense of self they may be defined as abnormal. Selfhood tends to be partially understood "through reference to constant corporeal and psychological criteria such as character and habits" (McNay, 2000, p.88), and these are seen to differ from those of other individuals. This discourse of continuous and coherent selves is normalised in the Western world. However, it has been re-apprised under post-modernist thinking. The concept "appears now, not as a universal "truth", but as a sociohistorically specific discursive construction that is ...peculiar to the particular historic period of post-enlightenment, modern Western society" (Malson, 2004, p.151). Post-modern theorists use words like fragmented and

multiple to describe subjectivity(s), and see selfhood as “a plural, uncertain and shifting collectivity...of discursively constituted subjectivities and positionings” (Malson, 2004, p.151). But such a view has undoubtedly not spread to the general Western public². Many people, for example, talk about “finding themselves,” suggesting they believe they have one pre-existent authentic self that can be “found.” People also use phrases like “he was acting out of character” or “he wasn’t himself”- a person is expected to act and react in similar ways in different situations, and if they do not it is noticeable and may be a cause for concern. Tellingly, we “still define sanity and insanity in terms of” the coherent, unitary self (Davis, 1985, p.15) with those people who seem to have two or more personalities within one body being labelled mentally ill with dissociative identity disorder.

Thus the coherent, continuous self, not as previously thought a universal fact of human life, is constructed. It is a process or project rather than a given, and is achieved (or not) rather than acquired. Narrative, because it is the linking together of different phenomena, is a primary method in this process, acting as “a vehicle for imposing order on otherwise disconnected experiences” (Ochs and Capps, 1996, p.24). As we tell stories about ourselves, disparate experiences may be linked chronologically or thematically, so that they “acquire a certain coherence” (Andrews et al., 2004, p.77): “these stories constitute the fundamental linkage across our lives” (Andrews et al., 2004, p.78). Not only does narrative enable speakers to connect events from their past, it enables them to make these events relevant to whatever situations they are dealing with in the present (Abell et al., 2004, p.182). If a person did something in his past that he would never do now, for example, he can still gain a sense of himself as the same person by narrating a story of change. Perhaps one might recount experiences that led their character to evolve, or say something like “I was young then,” invoking the common discourse that people mature and become more responsible through time because of age and experience and/or the stabilising of hormones. Thus, “narrative activity seeks to bridge a self that felt and acted in the past, a self that feels and acts in the present, and an anticipated or hypothetical self that is projected to feel and act in some as yet unrealised moment” (Ochs and Capps, 1996, p.29). That is, “we use narrative as a tool of probing and forging connections

² Indeed Malson acknowledges that the fragmented self is another socioculturally specific concept, one that has come out of the techniques of discourse analysis (Malson, 2004, p.158).

between our unstable, situated selves” (Ochs and Capps, 1996, p.29). While the fact that the coherent self is constructed is important to recognise, following such processes is not for the most part the direction I take here. Rather, I will focus on the sometimes difficult process of taking up particular subject positions (a good person, a brave soldier) through narrative. It should be remembered however that I am focusing on only one facet of each informant’s subjectivity, his occupation of a military subject position. Each man will also occupy other subject positions in different situations. They are airmen at work, but at home, for example, they are fathers and husbands.

The conception of the process of identity construction that I will be using throughout this thesis is one detailed by three scholars of war narratives, Dawson (1994), Summerfield (1998) and Thomson (1994). These scholars write that the word "composure" is an appropriate term for this process because of its double meaning: we "compose" or construct memories and stories, and these make us feel comfortable with our lives and identities- that is, they bring us "composure" (Thomson, 1994, p.8, Summerfield, 1998, p.17). The vital part of the process is the establishment of an acceptable self, “a version of the self which can be lived with in relative psychic comfort” (Summerfield, 1998, p.17). An extremely simplified example of this would be a World War Two veteran who lost friends during the war and who himself had to kill a few enemies telling a story that presented his war as a struggle between good and evil, a conflict necessary to save the world, freedom and democracy from a barbaric Hitler. This narrative would indicate that the veteran had had no choice but to kill (ie. he is not a bad person, as society would normally deem someone who had taken a life) and that his friends had not died in vain but in order to protect future generations. Experiences remembered and narrated may not be exact representations of the past, but will draw on the aspects of it that fit the identity that the individual is constructing for himself at the time of narration (Thomson, 1994, p.10). Thus the telling of past events is linked to the narrator’s present feelings and concerns or expectations about their future (Freeman, 2004, pp.82 & 85-88; Ochs and Capps, 1996, p.25). Therefore, the fact that 40 Squadron’s two forms of personal narrative occurred 15 years apart could be very important; an informant may well be interested in narrating a different identity now than he did so long ago.

Narration of one’s subjectivity however is not an individual process, and it operates

through the use of public discourses. Cultural and social formations shape not only the way in which people understand and represent what has happened to them, but also the context within which these things actually happen (Summerfield, 1998, p.11-12). Narrators tend to draw on public discourses and representations of the past in order to construct their own personal history (Summerfield, 1998, pp.15-16), which offer forms and general interpretative categories with which people can make sense of what has happened to them (Thomson, 1994, p.8). There is, as Summerfield terms it, “some sort of feedback loop” (1998, p.15) between personal accounts and public discourses. However, public discourses, which are abstract and generalised, “may come to have an apparent life of their own, independent of any particular, concrete historical conditions, constituting a tradition of recognisable public forms that tends both to define and to limit imaginative possibilities” (Dawson, 1994, p.25).

Why do people tend to narrate personal stories that to some degree fit public discourses? The subjective composure sought by telling stories depends on social recognition, which confirms that the self and world narrated by the individual are not fantasies that exist only in their minds but actually belong within “shared, collective identities and realities” (Dawson, 1994, p.23). According to Thomson, if our memories and identities do not fit public discourse, they may not find affirmation, and the alternative of alienation and exclusion may be psychologically devastating (1994, p.11). This is why experiences such as those gone through by two Vietnam War nurses, Lynda van Devanter and Winnie Smith, are so painful: both women attempted to show slides to their families when they got home, but when both began talking about the causalities they had to deal with on a daily basis, each woman’s respective mother told her not to show those slides, or tell those stories, because no one wanted to hear it (Bates, 1996, pp.169-170). Audiences vary, and the social recognition offered within any specific community or subgroup will be closely related to the cultural values it holds in common. This is a determining influence on the narrative told (Summerfield, 1998, p.20). Furthermore, people cannot just create any identity for themselves. As Craib points out, we may know or suspect when an individual’s story does not correlate with our own experiences, and classify this as lying or employing propaganda. Narratives are not sacred, but can be judged as true or false by those who hear or read them (Craib, 2004, p.65). Thus, the construction of one’s self through social story telling is intersubjective.

But neither does this mean the subject is absolutely constricted by public discourses. Privately and locally told soldiers' stories are by no means wholly determined by public and national forms, and can and do influence these discourses (Summerfield, 1998, p.15). There tend to be multiple discourses in any one field, giving the storyteller a degree of choice. Although "not free to choose any interpretation he wishes" agents nevertheless "[enjoy] the leeway to reconstruct the meaning of [their] personal history, remaking it for present concerns...and for the advancement of his or her social identities" (Lomsky-Feder, 2004, p.85). Many scholars see individuals as limited but not determined by discourses (Wong, 2004, p.286), with discourses providing "possibilities as opposed to essences" (Thompson, 2003, p.419), enabling as well as limiting (Papadakis, 1998, p.162) a person's narrative potential.

As McNay points out, the fact that life history has been used primarily by feminist scholars to obtain women's narratives, because "they reveal the reality of life that runs counter to patriarchal norms" means that the method comes with an underlying assumption that dominant social discourses can be challenged in personal narratives (McNay, 2000, p.82). Some scholars deal with this by treating dominant narratives as reference points in personal narratives, something that is always present and influential, but which can be accepted or rejected, or some more complicated combination thereof (See, for example, Andrews et al., 2004, p.78; Stewart and Malley, 2004, pp.224-225). This means that the men of 40 Squadron do not necessarily have to accept and utilise the categorisation of their deployment as a peacekeeping mission in their own stories.

Visual Narratives

Photographs are just as much an exercise in the construction of an individual's history and identity as is verbal story telling. What is photographed, how the shot is composed and how resultant photos are arranged in relation to one another are all very deliberate choices. Lozada, for example, shows that the camera and photographs "provide resources for what Appadurai calls 'experiments with self-making'" (Lozada, 2006, p.88). When he lent his camera to the villagers of Little Rome, in

Southern China, Lozada found that the formal photographs they took- in which “subjects were clearly positioned in a chosen location and posed” (Lozada, 2006, p.97) - had a common backdrop. This was a marker of modern technology such as a television or stereo. Lozada argues that in this “local framing” of photographs (he himself would not pose with a TV) the technological objects are “selectively chosen to highlight the family’s prosperity and modern lifestyle” (2006, p.97). In fact, photos are a particularly good method of identity construction, given that they are widely seen to be objective records of the truth.

Photographs too are influenced by public discourses, both the same ones that inform oral stories as well as dominant visual vocabularies. For example, people do not take family photographs in a vacuum, but rather are influenced by discourses and images of families that they have encountered in newspapers, films, and so on (Hirsch, 1999, p.xiv). Bouquet provides an example of this when discussing how “photography does not simply find ready-made families, but has an active hand in making them appear.” She shows the power of the traditional triangular family pose of the child between the mother and the father. The strength of this composition is such that placing people who may not be seen as kin in the traditional sense (for example a mother, her daughter, and the fertility doctor who made the pregnancy possible) or even disparate beings in paintings (a dog, a cat and a child in a work by Galan) into this pose constitutes them as a family: “we see what we have learned to see out of very unfamiliar elements” (Bouquet, 2000, p.16). In the case of photograph albums compiled by 40 Squadron, it is the discourses and dominant visual vocabularies of war that are influential.

Differences in Personal Narrative Genres

Although 40 Squadron’s interviews and photograph albums are both acts of identity construction, not all personal narratives work in exactly the same ways to produce selves. Life history-type interviews tend to be more social or intersubjective than some other types of personal narratives. Life history “differs from autobiography in that it is an immediate response to a demand posed by another and carries within it the expectations of that other” (Crapanzano cited in Caplan, 1997, pp.11-12). Life history

research participants differ from autobiographers in that they did not necessarily decide themselves to tell their life story. They agreed to do so when asked, but may never have done so under their own auspices. As a result, the life history in question is a product of the relationship between narrator and audience (Tonkin, 1992, p.2). The audience of the researcher may act as an especially strong determining force on what the participant will choose to say. Most research participants know what particular part of their lives the researcher is most interested in. Discussing her work on anorexia nervosa, Malson says, “by asking participants to talk as “anorexic women,” other accounts that they might have given of themselves in a different context were thereby excluded” (2004, p.159). Similarly, when I contacted my research participants, I told them I wanted to interview them about the Gulf War, and when I met them, I handed them an information sheet with the words “Gulf War servicemen” on it. In our encounter, it was me, not my research participants, who first constructed them as war veterans. Had they been asked simply “tell me the story of your life” they may not have constructed themselves as primarily military men at all. This becomes especially important in this case because one interviewee, no longer in the forces, expressed the opinion that the Gulf War was “not worth” talking to people about. Thus, life history may be much more closely orientated to a known audience need or desire than other forms of personal narrative such as autobiography, where the audience is a vague, unknown reading public that the author may never have contact with, or especially diaries and journals, which may never be intended to be seen by any audience. The self constructed in life history may also differ from that constituted in other highly social forms of personal narrative such as letters or gossip, as the relationship between the narrator and audience is different in that narrators will tend to have a closer personal relationship with those they write or gossip to. The photograph albums, on the other hand, are similar to autobiographies in that the informants did initiate their creation, most likely as a record for themselves and to show to family and friends. They themselves decided what would be included in the narrative and how, with no guidance or input by an interviewer.

The Mutual Narration of Nationhood and Subjectivity

Because of the feedback loop between public stories and personal stories, nationhood and subjectivities are mutually and simultaneously constitutive. As Wong writes, “subjectivities are simultaneously shaped by and help to shape historical, structural, and cultural processes in the society in which they are situated” (2004, p.261).

Nationality is seen as a fundamental component of selfhood in the modern Western world. The leading scholars on nationalism agree that a person without a nation is viewed as a very strange person indeed. Gellner writes, “having a nation is not an inherent attribute of humanity, but it has now come to appear as such” (1983, p.6): “A man must have a nationality as he must have a nose and two ears; a deficiency in any of these particulars is not inconceivable and does from time to time occur, but only as a result of some disaster, and it is itself a disaster of a kind” (1983, p.6). Similarly, Anderson writes, “in the modern world everyone can, should, will ‘have’ a nationality, as he or she ‘has’ a gender” (2005, p.49).

I too take the view that nationhood is integral to the individual subjectivity of the nation’s citizens. This is not to assume that having a nation is as natural as having a nose, or that, as Mansfield warns us, “there is a single black, white, Asian, Russian, Parisian, Serbian, or British subject about whom definitive statements can be made” (2000, p.132). Rather, it is to recognise that many of the discourses that are available for individuals to draw on in constructing their identities are those same discourses that constitute nationhood. The nation is currently one of the most important groups to which humankind is constructed as belonging. It is members of one’s nation that confer or deny social recognition to one’s stories, and thus affirmation to one’s identity, based upon shared discourses. Holloway writes that discourses make available positions for subjects to take up (1984, p.236). “The occupation of a particular subject position produces a particular subjectivity, i.e. the experience of being ...constituted as a particular kind of person...with a particular kind of self” (Morris, 2002, p.45). Multiple discourses exist in the same society at the same time,

and each will provide different subject positions. According to Hollway, individuals take up particular subject positions over others because they have an (perhaps subconscious) investment in that position: it brings them some benefit or reward (1984, pp.238-9). By occupying certain subject positions an individual may gain status, or, also importantly, acceptance as “normal”. Some subject positions offer higher rewards than do others (Morris, 2002, pp.45-47). For example, in New Zealand, founded as it was on a rural economy, the subject position of high country farmer brings rewards of elite status (Morris, 2002). Such powerful subject positions will almost guarantee public affirmation and the individual is thus likely to achieve subjective composure. The subject position of national citizen offered in national discourses will bring benefits such as those related to the law and welfare as well as emotional rewards such as feelings of belonging. Individuals may accordingly take up these subject positions by narrating themselves as having strong ties to the history of the nation or shared national characteristics. In discourses of the nation subject positions that are particularly rewarding may be those that are seen to have served the country. For example the subject position that Dawson (1994) terms “soldier hero” will bring those who occupy it status and recognition, as soldier heroes tend to be honoured and commemorated in various ways, such as through memorials and the setting aside of annual days of remembrance.

Nations are in fact often represented through the identities of their individual citizens. Certain groups of people may be especially important in embodying the nation: particular classes or genders, ambassadors of the nation on the global stage, such as soldiers or sportsmen. In India, for example, “the middle class constructed the nation in a highly ‘idealised’ version of its own image” where the class’ defining characteristic was respectability (Singh, 2007, p.93). Gendered subject positions are often particularly important in representing the nation. For example, “scholars have widely noted that nation-building discourses often situate women as symbolically central in embodying the idea of the nation” (Bloch, 2005, p.543). In Victorian Britain women were expected to act as an “Angel of the House,” keeping their homes and families good and pure so that this would carry over into the public sphere and the nation would remain so. The relative status of women can also act as a key indicator of a nation’s modernity (Bloch, 2005, p.543). Women in Hong Kong construct

themselves as more progressive and enlightened than their Mainland China counterparts, and so subsequently and simultaneously construct Hong Kong as retaining a distinct, and more modern, identity from China (Wong, 2004). Women therefore, through the process of their own identity construction, were actively engaged “in articulating various narratives of the nation” (Wong, 2004, p.286). In New Zealand, it is males who represent the nation. Jock Phillips argues that in New Zealand males and masculinity have become unusually closely identified with the process of national definition: “there can be few nations which have so single-mindedly defined themselves through male heroes” (1996, p.vii). War has been central to this process: World War One established “the soldier as the shining personification of the New Zealand male, and indeed of New Zealand itself” (Phillips, 1996, p.163). The importance of the subject positions of male and soldier to the project of national identity means that they will offer particularly high rewards.

Dawson shows that British national legends of soldier heroes were implicated in his developing identity as a young boy, as he would take up the subject position of soldier hero through play in order to achieve subjective composure (1994, pp.244-281). Citizens can strategically deploy national stories to tell their own stories in ways that enable them to occupy the subject positions in which they are invested. For example, Bloch argues that during the Soviet era the state attempted to modernise through constructing new gendered subjectivities amongst indigenous communities such as that of the Evenks in Central Siberia. Residential schools were one institution that “work[ed] on conceptions of self and social order” (Kavanagh cited in Bloch, 2005, p.538) and “cultivated ‘modern’ social practices and systems of knowledge” (Bloch, 2005, p.543). Now, post-USSR, some Siberian women who attended these schools still use the experience to achieve subjective composure. It allows them to narrate that they were valuable citizens (Bloch, 2005, p.552) in the vanguard striving for a new modern society and thus positions them as agents at the centre of a historical transformation (Bloch, 2005, p.556). In this case, the individuals in question made use of the discourse in the way in which the state intended, and thus simultaneously created and propagated the USSR’s desired narrative of nationhood. Bloch thus writes “one might dismiss Evenk women’s accounts as reflecting ‘false consciousness,’ but this would deny them active agency” (Bloch, 2005, p.555). What we can say about this example is that the same discourse could be deployed to realise both the national

identity project of the USSR and the investments of its individual citizens in rewarding subject positions. The story “works” for both parties.

However, as Taylor and Wetherell write:

The status of any national history as *the* account, or one of the very few, does not reflect an easy consensus. As Shapiro has pointed out, the dominant representation of any nation is established in a process of struggle during which contesting delineations and historical narratives are obscured or delegitimised...implicated in this there must also be a contest over values, both a valuing of certain people and a legitimation of values which they espouse (Taylor & Wetherell, 1999, p.45).

For every dominant national narrative, there are narratives of other groups that have been suppressed. Thus, in most nations, there are categories of people for whom national narratives do not work. These individuals may not desire the identity proffered by dominant discourses, or may not be able to narrate their preferred identity through that discourse. What comes to mind in this regard is minority groups. For example, one would not expect that the nationalist stories of Turkey work for its Armenian citizens, given that the state still denies that it ever massacred Armenians beginning in World War One. In Singh’s previously mentioned work on India, women figured centrally in embodying the respectability that was the basis of the national narrative (2007, p.93). This narrative of ideal womanhood does not work for all women, whom Singh terms the “largest, ubiquitous and most obvious ‘subaltern’ group of all” (2007, p.97). Within the discourse, women are uninterested in politics, and therefore individual females struggle to construct political subjectivities for themselves if they narrate their personal stories through it.

With regards to minorities in New Zealand, Thomas’ *Colonialism’s Culture* (1994) shows that while art exhibitions such as *Te Maori*, held in New York in 1984, and *Taonga Maori*, which toured Australia, were empowering for some Maori, the discourses created by these shows did not work for others. The “Maoriness” exhibited enabled New Zealand to construct a nationhood that went beyond being a replica of Britain or a smaller version of Australia. However the work featured in *Taonga Maori*, for example, was all composed of traditional forms and patterns, and most of it

came from the 19th Century. As no modern, postmodern, or innovative Maori art was included, the exhibition represented Maoriness in its “authentic” pre-contact form. In describing the Marae, for example, it was said that to return to the Marae from “the brashness of urban life is to return to a simpler time” (1994, p.185). Such constructions of Maori culture may not work for those many Maori who live in urban areas.

The construction of authentic spirituality marginalises most Maori who...must negotiate identities in urban contexts, with non-traditional social relations, institutions, jobs and so on...they stand as poor copies of a correct ethnic authenticity that is at once inaccessible to many urban Maori and inappropriate in so far as it is associated strongly with the past, rather than with the contemporary circumstances within which they, like everyone else, have to operate (Thomas, 1994, p.186).

Maori could not narrate an urban subjectivity that fit the circumstances of their lives through this discourse of pre-contact culture. And the circumstances of their lives meant that they could not convincingly establish that they occupied the subject position offered in the discourse.

Yet it is also conceivable that in some cases national stories may not work for citizens who form the majority either. In 1917, Auerbach’s study of Austria-Hungary emphasised that “the bureaucratic form of Austrian identity” had failed “to penetrate beyond the surface of its subjects’ sense of self” (in Sluga, 2001, p.220). Because Austria-Hungary contained no less than eleven principal ethnic groups, this was likely a common conception. Dominant discourse then (and now) held that each group naturally belonged together as a separate distinct nation, and indeed after World War One five states were formed from what had been Austria-Hungary. It would then be expected that new Hungarian, Polish, and etc. citizens would now feel affinity with their nations. In response to such discourses Sluga points out that “foundationalist assumptions about the naturalness of... national identification” are inextricably tied up with the idea that nation states are natural and primordial (Sluga, 2001, p.227). But if we see nations as imagined communities, constructed through various processes, then we must also see identification with the nation as something that has to be made to happen rather than something that occurs naturally. And this is true for majority as

well as minority populations. If national identification is a process rather than a primordial fact, it may not always go smoothly; it may sometimes fail.

This thesis will show that the stories that the nation tells about a certain event in order to construct nationhood may not enable the individual citizens involved in that event to achieve subjective composure through the deployment of these national stories in their personal accounts. In this instance, this is the case even for those who do not come from minority groups, but who as soldiers, Pakeha and/or males³ actually occupy some of society's most privileged positions. The Gulf War occurred at a time of transition for New Zealand's representation of itself to others as a nation. The Defence Forces have been a key site for the production of New Zealand nationality since the early 20th Century, and the change in nationhood was primarily a change in the international role of New Zealand's military. Traditionally, New Zealand willingly deployed to war when asked to by its more powerful allies (Britain, and later the United States of America), and showed no reluctance to play a combat role. In the 1980s, however, New Zealand made the consequential and anti-militarist decision to declare itself nuclear weapons free, and shifted its focus to working with the United Nations to maintain collective security. The New Zealand Defence Force was now deployed on peacekeeping missions dedicated to keeping conflict at bay and reconstructing war-torn societies. This shift set New Zealand apart from its former allies and redefined the nation's role on the global stage. 40 Squadron was caught between a traditional martial discourse and an emerging peacekeeper discourse; they took part in an operation that was in some ways similar to the wars from which the former arose, but which was publically narrated through the latter. The fluidity of this situation presented a challenge to 40 Squadron's achievement of subjective composure. The subjectivities of 100 or so New Zealand service members in the Gulf, all of whom were themselves invested in certain subject positions, became a site for the re-imagining of the nation.

³ All informants were male. Some were of Maori descent, but the majority were Pakeha.

Chapter Outline

The thesis will begin by outlining the discourses of war that dominate the New Zealand environment within which 40 Squadron must tell their (perhaps war) stories. What does make a war story? Chapter One outlines the plotlines of war that dominated the West for most of the 20th Century. Chapter Two considers how New Zealand as a nation has been constructed through stories of war and the subject positions of soldiers since the Battle of Gallipoli in 1915. Chapter Three will examine how New Zealand constructed its nationhood through public stories of the Gulf War and the men who served there. The discourses and subject positions in Chapters Two and Three are of course also those that 40 Squadron will have to contend with in telling their own stories. Chapter Four will examine the discourse that arises from Western veteran narratives of the Gulf War, encompassing examples from New Zealand, Britain, and America. These chapters are arranged so that the stories within them get progressively closer and more specific to the experiences of my informants. It may seem strange then, that the stories specifically told about 40 Squadron in the media in New Zealand come before the much wider category of Western participant narratives of the Persian Gulf War. This is however no mistake. Finally, 40 Squadron's own narratives, both oral and visual, will be analysed in Chapters Five and Six respectively to see how they draw on or reject these discourses in order to construct their preferred identity and achieve subjective composure. It will be seen that the national discourse of 40 Squadron's deployment as a peacekeeping mission was not workable in their individual identity projects.

Chapter 2

War Stories

Before the narratives through which New Zealanders construct their nationhood and members of 40 Squadron construct their subjectivity can be examined, it is necessary to outline the discourses available for them to draw on. What is it that “makes...combats war stories”? (Hynes, 1997, p.216) Discourses of war will have been known to a soldier a long time before he enters his own conflict. He will have been a consumer of war stories before he becomes a producer, reading and watching them as a young boy for example. This chapter very broadly outlines dominant Western war narratives of the last century or so. These tend to follow one of two general plotlines. These plotlines produce exciting stories, as they feature high emotions like patriotism, loyalty, sacrifice and betrayal, as well as major change or trauma in the soldier’s life. War is thus constructed as having a significant impact on the individual subjectivities of its participants.

The first time that a soldier is deployed to a battle zone, or even the moment he joins the Armed Forces, will not be the first time he has experienced the concept of war.

Every war is alike in the way its early stages replay elements of the preceding war. Everyone fighting a modern war tends to think of it in terms of the last one he knows anything about. The tendency is ratified by the similarity of uniform and equipment to that used before, which by now has become the substance of myth (Fussell, 1975, p.314).

Hynes’ (1997) “war-in-the-head” is a useful term for the images that every generation has of war. These wars-in-the-head tend to be romantic, featuring the “big abstractions” of war- Heroism, Valour and Glory. They are formed from ideas from various sources- novels, movies, poems, memoirs, popular history, public celebrations and commemorations. The war-in-the-head of the American generation whose fathers fought in World War Two, for example, prominently featured the figures of John Wayne and Audie Murphy. Hynes writes that “above all [wars-in-the-head] make war *familiar*; they can’t not do it- the conventions of war in art are simply too expected,

too established, too dictatorial to elude” (1997, p.30). Each war tends to have its own myth (or dominant discourse): “the simplified narrative that evolves from a war, through which it is given meaning: a Good War, a Bad War, a Necessary War.” Such narratives take shape at the expense of particularity (Hynes, 1997, p.xiii). Individual soldier’s stories, by contrast, are small-scale and detailed- no man ever sees a whole battle, let alone a whole war (Hynes, 1997, pp.12-14). However all these specific stories taken together and generalised form the myths of war.

Soldiers may expect their war to be like those they have had narrated to them down to almost absurd detail. In his Vietnam War memoir, Watson found it worthwhile to record: “Unlike what I had seen in the movies and various television series, the bunks on my floor [in basic training] ran parallel instead of perpendicular to the wall.” He then continues as if this was a discrepancy that needed explaining: “I could only conjecture that it made inspections easier” (Watson, 2001, p.31-32).

There are two main established types of war narrative. The first is heroic and patriotic. This is the war narrative that was passed on to Thomson by his veteran father and grandfathers:

My family and cultural myths reveal the selective nature of war remembrance. In this version war is fascinating and heroic, at worst a hard time shared by good mates. There is little recognition of the horrors of war or the fate of its victims. Public memorials... justify death as sacrifice for the causes of freedom and the nation (Thomson, 1994, p.4).

If such narratives are fictional, they tend to present the protagonist as a valiant hero (think John Wayne). If veterans themselves tell them, they may not present themselves as heroes, but could instead emphasise that their nation was fighting against great evil and saving the world from tyranny.

Working counter to these narratives, or more specifically telling stories in which the protagonist starts out wholeheartedly believing in them, but then becomes disillusioned when his own experience of war does not remotely resemble them, has become just as much of a standard formula. The horrors of war are explicated, even

focused on, in these "disillusionment" narratives. The general pattern is that a young man goes to war to serve his country, finds that war is not glorious and decides that either war is never justified, or that his particular war is not justified. He then feels betrayed by the original narrative and its proponents.

A major structuring device of both heroic and disillusionment narratives is personal transformation. Hynes tells us that no man goes through war without being changed by it (1997, p.3). He suggests we can see war narratives as a subcategory of the genre of autobiography: "Conversion-literature, since it is a testament of profound inner change in the teller. Most war stories begin with a nobody-in-particular young man, who lives through the experience of war, to emerge in the end defined by what has happened to him. Out of that nobody, war has forged a Self" (Hynes, 1997, p.5). Although war narratives are all different they are also all the same- they tell the story of the individual's journey from innocence into experience (Hynes, 1997, p.17). Unsurprisingly, the personal change in heroic narratives is the soldier's progression towards becoming a war hero. Heroic war stories may be narrated in the romantic adventure genre, the key structural feature of which is the quest. This usually involves a perilous journey, in the course of which there are preliminary minor adventures that provide the kind of challenge needed for the protagonist to grow in experience, and then a crucial struggle, which he is now prepared for. After this struggle, normally a battle, the protagonist emerges as a hero (even if he dies) (Dawson, 1994, pp.54-55; Fussell, 1975, p.130). Summerfield writes that "it is characteristic of a heroic narrative to present setbacks and problems as trials which temper and refine the character" (1998, p.276). Not only combat soldiers employ this structure; Summerfield reports that some of the women whom she interviewed about World War Two narrated their experience of war work through such a heroic narrative. They presented themselves as "doing their bit" to win the war by taking on men's work, and narrated personal change by reporting that they had been shy when the war started but had, through the trials of mastering men's work and interacting in new ways with colleagues, become outgoing and confident (Summerfield, 1998, p.261).

Change also occurs in disillusionment narratives, even though, if war is presented as the antithesis of glorious, no heroes may emerge. In these narratives, the young man commonly heads off to war innocent and politically naive, and comes out experienced

and cognizant that the ruling classes of his society have exploited him. Orwell, for example, wrote his Spanish Civil War memoir as a “conventional rites of passage narrative which presented his experiences there as a political coming of age” (Foster, 1999, p.4). His account is structured by Spain’s failure to live up to Orwell’s “war-in-the-head” of World War One, and follows a pattern moving through expectation, disillusionment, and comic resignation (Foster, 1999, p.14).

This personal change, in which the protagonist becomes either a hero, or gains political experience, is often simultaneous with (and perhaps necessary to) becoming a man. What Dawson terms the “soldier hero of adventure” has been one of the most powerful and durable forms of idealised Western masculinity. Military virtues such as aggression, strength, courage and endurance have more generally been seen as the “natural” virtues of males; thus war has been seen as the ultimate test of manhood (Dawson, 1994, p.1). For example, the author J. B. Priestly wrote that the call to enlist in World War One really had little to do with King and Country. Rather, it “was a challenge to what we felt was our untested manhood” (Schneider, 1997, p.20). New Zealander Jack Shallcrass wrote that he was afraid World War Two would finish before he was old enough to get there: “Getting overseas was the Great Adventure and a seal of manhood” (1988, p.24). As a child and young woman, Schneider understood that “war was special to men, that being/becoming a man was hastened and/or guaranteed by combat” (Schneider, 1997, p.3).

However it is important to recognise that narratives that construct war as a major transformative event in a man’s life are, as Lomsky-Feder points out in relation to psychological studies of personal war remembrance, grounded on an approach or discourse that “views war as foreign to the course of “normal” life, perceiving it as a difficult or stressful experience with far-ranging and transformative repercussions.” War may not always be interpreted in this way, and indeed Lomsky-Feder argues that this is a historically contingent view: “[the] meaning of war as traumatic is a cultural product, constructed after World War I ...and reinforced since the Vietnam War” (2004, p.83).

These narrative formulas of war were therefore constructed specifically around particular wars. Every war of the past has a general myth or discourse associated with

it that comes to mind as soon as the war is mentioned by name. The disillusionment narrative, for example, is associated with World War One and the Vietnam War. This suggests that the wars of the 19th Century and World War Two, which the soldiers of the former two would have heard about as boys, were narrated in the heroic/patriotic vein. According to Hynes, the “war-in-their-heads” of the soldiers of World War One consisted of the public view of what had gone on in conflicts like the Crimean, Franco-Prussian and Boer Wars, along with stories of dashing heroes like the Three Musketeers and Cyrano de Bergerac. (If we wanted to exactly follow Lomsky-Feder’s timeline for when war became constructed as an aberration, we might argue that such heroes were constantly fighting, thus war was a part of normal life.) These images, argues Hynes, led young men to expect that their war would be a personal affair- that is, they expected that what they personally did would affect whether or not they lived or died. They would be making their own decisions, and this would afford them the opportunity to display courage. If dying was necessary, it would be because of a choice they had made, and they would bravely accept it. However, new technology and the realities of static trench warfare meant that death became random and accidental. Soldiers did not die because they bravely charged into battle, they died because the part of the trench they were in just happened to be targeted by the enemy’s artillery. Men became not agents but victims in battle (Hynes, 1997, pp.48 & 56-57). Thus, “the romance of war died on the front” (well, it seemed like it did) (Hynes, 1997, p.76). Hynes summarises the myth that World War One acquired, which he dates to the 20s, in this way:

A generation of innocent young men, their heads full of high abstractions like Honour, Glory, and England, went off to war to make the world safe for democracy. They were slaughtered in stupid battles planned by stupid generals. Those that survived were shocked, disillusioned and embittered by their war experiences, and saw that their real enemies were not the Germans, but the old men at home who had lied to them (Hynes, 1997, p.101).

The principal theme of this myth is betrayal. Two famous lines written by Kipling, who lost his son in the war, encapsulate the discourse: “If any question why we died, / tell them, because our fathers lied.” This is not of course to say that every Great War soldier left home idealistic and came home disillusioned. However, those

representations of World War One that today hold the most weight- the poetry of soldiers like Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon- follow this pattern.

But history is often constructed in accordance with contemporary concerns, and so the war-in-the-head of the post- World War One generation was not necessarily this betrayal myth (it does not appear to have been for Orwell, for example). The romance of war had survived. It was found in theatres other than the Western Front, the air war between fighter aces and the story of Lawrence of Arabia, both of which offered what the trenches could not: a personal war with protagonists as agents. And so, young men went off to the Second World War (Hynes, 1997, pp.76-92). World War Two has always been narrated as a “Good War.” It “began with a clearer sense of moral necessity and never lost it.” Most people at the time accepted that Nazism was an evil that needed to be battled (Hynes, 1997, p.111). Furthermore, the discovery of the concentration camps in 1945 has meant that every generation that has followed has also seen the Allied forces as having been engaged in a justifiable and indeed necessary war. Even Richard Hillary, an English veteran of the war who received disfiguring face and hand wounds, expressed no bitterness or disillusionment. In his memoir, he still believed in the cause, he did not blame politicians for his suffering, and he felt that a pacifist friend of his was in the wrong. The suffering caused by the war was for something, it had meaning (Hynes, 1997, pp.129-30). Although soldiers might have felt anger at the *ways* the war was fought, the fact that it was, was not questioned (Hynes, 1997, p.173). Furthermore, World War Two provided agents whose exploits could be turned into romantic narratives: the fighter pilots of the Battle of Britain (“never was so much owed by so many to so few...”) and those engaged in tank warfare in North Africa. In both cases, there was a lot of movement and individual engagement (Hynes, 1997, p.123-145).

Narratives of Vietnam tend to be of the disillusionment variety. War could be disillusioning again for two reasons. Firstly, World War One was Britain’s disillusioning war; Americans only got there in 1917. Secondly, the war-in-the-head taken to Vietnam was, of course, the Good War of World War Two (Hynes, 1997, pp.178-9). Ron Kovic, author of the archetypal *Born on the Fourth of July*, once wrote:

Fifty-eight thousand killed because they lied to us, because they used us, because they fed us with all this crap about John Wayne and being a hero and the romance of war and everything we watched on television...they made us believe that war was going to be something glorious and something beautiful (cited in Hynes, 1997, p.178).

In “How to Tell a True War Story” (from the just as famous *The Things they Carried*) fellow veteran Tim O’Brien wrote “If at the end of a war story you feel uplifted, or if you feel that some bit of rectitude has been salvaged from the larger waste, then you have been made the victim of a very old and terrible lie” (1990, p.76). (This may be an echo of Owen, who also wrote of “the old lie”). Hynes points out that as with World War One, soldiers in Vietnam saw themselves as victims not agents. The tactic of search-and-destroy often meant that soldiers would walk around for days encountering only mines and booby-traps (Hynes, 1997, p.179). Several scholars have pointed out that although going to war is the ultimate male activity such powerlessness actually paradoxically places men into a subject position that is very much associated with femininity. Thus, they may have expected to become men and active heroes but ended up as passive victims doing nothing (See, for example, Cooper 1999, pp.87-88; Schneider 1997, pp.17 & 21-23).

Summary

All soldiers are sent into battle already having encountered war discursively. Discourses shape expectations, and are then deployed in the telling of personal war stories. Even if soldiers construct their war as very different to what war stories led them to believe, they still make reference to these existing discourses. This can be seen in the disillusionment narrative, which is contradictory to the patriotic discourse but is structured as a rejection of it. Thus to understand individual soldiers’ narratives and subsequent identity construction it is necessary to first examine the discourses that have constructed war for them. For the majority of the 20th Century war was constructed as something that is transformative for the individual soldier’s subjectivity: the war makes the man. By narrating himself through the patriotic discourse, for example, a World War Two veteran can achieve subjective composure by constructing himself as a fighter for freedom and justice. This exact same patriotic discourse can and has been used to narrate various nations. The next chapter will

examine specifically New Zealand discourses of war. This will illuminate both how the nation has been constructed through war stories, and what discourses will form 40 Squadron's wars-in-the-head. These discourses will also be those that have constructed war in the public sphere in which 40 Squadron's narratives must find affirmation.

Chapter 3

New Zealand War Stories:

National Identity and Kiwi Subjectivities

Some of the most powerful and inspiring national stories centre on wars. Indeed, it is often suggested in the abstract that states experiencing domestic problems may seek war with an outside party so that the subsequent rush of patriotism will distract the populace from their dissatisfactions. Nation-states themselves are of course frequently created through wars over boundaries and sovereignty. Throughout the last century, New Zealand has constructed its national identity through its involvement and performance in foreign conflicts.

New Zealand soldiers have been involved in military conflicts during every decade of [the 20th] Century. None have been on New Zealand soil, none have been precipitated by a direct threat to us, and none have been at our instigation, yet we have rarely appeared to need much inducement to participate (McLeod, 1986, p.8).

As one informant told me, the Gulf War was the first time New Zealand troops had been sent to war (as opposed to on United Nations or peacekeeping missions) since Vietnam. However, although New Zealand has almost always been willing to involve itself in conflicts, between the Vietnam era and 1990 a significant transition in what role the nation preferred to play had occurred. Perhaps foreshadowed by public protests against the Vietnam War, by 1990 New Zealand had changed its focus from missions of war to missions of peace. This chapter will examine how New Zealand has constructed its nationhood through both modes of involvement. In both cases, a key method of the production of nationhood has been to use the men of the Defence Force as one of those groups privileged to represent the nation. The subjectivities of New Zealand's soldiers have embodied New Zealand. Dawson explains how this process worked in the British context:

Intimately bound up with the foundation and preservation of a national territory, the deeds of military heroes were invested with the new significance of serving the country and glorifying its name. Their stories became myths of nationhood itself,

providing a cultural focus around which the national community could cohere (Dawson, 1994, p.1).

Military men like Lord Nelson, the Duke of Wellington and Lawrence of Arabia, for example, “have historically occupied the symbolic centre of English national identity” (Dawson, 1994, p.1). Because such discourses are based upon certain subjectivities, they provide military subject positions that can be taken up by individuals at the same time as constructing the nation.

New Zealand’s Baptism of Fire: The Martial Nation

Like many places in the world, New Zealand has been constituted as a nation through war. The defining event of New Zealand nationhood has always been a battle. However, although the country was fought over during the New Zealand Land Wars of the 1840s-1870s, Pakeha New Zealand tends to see its defining battle as one that occurred on the other side of the world. This battle had nothing whatsoever to do with New Zealand’s composition, sovereignty or safety. Rather, it was important because it was part of an event that the whole world was watching. On 25 April 1915, the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula in modern day Turkey as part of an Allied/Entente force attempting to break through the Dardanelles and capture Constantinople. Although this operation was a battle of World War One against one of the Central Powers (the Ottoman Empire), it was never a major component of the war as a whole (Phillips, 1989, p.92). Moreover, it was a failure. The ANZACs were evacuated on December 19 1915, never having reached the Dardanelles. According to Sinclair, of the 8500 New Zealanders who fought at Gallipoli, 7400 became casualties, 600 falling on the first day (1986, pp.162 & 158).

Yet in New Zealand, Gallipoli is almost always narrated through either a birth or growth metaphor. As Sinclair says, soon after the First World War “it became accepted wisdom to write that the nation was born, as O.E. Burton wrote, ‘somewhere between the landing at Anzac and the end of the Battle of the Somme’” (1986,

p.171)⁴. According to King, there was a sense during the First World War “in which participation in international conflict was seen as part of the national growing-up process, as part of the transition from nursling colony to contributing partner” (2003, p.15). In 1920, on the fifth Anzac day to commemorate the landing, the Christchurch Press wrote that New Zealand had “achieved nationhood, in the eyes of the world” (cited in Sinclair, 1986, p.182). In recent decades, “baptism of fire” and “coming of age” are phrases often used when discussing Gallipoli. In 2006 Lindsay wrote that Gallipoli was:

a national rite of passage; all three countries [New Zealand, Australia and Turkey] emerged with enhanced international reputations, and each saw its image clarified in its national consciousness. Not surprisingly each now regards the calamitous events of 1915 as a coming of age in its growth to maturity (Lindsay, 2006, p.xii).

The New Zealand Ministry for Culture and Heritage’s website explains why Gallipoli “has great significance for New Zealand's history and... has become an important symbol of its national identity”: “The campaign was the first time that New Zealand stepped on to the world stage” (n.d.a). Gallipoli was the first time that the small nation contributed to major world events, and thus the first opportunity for New Zealanders to display their national “qualities” in the international arena. The Government website says:

The Gallipoli campaign showcased attitudes and attributes - bravery, tenacity, practicality, ingenuity, loyalty to King and comrades - that helped New Zealand define itself as a nation... After Gallipoli, New Zealand had a greater confidence in its distinct identity, and a greater pride in the international contribution it could make (New Zealand Ministry for Culture and Heritage, n.d.b).

Although these sentences were likely written after the end of the Gulf War, this has been accepted history from 1915 onwards, and was current at the time of the War. The day after Anzac day in 1991, two months after the Gulf War had ended, the Christchurch Press reported “At Gallipoli, for the first time, Australian and New Zealand troops fought under the flags of their own countries. Actions there had

⁴ The Boer War of 1899-1902 had earlier stimulated national feeling, but Sinclair writes that despite this New Zealand had not yet achieved nationhood, although steps had been taken in this direction (1986, p.141). Today Gallipoli tends to be privileged in memorials, etc. over the Boer War.

revealed New Zealand and Australia to others, and to themselves, as nations” (Staff Reporters, 1991). This story of the nation’s birth is instilled in New Zealanders from childhood. For example, Davidson wrote in his book on Gallipoli for children ages nine and up, “the more [the Anzacs] chatted with the British the more they realised how different they were” (2005, p.25).

The Anzac Spirit

For a nation to prove itself at war, its army must have performed well. Thus actual soldiers have a large role in this process of self-definition, and in New Zealand act as a group that embody the nation. Here it is worthwhile to repeat Phillips’ quote from the introduction: World War One established “the soldier as the shining personification of the New Zealand male, and indeed of New Zealand itself” (1996, p.163). Like Dawson’s heroes, the soldier became a symbolic centre of nationhood. However, in New Zealand, the primary martial myth of nationhood does not focus on the stories of a few individual exceptional heroes so much as it centres on a stereotype of what the ordinary soldier was like.

New Zealanders at war are represented as demonstrating what is often referred to as “the Anzac Spirit.” The Anzac Spirit is made up of those national qualities that World War One gave New Zealand the chance to display on the international stage. New Zealand soldiers are narrated as enacting these virtues time and time again in New Zealand War stories. The word “Anzac” is of course an acronym for the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, who fought at Gallipoli, and as such it is from this battle that the Anzac Spirit as a coherent concept emerged. However, commentators have retrospectively asserted that the Anzac Spirit was displayed in the earlier Boer War as well, and have used events from that war as evidence of its existence. Furthermore, the concept was consolidated during World War Two, and today many of the best or most well known examples of the myth come from that period. The following is a summation of those qualities that are most often cited as part of the Anzac Spirit: military prowess or superiority, self-control, egalitarianism, mateship, ingenuity and larrikinism. None of these things necessarily reflect the whole truth, and most have in fact been challenged by scholars.

Military Prowess/Superiority:

Speaking about the Korean War, New Zealander Jack Spiers writes, “The American marines were good, nearly up to a par with the commonwealth forces” (in Williams, 2000, p.276). Spiers, who served in the New Zealand Army for 28 years, eventually becoming a major, also gives his opinion that no country in the world would measure up to the standards set in training by the New Zealand Army (in Williams, 2000, p.275). These seem like extreme claims to make: the armed forces of a small country with a comparatively tiny defence budget are better than the American Marines? But Phillips writes that when he was growing up it was “an article of faith, that New Zealanders were ‘good’ at war” (1996, p.132). The view that New Zealand soldiers are “naturals” and second to none has been so abiding at times that in 1986 John McLeod felt the need to write a book entitled *Myth and Reality* exploring its veracity (McLeod, 1986). Davidson writes that before Gallipoli the Anzacs had looked up to the British, but that by the end of the campaign “they knew they were not only equal to but better than the British regulars” (2005, p.173). On September 13 1944 the New Zealand soldier Cecil Coughlan wrote in his diary: “Yanks in Europe are inside Germany now, but we are still held up here. Might have to put the Kiwi shock troops in yet if we can’t move them out. Kiwis always have to come out to do the hard jobs, when the others fail” (2006, n.p.). A logical outcome of this discourse of military prowess is that subdued locals are often represented as being extremely relieved and grateful when New Zealand troops arrive to liberate them. About the New Zealand Division’s arrival in Greece, for example, King writes “they were welcomed as protectors and heroes” (2003, p.166). Belich suggests that the idea of military superiority evolved from an identical belief in Britain. At the time of the Boer and First World Wars many New Zealanders, whose families had emigrated not so very long ago, still saw themselves as primarily British. The British believed that they were an inherently militarily superior race, but during the early 20th Century, there was much concern about racial degeneration, as it was thought growing up in England’s huge urban centres was weakening its young men. There was no such problem in the colonies, and colonial men, having grown up on the frontiers, were seen as being the best of the British- thus the best of the best (Belich, 2001, pp.104 & 270). It may seem that this view of military superiority is rather hard to sustain, given that the battle New Zealand commemorates every year ended in its defeat. Scholars have challenged the idea of military superiority. Belich, for example, shows that New Zealand attacks

were “just as hopeless and useless as anyone else’s” during World War One (2001, p.98). However, the loss at Gallipoli has consistently been blamed on British high command (discussed in, for example, Phillips, 1996, p.166; Pugsley, 2004, p.27) as were losses in World War Two (Belich, 2001, p.276). This placement of the blame for military failures on non-New Zealanders allows the perpetuation of the myth that New Zealanders are good at war.

Self-Control:

New Zealand soldiers are said to have various traits associated with inner discipline: they cheerfully endured harsh living conditions without grumbling, they did not get flustered in a crisis, they could repress fear during battle, endure pain without a word, and did not get overly emotional at the loss of friends (See, for example, Jensen, 1996, p.30; Phillips, 1989, p.96; Phillips, 1996, p.146 & 166). Two often-repeated adjectives used to describe New Zealand soldiers are “stoic” and “laconic.” One comes across anecdotes like that of the machine gunner during an attack at Gallipoli sitting behind his gun “calmly reading *The Auckland Weekly News* and waiting for the Turks to come up” (Kinloch, 2005, p.132). Soldier George Bollinger wrote in his diary on the boat on the way to Gallipoli for the landing “our men are very calm, and some are even lying about reading and taking no notice of the bombardment” (Phillips, 1996, p.171). Even in analytic history books, one finds phrases like “Freyberg seems to have taken the situation stoically, despite the fact that nine German divisions were bearing down on them” (Wright, 2005b, p.47). Bravery is a quality ascribed to national soldiers all around the world, and such stories of calmness in the face of danger are how courage tends to be narrated in the New Zealand context. The self-control aspect of the myth is so prevalent that it is always a bit of a shock when one comes across admissions of complaints and grumbling, of which there are some (see, for example, Findlay and McCallum, 2001, p.61; Johnston, 2006, pp.17-18; Kinloch, 2005, pp.94 & 98).

Egalitarianism:

New Zealand soldiers are presented as being more egalitarian than those of other nations. For example, McGibbon claims that in the Pacific during World War Two the Kiwis generally got on with the Americans, although “the ostracism of black soldiers by some was regarded with distaste by the more egalitarian New Zealanders” (Hutching et al., 2005, p.27). One veteran of this war, Noel Rosoman, reported that

when he was in hospital an “American Negro” was so “chuffed” that the New Zealanders would talk to him when the white Americans would not that he used to visit them every night and bring candy bars (in Hutching et al., 2005, p.178). Davidson writes of the Anzacs stationed in Cairo during World War One, “although they were both bigoted, the Australians thought the New Zealanders were too soft on the Egyptians. They believed this was because of the respect the New Zealanders had for the Maoris” (2005, p.29). John Johnston, who served in Egypt in World War Two, wrote that certain bars and restaurants in Cairo had been designated officers only: “Oh yes, we had always been told we were fighting for democracy, human rights and equality, that sort of thing. But where did class distinction come into all of this?” (2006, p.219). Kinloch reports that the military similarly attempted to keep non-commissioned soldiers out of the better hotels in Cairo during World War One; whilst the British troops put up with this, the “less class-conscious” New Zealanders and Australians would not (2005, p.83).

These egalitarian ideals are said to have had a huge impact on New Zealand soldiers’ behaviour at war. According to Phillips, from the Boer War on there was an image among New Zealand troops of British officers as inefficient and stupid aristocrats (1996, p.166). New Zealanders have been presented as having little time for the discipline, ceremony and red tape enforced by officers in the armed forces (McLeod, 1986, p.9), and are said to have a habit of refusing to salute such officers. This was their way of rejecting what Phillips writes they saw as an immense class difference between officers and men in the British army (1996, p.135 & 147). A well-known anecdote concerns Lieutenant-General Bernard Freyberg, the Commander of the Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force, which fought in Europe for the duration of World War Two. Freyberg was walking with an Allied officer, who complained that Freyberg’s men did not salute him. Freyberg answered, “No, but if we wave to them you’ll generally find they wave back” (King, 2003, p.16; Wright, 2005b, p.84). One soldier on Gallipoli impertinently remarked that at times he felt tempted to walk between two officers and attempt to salute them both at once, one with each hand (Kinloch, 2005, p.43). Frank White, who volunteered for the Long Range Desert Group during World War Two, wrote that one of the advantages of joining this group was that there were no parades. Later he was sent to train as an officer and found the renewal of parades to be a “stupid performance” (White, 1999, pp.25 & 42). After the

war, before returning to New Zealand, White went to visit an Uncle of his who was a colonel in the British Army. His men were with him, and sat down on the parade ground to boil up a cup of tea, much to the chagrin of a passing Sergeant Major. “There was not much they could do with us,” White reports (1999, p.69). Phillips repeats a story from World War One in which a British Lieutenant lecturing on discipline declared, “you damned colonials who think you can do just whatever you damn well like” and was cheered by the New Zealand troops (1996, p.166). Even World War Two Major-General Howard Kippenberger is said to have hated the trappings of the military as a recruit during World War One, calling saluting and drill “all the old rubbish” (Harper, 2005, p.37) and being determined to “get rid of my stripe” after being promoted past private (Harper, 2005, p.41). Rob McLean, veteran of the Pacific War, said, “It’s a fundamental thing of New Zealand males, I suppose. They don’t like authority” (Hutching et al., 2005, p.138). New Zealand soldiers, then, are constructed as not being amenable to the military system of placing certain men above others and requiring that they (and their orders) be always respected as superior.

In contrast to the image of the British Army, the idea that New Zealand’s army was classless became “strongly entrenched” (Phillips, 1996, p.148). New Zealand commanders were said to be promoted not because of socio-economic status, but because of proven talent and leadership ability (McLeod, 1986, p.9). They were ordinary men who had gained respect through capability (Phillips, 1996, p.166) and were “senior rather than superior” (McLeod, 1986, p.156). Once promoted, New Zealand officers are said to have led from the front rather than staying in a privileged safe position in the rear. Harper writes that Freyberg was actually often criticised for getting too far forward (2005, p.150), which Wright reports sometimes got him into difficulties. At Arezzo for example, he had to take shelter under a tank while the enemy “did [the] place over” (2005b, p.208). Whilst New Zealanders felt that British officers treated their men with cold aloofness (Sinclair, 1986a, p.136), New Zealand officers were never too proud to mix with their men (Phillips, 1996, p.166) and were often seen as just “one of the boys” (Phillips, 1989, p.96). Frank White reports in his memoirs that once on an English Navy ship after a rescue he and one of his friends were joined under a blanket for the night by their squadron leader, who called them by their first names. Observing this, a British Brigadier asked who the man had been and

once enlightened, remarked “you get on very well with your officers, don’t you” (1999, p.22). One trooper from the Boer War is likewise reported to have said that the British officers were astonished at the “free intercourse” between New Zealand officers and their troops; a major in hospital was visited by his men for example (Sinclair, 1986, p.136). With New Zealand officers seen to regard their men as not merely inferiors, they are also said to have been willing to listen to their opinions on tactics. McDonald writes that VC winner Jack Hinton had “a natural ability to command and lead without having to depend on seniority of rank. He did not “talk down” to his men; he talked “with them”” (1997, p.56). Both officers and subordinates employ this discourse. Lieutenant Colonel Haddon Donald writes that he was glad to let a subordinate dairy farmer familiar with walking in the countryside take charge of leading his men on a withdrawal through the dark in Greece, and “learned a never forgotten lesson-always respond to what the troops had to say” (2005, p.22). Indeed, Jim Henderson, who served under him, wrote that he believed Donald “Brought [his NCOs] up” to be independent thinkers (cited in Donald, 2005, p.90). And Donald wanted *his* superiors to give him the same respect: “From previously pitiful leadership we now had someone who...was prepared to listen and take advice” he wrote of the appointment of a new General (2005, p.83). Bryan Palmer, a Second Lieutenant during World War Two, actually seemed to be a little in awe of one of his men: he writes that the Spanish Civil War veteran never called him sir, and he did not insist, and that “once he paid me a great compliment”- this being “You’ll do, boy” (2000, p.72-73). Palmer also wrote that New Zealand troops, because of what he termed “their inherited characteristics”, are different from other troops: “they are easy to lead and discipline on battle but out of battle they are unruly unless occupied on logical activities and reluctant if orders are obscure” (2000, p.157). Kiwi officers are presented as being just as reluctant as their men to follow direct orders that they disagree with, especially when doing so would mean unnecessary danger for the soldiers under them. When a General at Gallipoli ordered an attack through an extremely narrow and open pass which would result in troops being bunched up and thus “invite destruction on a grand scale” two New Zealand Lieutenants went above his head to protest to the Brigadier General (Kinloch, 2005, p.136).

Although Bernard Freyberg immigrated to New Zealand when he was two and grew up here, he had been a career soldier in the British Army and lived there for his whole adult life before his appointment as commander of New Zealand's European forces in the Second World War. According to one of Freyberg's biographers, Wright, after the disaster at Crete⁵, some of the brigadiers under Freyberg made sure he received a good deal of the blame, and there was some talk of his being replaced (2005b, pp.78-82). Freyberg placated these junior officers by instituting meetings, unorthodox by British standards, in which he would lay out details of upcoming operations for his officers and let them express their opinions. He also began holding informal "getting-to-know-you" dinners at his house. Wright writes, "Freyberg apparently relaxed into the New Zealand ethos, losing-as Stevens put it-"all trace" of peacetime British Army thinking. Geoffrey Cox thought he had rediscovered his New Zealand character" (Wright, 2005b, p.84)⁶. In other words, as soon as Freyberg begun running things in this more egalitarian, less hierarchical manner, he was no longer classified as "British" but was now placed in the category of "New Zealander." Finally, it is contended that New Zealand soldiers were deserving of the respect that their officers gave them. It has been claimed that when New Zealand officers go down, their men are skilled enough to take over (see, for example, McLeod, 1986, p.156). Donald recalls an incident in which leadership of a platoon was taken over by a Sergeant when the Lieutenant was wounded, then by another Sergeant when the first was killed, followed, as the casualty list increased, by a Lance-Corporal, a Private, and finally a second Private. This Private- occupying the lowest military rank and only the second choice from amongst this rank- led the rest of the men in an assault which took two strong points and captured eight prisoners (Donald, 2005, pp.149-150). For Donald, this was not unusual but "a classic example of the leadership capability of the rank and file New Zealand infantryman. In the toughest circumstances a leader would always emerge" (2005, p.150).

Mateship:

Camaraderie comes up again and again in war narratives, with phrases like "brothers-in-arms" evoking deep, unbreakable bonds of friendship and loyalty. In the Anzac

⁵ Freyberg commanded the Allied Forces in the Battle of Crete (May 1941), who failed to defend the island against an airborne invasion. When the Allies evacuated, more than 6000 men were left behind (King, 2003, p.178).

⁶ Stevens and Cox are presumably men who served with Freyberg at the time.

context this is referred to as mateship. Phillips writes that since New Zealand soldiers did not respect discipline, what enabled them to work together in cohesive units was mateship (1996, p.166). People tend to wax lyrical about war friendship. Ted Tangye, drafted with other New Zealand men into the Royal Navy, writes, “If a bar of gold lays touching a bar of lead long enough a portion of each transfers to the other. I feel that happens in close friendships. In the services, close brotherlike friendships just happen. Where one really knows the character, the thoughts, morals, moods of the other. Each one changes a wee bit. Part of each being seems to invade the other” (2000, p.109). Lindsay writes that mateship “formed a cocoon that enveloped the young soldiers and made their existence on Gallipoli bearable. The unconditional support created teamwork that produced a force far greater than its individual components; it often meant the difference between life and death” (2006, p.138).

Ingenuity:

New Zealanders in war have always been presented as gifted amateurs who can fix technical problems, find substitutes for something unavailable, or find a better or easier way to carry out a task, all with very little material. These bits and pieces are often symbolised by “number eight fencing wire”. A common example is the “Anzac” invention of a rifle with a periscope sight made from recycled shaving mirrors so that men could fire from the trenches without exposing themselves during World War One (Phillips, 1996, p.166; Wolfe, 2004, p.65). (However Lindsay notes that it was actually a “Sydney sider” not a New Zealander who came up with this (2006, p.82)). According to history books, at Gallipoli, bombs were made of jam-tins (Wolfe, 2004, p.65), and soldiers “came up with inventive ploys” to make the Turks think they were charging their trenches, thus keeping them awake and nervous and causing them to waste ammunition (Kinloch, 2005, p.175). During the battle for Chunuk Bair, when the New Zealand Mounted Riflemen found themselves without grenades, they dug stones out of the trench wall with their bayonets and threw them at the Turks (Kinloch, 2005, p.11). Davidson writes that burial parties were made up of only tall soldiers at Gallipoli “to trick the Turks into thinking that the Anzacs were giants” (2005, p.90). Lieutenant Colonel Donald attributes success at Minqar Qaim in June 1942 to “the initiative of the New Zealanders proving to be more effective than the rigid discipline of the Germans” (2005, p.203). Pugsley writes that any faults of the New Zealand Army during the Boer War were either shrugged off or “portrayed as

strengths of individuality and initiative” (2004, p.39). However he also utilises and perpetuates the discourse by writing that the Anzacs in World War One showed an adaptability and initiative “that was not always evident in their British counterparts” (Pugsley, 2004, p.27).

Larrikinism:

Although larrikinism (rowdiness, hoodlumism) is not as important in New Zealand conceptions of the Anzac Spirit as it is to Australians, it is still a part of the discourse that can be drawn on if New Zealand veterans so choose. For some New Zealand soldiers, going to war was an overseas adventure and they intended to have a good time. Findlay, for example, joined the army during World War Two to see the world (Findlay and McCallum, 2001, pp.49 & 56) and wrote in his memoir of the voyage to Egypt, “this was real adventure and I revelled in what may lay ahead” (2001, p.59). Phillips writes that despite New Zealand participation in a number of large brawls in Egypt in the early days of World War One, the most infamous occurring in Cairo on Good Friday 1915, official public discourse still constructed the New Zealand soldier as a courteous gentlemen. Comparisons were drawn with the more “boisterous” Australians (1996, pp.168 & 183). However, he notes that by the end of the war the troops, who often went on drinking binges on their way home, “liked to be thought of as loveable rascals” (Phillips, 1996, p.187). In World War Two novels no attempt is made to hide rowdy behaviour: swearing, drinking, stealing, and employing prostitutes. New Zealand soldiers fought hard but also played hard, and were described as “hard-living, reckless lads” and “irresistible irresponsibles” (Phillips, 1996, p.211). Underneath it all, they had hearts of gold (Phillips, 1996, pp.209-211). War memoirs record various hijinks, such as offering beer to local donkeys in Egypt and teaching the boys selling newspapers to yell “very good news, Sergeant [name] dead” (Kinloch, 2005, p.85). In veteran accounts, tales of mates engaging in rowdiness are categorised as “good times”. Findlay, for example, writes: “Every time the train [to Maadi, Egypt] pulled into a station, all goods which were not tied down were quickly loaded on board...the upshot was, the regimental funds were sadly depleted after paying for the cost of damage and stolen booze on what had been a great trip” (2001, p.123). When billeted in a house in Italy, Coughlan recorded in his diary on 19 December 1944 that he and his fellows broke into the cemented basement and found over a hundred bottles of alcohol: “We all got drunk and next day we all

got told off by the [officer in command]. So we all got drunk again in the afternoon, and also that night. A great life at times!" (Coughlan & Coughlan, 2006, n.p.).

Although I have separated these qualities here for ease of explanation, they are of course not unconnected in reality and together form one coherent Anzac soldier subject position. A soldier's larrikinism, for example, is a result of his defiance of authority and desire to have a good time with his mates. He is militarily superior because of his inner strength and his ingenuity.

The Anzac Spirit and New Zealand Masculinity

Proving that soldierhood and masculinity are closely linked, this list of qualities that make up the Anzac Spirit is very close to the common components of dominant New Zealand masculinity. Law, Campbell and Schick sum up the qualities of the stereotypical Kiwi male: "He drinks large quantities of beer and can fix anything with a roll of number eight fencing wire. He is a "good keen man" who looks out for his mates, a rough diamond who is at his best when faced with physical adversity or war, but who does not easily display his emotions" (Law et al., 1999, p.14). The characteristics in this short list read the same as those of soldiers displaying the Anzac Spirit: larrikinism, ingenuity; mateship; military prowess; stoicism. After all, Kiwi soldiers are also almost always Kiwi men (or were during the wars from which the Anzac spirit came, which occurred before women began taking on more combatant-type roles). Ingenuity is widely applied to New Zealand men beyond wartime. Roderick Finlayson in his *Tidal Creek* stories says of a Northland farmer: "it's a marvel what Uncle Ted can do with a length of stout tea-tree and a few bits of packing-case and some fencing wire" (Jensen, 1996, p.20). Ingenuity is the crucial trait of at least two Kiwi heroes, Richard Pearse, who New Zealanders believe successfully flew an aircraft months before the Wright Brothers, and John Britten, an innovator in motorcycle design (King, 2004, p.513). Mateship has always been important in New Zealand, often in the context of blokes drinking together down at the pub. Stoicism, or the repression of emotions, is also a staple of the Kiwi male. Again, Kiwi non-war heroes have been admired for this characteristic. Sir Edmund Hillary, first man to reach the summit of Mount Everest and the only New Zealander immortalised on a dollar bill whilst still living, is often said to have been laconic

(King, 2004, p.511; NZPA, 2008). Hillary, in fact, is said to have possessed many of the traits of the Anzac Spirit:

Just as it was Kiwis who got to the top of Chunuk Bair, it was Ed who beat the other Brits to Everest's Summit [...] Just as Kiwi soldiers refused to salute officers, so Ed refused to bow down to the dictates of his commanding officer in the Antarctic [...] Just as New Zealanders were believed to be do-it-yourselfers, so Sir Ed got the old Kiwi standby, the Massey Ferguson, to the Pole with No 8-wire ingenuity and hard work. He achieved, not through birth or pretension, but because, like [...] Charlie Upham, he was a modest "natural gentleman" who led by example (Phillips, 2008, p.18).

Another great site for the production of New Zealand masculinity, rugby, allows men to display the same virtues as does soldiering. In the early years of the 20th Century, Prime Minister Seddon lauded the "egalitarian" and "unifying" nature of rugby (Pringle, 2002, p.58). Decades later, in 1988, Spiro Zavos wrote, "rugby is fundamentally a democratic game...anyone can play and anyone can watch." He explains that even people who are not physically perfect can play well- larger men, for example, or small men who can nevertheless run quickly (1988, p.118). He goes on to say that the All Blacks represent to him "the best characteristics of the New Zealand male: resilience, courage, toughness, enterprise, innovation and perseverance" (Zavos, 1988, p.119) all of which are also aspects of the Anzac Spirit. As in soldiers, stoicism and insensitivity to pain is highly valued in rugby players- Colin Meads, for example, was admired for once playing in South Africa with a broken arm (Phillips, 1996, p.121). King describes a rugby team by invoking war-like mateship: "they had the Masonic intimacy of men who had fought together in a war: they trusted each other, confided in each other, shared jokes economically and draped their arms unselfconsciously around one another's shoulders" (1988, p.148).

Rugby, like war, has been used as a nation-building exercise. Pringle writes that politicians seized on the opportunity of the huge success of the 1905 rugby tour to the United Kingdom to help "forge a national identity" (2002, p.58). As Sinclair points out, war and sport are just about the only two arenas in which nations can directly measure themselves against one another (1986b, p.152). New Zealand has used both

arenas to present the same image of the typical Kiwi male, and through him, of the nation itself.

This typical Kiwi male has been constructed as originating in the earliest days of New Zealand. Phillips shows that the discursive qualities of the Kiwi soldier and rugby player are also the discursive qualities of the pioneers. The troopers who served in the Boer War, he writes, were perceived as latter day pioneers, and the qualities ascribed to them were the same as those that their settler forebears were seen to have possessed. This provided a reassuring identity to an urbanising society (Phillips, 1996, p.149). Phillips further writes that the Anzac Spirit represented an “affirmation” of the pioneer spirit during World War One (1996, p.165). From the 1890s onwards nostalgia and a search for national identity had “raised the pioneer image into a legend.” Books, speeches and memorials paid tribute to “noble pioneers”, who were seen as providing later generations with an inspiring model of manhood (1996, p.39). To aid this process the more unsavoury aspects of the pioneer lifestyle, such as heavy drinking, were de-emphasised (1996, p.40) - although this could certainly be seen as a stereotypical behaviour that was perpetuated by soldiers and rugby players. Phillips shows that many of the elements of the Anzac Spirit parallel this earlier pioneer legend. There was mateship: because the majority of New Zealand residents were male right up until World War One, men often only had other men for company, and Phillips argues that intense friendships formed (1996, pp.7, 9 & 26-27). However, he points out that these were relationships of circumstance rather than necessarily choice- one became friends with whomever one happened to encounter or be on a job with in the bush (1996, p.27). Of course war comradeship could also be seen to be the result of circumstance- soldiers do not tend to choose who they end up on the same unit with. Pioneers working on untamed land were often required to live on the job, from which developed a famous ability to “rough it” (Phillips, 1996, p.20): the ability to cope without domestic comforts (1996, p.24). This parallels New Zealand’s troop’s ability to endure rough conditions without grumbling. Also following naturally from the frontier situation, where there was a lot of diverse work to be done settling the land, versatility came to be valued over specialisation (1996, pp.18 & 24). Pioneers needed to be able to deal with anything that arose, and this can be seen as the forerunner of ingenuity. Finally, the legend of the pioneer community was that of an egalitarian society. According to Phillips, there was an expectation that although class

differences existed in more settled areas, on the frontier these should be disregarded. It was in fact hard to maintain the symbols of status away from civilisation. Mates on the outer edges, for example, used nicknames, leaving official titles behind (Phillips, 1996, pp.30-31).

Early New Zealanders actually asserted that the reason they were so good at war was their colonial, rural background. As has been mentioned, colonial men were seen to have distinct advantages over those British soldiers who had grown up in big cities. They were well nourished, of sturdy physique and accustomed to enduring outdoor living and heavy tasks (McLeod, 1986, p.8). Initiative and adaptability were “supposedly colonial qualities” and the British were seen to lack them (Sinclair, 1986, p.135). New Zealanders were good at war not because of the discipline and training the British Army had to rely on, but because the life they had had to lead had given them the valuable skills that make up the Anzac Spirit (Pugsley, 2004, p.38). Pugsley has noted that Britain’s other colonies, Australia and Canada, tend to have similar soldier stereotypes to New Zealand (2004, p.166). Thus, the discourses that surround Kiwi male pioneers, soldiers and sportsmen are composed of the same components.

A Civilian War Myth (or, No one Deserves More Glory than Anyone Else)

One reason that the war virtues of New Zealand soldiers may so very closely match the virtues of civilian men is that, as King notes, when New Zealanders have gone to war, they have done so “in a spirit of amateurism, within the ‘civilian into soldier’ tradition” (2003, p.16). In other words, the armed forces that New Zealand sent to those wars from which the Anzac legend sprung- The Boer War and World Wars One and Two- consisted largely not of trained career soldiers, but citizen volunteers. Rolfe suggests that one of the reasons military training had not been deemed necessary during peacetime in the 20th Century was that “the New Zealander had proved himself a natural soldier” (1999, p.12). The men sent to fight the World Wars were therefore civilians who had temporarily put on uniforms but were ready to take them off again once their duty was done and the “bad guys” were defeated (Rolfe, 1999, p.179). Because New Zealand’s economy was largely agriculture-based, many such soldiers who later wrote accounts of their experiences were farmers or identified with

farming in some way. Pugsley writes that the fact that a citizen force were learning warfare through trial and error once war had already broken out was integral to the Anzac experience and at least partly explains the defeat at Gallipoli (2004, p.81). Harper points out that at the outbreak of World War Two, the New Zealand Government actually had to look outside of the country- to Freyberg, from the British Army- for someone with enough experience to command New Zealand forces (2005, p.60), whilst Lieutenant Colonel Haddon Donald (who called his memoir *In Peace and War: A Civilian Soldier's Story*) writes that in the 22nd New Zealand Infantry Battalion to which he was assigned for that war, only 3 of 800 soldiers were regular military (2005, p.9). King suggests that it is the fact that New Zealand soldiers were civilians, rather than career servicemen thoroughly indoctrinated into the armed forces, that can explain many of the components of the Anzac Spirit. It explains the informality of the troops and their disdain for military discipline and hierarchy (2003, p.16) -their unfamiliarity with having other men placed above them. In 1901, a strike was held by New Zealand soldiers of the Sixth Contingent fighting the Boer War when they arrived at a new camp to find that, as had happened many times before, they had been provided with no food, no pay and no shelter. Pugsley notes that although in the British Army this would be mutiny, “this was very much citizen soldiers taking steps to right a wrong as they would have done in the shearing sheds, mines or factories back in New Zealand” (2004, p.46). The fact that the soldiers were basically civilians may also explain the greater reliance on (and hence weight given to) initiative- men who had not known the rulebook long were willing to dispense with the rules if they did not seem helpful or commonsense (King, 2003, p.16). Further, perhaps they needed initiative because they had less of a clear idea what they were doing. The war myth of New Zealand was developed from, and is that of a civilian army.

This would explain why New Zealand's war discourse tends to focus on ordinary rank and file soldiers. Most of the well-known “soldier heroes” in Dawson's sense were commanders or at least held fairly high ranks. Lawrence of Arabia was a Lieutenant Colonel, Havelock a General, Nelson commanded the British in the Battle of Trafalgar, and Wellington was the Commander at Waterloo. The fact that they got so far up the military hierarchy reveals that most of these heroes were career soldiers. Yet only one New Zealand soldier, Charles Upham, could be considered even a

household name in the 21st Century, and he was simply a Captain who enlisted only when war broke out. New Zealanders place huge weight on Gallipoli, and commemorate it every year. Yet very few New Zealanders know the name William Malone. Malone was a Lieutenant Colonel who commanded a Wellington regiment that gained a foothold on Chunuk Bair, a strategically critical peak on Gallipoli, and held it for 36 hours. This peak, one of those which made up the last range before the Dardanelles, was one of the two objectives of the offensive in August 1915. In fact, from Chunuk Bair, Malone and his men could actually see the Dardanelles, which, because they led directly to Constantinople, could open up Turkey for invasion (Hickey, 1995; Cooper, 1999). Chunuk Bair is thus referred to on Wikipedia as “the only success for the Allies of the Campaign” (*Battle of Chunuk Bair*, 2006, *Battle of Gallipoli*, 2006). Malone was 56 at the time, having lived in New Zealand from the age of 21, and was a Taranaki farmer, land agent and lawyer (Cooper, 1999, p.92). His actions at Chunuk Bair could be presented, if New Zealand historians, politicians or the public so wished, as embodying almost all aspects of the Anzac Spirit. He was a citizen soldier, and at one point refused to follow orders given by his commanding officer (rumoured to have been drunk) to lead his men into a hopeless daylight attack, waiting instead for nightfall (Pugsley, 2004, p.103). He could thus be seen to have shown contempt for inefficient officers (even though the one in this case was also a New Zealander), and a willingness to subvert military discipline for the sake of his men. Malone, his men, and their New Zealand replacements held on to Chunuk Bair alone, which could boost the argument that New Zealanders were militarily superior- New Zealanders, not the British or Australians, were responsible for one of Gallipoli’s few successes. British troops were supposed to advance from Suvla Bay to the North to meet the New Zealanders at Chunuk Bair (a much easier advance) but never left the bay (Cooper, 1999, p.90), which would further separate brave New Zealand soldiers from an inefficient British Army. In fact, a 1982 play by Maurice Shadbolt, *Once on Chunuk Bair*, does present the event in this way (Cooper, 1999, pp.86-94). Shadbolt even has the British soldiers still on Suvla Bay sunbathing and drinking tea (Cooper, 1999, p.97). Malone died on Chunuk Bair (he was, in fact, killed by friendly fire from the fleet that was supposed to be helping him down below (Hickey, 1995, p.279)) and thus his war experience fits the pervading atmosphere of sacrifice at Anzac Day memorials. Yet Malone was not included in the list of New Zealand’s Top 100 History Makers as broadcast by Prime TV in 2005 (*New Zealand’s Top 100 History*

Makers, 2006). He is not on nz.com's list of "Famous and Notable New Zealanders" (*Famous and Notable New Zealanders*, 2006). No New Zealander has thought to put him in the Military and Police section of Wikipedia's list of New Zealanders, even though this contains other unknowns like Lloyd Alan Trigg or James Allen Ward⁷ (*List of New Zealanders*, 2006). Malone does have two memorials dedicated to him (in Taranaki and Wellington), and his last letter to his wife was read aloud at the Memorial to New Zealand's Unknown Warrior in 2004 (Malone et al., 2005, p.21), but this does not appear to have had a lasting impact on the public's consciousness- and of, course, in 2004, the main focus was on the *Unknown Warrior*.

Discussing Malone as an embodiment of the Anzac Spirit to the point that his name would become recognisable would actually run counter to one of the spirit's essential components- egalitarianism. Many men died on Chunuk Bair in August 1915, and many more died in the wider Gallipoli region that year. Anzac Day ceremonies tend to focus on *all* of them. Even though Gallipoli is almost always cited, it is made clear that services memorialise all those who fell, in World War One, World War Two, and all other wars. Not one soldier is singled out. We do remember Malone in the sense that we remember all those who fell, but many do not know his name any more than they know any of the other thousands of soldiers' names. Malone, then, is not seen as more deserving of recognition than anyone else- which makes sense in a country in which soldiers and their commanders are seen as equal.

Of course, New Zealanders are more likely to remember commander's names, but not everyone does, and these historic commanders could not be said to be heroes today. The back copy of Wright's (2005b) study of General Freyberg announces, "He became a national hero, exalted by a generation"- but apparently, "generation" is the biggest claim that could be made. Although Wright asserts that Freyberg is one of the better-known New Zealand historic figures, he stops short at calling him a hero. Speaking of the period immediately following the War, whilst Freyberg was serving as New Zealand's Governor-General, Wright writes "His popular stature was unassailable, and his image as a hero-leader fed back into the vision of his abilities in the field- abilities that were themselves entwined with the popular reputation of the

⁷ Both Victoria Cross recipients for actions in World War Two.

Second New Zealand Division” (2005b, p.9). Thus, the stature gained by Freyberg- even in the period straight after the war- was not merely due to his actions, but to the reputation of the fighting men in his Division as a whole. Most tellingly, Wright speaks of his image as not a “hero” but a “hero-leader” –it was not him but those he commanded that were heroes. Wright tends to defend Freyberg against many of the criticisms that have been levelled against him, but begins quoting those who have criticised him- thus giving the criticisms space- on the very first page (2005b, p.9). Harper’s study of Major General Howard Kippenberger- first published in 1997- was the first analysis of a New Zealand Army Commander other than Freyberg, who has had five biographies and a TV series (Harper, 2005, p.11). Even five biographies are minor when compared with the copious work on people like Patton, Wellington and Nelson. Other New Zealand commanders- that is, those who are not Freyberg or Kippenberger- such as Hargest, Russell, Weir and Barrowclough, have been largely ignored by both historians and the public (Harper, 2005, p.11). Harper himself could not be said to present Kippenberger as a hero. At times he is extremely critical of him: pointing out mistakes he made which proved costly for his men (2005, pp. 118-119, 128-129, 157-160, 221-225); chastising him for taking unnecessary risks which Harper views as “folly and a failure of command” (2005, p.263); stating that his threat to resign when unhappy at the prospect of a second battle at Cassino, which he believed would be futile, was a “dereliction of duty” (2005, p.260); accusing him of “lack[ing] moral courage” in his failure to fire a subordinate commander who abandoned his battalion during an attack (2005, p.154).

The only real New Zealand war hero (and the only soldier to make Prime’s list) was, as previously mentioned, not a high-level commander but a Captain. Captain is not rank and file, of course, but Charles Upham, twice winner of the Victoria Cross, is always presented as an everyman. He is perhaps the best individual example of the civilian myth of the Anzac Spirit. Analysis of both the one biography that Upham authorised and cooperated in the writing of, Sandford’s 1962 *Mark of the Lion*, and a recent children’s book, Marriott’s 2006 *Soldier in the Yellow Socks*, reveal that both authors narrate his war (and indeed life) experiences within the frame of the Anzac discourse. In turn, these books, along with most other writings on Upham, reinforce and perpetuate the discourse. A major point running through Sandford’s biography is Upham’s identity as a farmer, with the implication that this made him a typical or

ordinary Kiwi. Although he was not from a farming family, Sandford writes that before World War Two Upham had worked as a musterer, shepherd and farm manager, and that it was his dream to own a farm (1962, pp.20 & 272). According to Sandford's narration, this ordinary, by no means aristocratic, man rose through the ranks on the merit of some extreme acts of courage. Sandford further states that Upham was intolerant of the "artificialities" of the army system (1962, p.33), partly because whilst working on Canterbury farms, he "came to judge men by their actions, not their clothes or titles" (Sandford, 1962, p.21). Sandford defines Upham's attitude as "an innocent indifference to many of the traditions and formalities of military life" and writes, apparently from Upham's point of view, "some things really matter; some things really don't" (1962, p.113). Sandford relates various stories which show that Upham was concerned for the welfare of the men under him: he would take messages to the front himself rather than ask his men to face danger (1962, p.145), give his men the presents he received from home, spend time trying to improve their dugouts, and defend them when they got in trouble with commanding officers (1962, pp.119-121). Unsurprisingly, Sandford says Upham asked for his men's opinions (1962, p.34) and expresses surprise that he was never arraigned for insubordination due to his habit of speaking bluntly to superiors and telling them when he thought they were wrong (1962, p.33).

Mariott also narrates Upham's lack of respect for or fit with the hierarchical military system, but she does so by relating amusing anecdotes designed to make kids laugh: he was more likely to yell "whoa!" than "platoon halt" (2006, p.11); he wore yellow socks to the presentation of his VC, and forgot to salute when he received it (2006, p.23); when the line of New Zealand VCs marched past the King during a victory parade in London it was "as crooked as a dog's hind leg" because Upham never learnt to march in time (2006, p.47). Both authors also present Upham as stoically denying pain. Mariott writes that once Upham arrived at a certain camp "he casually dug out the bullet that had been bothering him since Crete" (2006, pp.19-20). Even Sandford, writing the "official" biography wrote, "It wasn't until a fortnight later...that the festering wound forced itself on his attention. Then he bent down, squeezed at the flesh each side of the wound and prised the bullet out" (1962, p.89). Sandford also shows that what he calls Upham's "complete indifference to personal comfort" was a personal characteristic at home as well as in war (1962, p.21). He relates that Upham

once burnt himself but would not go to the hospital until he had finished some tasks the next day, and writes that Upham's fiancée (later wife) Molly had to learn that Charles would not lift the canvas hood on his car when it began to rain, because to him sitting in the rain was no inconvenience (Sandford, 1962, pp.283 & 22). Sandford generally narrates Upham as possessing ironclad inner strength, writing, for example, that he "had built up such a cold fury against the enemy, and such an implacable determination, that his mind could still dominate his battered body" (1962, p.103). However, he does present him as giving in to emotion at least twice. One episode is from Upham's time as a prisoner of war (Sandford, 1962, p.206), and the other is the occasion of the evacuation of Crete, when he was "weeping, in a medley of utter exhaustion and illness, and from bitter frustration at not being allowed to stay for another crack at the enemy" (Sandford, 1962, pp.102-103). The most probable reason for the acceptability of this latter incident is that the reason giving for Upham's weeping is his reluctance to leave his men behind and go to safety when he felt he could still fight (Sandford, 1962, p.103). Mateship and good leadership, it appears, trump stoicism.

Although Upham comes across as an Anzac hero in these ways, and in the stories told about his exploits against the enemy, he is also almost always narrated as an "everyman." Upham himself insisted that he was just an ordinary man, and his biographers have seized upon this and tend to repeat all occurrences that illustrate the point. According to Phillips, Upham possessed "extreme, almost obsessive, modesty" (1996, p.205). He did not like to be distinguished from his men and insisted upon transferring credit for his heroic deeds to them. So, for example, both Sandford and Marriott report that Upham was not happy at receiving the VC. Sandford writes that Upham felt he had done "no more than an ordinary man's duty" (1962, p.107) and that "it was all a mistake. He was no different from the others." Marriott writes that "he didn't want to be singled out" (2006, p.20) and felt that all the men at Crete deserved a medal (2006, p.24). Upham did not like the media attention he received, and Marriott narrates that when a reporter came to interview him he "hid in his dugout and wouldn't come out" (2006, p.20). Telling the same story, Sandford relates that he only emerged when Kippenberger suggested that he could tell the reporter about his men (1962, p.109). Both write that when he was captured he threw away his VC so that he was not treated differently than the rest of the prisoners (Marriott, 2006, p.37;

Sandford, 1962, p.175). At the victory parade Upham attended in London, he refused to stay in the hotel room put aside for him and camped instead with the rest of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in a park (Marriott, 2006, p.48). At the beginning of *Mark of the Lion*, which Upham uncharacteristically consented to be interviewed for (but only, again, after Kippenberger intervened), Sandford writes that “Charles Upham hopes... that this book can be read, not as a tribute to him, but to all those others- the men with whom he served” (1962, p.12). Charles Upham, then, is an ideal example of the Anzac Spirit. However, the Anzac Spirit describes the ordinary New Zealand soldier, so that Upham is really just the quintessential everyman. Only by insisting that he was not an exceptional New Zealand soldier could Upham become one.

One historian, Pugsley, argues that it is much harder for New Zealand soldiers to become worthy of commemoration than it is for Australians. He comes to this conclusion by comparing the Anzac memorials of both countries. In Australia, the primary focus of Anzac day parades is the veterans. Most Australian war memorials list all of the men and women from the particular district in which the memorial is sited who went to war. In New Zealand, war memorials tend to list only those who died. The focus on Anzac day tends to be not a parade of veterans but the cost of war and the names of the dead (Pugsley, 2004, pp.35-36). In Australia *everyone* who went to war is seen as being worthy of memorialisation and thus heroic, whilst in New Zealand you have to have actually died to achieve this. Pugsley attributes this difference to the fact that Australians would not accept conscription in World War One. This meant the Government needed to convince enough young men to volunteer, and part of this project was the Anzac Day parade in 1916, which initiated the commemoration of all soldiers: “because the personal decision to go marked them out as heroes”(Pugsley, 2004, p.309). In New Zealand, by contrast, conscription removed the element of choice. Those who went had not necessarily made an extraordinary decision; they had been ordered to go just like many others had. There was therefore nothing “special” about them.

Narrating the “Ordinary” Man

Both Upham and his biographers narrated his life to construct the identity of an ordinary man. This is by no means an unusual practice. One can find expressions of ordinariness all throughout New Zealand war literature. It appears almost compulsory, for example, for medal-winners to declare that they did not deserve their decoration. When Lieutenant Alan Roberts received a Military Cross in World War Two for being wounded trying to rescue a fallen comrade, his thoughts were “Arrant nonsense. Shouldn’t have been granted. There’d be maybe hundreds of other servicemen who had done far more” (Hutching et al., 2005, p.243). Jack Ingham, awarded a Distinguished Service Cross for landing troops on D-Day, “considers the award was for his ship, rather than for himself personally” (Parr, 2006, p.41). Jack Hinton, on learning of his VC in a prisoner of war camp, “thought that there must have been some mistake- that it was ‘a lot of bull’” (McDonald, 1997, p.100). Hinton’s biographer, McDonald, reports that he “would reiterate that the medal should have gone to the men who had fought alongside him... ‘they were wonderful men’ he would say. ‘Congratulate them, not me. I had my war cut short. My mates went on to fight more battles. They are the real heroes’” (1997, p.68). In fact Davidson wrote that during World War One “the New Zealanders were nicknamed ‘the silent division’ as they rarely sang or boasted about their deeds. They kept to themselves and tried to avoid any distinction” (2005, p.174). The most boastful comment I have located is a short phrase after Lieutenant Colonel Donald writes that he was awarded a Military Cross: “clearly cause for celebration” (2005, p.67). However, throughout his memoir Donald constantly gives credit to other soldiers, reporting on the awarding of their medals and almost always writing that they were thoroughly deserved (2005, pp. 80, 97, 121, 125, 130, 138-9, 141, 149, 150, 152). This avoidance of heroism is by no means the only attitude possible. When Vera Brittain’s British fiancée died during World War One, shot whilst inspecting some wire that needed fixing on the trenches, her sorrow was amplified by the fact that his death was “so grimly devoid of that heroic limelight which Roland had always regarded as ample compensation for those who were slain, like Kingsley’s *Heroes*, ‘in the flower of youth on the chance of

winning a noble name” (Brittain, 1978 (1933), p.241). When Vera’s brother, who had also been Roland’s best friend, won the Military Cross, she decided:

it was best that Roland, dead and undecorated, could not know; his reflections would have been too bitter. He had been so definitely “after” the Military Cross, had thought it more to be desired than the Nobel Prize, and his fellow officers in the Seventh Worcesters had shared our confidence that some high military distinction would be his fate. ...How could he have endured, the next autumn term, to be a silent witness of Edward’s clamorous reception at Uppingham [the men’s old school]?- a reception such as we had often imagined for himself, but had never even thought possible for Edward (Brittain, 1978 (1933), p.287).

New Zealand soldiers are narrated or narrate themselves as ordinary through all types of stories, not just those related to medals. McDonald calls her biography on a VC winner *Jack Hinton V.C.: A Man Amongst Men*. Not a hero, just a man. She writes that as Hinton had always had to fend for himself during the depression, he had learnt survival techniques which he could teach his men: “this expertise taught by an ordinary bloke to ordinary men gave them a heightened sense of security and proved invaluable in the many battles which lay ahead” (McDonald, 1997, p.55). The author of the introduction to a book of collected memories on the Pacific War notes that “the interviews reproduced in this book reveal men who did their duty quietly and efficiently” (McGibbon in Hutching et al., 2005, p.48). In a book from the same series, this time a collection of memories from D-Day, Russell Clarke is recorded as saying “we were just boys. One thing that bothers me a wee bit is that, as the years go by, those of us who are still surviving are staring to be looked upon as some sort of heroes, and I keep on trying to reiterate that we were just ordinary boys in the street in those days.” He continues that boys today would do the same (Parr, 2006, p.161). The editor of the collection, Parr, writes in the introduction that “some Second World War veterans have a tendency to understate experience, perhaps a reflection of Kiwi male culture among their generation.” She wants to make sure that despite this readers realise that there are “acts of courage, feats of endurance” in these pages- they are just “described simply, without drama” (2006, p.23). In other words, they are related laconically. In fact, it is probably very difficult to relate a heroic or glory-filled story

in a laconic manner; the Kiwi male's mode of expressing himself has affected the theme of his narration.

Five New Zealand World War Two memoir writers actually titled their books after their ordinariness: *Just an Ordinary Bloke* (Findlay and McCallum, 2001); *I Didn't have a Choice: An Ordinary Soldier's Story of the Second World War* (Johnston, 2006); *An Adequate Man* (Palmer, 2000); *Just Ordinary Seamen* (Tangye, 2000); *An Ordinary Man- Frank's Story* (White, 1999). Johnston begins his memoir by writing that he will let the heroes and the courageous tell their own stories- his story is "about the ordinary sort of chap. There were tens of thousands of those. I was one of them. And like the rest of those ordinary chaps, I just went off to war and became a soldier" (2006, p.7). He continues, "This happens to be my story, but it could quite easily have been theirs" (Johnston, 2006, p.9). Palmer, author of *An Adequate Man*, especially narrates himself as nothing special. He reports that "he was not much of a specimen" (2000, p.18) at birth, and that growing up "academically I had many inadequacies" (2000, p.27). He refers to himself as a "a white-legged, inexperienced Second Lieutenant" (Palmer, 2000, p.73) and writes about his rugby playing after the war, "again I was adequate, and good enough to play in the Country team, but not to reach the heights of provincial representation" (2000, pp.180-181).

Although these five authors all profess to represent ordinary men, they do not actually agree on what exactly an ordinary man is. Johnston, for example, writes that "except for the very few, none of us were ever cut out to be soldiers...for most of us the army had no appeal whatsoever and the mere thought of war was abhorrent" (2006, p.7). Neither Findlay or Palmer would agree, as both report being desperate to go: Findlay was "itching for the excitement of war" (2001, p.50) and actually lied about his age so he could join up (2001, pp.51-53), whilst Palmer's "major concern was that it would be over before I was able to fight" (2000, p.55). Yet no matter what characteristics they consider "ordinary" men possess, they all have in common the desire to present and create themselves as one through their narration. These men chose to publish their memoirs, indicating they felt their lives would be of interest to someone, and yet they also chose to emphasise that there was nothing unique about them. This does not mean to say that all of these men will necessarily present themselves as merely adequate, as Palmer does. Tangye, for example, narrates the ordinary man through a

heroic, glorious discourse. He quotes a tribute to those involved in the Dunkirk withdrawal published in the New York Times in June 1940, which he felt also applied to those, like him, involved in D-Day: “It was the common man of free countries rising in all his glory, out of mill, office, factory, farm and ship...This shining thing in the hearts of free men Hitler cannot command or attain or conquer...It is the great tradition of democracy. It is the future. It is victory” (Tangye, 2000, p.30). Near the start of his memoir, Findlay writes that he “eventually gain[ed] success not only as a farmer but also in the sports arena” (2001, p.7) and goes on to report his placings in bike races and rifle shooting competitions (2001, pp.137-140). Thus, Findlay has no problem narrating himself as successful. However, by calling his memoir *Just an Ordinary Bloke* and by closing it with the hope that his family will “be justly proud of their Mum and Dad, who is ‘Just an Ordinary Bloke’” (Findlay and McCallum, 2001, p.148) he implies that any Kiwi male could be a success at farming and sports, and that that probably is, in fact, his definition of an ordinary New Zealand male, just as the definition of an ordinary New Zealand soldier is someone who is successful at war.

That this discourse still dominates was proven in early July 2007 when Corporal Willy Apiata of the New Zealand SAS was awarded a Victoria Cross for carrying a wounded comrade 70 metres to safety under heavy fire in Afghanistan in 2004. In media interviews, Apiata could have been Upham reincarnated. He downplayed his actions, stating that he was “just watching his mate’s back”. He said, “I’m just an ordinary person. ...I’m just one of the boys and always will be” (Eaton, 2007b, p.A2). “What I did was nothing that any one of my mates wouldn’t have done for me” (*Full Interview with Corporal Bill Apiata, a True Kiwi Hero*, 2007). When asked by TV3’s Mike McRoberts who his heroes are, Apiata cited his parents, who taught him how to respect his elders and be a humble person. As is the tradition, he declared the medal was not just for him: “The boys are stoked [...] they’re really stoked ah, because this is not just for me... it’s for my mates as well, umm, for the unit, and for the wider New Zealand Defence Force, ah, this is something that’s for all of us here in New Zealand” (*Full Interview with Corporal Bill Apiata, a True Kiwi Hero*, 2007). The media were keen to report on Apiata’s Upham-like discomfort with attention. The Christchurch *Press* led its article on the medal’s award with “The first New Zealander to be awarded the Victoria Cross since World War 2 sprinted more than 70m in front

of Taliban machineguns as he carried a wounded mate. But facing the media yesterday, he all but froze.” The article further reports that “Apiata appeared nervous” and that before his media conference journalists were warned that Apiata “was not used to the limelight and might ‘freeze up’” (Eaton, 2007b, p.A1). The following section sounds exactly like Upham’s relationship with Kippenberger: “Voice cracking, Apiata at one point looked nervously to his right at Defence Force chief Lieutenant General Jerry Mateparae for help. Mateparae told reporters to ask other questions, saying Apiata was overwhelmed” (Eaton, 2007b, p.A1). Although Apiata does appear to have been truly uneasy with the attention (he refused to talk about his family, for example) the media were so attached to this angle that at times they appeared to be determined to force Apiata into the Upham subject position. In an interview of just 13 minutes reporter Mike McRoberts managed to interject Apiata’s dislike of fame into the conversation no less than four times. For example, without any context from Apiata, he said to him “I’m sure you’d rather be in Afghanistan than sitting in front of a camera.” At another stage, when Apiata said “when everything settles down I’d like to get back to my daily work” McRoberts immediately added for him “without the cameras” (*Full Interview with Corporal Bill Apiata, a True Kiwi Hero*, 2007).

Once again, this discourse of ordinariness is utilised not only in reference to Kiwi soldiers but to civilians as well. Sir Edmund Hillary too declared his ordinariness, once saying “I really am an ordinary person with a few abilities which I’ve tried to use in the best way I can” (Associated Press, 2008). At the 50th anniversary of his reaching the summit of Mount Everest he said “I like to think that I am a very ordinary New Zealander, not terribly bright perhaps but determined and practical in what I do” (Fairfax Media, 2008). Hillary said he felt surprise at having reached the summit first: “because it had happened to me, old Ed Hillary, the beekeeper, once the star pupil of Tuakau District School, but no great shakes at Auckland Grammar and a no-hoper at university” (Field, 2008). He said, “I was just an average bloke; it was the media that transformed me into a heroic figure. And try as I did, there was no way to destroy my heroic image” (Potter & Hubbard, 2008, p.C8). Reminiscent of a soldier awarded a medal, he said of his Knighthood, “It was a tremendous honour, of course, but I had never really approved of titles” (Associated Press, 2008). Hillary was made a Knight within days of reaching the summit, and because he was still in the

Himalayas, Prime Minister Sid Holland accepted on his behalf. Years later Hillary said that had he been given the choice, he would have refused the Knighthood (Potter & Hubbard, 2008, p.C9). Once on finding that someone had named a hospital in Nepal after him, he repainted the sign to remove the reference to himself (Hubbard, 2008, p.C3). Much like Hinton's or Freyberg's biographers, on the occasion of Hillary's death the *Sunday Star Times* stopped short at naming Hillary a hero for New Zealanders, even though it described him as such to other nationalities. The front page reads, "To the world he was a HERO/ To the Nepalese he was a GOD/ To us he was the MAN/ who embodied the Spirit of New Zealand" (2008). Prime Minister Helen Clark wrote that Hillary "endeared himself to our nation as a modest, unassuming, and unpretentious man" (Clark, 2008, A3).

Constructing those citizens that have achieved extraordinary deeds as ordinary enables New Zealanders to continue to imagine that they are all equal and live in an egalitarian society, rather than, say, a meritocracy. Molloy points out that "part of the egalitarian myth has been the reluctance of New Zealanders to promote the achievements of one person over another" (2004, p.91). This tendency has been labelled "tall poppy syndrome", and some have begun to see its prevalence as a negative and unhealthy phenomenon. Tall poppy syndrome is defined on Wikipedia as:

a pejorative term used [...] to describe what is seen as a leveling social attitude. Someone is said to be suffering from tall poppy syndrome when his or her assumption of a higher economic, social or political position attracts criticism, being perceived as presumptuous, attention seeking or without merit. Alternately, it is seen as a societal trait in which people of genuine merit are criticised or resented because the attention given them elevates them above their peers (*Tall Poppy Syndrome*, 2007).

The site mentions that it may have originated as a rejection of the British class system (*Tall Poppy Syndrome*, 2007).

The Anzac Spirit as described in this section is a discourse that constructs both individual subjectivities and the nation of New Zealand. By representing its soldiers

as self-possessed, flexible and superior warriors who denounce hierarchy and are capable of extreme loyalty, New Zealand constructs itself as a nation that can make a positive difference in the world, a nation that would make a good ally. New Zealand can win wars and save those oppressed by those who may not value all of humankind as New Zealand does. The discourse, largely based on an ideal subjectivity of the everyman Anzac soldier, may also be used by individuals to achieve subjective composure. Findlay in his memoir *Just an Ordinary Bloke*, for example, constructs his identity by taking up this subject position. Because the discourse is so prevalent, his memoir will find social recognition and his identity affirmation. In turn, as *Just an Ordinary Bloke* circulates in the public sphere it reinforces and perpetuates the “truthfulness” of the national discourse by acting as a real life example and thus proof of it.

New Zealand’s Display of Self-Determination: the Nuclear-Free, Peacekeeping Nation

By the time of the Persian Gulf War, 75 years after Gallipoli, New Zealand had found a new way to assert its identity. This by no means completely displaced Gallipoli, but did provide an alternative or second focal point. This new assertion of identity is still centred on war, but it now opposes war and emphasises peace efforts. This might seem to contradict a nationhood that is founded on New Zealand proving itself in a destructive and largely futile battle, but in fact both are based on the same underlying desire: to make a meaningful contribution in the world despite the country’s size and isolation. The first facet of New Zealand’s more recently constructed nationhood is its nuclear-free status. According to McKinnon, much early anti-nuclear sentiment in the 70s was fostered by environmental concern (1999, p.151). Some degree of anti-nuclearism had government support as early as 1966 when the National government made formal protests about French nuclear atmospheric tests at Moruroa Atoll in the South Pacific (McKinnon, 1999, p.147). In 1973, the Labour government under Norman Kirk sent a frigate, HMNZS Otago, to protest further French testing at Mururoa (McGibbon, 1999, p.122). Some citizens also took yachts out to the Atoll to protest, and for this were awarded medals by the mayor of Auckland (McKinnon, 1999, p.147).

However, New Zealand did not become officially anti-nuclear until the 1980s. By then anti-nuclear campaigning had taken a more anti-militarist, rather than environmental, character (McKinnon, 1999, pp.151-152). It was the Labour party who established New Zealand as a nuclear-free zone. As early as the 1978 election Labour's manifesto had stated that when they next got into power, the party would close New Zealand's ports to nuclear-powered and nuclear-armed vessels (Templeton, 2006, p.312). Labour next took government in 1984, and found this promise put to the test in early 1985. One of New Zealand's primary defence alliances at the time was ANZUS, formed by a security treaty signed in 1951 between Australia, New Zealand and the United States. As part of the ANZUS relationship, the American vessel *USS Buchanan* was scheduled to take part in an exercise with Australian and New Zealand forces off the coast of Australia in early 1985. The United States thus sought diplomatic clearance for the *Buchanan* to make a "routine operational visit" to Wellington that March (McGibbon, 1999, p.123). The *Buchanan* was a guided missile destroyer, fitted with an anti-submarine rocket that was capable of firing nuclear-armed depth charges (Hoadley, 2000, p.44; McKinnon, 1999, p.160). Under Labour policy, in the absence of American assurances or New Zealand's own assessment that a nuclear-capable vessel was *not* carrying nuclear weapons, it would be assumed that the vessel was potentially carrying weapons. Such vessels would be denied entry. The United States could not provide assurances even had it wanted to, for this would breach their "neither confirm nor deny" security policy on nuclear armaments for their ships (Hoadley, 2000, p.43). New Zealand therefore responded by requesting that a vessel of a different, non-nuclear class be sent instead. Washington rejected this. Therefore, on 5 February 1985, even though the likelihood that the *Buchanan* was carrying a nuclear weapon was very low, New Zealand formally declined the request (McGibbon, 1999, p.123; McKinnon, 1999, pp.160-161). The United States made it clear that they felt access to ports was an obligation implied by the ANZUS treaty and thus they would view such a rejection as not fulfilling treaty obligations (Hoadley, 2000, p.44). Further, in December 1985 legislation was introduced to parliament that would write policy into law and make New Zealand a legally nuclear-free zone, and the United States also warned that they would cease to see themselves as obligated to come to New Zealand's aid under the terms of ANZUS if this legislation was passed (Hoadley, 2000, p.46). New Zealand would not budge on either issue. For America,

the issue was not necessarily New Zealand itself but the precedent this might set for other more important nations to dictate the terms of their treaties (McGibbon, 1999, p.123), and on 27 June 1986 the U.S. suspended its obligations to New Zealand. The Secretary of State said, “We part company as friends, but we part company” (Hoadley, 2000, p.46). Practically, this meant New Zealand was denied access to intelligence and to opportunities to discuss important issues with high-level American officials (McKinnon, 1999, p.161; Rolfe, 1999, p.74). On 8 June 1987 the New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament, and Arms Control Act passed into law.

Although all of these initiatives had been taken by one party, by the time New Zealand sent troops to the Gulf War the policy had transcended party lines. In 1971, the National Government had actually told the United States it would not accept visits by nuclear-powered ships until they had agreed to take liability in the event of any contamination. However ANZUS meant more to them, and in 1975 Prime Minister Muldoon had announced an end to any limitations (McKinnon, 1999, pp.148-149). National was therefore not happy with the ANZUS split, and prior to 1990 argued that only a National Government could re-establish normal relations with the United States, as Labour would not repeal nuclear-free laws. However, on March 2 1990 the Labour Government’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade was unexpectedly given the chance to meet with the American Secretary of State. This was interpreted by many in New Zealand as a thawing of ice and suggested that it was possible to have contact with senior American officials *and* retain an anti-nuclear stance. Thus, National lost its electoral card (McKinnon, 1999, p.169; Templeton, 2006, pp.508-509). In 1986 a public opinion poll and public hearings commissioned by a Defence Committee of Enquiry had found that although the majority of New Zealand desired an ANZUS relationship, the anti-nuclear stance was also popular with the public (Hoadley, 2000, p.49). With the 1990 election fast approaching the National caucus forced a policy change on its leadership. National would now deny nuclear ships access to New Zealand ports. There was little point for the party to give voters a reason not to vote for them (Hoadley, 2000, p.52; McKinnon, 1999, p.169; Templeton, 2006, p.509). In his autobiography, Jim Bolger, then leader of the National Party, actually appears to blame the loss of the 1987 election on Labour-run ads that subliminally associated National with nuclear explosions: “as the mushroom clouds blossomed on the voters’ television screens, our dreams of victory slipped

away” (1998, p.22). He later notes that New Zealanders felt strongly about the nuclear issue “as I had learned to my cost when we lost the 1987 election campaign” (1998, p.147). The media presented National’s turn-around on the nuclear issue as a humiliating backdown, and high profile party members made their disgust with it public (Templeton, 2006, pp.508-509). Bolger stated that his party was merely adjusting their policy to the wishes of the public as is proper in a democracy, and from then on National campaigned on improving New Zealand-United States relations without compromising the anti-nuclear stance (Bolger, 1998, p.43; Hoadley, 2000, p.52).

New Zealand’s willingness to stand up to the much more powerful United States and deny their requests has been seen as a forceful display of self-determination. New Zealanders once again would not be ordered around by those supposedly superior to them. As Mein Smith says, “for many the pronouncement of a nuclear-free nation amounted to a declaration of independence” (Mein Smith, 2005, p.216). The anti-nuclear issue from 1985 on became “increasingly bound up with an upsurge in nationalism.” The catalyst for this was the sinking of the Rainbow Warrior, a Greenpeace ship bound for Moruroa Atoll, in Auckland Harbour by French secret service agents- and the non-response of New Zealand’s allies to this event. Although this was technically an act of war against the country, neither Britain nor America was keen to even condemn it (Belich, 2001b, p. 438). Furthermore, according to Hoadley, many New Zealanders “professed pride that New Zealand was leading the world with its unique policy” (2000, p.54) - especially given the relevance of anti-nuclear policy to world security. Once again, New Zealand was seen to be contributing to issues of global import. Mein Smith states that the passage of the nuclear-free law and resultant split with the United States encouraged a focus on and identification with the South Pacific (2005, p.222), which in August 1985 became a formalised nuclear-weapons-free zone with the signing of the Treaty of Rarotonga. Mein Smith defines this new nationalism as the imagining of New Zealand to be a “moral, Pacific paradise” (2005, p.222). New Zealand could be influential in this smaller terrain. The absence of nuclear generators in the country is further tied up with the clean, green image New Zealand likes to present to the world, which is currently embodied in the tourism slogan “100% Pure.” In fact, Labour had promised that New Zealand would not be “polluted” by nuclear ships (Rolfe, 1999, p.74). New Zealand is seen through the lens

of these events by at least our close neighbours; an Australian correspondent in 2005 referred to the country as “Australia's independent-minded neighbour” and defined it as having an “antinuclear, pacifist stance” (Kremmer, 2005).

Indeed, when Harper was trying to ascertain why there has been so little work done on New Zealand commanders other than Freyberg, he argued it was partly because of an anti-war bent:

New Zealanders have tended to regard military tradition and ceremony with great suspicion and hostility...many people seem to regard the study of military history as ‘politically incorrect’ and to believe that serious study equates with a love of killing...Strangely, the campaigns that have attracted most public attention are military defeats (Harper, 2005, p.13).

These defeats are Crete, Cassino and, of course, Gallipoli. “Military defeats,” Harper concludes, “especially when they demonstrate the futility of war, are viewed as safe and ‘politically correct’...in fact, one of the most remarkable New Zealand victories of the Second World War, Takrouna⁸...is virtually unknown in New Zealand (2005, p.13). The fact that New Zealand’s primary war discourse is a civilian one means that even when New Zealand is at war its soldiers are not seen to be professional warriors.

In fact, New Zealand so dislikes being seen as in any way war-like that in June 2007 the discovery that the national airline had in a commercial transaction flown Australian troops en route to war zones into the Middle East became a public scandal and major embarrassment to the Labour Government and Prime Minister Helen Clark. Air New Zealand is 76.5% owned by the government, and although top foreign affairs officials and staff in the Prime Minister’s office knew about the chartered flights they had not passed this information on to her. As one commentator wrote “to put things in perspective, Air New Zealand is a commercial, publicly-listed company. It can, in theory, carry whoever, wherever, it damn well likes” (Espiner, 2007a). However as “opposition to the Iraq War has become an article of faith for this administration every bit as strong as its opposition to nuclear weapons or nuclear power” (Espiner,

⁸ The Maori Battalion took the fortified citadel of Takrouna in Tunisia against huge odds on 23 April 1943, contributing to the Axis power evacuation of Africa that May.

2007a), a spokesman for Clark said she was “appalled and furious” (Espiner, 2007b) when she found out.

The Government’s anger appears to have arisen from that fact that Air New Zealand is a representative of and symbol for the country. Phil Goff, Minister of Defence in the Labour Party-led coalition, declared that Air New Zealand had “ignored its role as the national flag carrier” by involving itself in the war (DPA, 2007). Revenue Minister Peter Dunne said that “Air New Zealand’s board and management should know they are the majority taxpayer-owned flag carrier for New Zealand, not the lickspittle lackeys of the Australian and American governments” (DPA, 2007). And TV3 news, when the story broke, told the country “But who would have thought our national carrier bearing the koru- frequently used to represent creation- and 80 per cent owned by the government, has been transporting troops for war. A war the government wanted no part in” (*Air New Zealand Carrying Troops to Iraq*, 2007).

The issue was apparently more important than good trans-Tasman relations, as it turned into a row with closest neighbour Australia. A spokesman for Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer, said that Australia viewed this as “an attack on an issue surrounding Australian troops”. The outcry “appeared to be a slight on Australia” (Young, 2007). Australia thus stated that it would no longer use Air New Zealand and that it would ban its defence troops from flying with the airline. In a time of “trans-tasman strains” (an unrelated dispute about Australian market access for New Zealand apples was also in progress, and Downer himself had recently spoken at a Opposition National Party conference (Young, 2007)), Clark’s response was to basically tell him to mind his own business: “Quite frankly, I think it’s a time for biting tongues on the other side of the Tasman...I think he just might reflect that wading into our political debate wasn’t a brilliant idea” (‘NZ PM takes a swipe at Downer’, 2007). She also rather undiplomatically commented “the very day after he said that [they would no longer use the airline] Air New Zealand flew Australian Defence Force troops to Honiara, so perhaps things don’t get actioned very quickly in Australia” (‘NZ PM takes a swipe at Downer’, 2007).

Comments by New Zealand Foreign Minister Winston Peters point to how New Zealand sees its role. Soon after the story broke Peters told the press that he didn’t

know whether the troops Air New Zealand had transported were assigned to military or reconstruction tasks. He said that if the Australian troops were involved in Afghanistan or in reconstruction work in Iraq, rather than in combat, “then there was no problem” (NZPA, 2007).

This stance reflects New Zealand’s advocacy of solving crises through the United Nations, and in particular of providing troops for peacekeeping and reconstructive purposes in troubled regions. The United Nations did not support the current Iraq War, and so New Zealand did not join the coalition of the willing. In fact, New Zealand did not commit to the first Gulf War until it was clear that it had United Nations approval. It was National who committed support troops, after their win in the November 1990 election. On August 13 1990, the Labour government had declined to become involved in the crisis beyond imposing economic sanctions on Iraq, with Prime Minister Palmer, “questioning the legality and command structures of the present United States-led military operation.” Palmer stated that New Zealand wanted action in the Gulf (so far a blockade) to be “cloaked with the authority of the United Nations” and said that the country would be promoting UN command (Burns, 1990f, p.8). On August 20, Palmer again urged the United Nations to take command of the multi-national forces (Burns, 1990c, p.1). By the time the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 678 on November 29 1990, National had replaced Labour in government. On December 1 the Christchurch Press reported:

The government’s attitude to military involvement in the Gulf appeared to firm up yesterday after the United Nations Security Council passed its resolution authorising use of force against Iraq...Until yesterday, both the Government and the Opposition seemed to have policies of not involving the New Zealand military in the Gulf unless the United Nations specifically sanctioned action.

The article goes on, “Mr Bolger appeared to see the Security Council resolution as requiring a review of the government’s position” (Burns, 1990e, p.1). Two days later, the government committed 40 Squadron and a medical team to the Gulf.

Working with the United Nations is the way in which New Zealand currently prefers to make its contribution to world affairs. The following passage from Crawford sums up the feeling:

New Zealand has been, and remains, a consistent and strong supporter of the United Nations, and of collective security, and has made a significant contribution to world peace. Participation in international peace-support operations enjoys strong public support, and fits in well with the wide range of activities that New Zealand undertakes as part of its efforts to be “a good international citizen” (Crawford, 1996, p.78).

The introduction of *New Zealand as an International Citizen*, written by then Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Don McKinnon, presents New Zealand as “a founding member of the UN” and states that “New Zealand has from time to time been a member of all its main organs” (1995, p.5). At the conference in San Francisco at which the UN was founded, New Zealand, who “wanted small nations to have their proper place in world affairs: we believed they should not be pushed around by those more powerful” (McKinnon, 1995, p.6) ... “played a role larger than our size- or indeed our previous involvement in international affairs- would have suggested was likely” (McKinnon, 1995, p.6). Although this role may have been “disproportionate to its size” it was not to its “own estimation to the efforts it had exerted and the sacrifices it had made in the Allied cause during the War” (Templeton, 1995, p.20). For example, New Zealand lobbied for the decolonisation chapter of the Charter: “the result, for which Peter Fraser and New Zealand can take some credit, has been the virtual disappearance of colonies from the world scene” (Templeton, 1995, p.19). The Dumbarton Oaks proposals on economic and social questions were also greatly strengthened, “either at New Zealand’s initiative or with its strong support” (Templeton, 1995, p.16). McKinnon (1995, p.7), along with high school textbooks (See, for example, Bowen, 2005, p.6), notes that New Zealand was opposed to the Security Council having the power of veto. *New Zealand as an International Citizen* also constructs New Zealand as continuing to make a meaningful contribution to the UN, arguing, for example, that unlike most non permanent members of the Security Council who have been “unable or unwilling to take positions which opposed- in any effective way” the objectives of the permanent members (Brown, 1995, p.53) New Zealand in its term in 1993-94 “rock[ed] the Council boat more effectively than anyone can remember for a very long time” (Brown, 1995, p.54). Recognition and appreciation of this came “spontaneously” from various quarters- other small countries, Middle Eastern countries, the Secretariat, NGOs (Brown, 1995, p.54). One

of the ways in which New Zealand rocked the boat, and the trademark by which it was known during its term, was its attempts to reform peacekeeping practices (Brown, 1995, pp.59-60).

The New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade website states:

Peacekeeping is a collective responsibility...A strong commitment to global security, support for the role of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security, and participation in international peace support and peacekeeping operations, are longstanding and fundamental elements of New Zealand's foreign policy (*New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade*, 2007).

By the time of the Gulf War, New Zealand had participated (although this participation might be limited to a few observers) in UN peacekeeping and humanitarian missions in India and Pakistan, Lebanon, the Congo, Yemen, Namibia, Afghanistan, and Sinai. The country had also contributed to two UN Emergency Forces, a UN Disengagement Force and the UN Truce Supervision Organisation: Middle East (Rolfe, 1999, p.80). As a high school history curriculum textbook instructs, "Our country's reputation and size tend to make us trusted and not a threat so we are in a good position for peacekeeping." The text continues "In 1993 New Zealand participated in 8 out of 15 United Nations' peacekeeping missions, including the very dangerous ones in the Sinai and Bosnia" (Bowen, 2005, p.53). Thakur writes "by the 1990s New Zealand had acquired a reputation for disinterested contribution to UN peace-keeping [...] New Zealand defence personnel are much in demand for UN duty because they are known to be well-trained and well-disciplined" (Thakur, 1995, p.67).

The peacekeepers that now represent the nation are narrated as displaying the Anzac Spirit just as thoroughly as did the soldiers that had represented New Zealand before them. These peacekeepers come from the same institutions of the New Zealand Defence Force as did World War soldiers. An article printed in the *Christchurch Press* the day before Anzac Day 2007 is entitled "Modern troops extend spirits of first Anzacs." It states that the peacekeeper interviewed, on his way to a mission in the Sinai Desert, "represents a growing number of Kiwi servicemen and women imbued with the Anzac spirit of their predecessors, despite their much lesser combat roles".

“Times have changed for New Zealand’s armed services” the article states, “but the Anzac spirit is stronger than ever”(Hartevelt, 2007, p.A6). King writes that since New Zealand has taken on its peacekeeper role it has earned a “high reputation” for certain tasks, such as clearing mines, teaching locals to do likewise, and being skilled at interacting with and listening to war-traumatised civilians (King, 2004, p.497). Earning a high reputation is just yet one more claim of military prowess, this time in the field of cleaning up after the war. Being skilled at interacting with traumatised locals does not sound like the traditional laconic tight-lipped Kiwi, but King explains that this particular success “owed something to the hands-on approach by which everyone from senior officers to lower ranks were involved in all duties, and was partly explained by what one commentator called the “Maori-Pakeha mix and lack of formality” (King, 2004, p.497). This is just a modern day restatement of the classless egalitarian army. Thakur writes that New Zealand peacekeepers possess ingenuity: “They are able to adapt to different cultures, are of a problem-solving bent and have an ability to improvise because they are so highly flexible- a key consideration in the dramatically shifting environs in which UN soldiers find themselves today” (1995, p.67). In early 2008 the Army ran a radio recruitment advertisement that paralleled New Zealand soldiers in World War Two and contemporary peacekeepers, stating that both groups worked with the same ethos of courage, comradeship, commitment and integrity, in order to maintain New Zealand’s way of life. New Zealand, it states, continues to play its part on the world stage. The statement that peacekeepers are courageous, along with descriptions like Bowen’s above that they take part in dangerous missions, demonstrate that peacekeepers are still narrated as having the inner discipline to remain brave in war torn areas. Just like New Zealand soldiers, then, New Zealand peacekeepers are constructed as possessing military prowess, egalitarianism, ingenuity, bravery and mateship.

The continuity of national qualities between the discourses, as well as the shared underlying aim of making a difference in the world, enables two seemingly mutually exclusive (war vs. peace) discourses of nationhood to co-exist. However, at first glance it would seem that neither of the two are very useful to a RNZAF Persian Gulf War veteran attempting to narrate his story in a publicly recognisable and acceptable way. The discourses available focus on peace and civilian-ness, whilst the very fact that the informants were Air force career servicemen in a war seemingly sets them up

as opposed to and unable to participate in both. We will later see their strong negative reactions to elements of the peace discourse. However, a key component of the Anzac Spirit is egalitarianism- and this could possibly prove useful to support soldiers who experienced a type of event whose narration is generally dominated by those who engage in combat.

Summary

This chapter has outlined the ways in which New Zealand has constructed its nationhood through telling certain stories about its participation in international conflicts. Motivated by the desire to make a mark on the world despite its size and isolation, New Zealand constitutes the occasions of its birth as a nation and development of a distinct identity as ones in which it followed its larger, more powerful allies into their wars in order to fight alongside them. However, as the 20th Century passed and New Zealand “grew up” further, it came to disagree with the martial policies of those allies (especially those of the United States) and no longer wished to follow them into war. Now New Zealand would make its difference by setting an example for the rest of the world in anti-nuclear, humanitarian practices. It would involve itself in keeping the peace and in restoring quality of living after a war. New Zealand would no longer follow larger nations, but rather believed that those nations could learn some things from it. Considering that New Zealand had always put a lot of emphasis on denouncing any type of hierarchy in its national narratives this was perhaps inevitable. When Iraq invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990, however, the transition was still very new and perhaps precarious. It had been merely five years since New Zealand had stood up to America over the *Buchanan* and only three since it had become legally nuclear-free. And deploying to the Gulf War looked very much like New Zealand was, once again, tagging along after the nuclear-capable United States into yet another war. The next chapter will therefore examine how proponents of both types of nationalism debated their differences through the Gulf War.

It must also be remembered that these national discourses are those same discourses available for 40 Squadron to draw on in seeking subjective composure. The martial and peacekeeping discourses are connected by the key and underlying desire to make

a difference in the world, and also by the fact that its practitioners display the same qualities. This does not, however, mean that both discourses provide exactly the same type of subjectivities. A peacekeeper is far from being the same thing as a soldier.

Chapter 4

Stories about 40 Squadron in the Gulf:

Representatives of New Zealand on the International Stage

New Zealand nationhood as outlined in the previous chapter was a key determinant of the public discourses of the 1991 Gulf War. For New Zealand, the Gulf War was similar to Gallipoli. That is, the war had no chance of resulting in any attack on or subjugation of New Zealand, but rather gained any importance it had from the fact that it was an international event in which many countries were participating. In the long run, the Gulf War has not proved to be a terribly important event for most New Zealanders. There has been very little discussion in the public sphere of New Zealand's involvement since the war ended, and no histories have been written about the war from a New Zealand point of view. James Belich wrote a history of New Zealand from the 1880s to 2000, discussed the country's relationship with the United States, and never mentioned the Gulf War once (2001). Neither does it merit a mention in King's *The Penguin History of New Zealand* (2004). However, at the time, there was considerable discussion of the War, and most of it was tied up with how New Zealand wanted to present itself to the world. Was it to be the martial junior ally, or the defiant peacekeeper? It should be noted that even during 1990-1991 the war does not appear to have been the most important thing on the collective nation's mind. Newspapers indicate that the 1990 national election and the massacre at Aramoana on 13-14 November 1990⁹ were overriding focuses of attention. When many talked about 40 Squadron they were talking not just about the experience of 60 men, but also of the country's identity. Narratives that were seemingly about 40 Squadron were really narratives of the nation and various interests within it. It was 40 Squadron's turn to act as embodiments of New Zealand, or, to be left out of the limelight if the medical teams in Bahrain could fulfil this role more satisfactorily. Considering that not much has been said about the war since 1991, these narratives still largely form the public discourses of the war that a story told by a 40 Squadron airman may be compared to.

⁹ David Grey, a mentally disturbed resident of the small Otago town, murdered 13 men, women and children before he was shot and killed by police. The massacre sparked lengthy and passionate debate in the media about gun control.

The discursive categorisation of New Zealand's participation in the war as a peacekeeping mission, as seen in national museums, dates back to the time of the actual event. Here these narratives will be drawn out of newspaper articles from the *New Zealand Herald* and the *Christchurch Press*, the leading newspaper of each of the country's two islands.

Narratives told through the Anzac Discourse

When the newly elected National government announced the deployment of 40 Squadron and an Army medical team to the Gulf region on December 3 1990, it began to receive criticism, both from peace groups and from the recently displaced Labour Party. Complaints from both groups were related to the recent creation of New Zealand as a Nuclear-free zone. Less than two weeks before the announcement Craig Young had summarised the position of many peace groups in a letter to the editor in *The Press*:

any involvement in the Gulf would mean serving alongside nuclear-capable forces – in contravention of the section of the New Zealand Nuclear-Free Zone, Disarmament and Arms Control Act, 1987, which prohibits any New Zealand resident 'aiding, abetting or procuring any person to manufacture, acquire, possess or have control over any nuclear device' (28 November 1990, p.19).

Given that National had only very recently capitulated on the nuclear issue, and seemingly for votes, it is not surprising that nuclear-free zone supporters were suspicious of the new government's dedication to its maintenance. Shortly after the deployment was announced, peace campaigners actually lodged an application to prosecute the Prime Minister and cabinet based on the interpretation that they were in contravention of the act (PA, 1991c, p.9).

Labour, meanwhile, repeatedly accused the government of only sending troops to the Gulf in an ill-founded attempt to win back points lost with the United States over the nuclear issue, and thus be readmitted to ANZUS. Such accusations began even before National replaced Labour in government, with Ms Wilde, the then Minister for

Disarmament and Arms, predicting on 19 October 1990 that if National were to win the election they would have troops off to the Gulf within a matter of weeks so as to regain ANZUS membership (Riddell & Burns, 1990, p.4). Former Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition Mike Moore reiterated this view of National's motivation on both November 22 (Burns, 1990b, p.1) and December 1, saying on the latter that it would be "tragic, sick and sad' if the National Government attempted to get closer to Washington by sending New Zealand forces to the Gulf" (Burns, 1990e, p.1). When the deployment was announced on the third, Acting Leader of the Opposition Helen Clark took up the torch, declaring that the move seemed to be an attempt "to curry favour with certain other nations rather than a considered response to any fresh development in the Gulf" (Burns, 1990a, p.1).

There may in fact have been some truth in these claims. *The Press* reported on March 2 1991 that the successful conclusion of the war did result in the first phone call between the leaders of New Zealand and the United States for seven years, when Bolger, now Prime Minister, called Bush to congratulate him (Smellie, 1991, p.1). Bolger's discussion of the decision to deploy to the Gulf in his book on his years as Prime Minister is dominated by the issue of relations with the United States (1998, pp.42-44). He states that the government was hampered in its decision-making process by its lack of knowledge on the United States' precise intentions caused by the breakdown in communication between the two countries. Therefore, he actually called Bush before he made the decision to deploy, a call that was not publicised at the time (Bolger, 1998, pp.42-43). Bush said that he would welcome New Zealand support, and after Bolger had reported the conversation to the cabinet, "we moved quickly" (1998, p.43). Bolger writes that this phone call "marked an important psychological breakthrough in our relations with the US" and goes on to discuss his belief that he could re-establish dialogue without compromising the anti-nuclear stance (which public opinion would not now allow) (1998, p.43). Later on, in September 1991, Bolger got the opportunity to meet informally with George Bush after giving a speech at the UN, and took the opportunity to point out to him that "New Zealand was not a freeloader, we took our responsibilities seriously and had demonstrated our international credentials time and again." His next sentence, "George Bush was aware that we had recently been part of the US-led forces aligned against Saddam Hussein" implies that he was intentionally referring to the Gulf War.

He then “put it quietly” to Bush that it was difficult for New Zealanders to understand why it was acceptable for New Zealand forces to fight alongside America but not exercise with then in peacetime (Bolger, 1998, p.149).

One of the government’s main strategies in trying to justify the troop deployment against these criticisms was to constantly evoke the wars of the Anzac Spirit, especially World War Two. To associate the Gulf War with World War Two was of course to associate it with the Good, Necessary War. Given that the men at Gallipoli are commemorated every year for fighting for our right to freedom and democracy (“lest we forget”), World War One also has positive connotations. The New Zealand External Relations Review reported that when Bolger announced the deployment he said that New Zealand was a founding member of the United Nations and hoped that that body “would work collectively to protect all countries, but especially small ones, against aggression” (Woods, 1990, p.12). On the day the medical personnel left for the Gulf, *The Press* reports that Bolger told them that New Zealand’s involvement was about the need for “responsible members” of the international community “to do all they could to protect a small nation against unprovoked aggression, invasion and occupation by a larger power” (Rentoul, 1991a, p.8). Such comments, in which “small” is the defining trait of Kuwait, not only imply that New Zealand should help because we too are a small nation and would need such help ourselves, but are also extremely reminiscent of the rhetoric of the First World War. New Zealanders in 1914, like most of the Commonwealth, did not thoroughly investigate the causes of the conflict, but spoke often of the need to protect “poor little Belgium,” and “brave little Serbia” (Belich, 2001, p.95). During the December 3 announcement, Bolger told the public there had been discussions with “our traditional allies” (Burns, 1990a, p.1) which with the call back to history and the connotations of the word “allies” brings to mind the two world wars. Bolger even more directly referenced World War Two more than once. On December 3 he said that in 1938 the League of Nations failed a similar test to the one the world faced now, and that the mistake should not be repeated (Woods, 1990, p.12). During a special sitting of the house, recalled to give MPs the chance to debate his cabinet’s decision, Bolger said:

Saddam Hussein may have anticipated that the United Nations and sovereign nations around the world would appease him, as it appeased Mussolini when he invaded

Abyssinia in 1935, or as it appeased Adolf Hitler in Czechoslovakia in 1938. After all, Kuwait is, as Neville Chamberlain said of Czechoslovakia in 1938, 'a small, faraway country of which we know little' (Luke, 1991a, p.1).

In fact, the argument that to do nothing about Saddam now would be to repeat Neville Chamberlain's famously miscalculated policy of appeasement, the theory that if the League of Nations allowed Hitler the territories he seized world war could be averted, was made so often by so many different National party members that one political commentator was driven to note that "if Neville Chamberlain had never existed, it almost certainly would have been necessary for the National Party to invent him" (Welch, 1990-1991, p.8). One can see from the column of this commentator, Dennis Welch, that Chamberlain was evoked repeatedly during the special meeting of the house. The Attorney-General responded to a comment that peace was currently breaking out with "that's what Chamberlain said." The Defence Minister said of the Labour benches, "in opposition they always go back to being Neville Chamberlains. They wring their hands and hope conflict will go away." Sir Robert Muldoon said he remembered Chamberlain declaring "peace in our time" – "because eighteen months later I was in the army" (Welch, 1990-1991, p.8). Constructing the war as a necessary fight against evil in this way was a counter to Labour's claim that the decision was a calculated political move. The National Party had decided to deploy not to ingratiate themselves with America, but to help save the world from the next Hitler. If you are dealing with a Hitler, what other choice is there? Moreover, the focus on poor small Kuwait gave the decision a humanitarian connotation that made criticising it harder for peace groups. It allowed comments like that from a letter to the editor in the *Christchurch Press* on September 3 1990: "would those people who have publicly opposed New Zealand sending military help to the Middle East want to help a young girl being attacked in a crowded street? I suggest that there is no difference" (p.20).

The government was by no means alone in its use of a World Wars discourse. The media employed it: TV3 news showed a picture of the Hitler at a Nazi rally that faded into a picture of Saddam Hussein (Overton, 1991, p.12); newspapers often used the terms "allies" or "allied forces" in headlines¹⁰ even though the official term for the

¹⁰ For example, 'Allies focus firepower on Iraqi land forces' 1991, p.1; 'Allies fall back on B-52s', NZPA-Reuter 1991, p.4; 'The Pounding of Iraq: Allies claim 100 bases knocked out in raids' 1991, p.1.

forces in the Gulf was “coalition” or “multinational” forces. Members of the public also routinely made use of the discourse in letters to the editor. “The lesson that to capitulate to an unprincipled dictator will surely lead to the ultimate death of some millions of human beings is one which should not need to be learnt more than once in a lifetime” wrote one correspondent to the *Listener* in December 1990 (24 December 1990, p.131). Another, writing to *The Press* in August, declares,

Saddam Hussein is behaving like Hitler did in World War Two and must be stopped if we are to have “peace in our time.” Kuwait is like Austria- a small, rich nation on which to test forces and see how international eyes will react. Saudi Arabia is like Poland- the land they promised not to invade. Now, like then, we are waiting. Appeasement did not work then and it will not work now. I am ashamed to be a New Zealander right now. We are turning our backs on countries we have always stood by (28 August 1990, p.12).

Similarly Allan Webster wrote

For the first time in my life I am ashamed to be a New Zealander...I have heard that it [the country’s non-involvement thus far] is because of New Zealand’s nuclear free policy, but that cannot be true because Saudi Arabia and Kuwait do not have nuclear weapons. Why has New Zealand turned into a spineless coward? (3 September 1990, p.20).

As these last two excerpts suggest, some opinions on the Gulf War related to a wish that New Zealand participate internationally as it had done at Gallipoli. On Anzac Day 1991 Bolger said that New Zealand as a country had a determination to be “a participant in, rather a mere observer of, world events” (Staff Reporters, 1991, p.1) and these two men just a few months earlier were expressing the same sentiment. To them, New Zealand is able to, and should be willing to, contribute to solving a global crisis. New Zealand had in fact quickly responded to UN resolution 661, which placed economic sanctions on Iraq four days after the invasion of Kuwait on August 6, enforcing it on the eleventh (Riddell, 1990, p.1). Although the Labour government had then stalled on extending this into a military contribution, *The Press* made sure to report any contribution of New Zealand’s, however small. On November 13 an article stated that the New Zealand Navy “will help with the blockade of Iraq without

going to the Gulf’- by traveling part of the way there with two Australian frigates in order to refuel them (PA, 1990b, p.6). When the National government did decide the New Zealand military would participate, Bolger said that the government felt that to do nothing would be shirking New Zealand’s responsibilities (Woods, 1990, p.13).

Therefore, the discourse of the Anzac Spirit was connected in the public sphere with the Gulf War, thus becoming available for the men of 40 Squadron to draw on. This is because the Anzac Spirit was constantly being evoked in discussions about the 1991 War. Mentions of World Wars One and Two in the New Zealand context almost inevitably bring the Anzac Spirit to mind, as it is the major discourse through which these wars have been constructed in national history. Moreover, some people were advocating that New Zealand should be contributing to world events now in the same way as it did at Gallipoli, and Gallipoli was where the qualities that make up the Anzac Spirit were first displayed on the world stage.

Narratives told through the Peacekeeping Discourse

To some, not going to the Gulf threatened New Zealand’s national identity as formed at Gallipoli. However, to others, *going* to the Gulf War would threaten the emerging national identity based on the nuclear-free zone, collective security and peacekeeping. As suggested above, some were worried that New Zealand could not maintain a nuclear-free status if involved in the Gulf War. However, such views were not simply limited to idealist peace groups. The NewLabour Party’s foreign affairs spokesman asked on August 12 1990 “how can we be truly nuclear-free if we are part of a nuclear armed force in the Middle East?”(Wilson & Burns, 1990, p.6) The next day the Labour cabinet met to discuss what military contribution if any the country could make, and also what any involvement would mean for the anti-nuclear legislation, which *The Press* said “bans New Zealand military contact with nuclear armed forces”¹¹ (Wilson & Burns, 1990, p.6). Later on, the NewLabour party’s spokesman on foreign affairs, Keith Locke, said, “it’s tragic that New Zealand’s peaceful nuclear-free image is being undermined by its military involvement in the Gulf” (Vandenberg, 1991, p.6).

¹¹ Some interpretations read this to apply only within New Zealand’s nuclear-free zone however.

Such worries were not focused narrowly on the nuclear issue, but extended to concern for a wider humanitarian/peacekeeper identity. *The Press* article that reported New Zealand's enforcement of sanctions on Iraq made sure to note that the sanctions did still allow for the sale of foodstuffs in humanitarian circumstances (Riddell, 1990, p.1). On September 9, when he was still Labour Prime Minister and had decided not to deploy, Moore had said: "New Zealand has waged peace before. Our influence is more modest in the Middle East. It's not like Papua New Guinea and Bougainville, where I could make a difference by picking up a phone to help organise a peace conference and send our frigates, those vessels of war, on a mission of peace"(Moore, 1990, p.8). The Labour government did send the RNZAF on two humanitarian missions during the early part of the Gulf crisis: New Zealand Hercules and 40 Squadron crew delivered milk powder to Egypt, and took Pakistani ex-pats fleeing Kuwait back to Karachi. In a letter published in the *Listener* after 40 Squadron had deployed to Saudi Arabia, Larry Ross, the secretary of the New Zealand Nuclear-Free Peacemaking Association, wrote that "instead of breaking the law of the land, the government should engage in neutral, peacemaking activities such as refugee assistance, food and medical supply deliveries" (7 January 1991, p.85). Jim Anderton, then leader of NewLabour, also believed that New Zealand "should be putting all our resources into promoting a peaceful settlement of the crisis" (PA, 1991g, p.6). A Labour MP on January 15 1991 said that UN sanctions had not been given long enough to work (PA, 1991d, p.3). In an article on January 19, a leading New Zealand Arabist from the University of Canterbury stated that New Zealand's involvement "could damage New Zealand's reputation as a prospective international mediator" and called it "an initiative in which we could lose our identity" (Moore, 1991, p.26). On December 6, the *New Zealand Herald* reported that the Acting Leader of the Opposition, Helen Clark, had questioned why two of four operational Hercules and a top medical team were being sent to the Middle East when their primary role was in the South Pacific, especially as it was the height of the cyclone season. For years, these sections of the New Zealand military had spent this period "dealing with cyclone emergencies" (Armstrong, 1990, p.5). Clark was asking why troops were being taken away from humanitarian tasks in New Zealand's sphere of influence to take part in a war so far away. Thus, it can again be seen that people concerned with establishing New Zealand's identity as a humanitarian peacekeeper actually had the

same desire for the country as those who supported New Zealand participating in overseas wars. Both groups wanted New Zealand to make a meaningful international contribution, and for this contribution to aid the avoidance of widespread conflict and suffering. They just differed on how exactly this should be achieved.

Finally, some argued that participation could threaten New Zealand's recently displayed independence. According to *The Press*, when in September 1990 Bolger outlined a return to the ANZUS alliance as an early goal if National were to win the upcoming election, Prime Minister Moore perceived the move as "a pitiful attempt to reverse New Zealand's independence." He said, "We now talk with other countries as equal partners and Mr. Bolger wants to take us back to bowing to the whims of others" (Burns, 1990d, p.1). Following America into a war is presumably the type of thing to which Moore was referring.

As some of the preceding newspaper quotes suggest, discourses of peace were given as much space in the media as were those evoking the World Wars. New Zealanders who had gone to Iraq to join peace camps were deemed to be as worthy of attention as New Zealand troops, and peace protests made the front page. The feature photo on the front page of *The Press* on January 8 1991 is a shot of a peace protest at Christchurch airport, with a close up of a sign saying "no NZ troops for Iraq," although it is unaccompanied by an article (January 8 1991, p.1). Again on January 16 the photo on the front page is of a protest; this time of protesters marching through the Bridge of Remembrance (a war memorial) in Christchurch, with the accompanying article reporting that 400 people attended this march chanting, "we don't want to fight your war" (Metcalf, 1991, p.1). Page six of *The Press* on January 14 1991 contained four articles relating to peace. Three were one below the other, on, respectively: NewLabour's warnings against the escalation of New Zealand involvement in the war (Vandenberg, 1991, p.6); a gathering of 200 people in Wellington's St Paul's Cathedral to pray for peace (PA, 1991b, p.6); an interview with the husband of a New Zealand woman who had gone to an international peace camp in Jordan (PA, 1991e, p.6). To their left was an article on then leader of NewLabour Jim Anderton's assertion that war was not an option in the contemporary world (PA, 1991g, p.6). The next day, *The Press* ran an article in which it was reported that the family of an 80-year old woman was relieved that she was returning home from a peace camp on the

Iraqi-Saudi Arabia border, but were also proud of what she had done (Topp, 1991, p.3). At least one media source, Radio New Zealand, recognised the World War Two connotations of the term “allies” and actually forbade its announcers to use the word on air. Forces were not to be said to be “liberating” Kuwait, and Iraq was not to be referred to as the enemy (Overton, 1991, pp.14 & 28).

Narratives that draw on both Anzac and Peacekeeping Discourses

And in fact even the government made use of a humanitarian peace discourse. We have already seen that they presented themselves as helping those in need. It appears that the government took criticisms based on anti-nuclear issues and the desire to be a peacekeeping nation very seriously, and constantly tried to assert that threats to this identity seen by some people did not in fact exist. According to *The Press*, Bolger stated that “it would be wrong to interpret New Zealand forces side-by-side with British forces as any softening of the hardline anti-nuclear policy” (Burns, 1990a, p.1). The Government might have wanted the United States to view New Zealand as participating in their war, but at home, they attempted to place the country’s involvement in the same light as a peacekeeping mission. The only troops that had been committed to the Gulf were support troops- medical teams and 40 Squadron with its transport role. When Bolger announced the deployment he said that the decision “in no way indicated an intention to take part in a war” (Burns, 1990a, p.1)¹². After the support contingent had left for the Gulf, the National Government felt the need to repeatedly assure the public that New Zealand would not be extending its involvement by sending combat troops. On January 3 1991, responding to peace movement claims, Minister of Defence Warren Cooper said, “The Government is not considering sending combat troops- it’s as simple as that. No-one is asking us to make that commitment” (PA, 1991a, p.4). On the 14th, a spokesman for the Prime Minister, this time reacting to claims made by an opposition MP, confirmed an earlier comment that “the government had made a decision on its commitment- transport aircraft and a medical team- and that would not change” (PA, 1991d, p.3). On 15 January the *New Zealand Herald* reports Bolger as saying that “New Zealand would not play a

¹² At that stage Saddam’s ultimatum had not yet run out, but the possibility of war was obvious.

combative role” (Armstrong, 1991, p.1). On the 16th, after a cabinet meeting that finished shortly before the UN’s ultimatum to Iraq expired, Bolger again reassured the public: “There was no discussion on sending troops and there have been no discussions on sending troops” (Luke & PA, 1991, p.8). On the 17th, after the war began, Bolger called parliament a month early to be briefed on the crisis but “made clear...that his bottom line remained the non-escalation of New Zealand involvement” (Luke, 1991c, p.3). On the 21st of January the cabinet approved sending a second medical team, but Bolger “was quick to reject suggestions that New Zealand involvement in the Gulf war would escalate further.” He said, “There is no proposition that New Zealand armed forces go there” (Luke, 1991b, p.1) (although technically, members of 40 Squadron were part of the New Zealand Defence Force and did carry arms). The next day at the special sitting of the recalled House, he rejected a suggestion that this was merely because the country did not have the military capacity (Luke, 1991a, p.1).

During this special sitting of the house, Bolger characterised New Zealand’s involvement as “supportive and humane” (Luke, 1991a, p.1), as he did throughout the course of the war. In some cases, this was in response to direct questions about whether 40 Squadron, deployed to a war, was engaging in war-like activities. According to *The Press*, when the deployment was announced, the leader of the opposition, Helen Clark, raised questions over whether “the Hercules would have a role transporting combat troops.” Bolger was then asked (presumably by the media) if the Hercules would take part in military activities, and responded that the aircraft were backing up the UN sanctions (Burns, 1990a, p.1). On January 14, Bolger said that “New Zealand’s two Hercules aircraft, at present assisting allies with transport, were not armed and were not capable of dropping bombs” (PA, 1991d, p.3). When announcing that he would farewell the medical team, the Prime Minister said that “there is a clear need for the kind of humanitarian services that our medical team will be able to provide in the event of an outbreak of hostilities” (Rentoul, 1991b, p.9). On the 21st, when announcing the deployment of a second medical team, Bolger said New Zealand “was prepared to continue to play a military support-service role” (Luke, 1991b, p.1). When the land war began, he defined New Zealand’s participation so far as a “very constructive, supportive role” (Burns, 1991, p.1). This was actually in the same speech in which he had directly compared Saddam to Hitler.

Thus, although at first glance a discourse based on the myth of World War Two and a discourse that emphasised non-involvement in combat and humanitarianism would seem to be mutually exclusive, the government kept both discourses in play. This created a message that merged the New Zealand identity based on contribution to the World Wars with the identity based on being nuclear-free. There were evils that needed to be fought, and New Zealand could make a contribution- but this contribution would be largely humanitarian. In February 1991, there was interest in the fact that a New Zealand company, Donaghy Industries of Christchurch, were sending three metre long booms of wool to the Gulf to help clean up the oil spills resultant from the war. These booms, made of an iconic New Zealand trade product, could absorb up to 40 times their weight, and retained their absorbent quality at least 10 times after oil was wrung out. Donaghy Industries donated the first 72 booms and the New Zealand government paid for their transport. Here was an excellent example of the kiwi ingenuity of the Anzac Spirit, but this time employed not in the service of making war but in the environmental mission of cleaning up the mess after a war (Bensemann, 1991, p.4; Keenan & PA, 1991, p.1; PA, 1991f, p.9).

The government had a vested interest in simultaneously utilising both discourses, as they both enabled a justification of New Zealand's deployment. The World Wars discourse showed the deployment to be necessary, whilst the humanitarian discourse showed that even though New Zealand was helping, it was not being warlike. However, the government was not the only one to use both discourses. On the day of his departure, a member of the Army medical team, Major John Davis, said "It's just the same as if the Aussies had called out during their recent floods and fires: 'We need you.' I just look at it as a big emergency relief programme" (Rentoul, 1991b, p.9).

The media, too, although they used words like "allies", seemed to lean towards a peacekeeping discourse. In the newspapers more attention tended to be given to the medical teams- that is, those with the more humanitarian task- than to the transport team. There were many articles focusing on, for example, the training of the medical team, and the question of whether or not they would have to leave for the Gulf before Christmas. If these mentioned 40 Squadron, it was often in one or two paragraphs at

the end of the article¹³. The *New Zealand Herald* ran an article on January 21 that reported mail service had been suspended to various Middle Eastern countries including Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. The article reported that “New Zealand army medics” (stationed in Bahrain) would still be able to receive messages from their families but did not mention whether 40 Squadron (stationed in Saudi Arabia) would be able to or not (NZPA, 1991c, p.2). Comparison of the articles in Christchurch’s *The Press* on the days that the Air Force and then medical teams left for the Gulf show that whereas the article on the RNZAF largely only reports facts such as times and places (Wilson, 1990d, p.7) the one on the medical team is more personal. It reports on what the team was doing with their last day before departure, where they would farewell their families, and on their feelings of relief at finally receiving a firm departure date (Rentoul, 1991b, p.9). *The Press* then ran articles the day after each team’s departure, and both are personal, reporting on the farewell scenes. However whilst “Medics scared but hopeful” is on the front page on January 17 1991 and is so large that it continues onto page eight, “A few tears for Gulf 46” on December 21 1990 is much shorter (smaller than each of the two sections on the medical team just taken by themselves) and only makes the bottom of page eight. “A few tears for Gulf 46” does feature a photo of a RNZAF serviceman hugging his daughters goodbye, but “Medics scared but hopeful” has the feature photo of the front page (friends waving the team’s plane goodbye) and then another one on page eight (Bolger chatting with team members). “Medics scared but hopeful” quotes interviews with four members of the deployment about their feelings (Rentoul, 1991a, p. 1 & 8) whereas “A few tears for Gulf 46” quotes only one officer (who is unnamed) (PA, 1990a, p.8). This would seem to make sense considering that the medical team was based at Burnham, near Christchurch, whereas 40 Squadron was based at Whenuapai, in Auckland. However, the article in Auckland’s main newspaper, the *New Zealand Herald*, on the day 40 Squadron left only made it to page four and was even smaller than *The Press*. In fact less than half of the article even discussed 40 Squadron, as it went on to report the recent news that the medical team did not have to leave until after Christmas, and that

¹³ See, for example, from *The Christchurch Press*: “Burnham to supply forces”(Wilson 1990a, p.1) “Women on list for Gulf training” (Wilson 1990f, p.1) “Gulf team uneasy about trip”(Wilson 1990c, p.3) “Christmas at home for NZ medical team going to Gulf” (Wilson 1990b, p.5) “Unit simulates war” (Mathias 1991, p.1) “NZ medics help Americans build hospitals” (Wilson 1991c, p.7). From the *New Zealand Herald*: “Doctor packs for Gulf” (Oram, 1990a, p.1) “Women in units for Gulf” (Oram, 1990b, p.2) “Pending Gulf trip makes them sweat” (Oram, 1991b, p.4) “Medics get steamed-up for deployment to Gulf” (NA 1991a, p.5) “Medics fly right into danger zone” (Brown, 1991, p.2).

the frigate sent to refuel Australian vessels had arrived home (NA, 1990, p.4).

Further, neither the medical nor the transport teams were ever mentioned in the front page articles that recounted the progress of the war. Before Operation Desert Storm began such articles would focus on the upcoming deadline for Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait and what the major political players (Bush, Hussein, the UN) were doing. After the operation began they would focus on battles and weapons. Instead of being discussed in these, the New Zealand deployments would get their own articles (there were at least some focusing on 40 Squadron). However, these articles were typically much smaller and, although sometimes underneath the large headline ones, rarely made the front page, often being placed somewhere in the inside pages of the first section of the paper. This was partly because of, and an acknowledgment of the fact, that our 107 support troops could have no real effect on the course of the war. It also reflects a tendency to rely on the international press for such articles. Still, one might expect that at least at the end of articles on the War there would be a mention of how close the New Zealanders were stationed or were flying to the action discussed, or if our medical team could expect to work on injuries from particular battles. In this way, New Zealand's troops were discursively separated out from the main course of the war.

The article "RNZAF given warm greeting" from *The Press* on January 4 is typical of the few articles that focused on 40 Squadron. It is based on what the reporter has been told by a spokesman, Flight Lieutenant Fraser, and reports that:

- 40 Squadron were greeted enthusiastically by multinational forces
- the crews are working "from dawn until almost midnight each day, ferrying freight and personnel around the multiforce bases in the Gulf"
- Weather conditions were similar to Christchurch in August
- flying conditions were taxing with dust and desert haze
- 40 Squadron "have learnt to survive without so much as a cold beer, because of the strict ban on alcohol in Saudi Arabia"
- personnel kept fit in the hotel gym and with running programmes
- Available TV channels played Arabic programmes or B-grade movies
- personnel had been able to call their families (Wilson, 1991d, p.2).

A *New Zealand Herald* article entitled “Work only escape from daily grind of Riyadh,” from January 7 quotes Detachment Commander Brausch and reports that:

- the locals are accepting of the RNZAF presence
- the RAF greeted 40 Squadron with open arms
- there is some anxiety amongst personnel about the Hussein’s approaching deadline
- there is not a lot of mischief to get up to; men can’t be seen with women in society
- only one of three available TV channels broadcasts in English
- personnel use the hotel gym, jog, and go shopping in their leisure time
- pork and beer are forbidden but the men are getting used to a non-alcoholic malt beverage
- Saudi Arabia has a mild climate
- personnel are staying at a modern hotel
- the airways are full of dust and other aircraft
- “we’re moving passengers and freight. Naturally its military equipment. But more than that I can’t say” (Brausch, 1991, p.3).

Therefore, a good proportion of these articles focus on details of 40 Squadron’s living conditions and leisure activities- that is, what they are doing when they are not engaged in war. Their war activities are only talked of in a few ways, and these fit into the Anzac discourse. The fact that international forces were glad to see the New Zealanders implies that New Zealand did indeed have an important contribution to make in this global event. Reports that the men are working long hours in taxing flying conditions show that New Zealanders are once again working hard to do their bit and implies further that they are again dedicated to and good at their jobs, thus displaying military prowess. (They are even sacrificing beer!) However, what exactly their jobs are, and what their role in the Gulf War is, is not made clear. The terms used in these two articles to describe what the Hercules are carrying- “freight and personnel” and “passengers and freight”- are typical of the information that the public received. What this freight was, or who these passengers were, was never really spelt out. On December 31, for example, soon after they had started work in the Gulf on 27 December, *The Press* reported that the Hercules had been carrying “passengers and freight, including mail, spares and assorted equipment” (NZPA, 1990, p.6). Similarly, on January 2 the *New Zealand Herald* reported that the Hercules were flying “freight, mail and passengers” (Stone, 1991, p.3). All of these terms tend to be general (freight, equipment) but most importantly, they lack the strong military connotations that

synonyms or more specific terms might carry, especially in the use of “passengers” rather than “personnel” (only used part of the time) or “troops” (never used). The only item that is specifically named is mail, which of course has no combative use and suggests that the New Zealanders are bringing welcome contact with home to poor frontline soldiers.

The media was not, in fact, happy that this was all they had to report, and continued to question what, exactly, the Hercules could possibly be transporting to a war zone. On 29 January *The Press* ran an article headed “Little revealed about RNZAF’s missions” in which it is reported that New Zealand Hercules had flown at least 74 missions but that “there is still no information on what they are carrying and to where.” It reports that crews are instructed by the military to refuse public comment and that statements released to the media now contain even less detail than the “passengers and freight” type reports released before Operation Desert storm commenced (NZPA, 1991b, p.5). On January 31 both *The New Zealand Herald* and *The Press* reported that the RNZAF were “refusing to comment on reports that the New Zealand transport aircraft in the Gulf have been busy ferrying troops and ammunition within the allied-controlled areas of the war-zone, sometimes flying to within 70 kilometres of the Saudi-Kuwaiti border” (NZPA, 1991a, p.2; Wilson, 1991a, p.1). Therefore, it was the military itself that was ultimately determining what information reached the public sphere. The reporters responsible for the two articles examined above could only write what their respective military sources told them. According to *The Press*, Defence Headquarters statements emphasised “that the men’s morale is good, they are working long hours, and that the Saudi Arabians appreciate their presence, along with a recounting of how they have handled the Scud attacks on Saudi Arabia” (NZPA, 1991b, p.5). This is of course unsurprising; not releasing information on what equipment was being delivered where during a war is obviously a priority if the enemy is not to gain intelligence on one’s plans. However, this limited release of information for military purposes complemented the Government’s unwillingness to present New Zealand as participating in a war. In fact, one informant suggested that even the military was motivated by the fact that releasing more information on the medical team made for better publicity and made more political sense. Taken together, the Government’s peacekeeping spin, the military’s security procedures and the media’s lack of access to information meant that within the public sphere the men of 40 Squadron were not

linked in any active sense with the combat underway. A newspaper reader would not get the sense that 40 Squadron were involved in the fighting of a war.

There was however, one way not yet discussed in which 40 Squadron were decisively connected to war. This was occurring in the second of the two articles analysed above, with the comment that the men were feeling some anxiety about the approaching deadline for the evacuation of Kuwait. 40 Squadron, along with the medical teams, were constantly narrated as potential *victims* of the conflict. There was anxiety in *The Press* about possible exposure to chemical attacks, expressed through constant discussion of whether personnel had access to adequate protective clothing. This began less than two weeks after Iraq had invaded Kuwait, when New Zealand's involvement was still uncertain, with *The Press* reporting that the New Zealand Army lacked, amongst other things, chemical-warfare clothing (Wilson & Burns, 1990, p.6). The day after the deployment was announced, December 4 1990, *The Press* reported that "one unanswered question was whether New Zealand would supply its own chemical warfare clothing or buy or borrow suits from other forces." The article also stated that "Chemical warfare training, and how to operate in protective suits, was part of Air Force training but all Middle East candidates would undergo a refresher course" (Wilson, 1990a, p.1). The issue again made the front page the next day. In an article largely focusing on the medical team, an Army spokesman is reported to have given the information that "a limited number of chemical warfare masks were held but it was not yet known whether New Zealand Gulf personnel would take these overseas or acquire the equipment from other sources" (Wilson, 1990f, p.1). On the third day, December 6, the issue fell to page six but was covered in its own article that reported that chemical training would be emphasised in training beginning that day for RNZAF members who were listed for deployment, and went on to discuss the transfer of 45 chemical suits to Burnham for the medical team and the Army's refusal to specify how many suits it had (Wilson, 1990e, p.6). On January 30, a member of 40 Squadron, Flight Lieutenant Tony Davies, spoke to a media source, an infraction for which he was sent home from the Gulf. Of the information he gave, *The Press* chose to focus on the fact that the Air Force crews had been inoculated against possible biological warfare, including inoculations against anthrax and the plague. The headline of this front page article was "Gulf crews inoculated," and the article led with this information. The second thing from Davies' interview reported by *The Press*

was that 40 Squadron had been equipped with RAF chemical warfare suits to replace the New Zealand-issue clothing, which was considered to be too bulky for air crews (Wilson, 1991a, p.1). By placing 40 Squadron and the medical teams into victim subject positions the newspapers narrated New Zealand as a nation that would risk its own citizens to bring aid to the people of Kuwait.

Another major focus that emphasised a victim role for 40 Squadron was reports of Scud attacks on Riyadh. During the war, whilst the coalition bombed targets throughout Iraq and Kuwait, Iraq launched Scud missiles on coalition bases in Saudi Arabia (as well as on Israel). The coalition would then launch Patriots, anti-missile missiles, to intercept the Scuds. *The Press's* January 24 1991 article "Hours in chemical gear real air force ordeal in Riyadh" begins:

When the air raid sirens wail over Riyadh in Saudi Arabia, the 48 RNZAF personnel based there struggle into their gas masks and chemical defence clothing, sometimes spending up to four hours sitting, but not speaking, in their bomb shelter. It is by their own admission an unnerving experience heightened by the realisation that their air base is a target for Saddam Hussein's Scud missiles (Wilson, 1991b, p.10).

"A glimpse of the ordeal" was given by Flight Lieutenant Fraser:

The place is tense. Then the air raid siren sounds and you begin to kit up, your heartbeat increases dramatically, the adrenaline is really flowing. ...once kitted up we walk slowly and carefully into the sealed room set aside in case of chemical attacks. Everyone is pretty unnerved. Everyone is sweating...in the secure room you can't see or hear anything outside. You just sit and wait. No one talks. It's not hard to talk with the gas masks on, but no one does. It's something you never get used to (Wilson, 1991b, p.10).

Despite this, four days later Lieutenant Fraser is reported as saying "The Patriot system works and the other night the guys were actually ribbing each other during an air raid" (Wilson, 1991e, p.1). Here were the stoic Anzacs that kept their cool in a crisis. However, *The Press* did not respond by changing their presentation of the men; they now focused on the fact that the constant Scud attacks were impairing the hard working New Zealanders by leaving them sleep deprived. In the last week, the article

tells us, there had been only one air raid- free night, and there were on average three warnings a night, meaning the men could only expect a couple of hours of uninterrupted sleep (Wilson, 1991e, p.1). Similarly, on January 24 the *New Zealand Herald* ran an article entitled “Sleep eludes supply crews,” explaining that this was due to the noise of air raid sirens and the discomfort of chemical suits (NA, 1991b, p.2).

Therefore, the only specific and detailed information given to the public about what 40 Squadron was doing in the war, as opposed to what was being done to them, was about the delivery of milk powder to refugees in Egypt and the transporting of Asian refugees back to their home countries that had occurred before the deployment proper. This means that the only arena in which the men were presented as active agents was in that of humanitarian aid. They were, however, shown to be acting (or reacting) in line with the Anzac Spirit. The Anzac Spirit is therefore available for 40 Squadron to draw on, but the airmen were largely constructed as Anzac victims and peacekeepers rather than as Anzac soldiers.

Summary

This chapter has detailed how advocates and opponents of New Zealand participation in the Gulf War were debating not just actions but also national identity. Two New Zealands were being contested: should we perpetuate the New Zealand that based its identity on military prowess and following its more powerful allies into battle, or strengthen the newly constructed, independently minded peacekeeping nation? For the government, at least, not just a sense of identity but concrete diplomatic relationships were at stake. Ultimately, the National Government deployed to the Middle East and thus attempted to show America that New Zealand could still be a valuable ally. The discourses about this involvement back home, meanwhile, constructed New Zealand as a humanitarian, peacekeeping nation, which nevertheless possessed all the same treasured national qualities that it had done in its war-making days. This was achieved by constructing certain very particular identities for 40 Squadron, representatives and embodiment of New Zealand. They were peacekeepers, not war-makers, but they were Anzacs like their forefathers all the same.

However, whilst New Zealand's actions in the Gulf did impact on how it was seen in the world at the time and thus on New Zealanders' national identity, the Gulf War was not to become an event that would be remembered as pivotal to New Zealand as a country, or even much remembered at all. It was really only significant for its duration. This is unsurprising, as the deployment was not an ideal site for the construction of the new peacekeeping nation. 40 Squadron's day-to-day activities had in fact to be suppressed in order to define the deployment as a peacekeeping mission. Since the late 1990s the New Zealand Defence Force has participated in other missions, such as those to Bougainville, East Timor, and the Solomon Islands, which with the focus on reconstructing societies rather than on driving out troops and the service members' involvement as interim police forces and in reconstructing roads, schools and water supplies, fit much more closely with the vision of a humanitarian nation. Thus, today when an event is recalled in order to constitute this nation it is deployments such as these, and not the Gulf War, that are privileged as examples. This can be seen in the museum displays discussed in the introduction. Because the Gulf deployment did not acquire any lasting importance however, it was never rethought in the public sphere and thus when it is mentioned or brought to mind it is still framed through the peacekeeping discourse, as, again, can be seen in the example of the museums. The Gulf War for 40 Squadron, on the other hand, who were direct participants, had a much more lasting and individual impact. As the fact that it was felt necessary to suppress 40 Squadron's activities shows, the construction of the deployment as a peacekeeping mission was only one of a group of equally viable options. The next chapter will explore why, because the Gulf War was a significant event in 40 Squadron members' careers and thus has the potential to be key to their professional identities, this option would not in all likelihood be the one that they would favour. And because the Anzac Spirit that 40 Squadron was shown to possess as peacekeepers had for a century been utilised to narrate soldier subjectivities, this possibility was never very far away.

Chapter 5

Western Veteran Stories of the 1991 Persian Gulf War: The Career Discourse

In this chapter I will move away from nationhood, and back to the more general plotlines of war stories as in Chapter Two. As in that chapter a key focus will be how going to war is seen to shape individual soldiers' subjectivities. Veteran memoirs of the 1991 Gulf War will be examined and it will be demonstrated that the discourse that comes out of them both crosses national boundaries, and is a departure from the two traditional plotlines of war. The Anzac Spirit was an inherently civilian based discourse. But as war technology improves, and warfare has shifted from struggles over the homelands of world powers to proxy wars in poorer nations, the practice of calling up civilians in times of war seems to be becoming a thing of the past for Western nations. The 1991 Persian Gulf War, quickly executed and completed, with no time or need to appeal to the public for volunteer soldiers, was the war of the career serviceman. As we have seen, when civilians were called up for the World Wars earlier in the century, it was a major disjuncture in their lives. However, this is not the case for career servicemen. Thus, a much different discourse came out of the Gulf War, a discourse that constructs warfare as a stage in a serviceman's career, and thus always present in his day to day life as a possibility. 40 Squadron members used and perpetuated this discourse, which is largely incompatible with the discourse of the Gulf deployment constructed in New Zealand.

Almost all of my informants from 40 Squadron said that once they heard about New Zealand's deployment to the Gulf they were eager to be part of it. Ken, for example, says:

And of course everybody in the crew just said "yeah, go, take me" [enthusiastically] you know, "I'll go" everybody said that cause they just, you know, they were busting a gut to go, so. Don't think there were many people that didn't want to go. I couldn't even, I couldn't think of anybody right off the bat, really. You know, I think everybody was- that's their job, you know.

When I ask why he was so eager, Ken's answer (which is typical of the group) does not in any way resemble the discourse that the National Government constructed around the war. Ken says nothing about Saddam being Hitler-like, or about poor small Kuwait needing to be liberated, or even about serving his country. Rather, Ken's explanation for his desire to go to war is focused on his job:

Oh, it was just, well you know, you can do that- this is what you're trained for. I mean...we're sort of quite lucky on 40 Squadron because, even though, you know, you are training to do bits and pieces, you're always really doing your job anyway, which is carrying stuff from one place to another. So it's not like you're, if you ever saw that movie *Jarhead*? Did you see that? I saw it last week, it was bloody excellent. And they trained all that time to do that job, and they didn't do it. So of course, the guy was extremely frustrated. Whereas, we, on our day to day lives, we do that anyway. But this is sort of like the ultimate extension of it, you know.

Notice that when Ken mentions a popular representation of the war to help him explain where he is coming from, it is not a representation from New Zealand, but rather an American movie. *Jarhead* is based on the war memoir of Anthony Swofford, a sniper with the American Marines who went to the Persian Gulf War and never got the chance to shoot at the enemy. In his memoir Swofford wrote:

To be a marine, a true marine, you must kill. With all of your training, all of your expertise, if you don't kill, you're not a combatant, even if you've been fired at, and so you are not yet a marine: receiving fire is easy- you've either made a mistake or the enemy is better than you, and now you are either lucky or dead but you are not a combatant. ...but whether you are dead or not, you haven't, with your own hands, killed a hostile enemy soldier. This means everything.

Sometimes you wish you'd killed an Iraqi soldier. Or many Iraqi soldiers, in a series of fierce firefights while on patrol, with dozens of well-placed shots from your M40A1, through countless calls for fire. During the darkest nights you'd even offer your life to go back in time, back to the Desert for the chance to kill. You consider yourself less of a marine and even less of a man for not having killed while at combat (Swofford, 2003, p.247).

Swofford, then, clearly links not doing the job he has trained to do in war with not achieving the identity of Marine, even though he is undoubtedly in the Marines. For Swofford this also threatens his identity as a man:

I believed I'd enlisted in the Marine Corps in order to claim my place in the military history of my family [a father in Vietnam, a grandfather in World War Two]...the initial impulse had nothing to do with a desire for combat, for killing, or for heroic death, but rather was based on my intense need for acceptance into the family clan of manhood. By joining the Marine Corps and excelling within the severely disciplined enlisted ranks I would prove both my manhood and the masculinity of the line (Swofford, 2003, p.203).

Swofford narrates that on one occasion in the Gulf he had been in charge of the team tasked with calling reveille. The marine assigned this task, Dettmann, slept through the appointed hour, resulting in reveille not being called and the whole unit sleeping in. Because Swofford was in charge, he received the blame and as punishment was assigned to one of the worst military details, "burning shit". In retribution, Swofford later held his gun against Dettman's temple. Swofford writes that he knows this is "crazy and reckless." He reasons however that if he were to pull the trigger, he could claim it was an accidental discharge. He would probably spend some time in jail "but I'll be the fuck out of Saudi Arabia and the endless waiting and the various other forms of mental and physical waste, and also, I'll finally know what it feels like to kill a man" (Swofford, 2003, p.103). Later he notes that "accidental *on purpose* discharges" did occur: "when the marine decides its about time he fires his rifle or blows something to hell because there he sits with all this firepower and who knows when he'll be allowed to use it" (Swofford, 2003, p.161).

Disturbing as all this sounds to civilians, it is merely the extreme of a discourse common to many Western Gulf War memoirs, be they American, British or New Zealander. Men (and women) in the military are ultimately trained for warfare. If their career coincides with a period of peace, they may never get to do what they are trained for; never get to put into practice what they have learnt. A war offers fulfilment, a chance to finish what they have started, to accomplish that for which they have spent so long in preparation. *Jarhead* illustrates the frustration at never fully

realising one's training, and suggests that although you may be in the military, you are not fully a soldier until you have done what you have been trained to do.

Writes Captain John Scott Walsh, also of the United States Marine Corps, about learning of his deployment: "But the news was actually exciting, not that we are a bunch of war-mongers, but you understand that this is what we were trained to do. Up until then it had been like being in a sports team where you practise, practise, practise but you never get to play a game" (in Godden, 1994, p.64). Squadron Leader Gordon Buckley, of the RAF, was a Tornado GR-1 pilot. There is tension in what he says between traditional discourses surrounding the reasons for going to war, and the opportunity to do something for which he had been training for 13 years:

I'd been flying since 1977 and joined my first front line squadron in 1980, so in effect I'd been training for something I hoped would never happen. When it became obvious something was going to happen in the Gulf, half of me said 'right, we'll be able to try out these tactics which we'd worked so hard at perfecting,' while the other half thought 'should I be doing this? After all it's not my home I'm defending. My family's not going to get hurt, why should I be here at all?' But, of course, those thoughts are quickly dispelled and we went (in Godden, 1994, p.46).

Once in theatre Buckley was informed that he would be attacking Tallil airfield in Iraq:

That was an incredible feeling, just to look around the room and see the guys' eyes really widen. It was a hell of a feeling; we were actually going to do it!...the whole unreal atmosphere was compounded when we walked to the aircraft where the ground crews wanted to know if we would fly with the weapons set on 'safe.' No, it was the real thing, we were actually going to war for the first time (in Godden, 1994, p.38) .

And another member of 40 Squadron, Anthony, told me that he was keen to be deployed because *it's what you're trained for, it's what you want to do, you know. You practice all the stuff at home so it was good to go out and actually do it.*

Jarhead is one of the two most well known veteran accounts of the Gulf War; the other is Andy McNab's *Bravo Two Zero*. *Bravo Two Zero* tells the story of a British

SAS patrol compromised during a mission behind enemy lines in Iraq. Of the eight men in the patrol three died, one escaped to Syria and four, including McNab, were captured. Describing his feelings before he was sent to the Gulf region, McNab, like Ken, illustrates that going to war was the ultimate fulfilment of his training: “I felt like a bricklayer who had spent my entire life knocking up bungalows and now somebody had given me the chance to build a skyscraper. I just hoped that the war didn’t finish before I had a chance to lay the first brick” (1994, p.16). He writes, “Everybody hopes for a major war once in his life and this was mine” (1994, p.85). He also notes that he had earlier felt deprived by the fact he had not been sent to the Falklands’ War: “I wanted some [action] - what was the point of being in the infantry if I didn’t?” (1994, p.27)

The reason for this is not that McNab wanted to “fight for his country” in a patriotic sense. In fact McNab narrates that his decision to join the SAS had nothing whatsoever to do with patriotism. He does mention that he had exciting memories of his military brother coming home from faraway places with presents, but says that as a young man, he had no interest in a military career. Rather, his biggest ambition was getting a flat with his friends and being able to do whatever he wanted (McNab, 1994, p.21). He had left school at 15 and a half and had already been in trouble with law. He was then arrested for “coming out of a flat that didn’t belong to me” and was placed in a remand hostel for three days.

I hated being locked up and swore that if I got away with it I’d never let it happen again. I knew deep down that I’d have to do something pretty decisive or I’d end up spending my entire life in Peckham, fucking about and getting fucked up. The army seemed a good way out. My brother had enjoyed it so why not me? (McNab, 1994, p.22).

McNab joined the army for himself, in order to improve his own life. Career servicemen who join the armed forces in peacetime do not do so because there is a pressing need for it, because their nation or homeland is in immediate and severe danger. Thus, their enlistment has not necessarily been motivated solely by a need to protect their country and family, as it was for those World War soldiers who would not have chosen to join the armed forces had their countries not already been at war.

This is not to say that no one who joins the military during peacetime wishes to serve their country. However, career service people have much more freedom of choice than World War soldiers, and choose the military over many other possible careers. It is reasonable to expect that many of them, like McNab, join the forces at least partly to fulfil some desire of their own. Many of my informants gave their primary reason for joining the Air Force as their interest in or love of aircraft and engineering.

Once he had joined the Army, McNab found the course to be “nothing but bullshit and regimentation”... “But I learned to play the game. I had to- there was nothing else for me” (McNab, 1994, p.23). By 1979, after having been deployed to Northern Ireland, McNab had become “completely army barmy. It would have taken a pick and shovel to get me out” (1994, pp.25-26). It was therefore *once* McNab was in the army and being trained for war that he developed the desire to fight in one. Though he talks briefly about Northern Ireland, he does not once mention why English forces were there. Similarly, he hardly mentions why he was deployed to Iraq. He never explains in any detail what the Gulf War was about. A small reference, in which McNab relates that in response to a guard asking him about a picture of Hussein he thought “What was I supposed to say? ‘I’ve heard he’s pretty good at gassing kids in Iran’?” (1994, p.268) is perhaps the most comprehensive explanation in the book. The idea of fighting for his country tends to be treated dismissively. For example, once captured, McNab pretends to be patriotic:

My game plan was not to go into the cover story straightaway, because then they’ve got you. I was trying to make it look as if I was prepared to give them the Big Four and that was all. *Queen and country and all that*. I would go through a certain amount of tactical questioning and then break into my cover story (McNab, 1994, p.219, my emphasis).

He makes it clear that this patriotism was an act on the next page:

When I had refused to answer their questions I wasn’t being all patriotic and brave—that’s just propaganda that you see in war films. This was real life. I couldn’t come straight out with my cover story. I had to make it look as if they’d prised it out of me. It was a matter of self-preservation, not bravado. People sometimes do heroic things because the situation demands it, but there’s no such thing as a hero. The gung-ho

brigade are either idiots or they don't even understand what's happening (McNab, 1994, p.220).

Similarly, when he is first captured McNab can hear that he is being kept in close proximity to another member of Brave Two Zero, Dinger. He has been wishing for some contact with his mate, and when he hears vehicles and concludes that something is about to happen, begins thinking of what he might say to Dinger if he gets the chance: "I didn't know what I was going to shout to Dinger. 'God save the Queen!' maybe. But then again, probably not" (1994, p.228).

McNab refers to what he is doing throughout not as some heroic mission but as a job. Narrating the drop off behind enemy lines in Iraq he writes, "we were very isolated, but we were a big gang, we had more weapons and ammunition than you could shake a stick at, and we were doing what we were paid to do" (1994, p.96). Describing the subsequent first night of marching he writes, "my feet and legs were aching, and I had to keep reminding myself that it was what I got paid for" (1994, p.134).

Once captured:

I had been trying to gather as much information as I could to keep myself orientated...I was annoyed that I hadn't done a better job of it. I had been looking down too much when I should have been taking it all in. If I escaped and got past the gate, which way would I go?...how far inside the town was the camp? I'd need to get out of the built-up area as soon as possible. It was something I should have been checking as we drove out, but like a dickhead I'd let myself be distracted by the [violent] crowd. I was quite pissed off with myself for my lack of professionalism (McNab, 1994, p.237).

Nearing the end of his story, McNab says "as to the rights and wrongs of the war-well, that's never been a worry to me. I was a soldier, that's what I was paid for. It was very exciting, I got high doing it" (1994, p.404).

Not only does McNab's account lack a patriotic discourse, it also lacks the other major traditional war discourse, the disillusionment or betrayal narrative. McNab

could very well have narrated his story this way; another member of Bravo Two Zero, New Zealander Mike Coburn, has done so. Coburn talks about “a young boy’s romantic notions of serving and defending one’s country heroically” (2004, p.97) but soon learnt that war “most certainly wasn’t a great big adventure” (2004, p.77). He writes that Bravo Two Zero were given the wrong communications frequencies, which resulted in them being unable to make contact when they needed help, and that they had been given bad advice in being told to head north to Syria if they encountered problems instead of south to Saudi Arabia (Coburn, 2004, p.219). Later evidence was uncovered that “proved beyond doubt” that some of Bravo Two Zero’s calls for help had been received by the SAS hierarchy but they had “chosen to ignore them” (Coburn, 2004, p.244). Worst of all, in Coburn’s story, is that once the captured men were finally released and gathered for debriefing, their Colonel began by telling them that they would not be court-martialled (2004, p.218): “the moment the statement had left the CO’s mouth, I lost my Kiwi naivety, and those who commanded the regiment forfeited my trust” (2004, p.221). Coburn “realised that I would no longer see the regiment in the same light; the pedestal upon which I had placed it had been kicked from under it” (2004, p.220). McNab mentions the communications problems but in his account they were “a human error” that was “most unfortunate” and “a little hiccup in communication” (1994, p.397). He says that the decision not to mount a rescue operation “was right” (1994, p.398): “there was simply not enough information for the Colonel to act on” (1994, p.398).

Lacking the patriotic and disillusionment discourses, McNab’s narrative also lacks what was common to both: war as a catalyst or occasion for personal change. Coburn’s account is typical of a disillusionment narrative in that he moves from innocence and political naivety to experience, and recognition of exploitation. But in a major departure from the traditional literature, which as we will see my informants share, McNab does not narrate that the war changed him, despite the fact that he was held prisoner and tortured: “I’m not emotionally affected by what happened, I certainly don’t have nightmares” (1994, p.403). There is a narration of change, but it occurs in the first years after he joins the Army, when he transformed himself from juvenile delinquent to soldier. The war experience is not a narrative of transformation itself, but rather a fulfilment of the identity that McNab had already taken on. War, in this career discourse, has not become completely normalised, but neither is it a

complete aberration, as it is what McNab has spent his normal day to day life training for.

Piedmont-Marton (2004) has also noticed that “new modern features” have entered war narratives with the memoirs of the Gulf War. One of these is the career-centred trope of the contract. She writes that in *Jarhead* Swofford emphasises that what binds him and the Marines is an economic exchange. Swofford reports filing a complaint against a Marine drill instructor for smashing his head into a blackboard at boot camp, as he believes no one has the right to touch him. This would never happen in traditional boot camp narratives, in which harassment and violence by drill instructors are an integral part of the strategy for turning young men into warriors. Piedmont-Marton writes that Swofford’s account derives much less from the discourses of barracks and battlefield than it does from the discourses of the workplace, “a necessary new discourse” in a peacetime volunteer fighting force (2004, p.264). In fact, because New Zealand soldiers in Vietnam, unlike American soldiers, were also largely career servicemen, this discourse can be seen in New Zealand accounts of the Vietnam War. Downs wrote that most of the Vietnam veterans from the Royal New Zealand Electrical and Mechanical Engineers he interviewed went because they felt it was part of testing their trade and soldiering skills (2003, p.13). Murray Wardlaw said, “It was just another posting for me, there was nothing special” (Downs, 2003, p.14). 50 percent of the veterans said the deployment was part of the job and 50 percent said it was a chance to test their skills, with many saying that the experience had been valuable in terms of career advancement. Only one cited patriotic duty (Downs, 2003, pp.115-116).

Although this career discourse is a departure from more traditional discourses, McNab, for example, does still make some passing reference to at least the patriotic discourse. His denials that he was patriotic or that war had changed him, for example, indicate some expectation that his readers might assume these things to be the case. Furthermore, career discourses and more traditional war discourses are, in fact, not always mutually exclusive. Although Coburn uses a betrayal narrative, he also utilises a career discourse: “This was it, we were in Iraq. Years of training would now come into play; this was no longer a fictitious exercise, this was the real thing” (2004, pp.14-15). Coburn was originally in the New Zealand SAS but chose to join the

British SAS: “We felt like rugby players on the substitutes’ bench, week in, week out, itching to get a game, to prove our worth, yet never getting the opportunity. As soldiers in the New Zealand Army we didn’t get the chance to test ourselves; so it was necessary to look further afield” (Coburn, 2004, p.117).

Here Coburn talks about not getting the chance to fulfil his training in terms of “prov[ing] our worth” and “test[ing] ourselves”. Swofford too talked about proving his manhood. Likewise, Keith A. Rosenkranz writes in his memoir *Vipers in the Storm*,

I wondered if they’d come to announce that [his unit] would be deploying to the Middle East. Everyone present was a warrior who had spent his Air Force career training for a moment like this. None of us craved war. But if one started, we all wanted the chance to put our training to the test (Rosenkranz, 2002, p.30).

In Rosenkranz’s case, the career narrative coexists with the patriotic discourse: “I was once told that freedom isn’t free, and every generation has to fight for it. I guess my turn had come” (2002, p.45). Because Iraq made the decision to not fight in the air, Wing Commander Andy Moir of the RAF, a navigator of the Tornado F-3, did not get much action. He writes “to be honest, having served and trained on fighter squadrons for many years, it was in a way disappointing not to be put to the ultimate test” (in Godden, 1994, p.20). Captain Adam Greer of the United States Marine Corps flew a jet during the war, and found it very impersonal. He did not think about the fact that the crew could be killing people: “it was more of a professional challenge to get the bomb on the target at the first pass- that’s the way we looked at it” (in Godden, 1994, p.129).

It seems that for many what joining the Armed forces offered was a challenge. The idea of having to “prove one’s manhood” has been commented on by several scholars. Beneke writes about “the compulsion to create and conquer stress and distress as a way of proving manhood” (1997, p.4). He further states “boys never quite pull it off; they are never quite sure they are men and tend to feel only as masculine as their last demonstration of masculinity” (Beneke, 1997, p.5). Kimmel writes of “manhood as a relentless test” (1996, p.ix) and argues that this discourse emerged in America in the

early 19th Century, when the Industrial Revolution led to men linking their sense of themselves to a volatile marketplace rather than to much more stable land ownership. By contrast, Gilmore argues that the discourse is ubiquitous: “there is something generic, something repetitive, about the criteria of man-playing” (1990, p.3). Men need to prove themselves in many societies, be they hunter-gatherer, peasant, urban, warrior or non-warrior (Gilmore 1990, p.11). The state of being a man is regarded as “uncertain and precarious, a prize to be won or wrested through struggle” (Gilmore 1990, p.1). “True manhood...” he writes, “frequently shows an inner insecurity that needs dramatic proof” (1990, p.17). He quotes Pulitzer Prize winner Norman Mailer: “masculinity is not something given to you, something you’re born with, but something you gain...And you gain it by winning small battles with honour” (Gilmore 1990, n.p). Gilmore writes that boys have to be encouraged and sometimes forced to undertake such efforts (1990, p.25). This is not what is going on in this case. The career servicemen quoted all appear eager to be tested, and are much closer to Beneke’s model above- they create, or purposefully seek out, challenges that will allow them to prove themselves. Many enjoy being challenged, speaking of other ways in which they challenge themselves, not just at work, but as a preferred leisure time activity. When Spence Cameron of the British SAS found out that Iraq had invaded Kuwait, he was in the Himalayas training for the chance to attempt climbing Mount Everest. When he heard he wanted to switch challenges:

[I felt] a yearning to be back home. I could picture the activity at Hereford, the speculative conversations in the interest rooms, the buzz, the excitement.

This was a chance for a good work-out. An opportunity to put into practice all the training I’d received. I’d always regretted missing out on the Falklands, but it didn’t take a rocket scientist to figure that, potentially, this was bigger.

There was, of course, one tiny problem. I was stuck. All of a sudden, I forgot Everest. To hell with the Himalayas; I needed to get back home (Spence, 1997, p.3).

Notice Spence uses a fitness metaphor in relation to war- it would be a *work-out*, a test in the same way that activity would be. Coburn too defines himself as “somewhat of a fitness fanatic” enjoying triathlons, rugby, and basketball (2004, p.187). Swofford said of the Marines, “we’re all in great shape. Stateside, we’d run two or three 10Ks a

week, swim three thousand yards four days a week, and spend at least a few hours a day in the weight room” (2003, p.18).

In 2007, all three of New Zealand’s Defence Forces chose appealing to such desires and explicitly challenging young people as the main focus of their recruitment drives. The Air Force’s recruiting slogan was *Bring it on-* a phrase used to denote a welcoming and embracing of a challenge, and an assertion that the speaker can successfully handle it. The Navy extolled potential recruits to *Get into it* whilst the Army unsubtly enquired *Have you got what it takes?* In fact, the Army’s recruitment ads are quite literally challenges, short puzzles or questions for television viewers to complete during the commercial break. The Army’s website then features longer, more complicated “missions,” with leader boards and prizes (*New Zealand Army Website*, 2008). In 2008 the RNZAF launched a new campaign, this time appealing to desires to advance one’s career. Two television advertisements make up this campaign. In each a young person is employing specialised skills, but is doing so in a boring environment: a young woman suffers through a maths/physics class; a young man works as a mechanic in an empty garage. An Air Force helicopter arrives to rescue each protagonist and allow them to “take [their] skills to the next level.” The new slogan still connotes a challenge: *Step up*.

The men cited construct their masculinity through showing that they have faced and overcome challenges. Joining the Armed Forces may be one of those challenges, or seen as a job in which one will be continually challenged. Stories of “testing myself” and “proving my worth” are narratives of fulfilment or confirmation of an identity that an individual has already claimed, but that they may feel they have not quite fully achieved. Going to war in this discourse does not transform boys into men, as in the patriotic discourse, but it acts as further demonstration and proof of a man’s masculinity. These stories also show that the person in question is a true soldier. Going to war offers career fulfilment, but it does so by providing a chance to prove oneself, a challenge to face and overcome. A soldier cannot really prove himself if his training is never tested.

Summary

This chapter has shown that the dominant veteran discourse of the 1991 Persian Gulf War is quite different from those war stories that dominated during the earlier decades of the 20th Century. This change is due to the fact that the coalition forces in the Gulf were largely career soldiers. The major difference is that war is no longer foreign to the normal course of life. It is not a disruptive event; rather it has always been present as a possibility and has been worked towards. It is not, therefore, life-changing in the sense that it does not propel individuals into a different course than they were on before. This however does not mean that narratives of war are not very important to identity and subjective composure. These narratives will not construct a new, fundamentally different person, but being able to narrate that one has been to war is crucial to further proving, or fully realising, subjectivities of soldierhood and manhood that have already been claimed.

However if a member of 40 Squadron attempted to narrate his identity in this way, New Zealand's national discourse of the Gulf War would not work for him. To narrate himself as a serviceman who fulfilled his training he would have to tell a war story to constitute himself as having achieved that final step. However, the discourse that worked for the project of constructing New Zealand as a humanitarian nation would not allow him to tell a war story but rather one of a peacekeeping mission. This peacekeeping discourse is dominant in the public sphere within which 40 Squadron's accounts must find affirmation. It therefore has the potential to deny 40 Squadron subjective composure in the manner outlined in this chapter. Having examined all of the relevant discourses it is now possible to examine 40 Squadron's own narratives of the Gulf War.

Chapter 6

The War Stories of 40 Squadron

The previous chapters have outlined the various war discourses that dominate the society within which 40 Squadron's war stories must find recognition. This chapter will examine these war stories themselves, and how 40 Squadron make use of public discourses to achieve subjective composure. Words and sentences in italics are the informants' own. Because the narratives collected in interviews were histories of my informants' professional lives within the New Zealand Defence Force, the primary identity being constructed within them is military identity. Interviewees might construct themselves, for example, as soldiers, airmen, veterans, or, in at least one case, as not still connected with the military. Because war and the military are so closely connected with masculinity, male identity is also constructed. As we have seen, public discourses on 40 Squadron's role in the crisis as released through the government, the military, and the media, constructed them as being on a peacekeeping mission. 40 Squadron themselves did not for the most part share this definition of their deployment. This chapter is divided into three sections based on how different men categorise their experience in the Gulf: informants in the first two sections state that they were at war, but with differing levels of certainty, whilst those in the last section describe the deployment as a "holiday". The chapter is divided in this way because how each informant classifies the deployment is intimately connected with the identity he narrates.

The Gulf War was a War, Don't Listen to the Government

This section discusses the stories of those informants who show a desire to narrate that they were at war in the Gulf. However, for various reasons, they do not find this a straightforward process. Some of their colleagues, discussed in the next section, narrate without doubt that they were at war, but there is more uncertainty and defensiveness in the stories in this section. New Zealand discourses do not (and could

not) construct the Persian Gulf War as anything but a war, but by constructing 40 Squadron's role within that larger event as a peacekeeping mission they do suggest that these particular airmen were not "at war". This construction has the potential to threaten 40 Squadron members' identities: as people who have realised their training, as true soldiers or military personnel who have fought in a war, and as men who have faced and overcome the challenge of war. The men in this section explicitly discuss the peacekeeper discourse and register their disagreement with and dislike of it. This is in contrast to those in the next section, who give no space in their narratives to any discourse that does not place them as part of a war. Conversely, the veterans in this first section do respond to these public discourses, in order to reject them.

Rob's War Story

Steps in a Career

The first narrative I will examine is the war story told to me by Rob. Rob's narrative, like McNab and Coburn's, is one of career fulfilment. Showing that his deployment to the Gulf was an instance of him being at war would enable Rob to narrate that he has put his professional training to its ultimate use and has achieved a full military identity. In the same way that Coburn used the metaphor of sportsman and McNab of builder, Rob says of his desire to go to the Gulf: *It's like being a lawyer and not being able to practice law. You know...there was a lot of professionalism and everyone wanted to go. There was no shortage of people put their hand up and I certainly wanted to go.* The story that Rob told me was the story of his career. Here, Rob links 40 Squadron's eagerness to be deployed to professionalism. Furthermore, the metaphor he chooses to express the idea that the War offered fulfilment, law, is easily recognisable as a career. It is career fulfilment that Rob is speaking of. Rob does not narrate that his eagerness was linked to a personal desire to save Kuwait; when I ask him if he had wanted New Zealand to participate in the crisis, he says *I don't remember having any political views of any, I've never had any political views in that way.*

For his first six years in the Air Force, Rob was a *techo in a hangar*. Then, during an exercise, he went on a ride on a Hercules, and seeing how *exciting* and *interesting* that was, he decided to apply to train for an aircrew role and was selected. Rob had wanted

and expected to be posted to 40 Squadron to *go to the Hercs* after his training course, but instead found himself posted to another Squadron to work on a different type of aircraft. Rob says that this was *not plan A in the first place. However, it was just a learning curve and a stepping stone there anyway*. With these metaphors of gaining experience and of moving forward, Rob is narrating career progression, with 40 Squadron as a desired point to reach. He says *I just had to wait [for] an opportunity to be posted there*.

Meanwhile, as a member his new Squadron, Rob was deployed to a foreign country on a mission under the United Nations. Rob brought this up very early on in his interview. Leading on from the question *what was your job in the Air Force when you first joined?* he quickly narrated the first eight years, including his role change, in two sentences, and then stated *I'd already been away prior to the Gulf, I'd been to [country] already as a peacekeeper. Flying nine months*. (Rob narrated his role change in more detail as above later after further questions.)

The point that Rob wants to make about his UN deployment is that it *was completely different to the Gulf War. We weren't nearly as busy and we were pretty underutilised by the UN as a...air asset, a flying asset, they didn't quite know what to do with us at times and we weren't half as busy*. Thus, his reason for bringing up this deployment was to contrast it to the Gulf War, and make a point about both. This (the first thing he has to say about either deployment) is to describe their relative workloads. The Gulf War was busy; the UN peacekeeping mission was not. "Busy" is a major theme in Rob's narration of the Gulf War. He narrates that the aircrews worked constantly, to the point that he cannot think of any major events that stand out from the daily grind: *We had a lot of flying hours, for that period of time [...] we had like a year's worth of flying in about four months. And you're doing eight, ten hours a day, four days a week, I mean that's, 40 hours a week, I mean you can do that in a month back at Squadron if you weren't busy*.

Being busy is important to Rob. By the time his posting to 40 Squadron finally came through he *would have stayed at [his present Squadron], it was a pretty busy place at the time, and the [aircraft he was working on] were really busy and I was quite happy to stay there*. The fact that this Squadron was busy is the only reason he gives for his

willingness to remain in it. Rob uses being busy as a major criteria with which to judge, and compare, various deployments. When asked to describe a normal day serving in the Gulf War, for example, Rob again uses a comparison with the peacekeeping deployment to help make his point.

Well we were pretty busy, the aircrew, I'm not saying the ground crew weren't, but if the planes weren't there they didn't obviously have to work on them. But we had our missions every day the planes were serviceable which was most days because they were kept pretty well on the run, pretty well going in good nick, so we would fly two days out of three because we had three crews and two aeroplanes. So we didn't do anything else except go flying. So we would do a 12 or 18 hour day and have a break and do another 12 or 18 hour day and then we'd normally get a day off. And often we were rotated onto a night sorties [...] So we didn't really, we just ate and went to work. And that was the difference between [the peacekeeping deployment], I mean [the peacekeeping deployment] we had to amuse ourselves for days on end sometimes, whereas in the Gulf you didn't, 'cause you were busy. If the plane was serviceable two out of the three crews went flying. And we didn't have any major breakdowns which stopped us flying and had the planes on the ground, so, there was no downtime really.

Rob states that it was being busy or not *that was the difference between* the peacekeeping deployment and the Gulf War. He does not say the difference was that one deployment was more dangerous than the other, or that in one he was flying closer to any front; he says that one was busier than the other. Rob continues in the same vein when I ask him how a later deployment to a non-war zone city to coordinate supplies for New Zealanders on another peacekeeping mission compares to the Gulf and his own peacekeeping mission:

The [later deployment] was actually quite an easy one in regard to location, I mean you're in a major city, the workload was just the same as, it was behind a computer, it was all planning. [...] that was quite busy, [the third deployment] was pretty busy. But of course at the end of the day you just walked outside down the street [...] and have a beer [laughs]. That was the only one of the three operations where we had [that...] Cause [the UN mission] was dry, and so was Saudi.

I would have assumed that a significant difference between Rob's third deployment and his earlier missions would be that it was not a war zone, and thus a lot safer; but Rob focuses on the availability of alcohol and his workload. This use of relative workload as his major criterion of comparison is normalising and creates more of a career discourse than a war one; "I'm busy," and "I'm underutilised" sound much more like the answer to the question "how's work?" than "how are you going in the war?" When I ask if the extra hours mentioned above were a good opportunity, Rob seems ambivalent. *It's a good training in some ways because the flying's intense and you're always flying [...] if you're a collector of hours I suppose it was a good place to be at the time.* He then adds, in a statement embedded in work concerns, *You didn't get paid any extra to work any extra hours.*

The Next Step

Rob, therefore, is concerned with his career; he talks about progress, and expresses a desire to be able to actually "practice". When asked if, like the Gulf, the UN peacekeeping mission counted as "practicing" Rob continues his narrative of progression. *That was one step, but this [the Gulf War] was another step. This was the umm, this was the real thing. This was something going on here.* He says: *[On the peacekeeping mission] we were unarmed, anyway, we were just flying around supporting UN- there were only 200 of us, from 20 countries. So that was completely different to being in an operation with half a million men invading a country.*

The Gulf War was another step up from Rob's peacekeeping deployment in the stages of his career. Rob has been using a career discourse, but the job of a man in the military is war. Here he says the deployment was *the real thing*- in comparison, presumably, with training, which is not real. He stresses this by saying *this was something going on here*. This also, of course, means that peacekeeping was not the real thing, what he was ultimately trained for. And indeed, it would be difficult to feel like you are finally getting to practice when you are being underutilised. To show that he has made this next step, Rob teams his career discourse with a narration of his Gulf deployment that presents him as taking part in a war.

The Next Step Threatened: Public Discourses

Demonstrating that he was at war is made difficult for Rob by public discourses that construct 40 Squadron as having been on just another peacekeeping mission. Rob explains that the New Zealanders had to slot into the British operation as logistically, they were unable to set up a separate New Zealand operation.

Rob: I would have liked us personally to have been part of a separate New Zealand operation. But I accepted that that's just how we do business, in the big scheme of things. I mean we sent 46 Air Force personnel there and two Hercs, there was about 12 Hercs and a couple hundred Brits, I mean we were just a small...we weren't even, probably people didn't even know we were there.

Nina: So is that why you would have preferred to go as a New Zealand organisation, so people would know-

Rob: Well, I'll be honest with you, the reason I wanted us to go as a New Zealand organisation was because I discovered that 40 Squadron has what they call a standard, and it's a flag which has all the unit's battle honours going back to WW2, we didn't qualify, for anything on the standard, for the Gulf War. And I think we should have. And the reason why we didn't was because we were part of a British unit, and the British unit, the 70 Squadron, they got a battle honour, on their Squadron flag, and we didn't [...] Its just Squadron history, I mean 50 years from now it will probably be all forgotten... you look at, at the 40 Squadron [standard] now and its got Bougainville on it, and a couple of other theatres of operation from the Second World War, and it should have the Gulf War there. But it doesn't.

The major issue here is public recognition. Amongst the much larger British contingent at the time of the war, the New Zealand presence may have gone unnoticed. Then, because the deployment did not qualify for an honour on the standard (even though the New Zealanders were doing the exact same job as the British who did get an honour), it has not been entered on the visible record of Squadron history, and therefore may not be remembered. The fact that 40 Squadron and Rob went to war is not and may not necessarily be public knowledge, and thus the fact that they did take that crucial career step may not be part of their publicly recognised identity. The fact that they were not given a battle honour means that their deployment was not recognised as being on a par with World War Two or even with Bougainville. As it is commonly only those in the military that will see Squadron

standards, Rob may be thinking largely of recognition within the Air Force- those people who will be most concerned and interested in the taking of the next step.

Rob also, like many of my informants, talks at length about the issue of pay. When 40 Squadron were deployed to the Gulf, they were placed on “active service.” (One informant told me that the main difference between being on active service and the normal status is that the list of punishments grows.) An article in the Auckland Star shows us that the Government considered (or was reported by the media as considering) waiving 40 Squadron’s income tax for the deployment. This article states that New Zealand defence personnel had paid tax on war salaries since the Korean War, but that under the Income Tax Act of 1976 the government could waive the tax if they chose to do so (McRae, 1991). According to at least one informant, 40 Squadron was told that this would happen when they were placed on active service; but it did not. Informants believe that New Zealand personnel were the only servicemen in the Gulf being taxed on their income. 40 Squadron did receive a daily “active service” or “active duty” allowance of \$78.50. After the men had been in Saudi Arabia a while, however, the Government made the decision that these allowances, so far untaxed, should also be being taxed. Not only were the allowances taxed from then on (as, again, it is believed no other Forces’ were) taking the amount received per day down to roughly 50 dollars, there was also a *claw-back*. 40 Squadron had to pay back tax on the allowances they had already received *then and there*. One informant estimated the amount that had to be paid was a thousand dollars, another twelve hundred.

Rob’s narrative shows that the primary issue for him had nothing to do with wanting more money: *Why should we be the only... allied servicemen getting our allowances taxed and basically the government’s saying that, it’s simply a definition of a war.* Rob says that not having to pay tax on the allowance was a *definition of a war*. If men were sent to war, they did not have to pay tax. (Presumably, this idea comes both from the suggestion that they might not have to, and from the perception that every other coalition country in the Gulf- 34 other nations- followed this practice.) If you were not paying tax, you were at war. Ergo, if the Government decides to tax you, they are saying you are not at war. It is not about the money. The money is symbolic. This was reinforced after the interview when Rob and I were talking to a colleague of

his. Rob was telling the colleague about the allowance issue. Reiterating his account during the interview, he stated that taxing the allowances was a stupid move on the government's behalf. They created a lot of negativity just to save a comparatively small amount of money. Rob's colleague commented, *it's not about the money, it's the perception that you're being looked after*. Rob agreed, saying it would not have mattered if they had been told that they were getting a 60 dollar a day allowance untaxed, instead of 80 dollars a day taxed- *it's all about perceptions*.

Rob was not the only one to interpret things this way. An article from the *New Zealand Herald*, largely based on interviews with deployment members' wives, reports that military personnel and their families

[were] accusing the Government of penny-pinching. Because New Zealand is officially not part of the combat- although its personnel are armed and within range of Iraqi missiles- the soldiers and airmen are not considered "at war."

Yet they see personnel from other nations receiving tax-free pay (Oram, 1991a).

One wife quoted asked, "if it was not a war why are the personnel issued with sidearms?" (Oram 1991).

When asked what he thought the Government's motive was in taxing 40 Squadron, Rob does not say that they were purposefully trying to show that the Squadron was not at war, as he implies above. Rather, he responded *Oh, they're just tight*. No matter why they did it however, that was the impression it created. The very fact that it was this issue that stayed on Rob's mind after the interview shows how much it still bothers him. This was also shown by the length at which he spoke about it, and the fact that he brought it up repeatedly. For example, he later returns to the issue on his own volition (and again suggests the Government had some intent):

People were pretty pissed off about it. We were already the worst paid up there. See, and then they started to say "oh you know you're not, you're not at war," and then they, just stuff like that started coming out... however we got the active service medal. So we're not at war, but they presented us with the active service medal, so.

The problem is we, often, compare ourselves to Australia. And [it] wasn't an issue in Australia. They weren't taxed, it wasn't an issue [...] they were told they were at war, you know, the whole thing was just handled differently. And it didn't need to be handled poorly here. Unfortunately. And it was a National government too and they should know better.

Rob narrates taxation as having been a major issue for the Squadron as a whole. *They sent a guy home, over it. Did you know that?* He asked. Rob told me that not only was the pilot sent home over it, this was then covered up. According to him, Flight Lieutenant Tony Davies was not, after all, sent home for talking to the media, and that the Air Force had actually approved the interview Davies gave. *They approved an interview with a Northland radio station, he said that morale was poor because the allowance issue hadn't been resolved, and he was sent home. They didn't say why but he was sent home and that's why he was sent home.*

The Next Step Threatened: Tension in Rob's Narrative

However in presenting himself as being at war, Rob has to contend not only with these public discourses, but also with some reservations he himself appears to have. As we have seen, Rob called the Gulf deployment the *real thing* and emphasised this with *this was something going on here*. This latter phrase is echoed later in the narrative when Rob describes what the Hercules were carrying. His list is much different to the "freight/passenger" lists that appeared in the newspapers, and includes the primary components of any war story:

Rob: Anything and everything. You name it. We carried, every supply possible, and [pause] brought the dead bodies back. [...] They were all in coffins, yeah. So there was, most times we flew at night, it was often in support of a medevac. Our aeroplanes were parked right by the hospital in Riyadh, the Riyadh airport under the ground there, they had a hospital. So we often at night brought back casualties of war. And casualties of accidents, there was a lot of accidents there with the roads ... there's so many people and so many vehicles, it was like a small city, and I guess there was, there was motor accidents and often we brought back guys who'd been in crashed trucks and stuff, just taking supplies to the front via road. *So there seemed to be something going on at the time.*

Nina: Injured people as well?

Rob: A lot of burns. Had a couple of flights with a lot of burn victims. And umm, prisoners of war. We had, we brought a few prisoners back. Depending what we'd been doing often we met up with some army units which had prisoners with them. And so they would all be escorted back with us, to prison or for whatever they were doing, questioning perhaps, I don't know. But we certainly had POWs, on the aeroplane [My emphasis].

Real appears once again in the following passage, in the sense of 40 Squadron really being in danger. Danger is a central element to war stories.

What sort of happened was that we got up there and we didn't really know what would happen. I say that because there was an air of optimism that Iraq would back down [...] we were there Christmas day, and everyone thought oh well you know we won't be here much longer, you know the old, the Yanks are coming in big time with half a million troops and the Brits are- the Iraqis will back down, you know. As we got close to that D-day, I think it was January 16¹⁴, it started to become apparent that they weren't. The mood sort of changed. And then once the war sort of started there was talk of the old, would they, wouldn't they deploy chemical weapons. Well the feeling was well, we didn't think they'd actually go to war to start with and are they capable of it, yes they were, so your kind of attitude changed because nothing was certain, you couldn't predict anything and nothing was certain, and it became obvious after Iraq decided to go to War, that, you know, anything was possible. So it was kind of a, you know, oh, that's happened, attitude, and oh we better, and I remember one of the first days there, there was an air raid warning. And everyone's flapping around getting organised, getting all their gear on at the airport. And some guys had been a bit slack and some of their gear, couldn't find it or it was sitting on a plane. And [the] boss said "well, there are no...false alarms here. So get your gear get it sorted [laughs] you know there will be ...no more practices." So everything that happened was for real and it started happening everyday. That air raid siren was going off everyday. So that was kind of how it evolved, it kind of evolved from being a trip up there.

In this story 40 Squadron realise that they were no longer training; they were in real danger. The uncertainty in this story, the idea that you never know what will happen and what Iraq will do, exacerbates the sense of danger. Uncertainty occurs in other

¹⁴ It was January 15, 1991.

places in Rob's narrative and has the same effect. Rob says deployments are a stressful time for servicemen's families- *it's just how it is, I mean it's the unknown*. This is reiterated when he later narrates that his family was relieved to see him home- *it was the great unknown in some ways*. When asked what he expected the experience to be like he says *I had no idea. Umm, I had no preconceived notions*.

However, uncertainty and the unexpected do not convey danger every time they appear. The first time they show up, they function to show that Rob's job is exciting.

We were in Antarctica, and we heard about it [the decision that 40 Squadron would be deployed to the Gulf] on the radio. We could tune the Herc into AM radio stations, so on our flights back from Antarctica, on the last flight of Ice Cube¹⁵ that year, we were listening to ZB, and ZB advised us that we were going to the Gulf and we landed here, and the boss was here, and we said "and we know why you're here, you've come to see us. We've just heard on the radio three hours ago, at 60 South." And that was how we knew, and we weren't even advised that we were being considered for the job, to go away. The rumours running around were that 5 Squadron were going up, the P3s, and that they were secretly doing all their NBC training and prepping up, there was no word of 40 Squadron going. So we were all away up Antarctica. And so it was funny we went from, on the third of December I was in Antarctica, and on the 24th of December I was in Riyadh.

Moreover, danger itself is not consistently narrated. Half of the examples of uncertainty linked to anxiety over danger above deal more with Rob's family's worries than with his own. Rob often plays down any risk he was under. He does not narrate that he was afraid of death.

It was never scary to be honest. I never found it scary. To be frank, but I don't know if that's... I was never scared of anything over there. And it didn't worry me, well, I say it didn't worry me, there wasn't any panic. You know we were pretty well prepared I thought and, and even flying...there's always a chance the Yanks could shoot you down I suppose ... [laughs] I was never scared about it. Worried perhaps, but never scared.

¹⁵ The name given to RNZAF missions to Antarctica.

Here Rob is being stoic, but he is not merely saying that he was not scared in order to construct a brave Anzac subjectivity. In the next passage, he tells me that there was not as much for him to be scared of as I might have thought:

Every time [an air raid siren] went off you'd, you jumped out of bed, you threw your boots and your NBC kit [Nuclear Biological Chemical- the protective clothing combatants wear] on, and well what I used to do, because my room was about here. And I was looking at the Patriot missiles [there was a Patriot battery across the road from where 40 Squadron were stationed]. If, we soon got to know that, they were so sensitive that every time there was a Scud launch, our alarm would go off. They had it set up, so if the Scud was going to Israel, we still got out of bed. So, what I used to do, was I used to open the curtains, when it went off I'd get up, I'd throw my boots and my gear on and open the curtains, and if I didn't see Scud missiles going for 30 or 60 seconds I wouldn't panic. But if I saw the fireworks, Phew! Phew! Phew! Phew! Phew! I would then get my ass into gear because I knew that [the Patriots] were defending a Scud missile attack on us. That was probably only about one in, five, one in seven. Most of them were going elsewhere, most of them were going to Israel, most were going to Dharhan, and I don't know what the percentage was that went to Riyadh but it wasn't umm, it was maybe only 10 percent, to 20 percent perhaps, I don't know for sure, but it wasn't all of them. And they were cleared early, so if it, if it wasn't us we got the all-clear within half an hour, we'd go back to bed.

If Rob's primary aim was to narrate himself as stoic and brave, he would have to narrate danger- you cannot be brave if nothing is threatening you. This downplaying of danger is part of a tension that exists between Rob's desire to narrate that he was at war, and a simultaneous feeling that he was not at war in the same way that, for example, an uncle of his who fought in World War Two was. When I asked how their experiences compare he responded: *Completely different. His was a life changing experience, fighting at Cassino I'd say. He saw his mates get shot and killed and he physically killed people I'd say, I'd say quite completely different to us.*

Rob indicates that he thinks his relative's war was life-changing because it featured death. He reinforces this when I ask *You didn't see yours as a life changing experience?* answering *Not really. I'd, if someone had died, if we'd crashed a plane maybe.* Here, Rob's career discourse and traditional transformative war discourses

become mutually exclusive. Rob was not changed by war. The passage with which Rob immediately follows this is revealing:

But umm, we were kind of, for a war, we were kind of in the corporate box. We didn't have to physically get our hands dirty and fight it but we had the best seats in the house. But we would fly round at night and we could see the carpet bombing. We'd be flying at 18, 000 feet coming in and out of Saudi, and you could see the flashes of the bombs, from the B-52s coming out of Diego Garcia, bombing the front lines, you could see it and you could feel it. Boom-boom-boom-boom-boom-boom. You know, how many people have sat in a plane and watched carpet bombing? [laughs]. So you know that's the sort of view we had of things, you know, and we could fly, that's the photos I took. Flying 200 feet above a major battle [laughs]. You know, in a war. You know that's how close you got to it.

Although here Rob emphasises that it was a war- *for a war, you know, in a war*- his paragraph constructs him as an observer, rather than an agent. All of the imagery connotes spectatorship. He says that they were *in the corporate box* and *had the best seats in the house*- metaphors of places from which one views some sort of entertainment as an audience, a sports game and a show or concert. The word *see* is used three times. Rob *sat in a plane and watched* and talks about the *view we had of things*. They did not have to *get our hands dirty and fight it*. The last line is *that's how close you got to it*. Being close to something is not being in it. Rob also says that the crew would fly over what he terms *touristy* sites:

We'd just fly into Kuwait, drop all the grunts off at a desert strip somewhere, and the operations there would pre-prepare a route, like a highway, in and out to fly in, and [...] the aircraft could declare itself VFR, what they call Visual Flight Rules, and [...] we could fly under certain conditions, we could fly without air traffic control, and so once we'd done our job and we were heading back, I'm not sure if these were, or what, any air transport routes but we would fly VFR, get down to a couple of hundred feet, and we would just sort of fly over all the interesting battle zones [laughs]. So this is where the oil tanks were destroyed [...] this is the oil fields on fire, and that is ah Multa Ridge, the big retreat, by the Iraqis that failed, that got caught, and we flew over that the day after and I've got other photos as well [...] of successful air attacks on a number of other military installations.

The photos Rob is talking about were taken by lowering the hold of the Hercules, strapping themselves to the plane, and leaning out of the open aircraft. Thus, although by downplaying danger Rob does not construct himself as a potential victim like the media does, he does not construct himself as particularly active. He flew above. In presenting himself as a tourist, Rob actually comes close to the same discourse that other informants employ to narrate that they were *not* at war- that the deployment was a “holiday”.

Narrating the Next Step

Therefore, for Rob, presenting himself as being in danger as a strategy for narrating he was at war is out. The strategy that Rob does employ also does not rely on him being active. This is, again, done through comparison with his earlier peacekeeping deployment. The Gulf deployment is presented as more war-like, and thus a further step in Rob’s career, not through discussion of danger or action but through showing that the Gulf War involved a much deeper day to day involvement in the military. Rob says *definitely they were quite different operations*.

[The Gulf War] wasn’t like [the UN mission] where we lived within the city, and met locals, and got invited to their homes, and shopped. In Saudi, it could have been a piece of dirt anywhere, we had no contact with the locals really, we went shopping not very often, really, you weren’t there to explore [...] Medina [...]

[On the UN mission] we were allowed to drive around so we drove across the mountains for example and had a weekend [at the sea] and also we went skiing a couple of times over the ski fields, so we were sort of, we were just living there. Whereas here we just worked and we had no, I mean I couldn’t tell you anything particular about Saudi as a holiday destination, except maybe it’s got plenty of money and the petrol’s cheap.

Rob emphasises that he was *living* in the country that the United Nations deployed him to, the way you would live in New Zealand or any other place - you work, but then you go home, and shop, go on holiday, and connect with neighbours. Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, was not a home. Rather, like the World Wars, even though it did not transform him, it was a break in normality in some sense. It was a period in which they were not *living* somewhere, but were stationed somewhere in order to

resolve a crisis. Rob gets across the point that Saudi Arabia was not a place in which to live in the normal sense by emphasising that 40 Squadron's living quarters were a military barracks.

Rob: So once the Gulf War started of course there was no more tourism in and out of Riyadh, the civil airport closed and the airline went away. They parked their airplanes, God knows where else. So this hotel which was generally used for accommodating crews was empty. And it was close to the airport but it was inside a zone that was restricted. So what our government did was we booked the second floor. We went down and struck a rate, this was basically filled up with the hospital staff. So the hospital was quite handy, and so all the military doctors and nurses and blah blah blah came and lived in this, it was like a barracks, a barrack block, and they kept the kitchen going. And we had the entire second floor.

And so inside there we had a swimming pool, was outside, and it was, it was probably a, oh, what would you say, [...] it was a four star hotel, just converted, and it wasn't converted anyway we just doubled up in all the rooms and they just turned the rooms into this barracks basically and the middle of all the rooms was common areas with TVs set up and card tables and stuff, so. That was probably as good as anything, really [laughs].

Nina: Like luxury barracks?

Rob: Yeah well it was empty, I don't know how the, I presume the government paid for that or someone put us up in it. But it was just full of military, it was just an entirely, utilised by the military as a barrack block.

Whereas on the UN deployment *we were on our own, so we just, we were posted up there, met up with the UN, went and found somewhere to live*. Rob could live where he chose. He was not in a complete military environment 24/7, as he was during the Gulf deployment, befitting a soldier in wartime. In this way, he narrates himself as having been at war in the Gulf, and constructs the identity of soldier who has realised his training.

Sam's War Story

Sam, like Rob, states that he was at war and is invested in the subject position of war veteran. However whilst in Rob's story war gains its importance from its role in Rob's career, in Sam's story the experience of going to war seems to be important more for its own sake. Sam started off his interview by showing me his war artefacts: NBC gloves, dog tags, a piece of Scud missile picked up off the ground, an Iraqi anti-aircraft shell, and his rifle handbook. Later, he demonstrated the routine for putting on his gas mask. Like Rob, Sam said that his role in the Gulf War was misrepresented. He says that the Hercules carried *airplane parts, a complete cargo of bombs, a complete cargo of ammunition...in the days leading up to the land war we started moving troops up to Q [Qaisumah]*. Further, *when the land war started we operated as medevac flights...I certainly saw a few sick people getting pulled off the aircraft. [...] So we did that and a few prisoners.*

He then narrates: *I remember the New Zealand media turned up, cause, the only thing anyone in New Zealand heard was about the medics. And they turned up and, lo and behold, we were delivering mail that day. You know.* He later says:

At the time that we were going over, one of the things we were told is you're going on active service, but the good thing is you won't pay tax on active service. [...] And so we went over there and we were still paying tax and everyone was pretty grumpy about that. And we kept hearing these things back from New Zealand, that oh, we weren't actually in a war so we still had to pay tax.

[...]

The thing was the being told you weren't in a war when you totally were. And you know hearing back from New Zealand that no one knew what we were doing, it was being misrepresented. Didn't have a problem contributing to the war effort, to the active war fighting, you know the, the role. I always saw it as [pause] you know the government decides that going there is going to achieve something for New Zealand then, that's what you're doing. Whether it's securing oil supplies or securing bloody

free trade agreements or whatever. That's people in New Zealand's decision through their government. And ah, this bloody mine[ing] around about humanitarian, medic, bloody mail, all that -bullshit.

Sam *didn't have a problem* taking on a military role. He was prepared to be involved with *active war fighting*. When I asked, for clarification, if he felt that he was not been supported by the people of New Zealand or the government, Sam corrected me that the issue was *that we were being misrepresented what we were doing*. This is what he had just said- *no one knew what we were doing, it was being misrepresented*. What bothers Sam is that he was being presented as doing *humanitarian...bullshit*, when what he saw himself as doing was *contributing to the war effort and acheiv[ing] something for New Zealand*. Later on Sam says *I like control in what I do and I like to control my own destiny*. But Sam could not control the narratives being told about him in the public sphere, or subsequently his public identity.

One reason that these discourses may have angered Sam more than some of his colleagues is that the experience of going to war itself seemingly did not go the way Sam expected it to. Sam narrates that he did indeed control his own destiny. When he had completed his training, Sam took the initiative in determining the course of his Air Force career: *I wangled my posting to 40 Squadron*. His choice of 40 Squadron was based on several factors: he had worked with Hercules before and liked it; any Squadron was better than working in a repair bay; and 40 Squadron was regularly in the news for its role in operations such as the evacuation of Kiwis from Fiji at the time of the 1987 coup. Then, Sam's narration implies that he forced the Air Force to let him go to the Gulf War. He says *I handed my 717 in, which is like release papers, and I asked them to overturn them so I could go. They did reluctantly*. They did so even though *in those days they didn't like people doing that. They didn't want to encourage people to casually put their papers in*. It seems that Sam had decided he wished to leave the Air Force or the Squadron (whichever he was applying to be released from). However, when he found out that the Squadron was being deployed to a war, he changed his mind, and convinced the hierarchy to let him go.

Sam tells me that he and his family did not know what they do now, that:

in retrospect there wasn't that much danger. There was a little bit but it's not like there was going to be a massive war, where, of you know equal fighting forces. But we didn't really know that then. Didn't know what Saddam Hussein and his army were capable of. The Riyadh people were, you know the locals living out in the desert expecting Saddam's tanks to bomb the town. They left all their women and children behind to look after the houses and went and camped out there. As was the custom.

For all he knew from the information available to him at the time, Sam could have been going into a very dangerous situation. This narrative functions to show that he was willing to do so. Similarly, when asked what he expected the experience to be like before he got there, Sam responds: *I guess the only thing prior to that was Vietnam. You know, thoughts along those lines. Wasn't sure how hostile the locals would be. Wasn't sure how big a battles there'd be. And ah, how close we'd actually get to them.* Expecting the situation to be like the Vietnam War would not of course make someone feel secure in their safety. Yet Sam obviously wanted the opportunity to be deployed to a war zone.

Sam was involved in the Gulf conflict first as part of the humanitarian missions ordered by the Labour Government.

Sam: I went to the Gulf war...area, prior to going there. So when Saddam Hussein did his invasion of Kuwait a whole bunch of ex-pat workers left Kuwait, a big evacuation of, there was this so-called humanitarian crisis happening. You know, we sent a Herc over and I was with that crew. The Labour government sent us with three and a half ton of milk powder, and going into, you know, [an] unknown situation, they wouldn't let us take NBC gear. Because, that would seem war-like. They wouldn't let us take weapons. Gave us a big bag of cash. 30 grand US, in cash, to bribe our way out of trouble.

The military vehicle of New Zealand is [pause] like [long pause] I don't know what you'd call that like. It was very strange. So we flew to Cairo and got parked out the back of Cairo airport, so far off the way you couldn't see a terminal or anything like that. And all the milk powder got taken off. Went God knows where. Straight on the black market. Nowhere near refugees I'd imagine...and, then we sat there for hours. And the captain and the navigator had gone to file a flight plan for the next route and they were kind of being held to ransom 'cause a previous Air Force plane had come

through Cairo about a month before, paid with a, basically a money order, you know, typical government. You know here's a form that's worth money you just have to present it to a New Zealand- . And the Egyptians wanted cash. So we forked out the cash. For them and us...and then we left. Went to Cyprus and hung out there a couple of days. [...] But Cyprus had big British bases on it, and we weren't allowed to land there. It was a stance the government had made on, on something, the Brits wouldn't let us in.

Nina: Because of a stance the New Zealand government had made on something the British wouldn't let you in?

Sam: Yeah. Yeah. I can't remember what it was. Something to do with that nuclear thing [pause]. Umm, and then we... we were in this tourist town, hanging out on the beach, and we got told to go into Jordan. We flew into Oman and we picked up ...some Pakistani refugees. And...what they were, was they were ex-pat workers who had been working in the Gulf area. And they had come running out. And, you know, they weren't that badly off. You know, they just left. They were in, for them, high paying jobs. We kind of loaded them up into an airplane and took them back to Karachi, which I'd imagine was the worst place for them. Because, they didn't have jobs there. [...] So it was kind of a bizarre thing. It was like humanitarian business. Didn't make any sense.

To Sam, the humanitarian missions he was sent on were *strange, bizarre, and didn't make any sense*. He disputes that they did any good whatsoever. He suggests that there was really no need for them with the phrase *so-called humanitarian crisis*, believes that the milk powder probably never even got to refugees, and thinks that those refugees that they flew home were probably much better off where they were. Labour sending 40 Squadron into an unstable area and not letting them take those things that would protect them, NBC suits and guns, because of the desire not to *seem war-like*, is also foreign to Sam's worldview. He has trouble comprehending these actions, and cannot even think of something to compare them to or to explain them in terms of: *the military vehicle of New Zealand is [pause] like [long pause] I don't know what you'd call that like*.

The strangeness did not abate for Sam even after he was sent to war under National. *We were still pretty inadequately equipped. Our personal weapons didn't catch up to us for about two weeks. It was like -yeah. Stupid. I think the air crew had pistols and*

that's it, when we got there. For Sam, this is not how the New Zealand Air Force should be operating in a time of war. The above would not have occurred in Vietnam, the model along which Sam's thoughts were running. Neither would the following:

I remember at one stage when [the deployment commander] was looking at, we were woken up, taken out to the airport, and told to get ready to leave. And you know some people were pretty angry about that [laughs] but it was, there was some rumour that Israel was going to nuke Iraq and the government had decided that we'd have nothing to do with nukes, we were going to leave if that happened or something. I don't, I don't know much more than that, we didn't get told much more. But we didn't leave. I know some people would have been really pissed off if they'd had to leave.

Sam's wording does not clearly state that he believes this plan was aimed at getting the men out of danger; they were, of course, not in Iraq but in Saudi Arabia. His phrase *the government had decided that we'd have nothing to do with nukes* could be read to express that, rather, the government did not want to be associated with a situation involving nuclear weapons. Sam of course has already stated his opinions on the government's concern for his safety. I asked, *You were going to leave because they thought there might be nuclear weapons involved and we couldn't be seen to be-?* and Sam interrupted to respond *Yep*. What is interesting about this story however is that Sam never says that he would have been angry if he had had to leave. Is he using other people to stand in for himself? Does he not want to say he did not want to leave for some reason? Or is he in fact indirectly conveying that he would not necessarily have been angry at being sent home, thus now displaying an ambivalence about being in the Gulf that was not present when he was pushing to be sent there?

This is what Sam has to say about whether he was glad he went: *Umm. Yeah [pause] It wasn't full of wonderful benefits. Umm, but it was certainly, ah, you know, an experience not many people get [pause]. Learnt what I didn't like about being in the military. This is a lack of control.* Sam likes to control his destiny, but there was *not a chance to there*. Sam felt he was less in control in the Gulf than back in New Zealand because:

Certainly back here you felt more like it was a job rather than, you know, the day to day involvement. There you were definitely part of [...] the military machine because you were there 24 hours a day. But also the things that affected what you did you had less control over, than in the home environment, even in the military you had a lot of control over- not when and where I worked but what I did to the airplane, as far as I made decisions for what needed to be fixed... or how- not what needed to be fixed but how to go about fixing something that, you know, was on the certificate as being needed fixed. And yeah over there there was still that, but, you know, what gear you got to use, when you carried it, a whole bunch of stuff that became not within my control.

Significantly, the first thing Sam says about why he felt less in control in the War than at home is that *certainly back here you felt more like it was a job*. This is opposed to the *day to day involvement* and being part of *the military machine* also noted by Rob. When he liked being in the military (or, at least, had not *learnt what I didn't like about being in the military*- the release papers story implies he had already become disenchanted) was when he felt it was a job like any other job. However once he got back from the war, he stayed on in the military. This was because:

It was hard to, to walk away from it. Hard because, going over there and came back, didn't feel like it was finished. Yeah, I certainly had that sense. Oh hang on. Not finished with this yet. And certainly 40 Squadron people that, if I'd stayed in Auckland I would have been back in all those places again, Afghanistan.

Having been to the Gulf War, Sam still did not feel like he had finished what he had started. Bizarre to him as the experience turned out to be, the Gulf War did not give him a feeling of fulfilment. Sam did not stay in 40 Squadron, but suggests that if he had have, he might have got *to finish with this* by being deployed on other operations- Afghanistan as mentioned here, as well as Somalia, East Timor and Bougainville. Therefore when asked if he wished he had still been in 40 Squadron, and got to go to Afghanistan, Sam responds *There was a while there I wished I had*.

Sam left 40 Squadron because he became frustrated with his career progress. After the war, he had expected to come back to 40 Squadron and work in a particular role that he felt he was best qualified for. However:

One of the other brilliant things that the Air Force did at the time, they filled up 40 Squadron with other people while we were away. And when we came back they went, “oh, not on 40 Squadron anymore.” Yeah. So that, that was really [pause] very weird. I mean, what they were doing is saying oh, yeah, you need to go to the bay for a couple of years and then you’re going to come back to the Squadron. But they didn’t say that, they were just like “oh you’re posted. Off you go.”

Sam later found out that the Air Force had recognised his abilities and was in fact grooming him for the role he wanted but *they didn’t bother telling me that*. All Sam knew was that he was told to go to a bay- the very place he had wangled the posting to 40 Squadron to avoid. Thus, he once again decided to take his destiny into his own hands, *went oh fuck this*, and requested a posting to another part of the country *basically to get out*. Like any Anzac serviceman, he would have benefited from being given more information from his superiors! However, Sam no longer wishes that he had stayed in 40 Squadron. This is because he now has a job he enjoys- *I like control in what I do. I’ve got that at the moment*. Of the place the Gulf War has in his life as a whole, Sam says, *I don’t think it’s a great place. It’s not hugely significant. Certainly was for a wee while. It’s not anymore. You know it’s pretty much a- blind alley. It didn’t go anywhere. In my life*. The Gulf War, for Sam, did not lead anywhere. His career took a different turn (due to his own actions). The War was not directly part of the path that has led him to his current job and career-related identity. Yet the fact that he went to a war was significant for a while and he still shows a desire to narrate it and annoyance at those who counter it. His current job is still military, and it seems he would still rather be seen as a war veteran than someone who ran a few humanitarian missions. As we have seen, Sam is more willing than Rob to narrate that he was in possible danger. Stories of air raids like the following show that Sam considered that he was under attack and thus at war.

One time, we were down in the, just got to the shelter... and we had- helmets that didn’t fit over the NBC gear, and I was just finishing putting my NBC gear off and I’d heard the sonic boom outside from the Patriot battery that was just across the road, about you know a kilometre away, and the thing about Patriots is they can only protect where they are. Cause they’re, they’re ballistic missiles so they go up to space and then they come straight down so Patriots can only protect straight up. So when

these things start firing off volleys of Patriots you know that the Scuds are actually coming down on you. And ah, I remember that distinctly, trying to get my helmet on. There was like dust bloody, you know out of the ceiling, dust coming down, and it's all going to happen now. That's what it felt like.

Oh there's actually a Scud landed not far from where we were staying. The remains of it. So yeah as soon as you knew that, as soon as you realised that the sonic booms were the Patriots, whatever they're aimed at is pretty damned close. One night the battery across the road fired 22. Patriots. In one go.

They had these things called NAIADs, that went off, and a NAIAD is a chemical weapon detector that they have spaced around the- and [the New Zealand NBC Controller, who was shown British eyes-only papers] always said that no one ever gave him an adequate explanation of why they went off. And in some ways it's reasonable to expect that the Iraqis did put nerve agent in the Scuds but they were such an inefficient delivery system that it didn't really have a major effect. 'Cause they reckon the most they could get is a cupful in each one.

Furthermore, Sam's narrative of the government showing more concern to not appear warlike than with his safety, and his description of war as a learning experience, fit well with traditional betrayal and disillusionment war narratives. However, there is no real narration of personal change.

Summary

The narratives of both Rob and Sam contain elements of the career discourse and a desire to realise their military training by participating in a war. Both are therefore angered by the categorisation of the Gulf deployment as a peacekeeping mission, which they regard as a misrepresentation of the truth. However, Sam goes a step further than Rob does and is angered also by some elements of the actual military operation, rather than merely how it was represented. This means that whilst Rob's narrative is structured by the demonstration that he achieved the ultimate step in his career despite what the government may tell you, Sam himself did not narrate that he realised his expectations in the Gulf. Thus, the Gulf War is not constituted as a step in

Sam's present career. It has some importance to his subjectivity but is not integral to the narration of his professional identity at this time.

Both men disagree with the construction of their deployment to the Gulf War as a peacekeeping mission, and state that they were in fact at war. However, the peacekeeping discourse is prevalent and neither man consistently counters it with any other powerful discourse. Sam in fact went against dominant war narratives, including the Anzac Spirit, by stating that in his deployment there was *not that comrade in arms thing*. Rob relied on displaying that he was in a military environment for constructing the deployment as a war, whilst Sam's strategy was to narrate that he was in danger. This, however, does not actually contradict the peacekeeping discourse, as it too constructed 40 Squadron as possible victims. In the next chapter, I will examine the stories of men who also narrate that the deployment was a war, but who do so by employing other discourses that are powerful in the sphere in which they told their stories, such as the Anzac Spirit.

The Gulf War was a War

This section discusses 40 Squadron informants who simply and clearly narrate that they were at war in the Gulf. This was not necessarily common. I remember interviewing one of these informants, Stephen, and getting very excited because he was actually using words like *fighting* and *war*. Stephen was one of my later interviews, and it took me a while to realise that this was a very strange thing to be excited about, given that I was doing a thesis on a war and had already interviewed a number of other veterans.

Like Rob and John, the informants in this section are angered by the issues of media representation and taxation. They can be quite as heated as the informants from the first section in their discussion of these matters. However, there is one key difference. Seemingly secure that they were at war, these informants never explicitly link media coverage or tax with any attempt to claim that 40 Squadron was not at war. Dennis, whose narrative is the primary case study in this section, said:

What Bolger's government did, was, play up the medical detachment...in Bahrain, and downplay the Riyadh- which was, ours was more warlike, you know we actually were carrying ammunition, carrying troops into battle and all that sort of stuff, so ours was more war-y, theirs was totally- I mean who could argue with a medical detachment, you know, its only doing good, so focus on that, focus on that, and that was really the minor part of our involvement in the whole, of New Zealand's involvement in... so we'd get the papers sort of a week late, we'd get some papers you know, and its all askew. And I remember asking [the PR officer] [...] he said [...] [that Bolger] was evidently worried about the five percent of the green vote or the sort of the left wing, you know, don't upset them, you know, that is not leadership, that's holding the polls, that's not leadership, so I've never ever respected Bolger as a leader, ever. [...] You know, if you're going to send people somewhere, commit them and then get the public, you know, behind them. And most people would have said that that's a good thing, its not, its what we can do, it's our part and yeah.

Likewise, Stephen said

Only comment about the media is, it would have been nice for the media to perhaps give us more publicity and tell the general public of New Zealand that we were there, and actually fighting, in this war. A lot of people didn't know. And it took a long time, basically to feel supported by the general New Zealand public during this. In fact it was sort of almost the opposite at first, seemed to us, that the Government ...were trying to keep this a little quiet, that they'd sent this unit into an active service where some of them might not come home. I think that was basically the thinking, that "yes, off you go boys, but, you know, we sort of won't be telling, putting this across the main news."

Both men were frustrated by the media coverage. However, they do not see in it a claim that they were not at war or a discourse that constructs the deployment as something different. Rather, they frame the coverage in terms of downplaying or keeping quiet the fact that 40 Squadron was at war. Unlike Sam, their main issue with the public discourses of New Zealand's involvement in the war is that a lack of information about their role led to a lack of support, rather than that there was a misrepresentation of their role. Dennis in fact implies that the public would have been

supportive of 40 Squadron- they just did not know anything about what they were doing.

When I brought up the issue of taxation, Dennis immediately responded: *Oh, this is, I don't know **why** they do this.*

Talk about one way to kill morale, for absolutely, just about minimal financial gain. We're talking about [...] about 130 people [including the medical deployments], and taxing their daily allowances. You know when these people are putting their lives on the line, you know we were coming under Scud attack at night... there were some very scary issues, when you're out there, caught out on the airfield and Scuds are coming in, and you're trying to run to the shelter. You know sometimes we sprinted to the shelter with all our kit on sometimes. And then you think, how petty was that? And I think it was shown when the detachment arrived back and Bolger was there to meet us and no one wanted to have a bar of him basically. [...] There was some people actually muttering under their breath quite loudly, someone was going "sshhh, quiet," might be heard you know, it was, very, I would say very poor leadership I think at the time, on that.

When asked why he thought Bolger did it, Dennis says

I just thought it was petty, it was stupid you know. And it just causes morale, I think something to be aware of [is that] the little things can make someone's self-worth, you know, even if it had been five dollars a day it just was wrong, they didn't have to do it, you know. And I thought that was, it's the little rewards or little things that can, in an employment thing, can actually make a big difference to a person's sense of well-being, a sense of being wanted, you know?

Dennis too sees the money as being symbolic, but of how much he was valued rather than of whether he was at war. He implies that the decision to tax was made for purely financial reasons, but that this was indicative of the Government not appreciating 40 Squadron's wartime sacrifices. Stephen says:

Morale is a really important thing, and getting paid is one big issue that helps keep you smiling [laughs]. So yeah, there was a problem there, there was a couple of, hiccups. You know, not ideal, but, you know I guess to look at it objectively we

hadn't been to war, for oh, I don't know how many years, this was the first conflict that we'd been to that was a real, actual, active service since [Vietnam]. So, the [Vietnam] War was about the last time we'd actually sent a New Zealand force to war, and with three weeks notice. You couldn't sort of expect everything to be in place, you know, so although I said they were big issues to us at the time, I guess in some ways you can't expect everything just to happen on the other side of the world. You know, this small unit in the middle of Saudi Arabia, trying to communicate with the Air Force unit back home, and have it all happen just with bank accounts, allowances and bits and pieces, it...yeah it wasn't always easy for the other support staff to keep everything working. [...]

You wanted to know that you... you weren't doing this for nothing. That really getting shot at and Scud missiles landing nearby...that you should be at least paid what you're entitled to, for being in that situation. And sometimes that wasn't happening, so, that was a, yeah, a little bit of a sore point, but, hey.

Like Dennis, Stephen links being taxed with being unappreciated. He attributes the issue to administrative difficulties rather than any intent to present 40 Squadron as not being at war; in fact directly equating the deployment with the Vietnam War by saying that Vietnam was *the last time* what the Air Force was now doing had been done. In not interpreting the public discourses created by media coverage and taxation as John and Rob do, neither Dennis nor Stephen ever admit into their narrative even a suggestion that they were not at war. In this way, they construct themselves as war veterans.

I asked all ten informants if, before the government had made its final decision in December 1990, they had wanted New Zealand to contribute to the Gulf War. Three said they had not given the situation much thought before they found out that they personally would be involved; one focused on what role the New Zealand Defence Force was militarily capable of playing; one said he had not particularly wanted New Zealand to contribute; two said they had primarily for reasons that would benefit New Zealand (we would want help if it happened to us, so we should help others, and we needed to be seen to be pulling our weight, particularly after the breakdown of ANZUS); and one said that he had because going to war is what the military does. Stephen and Dennis, the two informants who most successfully and unambiguously narrated themselves as being at war, were also the only two who directly stated that

they had wanted New Zealand to participate because Iraq was in the wrong and thus needed to be removed from Kuwait. Dennis said: *It was a pretty clear-cut, I don't think there was any deep moral issue there because it was a clear-cut invasion of a sovereign nation by another nation, in breach of all the protocols, there was no, "this [international intervention] isn't right" or anything, it [Iraq's invasion of Kuwait] was wrong.* Dennis adds that the fact that Kuwait was an oil-rich country was part of why the world felt an urgency to help it but that this did nothing to alter the fact that Iraq was in the wrong and therefore the validity of the operation. Stephen said:

I was pleased with that decision, that New Zealand as I said would be part of a multinational force to sort out a tyrant who, you know...had taken over someone else's country, for no good reason at all apart from to grab the oil ...yeah that wasn't right as far as I was concerned. So I was pleased that New Zealand had made a decision to send troops and to help ...sort that situation out.

Such references to tyrants and the reprehensible invasion of countries, which work to construct Iraq as an enemy and cast Iraqis as evil, are basic elements of traditional patriotic war stories, and are absent from all but these two narratives. In fact, Dennis and Stephen were the only two in answering the question about whether they wanted New Zealand to participate who explicitly discussed the cause of the war. This is a trend of the interviews as a whole, not just the responses to this particular question. Most informants tended to focus almost exclusively on their own specific experience of the war, to the point that after I had completed all the interviews I panicked because I had been working on the thesis for over a year and did not feel I knew anything beyond the very basics about the war itself. Informants rarely spoke about the causes of the war, the overall course of the war, or the aims, strategy or progress of either side. Of the eight informants apart from Dennis and Stephen, only four ever uttered the words *Saddam Hussein* and two of those were only in the context of their experience of painting messages on bombs headed to Iraq. One informant actually told his whole story without ever saying *Iraq* (although he said *Iraqis*- once). In the majority of interviews, the only mentions of Kuwait have to do with a visit 40 Squadron took to Kuwait City after it was liberated, and what they got up to there. Only two informants ever mentioned George Bush Senior (Dennis was one of them) and only Dennis brought up Norman Schwarzkopf. This is, of course, partly due to

my questions. I only asked the informants directly about their experiences, and never questioned them on the war as a whole. Presumably, they assumed I knew things like the causes of the war, and did not need to be told about them. However, both Dennis and Stephen of their own volition made the choice to include discussion of the wider war in their narratives. This focus on events beyond those that they directly experienced is the basis of one of two main strategies for narrating that they were at war: placing themselves in the context of events internationally recognised as “The 1991 Persian Gulf War.” The other main strategy is use of the Anzac discourse to tell recognisable war stories.

Dennis’ War Story

In Dennis’ narrative, the Gulf War is important as a site and an occasion in which he was tested and proved himself. Dennis is invested in the role of “war veteran.” He constructs himself as having had a full and active role in the Persian Gulf War by consistently placing himself within the international force that liberated Kuwait. He also uses the Anzac Spirit, so that his narrative is familiar as a war story in New Zealand.

Dennis was *always interested in aircraft*. As a child, he would go and stay with his supply officer uncle on the Air Force bases at Wigram and Ohakea. He sums up his reason for joining the Air Force as *probably just a love of aircraft and electrical engineering*. Dennis had been on Ice Cube (to Antarctica), but the Gulf War was his first operational deployment. He later also went to East Timor and Afghanistan.

An Opportunity to Really Test your Worth

Dennis values being challenged, and finds the military to be a challenging environment. For example, he says that he has not left the military because:

I’m actually scared that I’d get a boring job. That’s the main reason. It’s been so varied [...]. [In his current role] I’m just constantly learning, and always have to delve through textbooks and try to find new textbooks [...] on the latest [relevant information] there’s all this sort of stuff like that, its just gone so fast, its technically challenging.

Dennis prioritises being challenged over other concerns: *I know I could earn more money outside, but ... I'd probably die of boredom in some of these jobs, you know.* Within this challenging environment, 40 Squadron and the Gulf War were especially testing.

A technician, Dennis had spent the ten years immediately previous to his posting to 40 Squadron working at a *depot level base*. In this role, he had attended one course overseas *but there was no chance for anything else*. Dennis thus took the opportunity to request a Squadron posting when it arose:

I thought that would be challenging, also, on the Squadrons it's an opportunity to really test your worth because that's where you, all your training comes into it and when your small unit's deployed away, just have one or two aircraft and something goes wrong, that's when you have to really, you're really tested the most I guess.

The Gulf War was one such occasion in which two aircraft were deployed with a small unit. Dennis therefore *felt lucky to be chosen* and *very grateful to be part of* the deployment:

I thought it might be the only operational deployment I'd ever get at the time, I thought you know, it's a bit like, probably if you're a doctor the last thing you want to be doing is just working in a clinic putting band-aids on people, you know they don't want to see people injured, they don't want to see pain, but they probably would find it incredible challenge to have to respond to a real emergency, and to save someone's life, you know. So its, their reward for their training, you know, it's the job fulfilment I guess.

Like so many other Gulf War veterans who employ a career discourse, Dennis saw the war as his *job fulfilment*, his *reward* for his training. Dennis is one of many to use a metaphor to help him explain this concept. This metaphor, doctor, is rather skilful. As a career, it links to his statement that this is *job* fulfilment. It also enables Dennis to incorporate the desire for a challenge into his explanation, as well as the idea that he is grateful for this challenge even though he does not wish to see people hurt. Moreover, it further casts him in the role of rescuer of Kuwait. When asked if he was

glad when told that he would be part of the deployment, Dennis responded *Ooo yeah [laughs]. Yeah, it, it was going to be exciting and ah, didn't quite know [pause]. Yeah, it was a big unknown basically, so yeah.* The fact that the situation was a *big unknown* exacerbates the challenge, and this is linked to excitement and given as a reason why Dennis was glad to go. And indeed, Dennis did find the Gulf War to be challenging. He outlines in detail why this was so:

It was basically just responding to what the problems were. And we did have some very big problems, it was a whole new theatre for us. We had modified the aircraft immediately before we left with a certain electronic kit, we had some trouble with it, it turned out not to be...I think our first explanation was, [it] was our problem, but it wasn't, it was just ... there were that many radar sets operating in the theatre that the things were getting false returns and stuff like that, so technical issues like that to get your head around. Big, not a big problem, but an issue was that you're operating completely away from your supply chain [...] our supply chain was through England, basically, and they'd come out in the TriStars which came out every night, the TriStars would come from England and deliver supplies so we did have that big lag. So that was hard. So it did mean you had to fault find really carefully cause you don't want to say "ah, it's this" and okay we're going to have to fly without that system and you wait for the parts, wait 14 days for the parts, or ten days for the parts to arrive and then go "oops, that wasn't it." So you really did your, whereas at home sometimes you might think "oo!" you suspect something and you can go grab one of those boxes, try that, "oh, it wasn't that." You know, and then, that might, that might waste 15 minutes, you know, but here this would waste...you'd have to be very, very careful about your, ensuring everything was just right, because there was enough pressure on the crew as it was without having systems not working or things. There was also issues... sand posed a big problem. There's a lot of airborne sand up to about 16, 000 feet, just like a dust...its not as clear a horizon... and up here, even at this altitude, or definitely at this altitude, you're getting a lot of sand, which was causing a lot of erosion on things like pito tubes and was jamming up the air speed instruments and that. We were having to flush those out, so things that just don't malfunction back here were malfunctioning because of the amount of sand that was getting up into things, and consequently...we had a lot of engine problems on return that were just caused from you know sand ingestion turning to glass.

Here Dennis narrates not only *big problems* but also the fact that there were people relying on him to deal with them: *there was enough pressure on the crew as it was without having systems not working*. In presenting the situation as challenging by enumerating the problems faced, Dennis differs from many informants, who are more concerned with narrating Anzac prowess by declaring that everything went smoothly. Ken, for example, says *I think we did very, very well over there, didn't have too much major unservicabilities*. The fact that Dennis makes this narrative choice is significant, as he himself regularly utilises an Anzac discourse.

Generally, Dennis stated that it was a *very good team* and that the group as a whole *acquitted ourselves well* in the face of these challenges. He did not directly state whether he himself proved his worth. This is in line with the Anzac discourse; stating outright that he did well would be antithetical to the central tenet of humility. Yet if we look closely, he did manage to narrate that he did prove himself. For example when asked if he is glad he went to the war, Dennis responded *I think you measure how well you can perform yourself and I think that's quite important, you know to umm, to, I got a lot of confidence out of it, that's probably what I got*. Dennis does not say how well he performed, but we can infer that the reason he gained confidence is that he learned that he can measure up. Dennis also told a story in which he successfully deals with a difficult situation:

There was one incident, we had this big tarmac area, and, [lets out breath] we had actually agreed on allocated parking zones and, and basically the rule was if you're going to be taking your aircraft out again, straight away, then you can park right close to the things that needed to be serviced quickly and got out. If you're bringing your aircraft back in, you know you're not going to use it, say you've come back from a major engine problem, this is not going to fly for two days, park it right over there, get it out of the way. The French would just park it right in front of everything, in the middle, and just park the aircraft. They wouldn't give a hoot. [...] we had this agreement about, okay these will be your parks, these will be our parks. And we even accepted ones further round, we'd have to walk round, but just, just don't park in our park. So we bring the aircraft back once and our parks were taken, said "right," [I said] to the guy, [I] said "right, park them there. Next ones along, park them there." "They're French ones," I said, "too bad. They've taken our ones, we'll just have to take theirs." Now I, thought this might be an issue because one of their ones had a big

air bridge going out to, like you have at Christchurch and Auckland, but which the Hercules don't need, but an airliner, does need, you know? [...] So we parked the aircraft there. We're working, I only had three people working with me, I parked the night before then we came back early in the morning, and we were actually replacing a radar, or a gyro for a radar, and [pause] we're half way through doing this and this French officer came round and said "Oh could you move your plane please, we need to use that air bridge," and I said "no, sorry, I can't." Oh at first I ignored him. But I said "no we can't" ...and I technically couldn't because I had a gyro running and when you turn the gyro off, remove power you must leave it to run it completely down before you move it, you can damage it if its- and also I didn't have enough people for a tow team. You need one on each wing tip and, so you need about four or five people. And so I just sent him on his way and shortly afterwards he came back with his officer, who I knew was the guy who'd actually agreed with our boss, and he just basically was arrogant, and he just basically, nah, stuff him. So I was not even going to talk to him. And he only spoke French, didn't speak English, and he had an African, I remember, a French guy but North African guy who spoke perfect English and he was asking "now could you move?" I said "no" and then I just said "look, you tell your boss that he agreed with our boss, those are our parks. We've moved here, I'm in the middle of a technical job, I cannot move the aircraft. At the moment, anyway even if I wanted to, I can't." And he said "oh we can provide wingman and that," I said "well I technically can't, it will be at least 40 minutes, before this gyro has run down, if I remove power now, and anyway I don't see why I should remove power." ...and this guy went all red and he was quite flustered, next thing he comes over with quite a senior officer and says "well would it be possible" and then I repeated this, and I got stuck in and he just *glared* at this Major, and you see this Major was a couple of ranks above our Flight Commander ...So I let his boss know completely why we parked there and basically [...] about this individual, and, okay, seeing as you've asked I will, but I want an agreement that we will not get mucked around and he gave [it to us]. And we never had a problem from then on. But yeah, it was quite a senior officer, I think it was a Colonel that came round, and so anyway we did move it, but this, what was funny was this French Air Force [aircraft] sat there on the taxi waiting for about 15 minutes, waiting for its parking space, while we moved the other aircraft and then they came in and it was a French General.

Dennis narrates the outcome of this situation as a success for himself -even though he briefly conveys that *anyway we did move it*, and never explains how they got around

the gyro issue. It was a long-term victory: the New Zealanders got an agreement that the French would stop stealing their parking spaces and never had a problem thereafter. Dennis thus successfully overcame a challenge facing the whole team. Moreover, this success is an example of the Anzac Spirit. The focus throughout is on Dennis' willingness to stand up to the French and not let them bully the New Zealanders. Dennis was standing up not only to "the French" but to French officers. It appears that it is a Major and a Colonel that Dennis stood his ground with- both of which were ranks ahead of the New Zealand commander, and thus much higher than Dennis. This also meant keeping a General waiting. This was a victory for egalitarian Kiwis unafraid of rank structure but concerned with fairness.

Strategy One: The Anzac Spirit

Narrating that he was at war is crucial to Dennis' construction of his identity as man who has proved his worth in the situation in which *you're really tested the most* and soldier who has fulfilled his job training. This is achieved partially through employment of the Anzac Spirit. Dennis' story contains the same elements as a New Zealand story from the World Wars would. Even though it is primarily about fixing planes rather than charging beaches, it is easily recognisable as a war story and is likely to be categorised as such. Egalitarianism is a core value in the narrative, with Dennis expressing disgust at patriarchal, hierarchical Saudi Arabian society:

Saudi Arabian women don't drive [...] women and men would not go to the pool at the same time, very, very ah...chauvinistic, and...quite a cruel society [...] the way they treat the ex-pat people, not the Westerners but the other ones. Some of the hotel staff were really good...Filipino hotel staff, really good people, and often treated like dirt by the Saudis. Oh, just, it was absolutely shocking. One of the guys, [...] he was a doctor, they put in their hotel brochure "we have a doctor on site" and advertised it [...] but all they paid him was, as a fitness room attendant, that's all they paid him as, you know? They typically paid the ex-pat Filipinos and that about one-third what they'd pay an equivalent Westerner, because they know the living conditions were cheap- the living costs were cheap in their country [...] But we got on really well with these guys [...] They had their quarters way down the bottom and some of us would sometimes go [they'd] say, "come down for a meal" and they'd put on a little Filipino meal.

The Saudi media were terrible at downplaying it and quite often they'd say, "Scud attack on Riyadh last night and one Saudi citizen was killed". We found out from the ex-pat medical staff like Kiwi or Brit doctors and nurses that yeah, but another 18 Filipinos or Bangladeshis were killed, and they never included those in the tally. "One Saudi citizen was killed," they'd say. And they'd say it quite...their lives didn't matter to them.

The Kiwis, by contrast, did care, and helped the Filipino workers at their hotel when the Saudi Arabians would not: *When the Scud attacks came along [...] we'd be donning all the kit, and we suddenly realised, they don't have anything. So someone, I can't remember who, someone actually organised a whole lot of gas masks sent up to you know, a few of these people.*

This constructs the Kiwis as humanitarian as well as egalitarian. Dennis repeats the long-held idea that, like as at Gallipoli, New Zealand should contribute to world affairs when he said *We need to play our part, I think that's very important*. However, he is not solely expressing the desire to be a good international citizen; he links participation in world crises with benefits for New Zealand's foreign policy, primarily through enhancement of relations with other nations. For example, he said that the people of East Timor were *immensely grateful* to the people of New Zealand because they saw the soldiers aiding them *at a personal level*. This is also reminiscent of earlier wars; locals have always been said to be extremely appreciative of New Zealand's presence.

Dennis also narrates military prowess and superiority:

I've got faith in our professionalism, how we do business, in our command and control. And that's what a lot of countries our size don't have. If you look on paper, I can show you magazines where it's got the order of battle of different countries, and Malaysia has got aircraft... I think it counted up there's about 120, 140 really good front line aircraft, but I don't think their command and control is probably as good as ours, and the way of doing business, so while we might be small, we're definitely a first-rate armed forces in our command and control... so some of these other countries you look in, well Bangladesh has Mach Two fighters and we don't have

anything anymore, Bangladesh has quite a good fleet, and I mean, would I want to go under their command? I don't think so. No. No.

Dennis' use of the words *professionalism* and *business* works to merge this aspect of the Anzac Spirit with a career discourse: the Kiwis are good at war because they are professional and good at their jobs. 40 Squadron also had the stoic Anzac character:

They [laughs] they said there'll be psychologists available [imitating a coddling voice]... when you've seen what some of the other people went through, you just downplay it [...] you don't need *psychologists*, you know, just been away, if we'd come back missing limbs and that, or half our mates had been killed, yes, we might have needed psychologists but I, I thought it was an overkill, yeah. Okay someone's making sure they're doing the right thing and...good on them for providing, offering it but, I didn't think it was necessary, I certainly didn't [...] when you saw what...one British unit in particular, and we brought some bodies back and I just felt so sorry, you know, there were their mates, and they brought the guys back, sitting in the plane and there was their mates, their bodybags stacked up [...] and they'd been living out in the desert for weeks on end in landrovers and that, with these guys, you know, so no showers, for weeks, and they must have stunk, living out of ration packs. And here we were in a hotel so, I don't think we needed a [laughs].

Dennis is not only narrating a stoic character here, he is also, like so many Kiwi soldiers before him, downplaying his experiences in war by taking the attention off himself to focus on others. Of course, because Dennis was not on the frontlines, this is more convincing than, say, Upham's or Apiata's declarations that their various heroics were not anything that any of their fellow soldiers would not have done. Here, Dennis acknowledges that his was a less intense warlike experience, and yet at the same time he is drawing on the exact same discourse as Upham did. This means he is partaking in the same tradition, and establishing himself as having the same type of Anzac character. The fact that the dominant New Zealand war discourse for returned soldiers is to say, "I did nothing special" allows 40 Squadron veterans who want to narrate that they were at war simultaneously to not claim that they did something comparable but also to adopt the same subject position. Although the dominant war story developed out of activities much different to their own, they do not have to try too hard to fit their own experiences to the model, due to the model's inherent base in

modesty. And yet Dennis cannot completely downplay his activities in the Gulf if he wants to present himself as having been at war. If I had been interviewing a World War Two veteran and he had told me that he had done nothing of note I would probably not believe him, but public discourses of 40 Squadron would make me more likely to believe Dennis. It is a thin line to walk, because of course talking his actions up too much would jeopardise Dennis' construction of himself as an Anzac soldier, expected to be humble.

Strategy Two: Narrating himself into the Gulf War

Dennis arrived in the Gulf region the day that Operation Desert Storm began with air strikes on Kuwait and Iraq:

I remember being down the back of the aircraft and getting a call on the headset from the Wing Commander, went up to the flight deck, as we entered the Straits of Hormuz, you know near Oman? And it was one of the most amazing sights there was, I can't remember how many aircraft carriers, there was several carrier battle groups, and up ahead, directly at our level, you could see this black, a whole lot of black, like a black smudge on the horizon... we looked down, and then I realised what it was. And there were, I think I remember counting something like six or seven aircraft carriers, all launching their complement of fighters[...] there was a trail of fighters all coming up, to the same level as us, and that's what they were doing, they were congregating around the tanker aircraft and getting a final top up before going in to, this was the assault, this was the opening, you know the opening sort of, it was full on, and you know that was anti-aircraft carriers carrying probably 80 odd combat aircraft, [I] thought this is big, you know. It really was big. So that probably woke me up straight off, this is, this is it you know. And, from then on we went over the hills of Oman and into Bahrain, got rid of the Medical- oh, I should say- offloaded the medical detachment...doctors and nurses...and then straight up to Bahrain, and when we went low level, very low level across the desert that was, you know yeah that was sort of, into the thick of it...

This leads to:

So then [we] basically arrived and I was just straight into it. [Dennis' boss] met me at the plane and it was just straight into it from there, you know, all work was basically, 20 days on, 1 day off, I think it was, from memory, so.

I missed the point of all this, and rather offensively asked if *it wasn't an anti-climax landing down with the supply troops after you'd seen all the attack planes flying off?* Dennis sounded a bit shocked at this, and corrected me:

Pardon? Oh, no, not really, 'cause you've all got your job to do, it doesn't matter what aircraft you're fixing, it's the same. It doesn't matter what type of aircraft, it's the same, it's an engineering task, you've got problems, and bearing in mind we were doing some missions right into the, right into the front...Oh, that was just a busy, extremely busy, and everyone, and there's not sort of like a glamour thing, it's, everyone's got their role to do, like the medic in the hospital right back has got just as much a vital role as the, the fighter pilot at the front and it's all, you know, without anyone in there it does actually fall to pieces [...] Yeah, doesn't matter if they're a chef or what, you know, you're all there for a reason, basically, and most of the times you're so busy, you don't really worry too much about what's, you're just busy doing your own job.

Here Dennis explains that everybody at the Gulf War had a *vital role*. The success of Operation Desert Storm was dependant on every person there doing their job in concert, like the cogs of a machine. If just one of these jobs was not accomplished, no matter how unwarlike it seems (chef) then the whole operation would have been jeopardised. Thus Dennis sees and presents himself, just like every other single person there, as having had a full and necessary role in the 1991 Persian Gulf War. He may not know what the frontline troops were doing, but this is because he has to focus on his own job. What Dennis was saying in his narration of his arrival, it seems to me now, is that he arrived in the Gulf region, saw the fighters that were about to start the war, and then flew on to Riyadh and immediately began contributing to the war himself. He and the fighters were all part of the same big picture. This was no small contribution: he was working 20 days on and 1 day off.

When asked what the difference was between his war and that of his father, who fought the Japanese in Indonesia in World War Two, Dennis said *I didn't have to kill*

anyone. Therefore, he says, his father's war (and in general the war of those in the Army rather than the Air Force) was *probably a little bit more personal*. Dennis does not say his role was less effective, or less culpable, just that it was less personal- and he qualifies even this with *a little bit*.

You know I think you play your part, you're not actually dropping the bomb but you're playing a part in delivering the, enabling the aircraft to deliver the bomb to the aircraft that delivers it, that drops it. Umm, it's probably more personal. Umm, I don't think it stops you thinking about it but you don't have to...probably won't have to look into the face of a dead person. So, it's probably a different league of experience.

Although he does indicate that they are two different experiences, he is not entirely convinced, as indicated by his continued use of qualifiers- the word *probably*, twice. He even corrects himself to add one of the *probablys*. Although he is further removed, Dennis says that he plays a part in one of the key areas of the war, the dropping of bombs. Thus, unlike Rob for example, he constructs himself as having active war role.

In his narrative Dennis connects his personal experience of the Gulf War to prominent and recognisable names, images, technologies and events. He places himself in the context of these icons and ties himself to them. For example, Dennis told me that the Western media paid most of their attention to Scuds launched on Israel, because this had the potential to bring Israel into the war, although the majority of the Scuds were launched at Saudi Arabia.

Most of them were launched at Saudi, and most of them were launched at actually Riyadh. Trying to take out Schwarzkopf's headquarters or our base, it was a main target as well. Because [of] the AWACs and the tanker fleet. AWACs aircraft are the Airborne Warning Control Aircraft [...] they were the eyes in the sky, and if they could have taken out those, that would have made a *big* difference. Because that's the first, one of the first things the Americans did, early in the war, I think it was two or three days into the war was take out two Iraqi ones, they had two and they got rid of those. One may have got to, escaped to Iran but they were basically no longer a threat, they were no longer able to see across the border and that sort of stuff. So they

basically, the Americans basically, and the Allies... had total visibility of what was going on, they could see the whole picture whereas the Iraqis couldn't.

Here Dennis is discussing the overall course of the war, but he locates himself within it. He explains the strategic moves of both sides relating to crucial game-changing technology, and with just one small phrase- *our base*- he constructs himself as part of the picture. This passage tells me that Dennis was on the same base as the AWACs, which the Iraqis would have loved to take out, and that this is why he came under Scud attack. Many people told me about the attacks, but nobody else explained why their base was targeted and thus linked it to the wider war in this way.

Dennis tells me that, because 40 Squadron was only given the facts necessary to fulfil their own part of the overall operation, they *were actually quite ignorant, probably, of what was, of the big picture:*

Apart from what you could actually figure out might be happening, like there's a massive build up into ah, went up [on] one of the flights into Al Qaisumah and, you could see ...as you flew up...passing just columns of tanks and vehicles going in a *massive* build-up, when you went up there, there were *huge* parking lots of tanks and everything, why are they building it up here? Because everyone thought it was going to be an attack from the sea, there might be a marine launch invasion from the Gulf, into Kuwait there, but what it was was the pincer movement was going round from the top. And they kept that quiet, then suddenly the 52nd Airborne just let rip with everything, and went and took them from behind basically, encircled Kuwait and then also went up and circled Baghdad for a period. But while we were there, just straight across the border here, the Iraqi Republican Guard were dug in, so the B-52s just basically hammered them...some of the columns just, they were just going across the desert like that, just, there were tons, all heading in the one direction, think something big is going on. So apart from what you might just figure out, something like that, there was very little information which you got.

This is Dennis telling me what *his* connection was to one of the major events of the war known to the general public through news stories at the time and histories since. He witnessed the build-up for one of the pivotal points of the war and was able to deduce that something significant was about to occur. Moreover, he saw this whilst

the New Zealanders were making their own contribution to the victory- transporting equipment up near the front lines. This is emphasised when he refers to the force liberating Kuwait as *we- while we were there*.

The following story achieves the same effect. 40 Squadron had set up a sign reading “Kiwi Korner” with a painting of a Kiwi at their workspace at the base, and at one point two New Zealanders in the French Foreign Legion passing through noticed it and came over to talk.

“What are you guys up to?” and there was this big [...] column of vehicles just parked outside and they were going to be airlifted up, close to the front, dropped out, and they’d drive a certain distance then they’d go on foot across the border, near Al Qaisumah, and, he said “well...we trained these guys a year ago, we trained these Iraqi Republican Guard a year ago, and Schwarzkopf wants us to go and assess their capability, to see if there are, how many there are, because we know,” these guys knew it like about, because they’d actually trained them in these bunkers, underground bunkers, and so they’d actually lived in these bunkers for, you know for weeks, and they knew them backwards, so and of course what they did the French, in case they ever needed it, mapped exactly where everything was and where every air shaft was... they were told to go in and just ascertain these air shafts, they still exist, haven’t put a dog leg in it, so if we drop a bomb down one its going to go in the bunker. It’s not going to- all this sort of stuff like that. And just to ascertain the risk, before he deploys the land troops. And obviously the report came back not favourable because that’s why he just used the B-52s to hammer them for, for a period. Which is, you know, killed a lot of them unfortunately, but [...] so he hammered them all until there was no opposition.

Dennis is again talking about a publicly recognisable part of the war (B-52 bombings of Republican Guard shelters), in which he was not directly involved, in personal terms, thus connecting himself to it. He is interpreting a strategic part of the war through the lens of his own war experiences. Dennis has more knowledge of the decision to use the B-52s than the general public back home in New Zealand does, because he was there and discussed the situation with soldiers who undertook a fact-finding mission on which the decision was to some extent based.

When I ask about what place Dennis sees the Gulf War as having in his life as a whole, his response leads him directly to a discussion of the success of the overall Operation, encompassing millions of people. It is in response to this question that he uses the doctor metaphor above, and he goes on without pause to note that there was only one injury amongst the New Zealanders:

[We] acquitted ourselves well, and the mission was accomplished, it was, you know successful. In hindsight there were some failures there...they were political failures not military failures. I think George Bush's father, George Bush Senior, should have actually pushed for permission to [...] At the time, Baghdad was surrounded, 52nd Airborne had Baghdad surrounded, and basically could have easily moved in. [...] it was a political miscalculation, not a military one, so I think the leadership right up to the top was good, the British, the Americans, Schwarzkopf, and all those. Colin Powell right up the top, and that was very good.

A discussion of his individual life leads Dennis easily to discussing 40 Squadron as a whole, and then the entire military operation. He identifies with these larger collectivities. All of this constructs Dennis as a member of the group that liberated Kuwait and gives him a role in this victory. Moreover, it does the same for 40 Squadron as a whole and for New Zealand. The Kiwis in the Foreign Legion especially are shown to have had a full combat role. Showing that New Zealand, even although it is small, can and did make a difference in global affairs is part of Dennis' Anzac and Gallipoli discourses, and helps construct him as a war veteran. In this way Dennis constructs himself as a soldier who fulfilled his training and man who overcame the challenge of war.

Stephen's War Story

Stephen too constructs himself as a war veteran. Like Dennis, he does this by placing himself within the international force that liberated Kuwait; in his narrative, this strategy is more important than use of the Anzac Spirit. Stephen joined the Air Force for adventure, travel, and to acquire a trade, as he had heard that the training was good. Stephen was trained as a technician, and he briefly and matter-of-factly narrates a successful career progression: *I passed all my exams towards that...and so you start*

off at a junior level and learn the ropes, away you go through the ranks and end up as supervisor. Stephen really was pleased to be posted to 40 Squadron as he had heard it was a challenging position but generally very rewarding... you could sort of do something for a purpose. Stephen saw it as quite a useful job because the whole Defence Force relies on their transport. Like Dennis, the Gulf War was his first deployment apart from Antarctica, but he was later involved in deployments to Somalia, Thailand, and Bougainville. Stephen said that the Gulf deployment had positive impacts on his career, as he learnt more in five months about managing a team in a stressful environment whilst keeping them motivated and their morale high than he would have in two years at home.

Stephen narrates that 40 Squadron sacrificed and gave their all as part of an integrated global force in order to solve an international crisis. “Reality” is central to this narrative, as Stephen is keen to show that this was not just an exercise; 40 Squadron were involved in something consequential. Before his interview, Stephen said to me, *I congratulate you on, on choosing a topic like this. Something, umm, real, you know, so.* Of hearing that 40 Squadron would be going to the Gulf, Stephen said:

There’s two thoughts through your mind. Of course, this is the real thing, active service, the bullets would be flying, no doubt about that. So there was the apprehension of what if, and what could happen over there. But also the real excitement of going to something, real, after you’d, actually been trained in the military to do this sort of thing. And to actually go and be part of a multinational force that was dealing with a world crisis. So, yeah, it was exciting and scary.

The word *real* is used in this passage in reference to two main components of Stephen’s narrative. In a by now familiar career discourse, the Gulf War was a *real* operation to solve a *real* crisis, the thing for which Stephen had previously only trained. When asked how his later deployments compared to the Gulf War, Stephen’s immediate response was *Oh, no, nothing. They were just flying somebody from a to b.* Secondly, and subsequently, there was *real* danger. On his own volition, before I ask any questions, Stephen begins his narrative by showing me the various pieces of equipment that he was issued for protection in the war (chemical warfare clothing,

chemical detection paper, atropine, NAPs [Nerve Agent Pre-treatment] tablets that had to be taken regularly) and describing a Scud attack:

Suddenly there was a Scud launch, a missile launch, because we needed all this stuff, right? It was a typical air alert, over Riyadh, okay? So we had all this stuff to put on, now, of course we were worried the Iraqis were going to use chemical and biological weapons...we had to put these suits on, and they're sort of charcoal impregnated things... they're sort of, as I said, a charcoal, which is good for absorbing stuff, okay, so these, we had to crawl into these, and of course, they're very hot, too, is the main problem. Usually you'd just run from somewhere, like out [gestures to the view outside his window]- picture, well most of that area you see out there, as an area where aircraft are operating. Like a big area. Maybe only half that, but, quite a large area. And our two Hercs kept getting further and further away from the air terminal where we were trying to, was the safest area we had, which wasn't outside. We could go downstairs into the basement of the air terminal, it was the closest thing we had to any shelter. These Scud missiles that were firing at us, now there were 13 of these launched at us the night the war started, by the way, and thankfully they were shot down by these Patriots, anti-missile systems.

Danger runs throughout this narrative- the threat of chemical and biological weapons, the exact demonstration of how far one had to run to reach shelter, the fact that this got *further and further*, the implication that this shelter was not adequate, and the large tally of Scud missiles launched at them in one night. This danger of course helps to construct Stephen as being at war. He continues to emphasise it, saying that this was *the reality of being in active combat* and that they would put on their protective gear every time there was an air alert, because the threat *was taken very seriously*.

Stephen also stated that because air alerts could happen five times a night, they were very disruptive to what he terms *our war effort*. Stephen also refers to himself and the rest of 40 Squadron as *fighting* the war. We have already seen that Stephen said it would be nice for the media to show the public that *we were there, and actually fighting, in this war*. The first time Stephen used the word he backed off from it, as if he was perhaps unsure that I would accept this construction of the Squadron's role. He was talking about the Squadron's accommodation at a hotel, and said that such an uncontrolled environment is not ideal for *a military unit, trying to get ourselves*

established, to fight, or be in the middle of a war. However, he became more confident in the verb and used it for a third time. Stephen stated that the Gulf deployment should be commemorated on Anzac Day as:

It was, active service, it was a war. Global- it was a global conflict really, you know? Everyone in the world was affected by it. Oh yeah it should definitely be mentioned. Of course, no one died. Umm, so, but the fact that New Zealand troops went, and fought, on active service, oh definitely.

Like Dennis, Stephen incorporates the wider war into his narrative and constructs 40 Squadron as a part of it.

We were in Christchurch at the time we were told we were going to the Gulf. [We had been] down to the ice [Antarctica]... that was only three weeks before we went to the conflict, that we got told that they needed the Hercules over there, and I think the Orions had been- The Gulf War had started. You know, Kuwait had been annexed by Iraq, and the Americans had already moved in, moved their forces in to try and stop that, them spreading into Saudi Arabia, which was clearly on their mind. And we thought that out of the Air Force, if anyone went it would be the Orions and surveillance. And they were, they had already started training. Yeah that unit had started training. 40 Squadron hadn't even been mentioned. And then all of sudden, when they ended up what they needed over there, they said "hey, we need more transport aircraft," not, not surveillance. And so all of a sudden they turned to 40 Squadron, said "hey, can you go?"

Stephen began telling the story of how he found out that he was going to the Gulf in the exact same personal terms as most of the informants: he had been away on Ice Cube at the time. However, Stephen goes beyond the personal and continued the story from the point of view of coalition force planning. 40 Squadron and its specific skills were necessary to Operation Desert Storm. When I turned the discussion to the current war in Iraq, Stephen said:

We should have finished the job in 1990. While we were all there, and we had a legitimate reason to go in and sort this mess out and get rid of Hussein and try him for crimes against humanity and the environment and all those oil fires he'd created and

what he'd done to the Kuwaitis and the Iranians and whatever in history, and basically hang him then. As far as I was concerned. Heck, we were, they were on the outskirts of Baghdad when they were told to stop effectively. [...] I was kind of disappointed that he was still there. And running things the same way he had. Sure, we got Kuwait back. Great. But, ah, we hadn't fixed the problem. Cause he'd caused the problem. So I saw that as actually, we hadn't actually achieved, but, in the military you follow orders. And that's that, so, we were told to stop, we stopped. Yeah. But, I...if I'd been the boss, we would have carried on and got rid of him and his regime right then and there.

Stephen consistently uses the word *we* throughout this passage. *We got Kuwait back, we were told to stop.* He even says that he was on the outskirts of Baghdad before correcting himself. Like Dennis, Stephen is constructing the multinational forces in the Gulf as one single group working in concert, the achievements of which were the achievements of everybody there. Stephen said that, *unfortunately*, he never really got to talk to the ground troops about what they were doing, because they passed through Riyadh only briefly: *but, really they were just as busy as us, getting on with their bit, as we were getting on with our bit.* Stephen identifies with the coalition force as one unified group even more than Dennis does:

We worked directly with the British, there was a French unit right next to us, the Americans were nearby too, all of these groups who I'd never worked with before in my time in the military, it was a wonderful, camaraderie type, NATO force- you know or world force. It was great. And without exception they were all helpful. And pleased to see us, and even though we were just two little Hercs amongst all, they all knew we were there.

While Rob feared that no one knew 40 Squadron was there, Stephen is confident that they did. Moreover, he utilises an aspect of the Anzac Spirit: everyone was pleased to see the New Zealanders and have their help. Stephen's narrative construction of the 35 coalition countries as a global force is reminiscent of an "It's a small world after all" mentality. Different nationalities were extremely co-operative, got along well and were interested in one another. *There were some good things [that] happened, you know, part of that was meeting those other Allied Forces. You know stop and have a, if you could for five minutes and have a talk to someone where he was from, and how*

he was getting on with the war. International sporting events were held at the American compound and forces sometimes played volleyball together. British aircrews let Stephen go up with them on a refuelling aircraft, and as he would watch F-14s getting refuelled the pilots would *give you a thumbs up and go “how are you mate?”* In fact, Stephen even enjoyed meeting the French, unlike all my other informants who tended to denigrate them as Dennis did.

Stephen narrates that the New Zealanders worked extremely hard as part of this multinational operation. He said *the first couple of months we hardly stopped. We hardly slept, and we hardly stopped for anything. It just kept rolling 24/7. It was just continuous.* He reiterates both this and the fact that such hard work was necessary because this was a real crisis: *As I said the work pretty much consumed us, it was just non-stop, you know we were there for ...a real job, to get on and sort this conflict out.* Stephen, drawing on a common New Zealand discourse, noted that we made a huge contribution for our size: *That was actually quite a large proportion of our Air Force, in relative terms to other countries. That was actually quite a big commitment, and to actually support that over there for that period of [...] and we had to cycle almost our whole fleet of Hercs, I think all of them went to the Gulf War, five of them.*

Such a contribution involved making sacrifices; according to Stephen a large part of New Zealand's Air Force stopped their normal work to support the effort in the Gulf:

Basically the whole 40 Squadron, all they were doing was supporting us in the Gulf. They were just fixing aeroplanes to send new ones up to us [...] This whole operation consumed base Auckland. All the other units around were also supporting, because we'd gone, they had to send other people in to help do the other flying they were doing anyway. And they were racing people through training and stuff to get them up to speed to send up to us.

40 Squadron themselves were making sacrifices- working so hard, having vaccinations for diseases like anthrax and the plague that made them feel *really lousy* but being unable to take sick days. The biggest sacrifice, of course, was being willing to risk the reality of danger, which Stephen constantly narrates. Stephen did not see

the hotel in the middle of Riyadh that 40 Squadron was first accommodated in as ideal because of security:

There were a number of terrorists arrested and there was a terrorism threat of course at any time during a conflict like this, where some, one of the maniacs from the wrong side of the fence wants to go and make his point known by blowing up a hotel full of military people...and you can't control, who's coming and going in the door of a hotel.

Moreover the location of the hotel necessitated *commuting all that way [to the airbase], again in an uncontrolled environment along city streets*. Many informants told me stories about getting the chance to go on flights in British aircraft in their spare time, but only Stephen narrated that his response to such an offer was “hey, great, sure,” I said “are you sure its safe?” [The Briton] said, “Well it’s as safe as it can be, the air war’s under control, there’s no Iraqi aircraft running around the place,” so away I went. Stephen never forgot he was in danger or let himself get careless. As the war wound down, Scud attacks became less frequent and *some of the guys were getting so, well, blasé, about it [...]* Some of the guys were going out and watching! Yeah, I thought that was a little keen too. Some informants told me they stopped taking their NAPs tablets, but Stephen never did: *we took it dead seriously*.

A very effective part of Stephen’s narrative at both showing the sacrifices made to liberate Kuwait and at establishing that he was at war is his discussion of what his mother went through when he was away. She *aged significantly during that time* because *no one knew what the conflict was going to bring, whether it would go nuclear*. Stephen narrated his mother as acting in ways consistent with the depicted behaviour of mothers in war stories. She had family photos done before Stephen left, in case he did not come back: *it was pretty real all right*:

I remember on one occasion, my father who had a joinery business at the back of our house, and made kitchens and furniture and things, and one day a police car, while I was away in the Gulf, pulled up in the drive, two policemen got out. Mum ran inside crying because she was sure they’d come to tell her I’d been killed. It turned out they were turning up to see dad about a job for their house, a joinery job, so you see how emotional it is.

This is reminiscent of typical scenes, such as those in the movies *Saving Private Ryan* and *We Were Soldiers*, in which a car pulls up to the house and official-looking men emerge to tell the women waiting at home that their family member has been killed in battle.

Showing that the world worked together as one in solving the Gulf crisis appears to be Stephen's primary aim. It is much more important to him than it is to Dennis, who did discuss how multi-national the operation was, but only briefly, and who did not show togetherness when he constructed the French and New Zealanders as being at odds with each other. However, Stephen also employs elements of the national discourse of the Anzac Spirit. He too found hierarchical Saudi Arabian society *an unusual place, by our lifestyle*:

One of the big things over there that's foreign to us is women have very few rights. Very few rights. They have to be completely covered and they're not supposed to be speaking at the wrong time and they're not allowed to drive, they're not allowed to vote, there's no, well it's a kingdom anyway there's no voting, but they have very few rights. In fact, their three-year old son, in a house, has more rights than the mother, even in the house.

Complementing these egalitarian values, Stephen tells two stories in which New Zealanders show a willingness to either disrespect their superiors or find a way to circumvent orders they do not like. In the first, Stephen describes a plan that his superior came up with in regards to the taxation issue:

At one stage there, our commanding officer over there, said to us, "right," he said, "well if this money isn't sorted out soon," he says, "as detachment commander," he said, "I actually have the authority to promote people." He said, "and if this isn't sorted out by next week, I'm going to promote everybody one rank, so they get more money out of their normal pay." "Sweet. *Sweet*," we said, "hey [rubbing hands together] good one. Good one boss. Now we're talking."

In the second, 40 Squadron had been called together and informed of the decision to send Tony Davies, who talked to the media, home for disciplinary reasons. Because Davies was well-liked, 40 Squadron were not happy about this:

We didn't like that. And someone else put their hand [up], when the commander told us that that's why he was going home, someone else piped up and said "oh, so all we have to do to go home is make a phone call?" Maybe we could all go home, sort of thing. Course this is, not ideal in military circles, to be saying those sorts of things [laughs] you know, could be construed a mutiny, really, couldn't it?

There are two possible interpretations of this last sentence. It could, perhaps, actually be an expression of disapproval of the Anzac habit of disregarding rank structure. The disapproval could also, however, be aimed more towards the content of the smart remark rather than the fact it occurred. Suggesting that one might want to go home and not stick it out is not what a good Anzac soldier with inner strength and resilience would do.

These are the clearest examples of the Anzac Spirit in Stephen's narrative, and they all focus or touch on egalitarianism. This is a virtue that could well be seen as a prerequisite for forces from different nations to work together and get along as well as Stephen constructs them as doing. Similarly, Stephen's constructions of New Zealand as contributing to world events and the rest of the world being extremely grateful for this could be read as expressions of the Anzac/Gallipoli discourse. They could also however be read as being constructive of the spirit of world co-operation, in which everyone can play a part and is welcomed no matter how small. The rest of the coalition may have been happy to see New Zealand because of an international spirit of togetherness rather than because of any specific or individual qualities held by New Zealanders. With his global approach, establishing an Anzac character for himself or for the nation seems to be less important to Stephen than to Dennis. He constructs himself as belonging more to a global collectivity than a national one. In fact, in order to demonstrate the sacrifices made to liberate Kuwait, Stephen actually narrates against a key aspect of the Anzac Spirit, stoicism. In direct opposition to Dennis, Stephen says:

Something that really I thought let us down badly was any follow-up on how the people had been affected by [the war]. That really was poor as far as I was concerned. During the flight back, they'd flown two psychologists to Australia, to get on the plane with us and walk around and talk to us, during the flight ...from Australia to New Zealand, and ask if we had any issues. And, you know, you can't tell me that someone who's got any deep personal issues about stress related or, you know the Gulf War Syndrome that was talked about afterwards, or health issues or, anything that really was deep and meaningful, they're not going to sit there and tell the psychologist when there's rows and rows of their friends sitting around listening in, are they? It's just not going to happen. So that was completely a broom brushed, just brushed over the surface of any issues that people may, and certainly some of them did have. By actually going on active service, being shot at, scud missiles, and the lack of sleep, and the, you know, the very high stress that we'd been put under, and so that wasn't followed up at all, [they just] said "off you go on two weeks leave."

Stephen does not narrate that New Zealanders could just come away unaffected by their experience in the Gulf, and therefore does not show that he consistently ascribes to ironclad inner strength. Stoicism is present in this passage, but it is not presented as something that Stephen necessarily values. Rather, it is a characteristic that New Zealand men could be expected to desire to demonstrate, that may have prevented those men who did have *issues* from getting help. Of course prioritising the narration of sacrifices made for the cause over stoicism could still be a strategy for constructing a New Zealand national identity- not necessarily a completely traditional Anzac one, but one as a good international citizen.

Summary

This chapter has outlined the two approaches used by those of my informants who most successfully narrated "war". By this I mean that of the narratives collected, the stories of Dennis and Stephen were the ones that I, a member of the same society as 40 Squadron and subject to the same discursive constructions, most recognised as war stories. Both the national approach-of placing oneself into a specifically New Zealand war tradition - and the more global approach- of constructing oneself as a full member of the international force that is widely known to have fought Iraq and liberated Kuwait- are effective strategies for narrating that one was at war and thus constructing

oneself as a war veteran. By narrating his personal account through such a powerful and dominant discourse as the Anzac Spirit, Dennis ensures that his account contains familiar elements, elements that one expects to hear in a war story. Including the wider war in the narrative, such as by condemning Saddam Hussein, as both men do, has a similar effect, as such rhetoric is expected of patriotic war discourses and of discourses of the Gulf War more specifically. Thus, for example, although both Sam and Stephen narrate danger to establish that they were at war, Stephen's narration is more successful as he teams the description of danger with such powerful discourses. Dennis is an example of a serviceman who uses both the career discourse and more traditional discourses in tandem to achieve subjective composure. He narrates that he realised his professional training, and this narration is achieved by demonstrating through Anzac and patriotic discourses that he was at war. The Anzac discourse in his narrative invokes egalitarianism and thus prepares the listener to see all of the troops in the multinational force as being on an equal footing. However, although he overcomes it quite well, the national story of the Gulf deployment still placed Dennis in a difficult position. He had to both argue that he was at war (against the peacekeeping categorisation, and more explicitly against my assumption that his role was on a lesser plane than that of American fighter pilots) and yet not overstate the point, as the discourse he used to construct war requires him to speak with humility. The next section will examine the narratives of informants who do not find themselves in such difficult positions, as for various reasons they did not even attempt to tell war stories.

The Gulf War was a Holiday

Whether explicitly or implicitly, all of the narratives examined so far have worked to counter public discourses that constructed 40 Squadron as not being at war in the Gulf. This is not the case for the informants in this last section. This is because these informants say what Rob and John fear others are thinking; that is, they do not primarily characterise their Gulf experience as one of being at war. There are the narratives of three men in this section, and the common factor is that none of them narrate the deployment as a war in order to construct their various identities. The stories of these men may converge with public discourses in that they do not

consistently narrate that they were at war, but they also differ in that neither do they focus on defining the deployment as a peacekeeping mission. The first two informants, Brian and Eric, directly compare the deployment to a holiday. The third, Geoff, uses tourist imagery, and thus draws on a similar discourse. This means that every informant who did not consistently attempt to narrate the experience as one of being at war chose the same alternative leisure discourse. At least one other informant, Ken, acknowledged that this was a possible interpretation:

So yeah, typical day... you might go for a run or something like that, you know, watch some videos, very featureless land round there, not only that, the pool was drained, so there was no pool- might sound like a holiday resort. It was a five star hotel, I might add. It was a bloody nice hotel.

However, the fact that 16 years on from the event these veterans compare their experience to a holiday does not mean that they do not narrate that at the time they were in danger or scared for their safety.

Brian's War Story

The three men in this section construct quite different military identities from each other; but have in common no need to narrate their Gulf deployment as a war to do so. In Brian's case this is because he does not presently highlight his military past as a major aspect of his identity. The Gulf War was Brian's first, and last, active service. He left the Air Force not long after. Brian told me that *we weren't too involved in the thick of it* and that *we were supposed to be there in a kind of peaceful role*. He described the deployment as *not too severe* and *[not] really that stressy or anything*. Brian is the informant who casts the most doubt on the idea that 40 Squadron was "at war." The other two informants in this section, Eric and Geoff, do sometimes refer to themselves as being at war; but they do not frame their overall stories in this way. Brian however, said: *You like to think, I suppose, that you're involved in a, in a, a "war" [makes hand signals that indicate speech marks] at the time, and you think that's pretty cool, but it really wasn't that dangerous or anything, from my perspective*. When someone signals that they are putting speech marks around a

spoken word, as Brian does to “war”, they are indicating that although what they are talking about may have been referred to by that term, they disagree. Near the very end of his interview Brian said:

There’s no way I’d compare my experience in the Gulf to [the experience of soldiers like Charles Upham], no way. With the benefit of hindsight, what we, and others might say differently, but what we did was umm it was like a bloody holiday. To be honest with you. I mean, apart from the odd bit of stress, and the vaccinations and what have you, and the fact that there was a certain amount of risk, we were staying in five star hotels. And eating very well, eating restaurant meals, in the hotel, and what those guys went through was misery.

Looking back through the interview with this insight from the end, Brian had indicated this viewpoint earlier, but had stopped short at making the holiday comparison:

Brian: See those [the American troops] were the guys that were *really* doing the hard work out in the front line, we were safely back in Riyadh in a city staying in four- in hotels, you know.

Nina: Support troops?

Brian: Yeah, exactly. I think that’s the way, if you’re going to get involved in that kind of thing, is to be aircraft maintenance I’ve decided. Don’t want to be in the front lines digging holes and firing guns, and being shot at [laughs]. I’d rather send the planes away- see you later [laughs] you go do your thing. I’ll go back to my hotel room now, I’ll go do some shopping. That’s what it was like. *It was a real-*you know, it wasn’t that bad really [My emphasis].

Brian also conflated the deployment with tourist travel when, when asked if the Air Force had sent him anywhere else after the Gulf War, part of his reply was, *Oh, no, nowhere else, no, that was it. I went overseas with my wife...And, but no, not with the Air Force.*

Because Brian himself presents his deployment as a comparative holiday, he is not bothered by public discourses that construct 40 Squadron as not being at war in the Gulf. This can be seen in his reactions (or, more accurately, non-reactions) to the two

issues that were hot button topics for most other informants. About taxation, Brian simply said *Oh. Wellll... you know. It's just money, isn't it?* He expanded: *At the end of the day it's not really- you're not there about money [...] while it's nice to have it, we all could get a bit greedy, you know, you're doing a job, so, if it was there we took it.* To Brian, the tax taken from his salary and allowance is *just money* and he speaks of it in materialist terms. Unlike the other veterans, he does not see it as symbolic or reflective of his status. Nor was he concerned by media coverage. Asked if thought this coverage adequately represented his role, he briefly replied *I think it was, really. I don't think there was much of it.* He expressed no ill feeling whatsoever about the fact that there was not much of it.

Unlike Rob or Dennis then, Brian has little investment in being seen to have been at war in the Gulf. Why is this? Brian's narrative of the Gulf War is one of disengagement from the military. He narrates that his younger self embraced a military identity, but distances his present self from this subject position. Brian is no longer in the Air Force, or in any branch of the military, and is *embarrassed to say* that he has lost touch with most of his Air Force colleagues. He said: *I used to be a member of the RSA, back in Auckland, I was still in that kind of phase where hey, what I did [the Gulf War] was cool. And it was our local anyway. Local drinking hole, when I was living in Auckland the closest was the RSA.* Brian is no longer a member of the RSA, partly because he moved and has the option of a different local (which in itself demonstrates that being a part of a veterans' association is not overly important to him), and partly because *I've got kids and family now.* When I asked *Better things to do with your time?* he responded *Yeah. Too right.* Brian seems to value a "family man" identity over a military one. In fact, he narrates that he was far from completely invested in a military career or subject position even while he was in the Air Force:

I probably wasn't that happy in the Air Force, overall, it was never going to be a lifetime career, my opinion was, well, and I thought I'd do four or five years, ended up, and I tried getting out after five years and then there was a big economic crash in the late 80s, and I decided to stick around for the safe job. But I didn't see a future.

He does not even narrate himself as the agent in the story of how he joined the Air Force:

Brian: Dad got a bit annoyed with my lack of motivation, because I was still working for him, and he went along to recruiting and booked me in for an appointment for flying and I wasn't really, you know, mentally prepared for it, and I got to the selection thing but I didn't quite get selected. Then a year or two later I thought blow this- I was working in a bank [...] and they called me back for a recruiting for [a technician role]. Got in.

Nina: Did he tell you that he'd booked you in for an appointment?

Brian: He told me, he said "Guess what, you're going to recruiting, I'm sick of you, you can't work for me all your life. Go out and get a job." And I'd talked about the Air Force, and he made me, basically [took] the initiative.

Nina: So were you bored of banking?

Brian: Ah, my dad was in a- his family have a leather- making, leather-goods making business in Auckland and I was working for him in a factory, and he didn't want me to be in a factory...he wanted me to go out and get a decent job, so yeah. And but yeah, you're right, I was bored of banking. It was only really a fill-in job. I really intended to keep trying with the Air Force, it's just when the time came up.

Although Brian says he had talked about joining the Air Force, he presents himself as doing nothing active to achieve this. It was his father who set the wheels in motion by setting up the first, unsuccessful, recruitment appointment that brought Brian to the Air Force's attention. Then, when he does join, it was actually the Air Force that called him back, even though he was bored with his current job and said that he *really intended to keep trying with the Air Force*. Brian does not, as he could have, narrate an excited or grateful reaction to his father's surprise recruitment appointment.

Although Brian has no investment in a military identity now, he narrates that his younger self, the Brian that was in the Gulf War, embraced the subject position of soldier hero:

One time I was out on the flight line actually, and it was dark and one of these air raid sirens went off and I was the last one off the tarmac because I was the

furtherest away, the plane I was working on, and all these guys were down below in this air raid shelter underground and that was kind of freaky, we were wearing gas masks, it was very surreal, but ah, I remember walking around the tarmac thinking “*Yeah, this is it*” [laughs]. Worked up really gung-ho, you know, this is what we were trained for, and as you do when you’re a bit of a lad. I wasn’t married, I had a girlfriend but I wasn’t married, didn’t have any real ties, and you know, typical lad atmosphere.

All these guys were down below in this air raid shelter underground, but there is no sense of urgency in young Brian’s actions. Although he found the situation *kind of freaky* he was not rushing to join everybody in the shelter. Rather, he was *walking around the tarmac thinking “Yeah, this is it.”* He was walking rather than running, and *around* suggests that he was not necessarily proceeding directly to safety. He appears to have been savouring the fact that he was in a war. Like so many others, he notes that *this is what we were trained for*. The *this is it* reinforces the idea that he is encountering the real thing. In Brian’s case, however, this appears to be linked more to the glamour of being at war than to a career discourse.

However, present-day Brian immediately laughed at his younger self. He attributed his behaviour of 16 years ago to his being a *lad* (here used to connote carefree youthfulness), and explains that he had no one dependant on him, as he does now. Although Brian laughs at himself, phrases like *as you do* and *typical lad atmosphere* suggest that he acted as most young men are expected to do. Brian went on to develop these ideas. After a while in Riyadh, 40 Squadron realised that Iraq’s Scud missiles were not very accurate, and that the Patriots used against them by the United States were. Therefore:

I didn’t really feel, I never really felt at any real risk, or I never really felt fear for my life, and ah, it actually felt a bit more exhilarating ...to where I was at my life at the time. Now with kids, I wouldn’t feel the same, but you know, it’s not just about me. [...] Yeah, at the time I got this bit of a buzz, yeah. Not so much for the fact that we were kicking the Iraqi’s butts, it was just that it was a real, it was a military exercise, it was an active service, you know, and these machines were being used and, without thinking about it too deeply, you know- just a bit of a lad, really, yeah.

Young Brian was not fearful for his life; rather the War *exhilarated* him and gave him a *buzz*. However, present-day Brian immediately dismisses these feelings as being due to *where I was at my life at the time*- to his youthfulness and lack of responsibilities. He was not the same person as he is today.

Whenever Brian described himself as gung-ho, he also described himself as young. For example, he said that when 40 Squadron's deployment was announced, he was keen to participate: *I was pretty young and single and pretty gung-ho and I was quite excited by the whole idea really. I was into it*. When I asked if he had wanted New Zealand to participate in the crisis before the decision was made, he responded:

That's a really interesting question, because at that stage...young, and not overly political, you know, although I did think it's important for New Zealand to [pull] its weight and with ...ANZUS and what have you- It's been clouded a bit for everybody with recent events...but at the time we were all a lot more naïve I think and [pause] ah, yeah I saw the sense in it, I was a bit concerned at, militarily New Zealand probably wasn't being seen to pull its weight.

Here Brian's own growth in political acumen is paralleled to that of the nation's. Brian also distances himself from more general and not necessarily war-related actions of his younger self. For example, he explained that after the war ended but before 40 Squadron went home, the men managed to acquire spirits, and because it was spirits they were drinking Brian was consuming more alcohol than he normally would have. *It was probably the most I've ever drunk in my life*, he said, and *I look back and frown a bit*.

In the same passage in which Brian said he found the war *exhilarating*, he also said that he was not *thinking about it too deeply*. Again, not thinking about things deeply is considered to be a common trait of young men. When I asked Brian what the reaction was to the New Zealand Defence Force's decision not to send women over to the Gulf, he reacted in much the same way everyone had. This was to assume that I wanted to hear about feminist type outrage and appear to feel guilty that he had not felt it: *I don't think there was any real animosity or negative feeling about it, to be*

honest with you, I don't remember it being an issue, or being questioned. Guys are pretty basic, you know, they don't think too deeply.

Brian told several stories that illustrate that he was not taking the war seriously. The first concerns a run in with a British officer:

I had a lot of respect for the Brits... for the Kiwis, who don't get involved in too much active service, but the Brits, they'd had Ireland, and they'd been involved in a lot more action and more serious and professional- I wouldn't say professional, but more serious situations. I can think of a situation where, it was late at night, the days were long, and there was another guy, similar age to me, in the British Air Force, we were sharing the same base, and facilities, and rooms, operations rooms, and they had these comics called Viz Comics, they were new out at the time and I thought they were really funny and I was photocopying them, and this guy was encouraging me, you know, "yeah, go for it, no worries," using their photocopier, and one of the officers, that come in and saw us, he gave us a real blast, and made me think hang on, this is not really about, you know, kidding around, these guys are pretty serious.

In this story, Brian shows that in the Gulf, his younger self, in contrast to the *serious* British, was *kidding around* and focused on amusement. The next such story occurred on the trip 40 Squadron took into Kuwait City after liberation. *[A colleague] was with me, and he frowns on it, but there's this box of hand grenades, and I picked one up, and I've got a photo of me holding one, you know, [laughing, and posing like he's about to throw a grenade] like this, its really stupid, because there were a few booby traps.* In this story young Brian plays around with a hand grenade, posing with it as if he was about to use it. Two people in this story are critical of young Brian's actions, and are presented by Brian as having felt that he should have taken the situation more seriously. The first is his colleague, at the time. The second is present-day Brian, who says what he did back then was *really stupid* because he was endangering himself. In Kuwait City, 40 Squadron acquired badges that proclaimed, "Kuwait is Free." When I asked if he had worn the badge, Brian answered *Oh, I think we might of, yeah... Yeah, just a laugh. Yeah, we didn't take it too seriously.* Brian described what 40 Squadron found at the airport at Kuwait City:

They had all these oil fires burning around the airport; you know [Iraq] lit [Kuwait's] oil wells off? So it was like totally smoky and it was 40 plus degrees in Riyadh just a couple of hours flight away, it was like kind of dark and really overcast but it was oil smoke. And it was cold. We were wearing cold weather jackets 'cause there was no sun, and we were wearing our swandris. The effects of it afterwards, were like, because of the smoke, we had really sore lungs after three or four hours and our skin was like black with oil. You know? Yeah, it was not very nice. So it can't have been very healthy to be there. But it's the surreal- the most surreal experience I've ever had, it was like a movie set. Because, the place was blown to bits, there was all this grey smoke...The hangars were all corrugated iron or steel, whatever, and they were just flapping, it was like, wind was blowing, it was making this really weird rattly noise, constantly, and burnt out airplanes and craters...and ammo everywhere, trucks of ammo, and that was probably the neatest experience I had, or the, I remember going up to the control tower, and I was the only one up there- this was the closest I got actually to any action- going up to the control tower and it had smashed windows and the Venetian blinds were rattling, just looking down over all this, like burnt out British Airways 747 down there, we were climbing around, and I was with some guys in the airport and said "who wants to come with me?" But we were going and I ended up going by myself interestingly, and there was a door to go underneath it and some of the guys had gone down there the next day and there was a few Iraqis still hiding down there, so if I had gone down there I would have been by myself.

Yeah, that's the closest I got. Yeah, but I think they were just probably as scared as anybody else, I don't, yeah, you know. They're just people, and they're put in that situation so it was a funny thing really, I don't-.

Brian seems to have had some difficulty describing what he encountered at Kuwait City Airport as real. He uses the word *surreal* – dreamlike, unreal- to describe it. Then, when Brian uses a comparison to describe the airport, the comparison he chooses, *a movie set*, is fictional. This is Brian's second use of the word *surreal*. He used it first when he was striding around the tarmac thinking "*this is it!*"- when he was acting like the hero of a Hollywood movie. In fact, one of the very first things Brian said to me, when I asked about his reasons for joining the Air Force (before he told me the story about his father) was that it was a cool thing to do at the time because of the movie *An Officer and a Gentleman*, in which Richard Gere plays a Naval Aviation Officer Candidate. In this passage Brian appears more awed than exhilarated, as he was in his earlier story. However, he calls the experience *neat* and

was posing with a grenade. The fact that he was the only one of his group to go up into the control tower (from other interviews, others went up at different times) indicates that he was being more keen and brave than they were.

Going up into the control tower could have been narrated as a sobering experience, as with additional information it became clear that it had exposed Brian to real danger in the form of actual Iraqi soldiers. Brian did not explicitly narrate the experience as a wake-up call, but he did use it to introduce his narration of when he did, in the end, start thinking more *deeply* about the War. He concluded the story by saying that the hidden soldiers *were just probably as scared as anybody else* and that *they're just people, and they're put in that situation*. He went on:

When I look at some of those photos now, there's this one called "the Highway of Death," someone called it, and it's just a bunch of, a whole bunch of cars, strewn over the side of the road, and the Americans have just blown it to bits, they had this thing that's called like a turkey shoot, cause they were trying to evacuate from Kuwait, so they just came in and blasted them, rightly or wrongly, they blew them to bits. I've seen the photos and apparently it wasn't very nice, you know, a lot of dead people, and when you think about that, you know, so, yeah. It's one thing, it wouldn't, I spare them a thought now and then, I think, well, you know, I was there because I had to be there, ah, but it was very political, the whole thing was very political, and it's about power and oil and what have you, so I didn't have a choice. Probably in my first few years, I was quite gung-ho about it, thinking it was, you know, a good experience, but now I'm thinking, "well..." You know, you know, I don't think it's worth talking too much about to anybody. Based on actually just [bit of a laugh] thinking about what people might have gone through. A lot of hardship I'd say. Misery, and yeah.

After the *first few years* Brian stopped being so *gung-ho* and started seriously and deeply thinking about the war, as he had not done at the time. Variations on the verb *think* occur eight times in this 200-odd word passage. The passage suggests that Brian started thinking about the war as real instead of *surreal*. He certainly started thinking about the real effects it had on real people. Then, although he stated he was gung-ho about it at the time, Brian goes on to distance himself from the war, as, consistent with his earlier stories, he states that it *was not his choice* to be there. This time the

agency is assigned to politicians. He says of the War *but now, no, I wouldn't like to glamorise it.*

In fact, Brian does not think the war is *worth talking too much about to anybody*. He said that being gung-ho was *probably an immature way of looking at the experience* and that *I don't think ah, it's worth talking too much about, and I think the main reason is it's, just, politically incorrect, to a certain extent*. However, he is glad he went:

I am glad I went. Yep. For me it was probably the highlight of my Air Force career, 'cause it was active service. Umm you know, I've mentioned a few questions I have, I don't, I wouldn't like to, I mean in the past I would've- its something that I thought was [pause] worthy of mentioning but because of the situation now I probably won't, you know, I just keep- I, I don't talk too much about it. Umm, yeah, but overall, it was an experience, that I mean you know, I don't regret. Yeah.

When I followed up with *Do you feel like it had a major impact on your life as a whole, like it was one of the major events of your life?* Brian paused and then reiterated *well it was certainly the highlight of the **Air Force career*** [my emphasis]. He rather ambivalently added *umm, of my life, I guess it was*. It was pivotal for his military career, but not necessarily for his life as a whole. Brian does not regret the experience, but he would not bring his role in the War up in conversation, both because of his own questions and because of current, largely negative, discourses surrounding Western intervention in the Gulf region. He therefore does not include the Gulf War in the identity he constructs for himself publicly. Brian is not invested in being seen as a war veteran. He narrates that others- the Iraqis on the other side- had much worse experiences than he did. Hence, public discourses of peacekeeping do not threaten his identity, and he himself conflates his deployment with a holiday.

Some elements of Brian's story do seem at first to converge with prominent war discourses. For example, he narrates a personal change from naivety to awareness. However, this transformation does not come during the war, but a few years later. The control tower incident, during the war, is not narrated as a wake-up call. It was not the war that was transformative; rather, at some point after the war, Brian matured.

Secondly, Brian, like Upham, says that he did nothing in war compared to others. However, perhaps unlike in the case of Dennis (or Eric, discussed next) this is not linked to the narration of a specifically Anzac character. Only a very few parts of Brian's narrative could be interpreted as an expression of the Anzac Spirit, and all of them could be interpreted in other ways. If Brian's statements that he did nothing special are linked to the construction of any type of identity, it could well be the more general Kiwi masculinity, which of course also has self-deprecation as a core component.

Eric's War Story

We Just had a Ball

Like Brian, Eric conflates his Gulf deployment with a holiday. However, his reasons for doing so are much different to Brian's, in that unlike Brian, Eric in 2007 was invested in narrating a military identity. He just did not need to categorise his Gulf deployment as a war to do so. Eric stayed in the Air Force much longer than Brian did. During his military career, Eric was deployed not only to the Gulf War, but also to East Timor, Bougainville, the Solomon Islands and Afghanistan. When I asked Eric how these experiences compare with that of the Gulf War, he said *umm*, paused, and then said *the Gulf War was a holiday camp*. He explained:

We were a little group of people left to our own devices, with no one really that was watching over us as such, you know, weren't directly controlled by anyone, as much as we were with the British they didn't directly affect our way of life. We lived in a hotel, we had our own cars, we could go shopping, go flying, yeah. And we'd work [laughs].

Interestingly, this is the direct opposite of Rob's account: whilst Rob narrates that he was at war because he was in a completely military environment, Eric narrates that the experience was like a holiday because, very un-military-like, nobody was dictating his actions. Eric, like Brian, seemed to show a little hesitancy before using the holiday metaphor. Moreover, from the context, Eric has said only that the Gulf War was like a holiday camp comparative to his other deployments. However, the statement is in line with Eric's overall narrative of the experience. Eric is *without a*

doubt glad he went to the Gulf: The group of people that I worked with, we just had a ball. We really had, considering we were at war, and we did work quite hard... the people there made the most of it and everyone got on really, really well. And had a good time. A very good time.

Here Eric does term himself as being *at war*, but it is his statement that *we just had a ball* that becomes the major theme of his war story. I would end each interview by telling the informant that I had finished my questions, and asking if they had anything else they wanted to say. A few took this opportunity to give a sort of summary of what the war experience was to them. Eric said: *not much to say apart from yeah, I most certainly had a great time. I did, we made the most of it. As Kiwis do. Wherever we go, yeah, we make the most of it. Do whatever. Seen some great things.* Eric's *as Kiwis do* shows that he sees the fact that he and his mates *made the most* of their deployment as a trait inherent to New Zealanders. He had earlier said: *at the very beginning we did have a bit of time off where we did bits and pieces [...] we got out and had a look around the local areas, did a bit of shopping, as you do, yeah, generally made a nuisance of ourselves as Kiwis always do.* When I asked how they made a nuisance of themselves, Eric replied *Well, it was just being a Kiwi I suppose.* He explained:

All of the other coalition forces, Americans, English etcetera weren't really allowed to go into certain shopping centres [...] whereas we had our own vehicles and we went wherever we liked. So we went into a lot of the areas that, you know, the old markets, trundled round and did what we did as Kiwis all round the place and generally had a good time and visited lots of things.

Eric also established a holiday/ball atmosphere for his deployment by telling me all about parties held by ex-pats in Riyadh that he and his colleagues attended. Although at the very end of these stories he said *it wasn't very often, it wasn't like we were, you know, out every Friday night, it was, I would have said about four or five times in the time we were there*, he talked to me about these parties at length.

The First Experience

The reason that Eric is willing to conflate his Gulf deployment with a holiday is not, as it is with Brian, because he has no investment in a military identity. Out of all ten

informants, Eric's explanation for joining the Air Force reads the most like the young boy awestruck by the family war hero and wishing to follow in his footsteps:

Well my grandfather ...went over to England before the First World- well actually he was in the First World War, apparently, as a pilot, and then he did a bit at the beginning of the Second World War before he was, ah, you could say, too many crashes, and it was all given away. So ever since, according to my parents, ever since I was, too small to believe, I've always been very interested in aircraft and the Air Force so, yeah, so I suppose I just carried on with that.

Eric also said that, like others, he had applied for both the Air Force and Air New Zealand, and that the Air Force was the institution that said yes. Eric *didn't even believe joining up, you know, you join up and you sign up and you sort of "oh, yeah... well there's no chance of us going anywhere."* He reiterated this point at a later stage, saying: *And then, yeah, you know, a war. Okay, you joined the military, I joined the military and I must say I never ever expected, didn't even dream I'd end up in a place like that. And, and yet I did. So, a realisation that [...] it can and will happen.* However, when the team that would be going to the Gulf was named, Eric was not on it. *And it was like, umm, feelings to that, it was like, you know, this is what you join the Air Force for, and you've been left out, and you're sort of feeling, well, I've been diddled here.*

This seems rather contradictory. Eric stated both that when he joined up he did not expect to go to war, and that he was not pleased to not be deployed when war came because *this is what you join the Air Force for*. It seems unlikely that Eric joined the Air Force solely to go to war, because he did not think (or *even dream*- which implies the thought had never crossed his mind) that this would happen. He seems therefore to be using the phrase *what you join the Air Force for* to express the idea that this is the point of being in the military, the *raison d'être* of a serviceman, which he perhaps decided once he was in it. About whether he wanted New Zealand as a whole to deploy, Eric said the question was less *why shouldn't we* and more *why aren't we?* He said *we're in the military and that's what we do...we shouldn't be hanging around here*. Eric, therefore, seems to have had desired career fulfillment and to go to war like his grandfather. He is definitely identifying with a military role. As it turned out,

the Air Force rethought the team to be deployed and Eric was chosen after all. The fact that he was actually going to a war may have shocked Eric, but it did not, overall, displease him. *And so it was like “cool!” And then it was, “Oh. How cool is that?” [Laughs]. Second thoughts. Umm, but it was ...no worries [...] And then yeah, once you get going all butterflies over. Away you go. Get on with what you’ve got to do.*

Although he had had second thoughts, once he was in the Gulf, Eric was there to stay.

The night of the beginning of the war [...] the person that was put in charge of us [...] he was basically going to have us pack up and fly out of there. That night. And it was like, you’ve got to be kidding me. Not going anywhere. Ain’t going to sit there and say, Kiwis are running away. [...] the boss at hand was willing to, this is too much, this is going to get ugly [...] we’re going to pack up and go, no way, and I think we moved from the hotel in town that night out to the airport, and we stayed out there, and then, and we got him sorted out from there, and we moved into the hotel next to the airport.

Eric’s given reason for not wanting to leave the war is *Ain’t going to sit there and say, Kiwis are running away*. *Running away* implies cowardice. Eric did not want this identity either for himself, or for his country. At my request, Eric elaborated further on his boss’ perceived motivation:

I knew his intention was he wanted us to go, because I think he told us that, and it was like we’ll move out to the airport, and we moved out to the airport and it was like, whether he was calmed down by, I think by then he might have been calmed down by a few other senior officers at the time, and then sort of seen sense.

To Eric, to realise that they should stay was to *see sense*. He further talks about his boss as being *calmed down* and *sorted out* which suggests that for him the idea of leaving was irrational and emotional, rather than a thinkable option.

If Eric is invested in a military subject position, why does he have no problem with narrating the Gulf War as a holiday camp? Eric’s military identity does not depend solely on the Gulf War. He has, after all, also been to Timor, Bougainville, the Solomon Islands and Afghanistan. Thus even if the Gulf War was a holiday, he can

still construct a military identity based on these other deployments. (Eric refers to East Timor, at least, as a war.) In fact, saying that the Gulf War- a war! - was a holiday compared to the later deployments actually constructs them as very serious. Moreover, during the Gulf War, Eric worked as part of the ground crew, whereas he later took on a role in the aircrew. *The other ones I've been involved with have all been since I started flying. So the whole thing changes, you know, you're not the one sitting back waiting for the aircraft to come back, I'm now the one sitting in the aircraft doing it all. So everything sort of changes.*

Eric characterises his job during the Gulf War as *sitting back, waiting*, whereas during the other deployments he was *doing it all*. Eric would be more likely to base his military identity on the deployments in which he felt he was active and involved rather than on the one in which he constructs himself as having been left behind. When I asked Eric what place he sees the war as having in his life as a whole, he said:

I would just say it was one of the first experiences and thoughts I ever had of what war can be like. .. Umm, so, yeah, I'm not sure. I wouldn't, it was just an experience, an experience that I had that turned out, in the way it was just to be a very good experience. Opened your eyes to, you know, how the world really is.

The war was not overly important; it was *just an experience*- a good experience, but just an experience. Unlike for Sam, for who the war was a blind alley that did not lead anywhere, for Eric the Gulf War was the start of something. It was his first, but to his view by no means last, experience of war. It was just the beginning. In fact, this is the complete experience that Sam noted he would have had had he not become impatient.

That the experience was a beginning is emphasised by Eric's saying that it *opened your eyes to...how the world really is*. At another point, he reiterated this, saying *it certainly opened my eyes to a few things, and changed a few attitudes*. What the experience opened his eyes to was *how governments work...how quickly they can change, how New Zealand's... how we actually do fit in overseas*. He goes on to explain that this is the ability to make a professional and superior military contribution despite the country's size. Eric said *I didn't know at the time, how the government sort of fitted into things, and over time I've learnt how the government*

does fit into things and how it all plays out. Eric does not specify beyond this what, exactly, he learnt about how the government works, but it is clear that he is employing a classic disillusionment narrative of the naïve young man going off to war and coming back more in tune with politics. However, if he is disillusioned with anything (and he never directly says he is), it is solely the New Zealand government and not the military or what it does. With his eyes opened, Eric could then go on in the military and to other deployments as an experienced serviceman, aware of politics and the government's role in how things work. This is reflected in several places in the interview (and when he was talking to me afterwards) in which he discusses issues such as the military's public image and what they could have done to ensure that this was positive and therefore kept recruitment up. He said, for example, that the military would have released more information about the medics than about 40 Squadron during the Gulf War because it *sounds good*. [...] *Which is politically good sense. To my way of thinking.* Again, he can say this because he is not dependant on narratives of the war for his military identity. He also, however, does not necessarily consider that limited media coverage affected how the public viewed 40 Squadron's role: *Pretty sure most peoples' mind is developed enough to understand that [in that] situation what you're carrying round is not always carrots and soup, so.*

An Anzac Character

Eric may primarily narrate that he and his mates had a ball, but he narrates that they enjoyed themselves with an Anzac Spirit. Earlier, of course, Eric actually attributed the very fact that they made the best of the situation to the inherent qualities of Kiwis. This is reminiscent of the larrikinism of the Anzac Spirit. Here, for example, is Eric's story about the parties they attended:

The only other locals that we ever did get around with were the ex-pats, so we would catch up with, 'cause there was a very big contingent of maintenance guys, and especially nurses. So, they would always, because we were new people around town, we would generally find we'd be invited out to different compounds for parties you could say. And so we'd all go out as a team, basically. I think it started off with the air crew being invited and then they started, oh, nah, they kept it to themselves- there was a very big delineation between air crew and maintenance...they work in their world and we work in ours, so they're the officers and they get all the information first up, and it just gets palmed on down to us. And I think the reason we got into

these parties was, ...one of our offers [party invitations] had come, of course goes to the officers first, the bosses, and it was looking at it going “oh, nah, we don’t want to do that, oh we’ll give it to maintenance” so we all took it up and from there we ended up being invited out to lots of places, and end it got quite funny ‘cause they were starting to say, “well if you’re getting invited out you should tell us.” “*Oh*, that’s good.”

As well as a tale of mates partying together, this is a typical egalitarian leveling story, with the ground crew getting one over the arrogant officers. Furthermore, these parties featured alcohol in dry Saudi Arabia, because in a typical show of ingenuity the New Zealand ex-pats would brew their own straight alcohol and then mix it with different flavours to imitate different drinks.

Eric’s discussion of how the men would go for flights on British tankers *for a bit of a something different* is another story of New Zealanders enjoying themselves used to construct Anzac characteristics:

There was a lot of tankers there, another thing to kill time [...] I used to do it anyway, go up and get on with the crew and then go for a fly and fly with them during the day doing all their tanker refuels for the aircraft [...]. But it was good, they didn’t mind, I didn’t mind, our bosses didn’t mind, so that was fine. The Americans wouldn’t let us, they were very, they’re very [pause] very [pause] backwards compared to us. They’re just so, how would you put it, regimented, and if it doesn’t say it in a book you can’t do it. Outside of the box they don’t work.

In this story, flexibility, related to initiative, and working *outside of the box* is shown to be a valued trait. In fact, the *regimented* American military is said to be *backward* in comparison with New Zealand and Britain because of their inability to embrace such traits.

Since Eric frankly stated that the Gulf deployment was a holiday camp, an Anzac discourse is not being used here to construct the experience as a war, as in Dennis’ case. It may not be necessary for Eric to solely and consistently narrate the deployment as a war in order for him to construct the identity he wishes to claim. Nevertheless, his preferred identity is still a military one, and he was on a military

deployment. Eric is showing that he has an Anzac character, whatever he may be doing. We can therefore expect that he acted this way on his other, less-holiday like deployments as well. In fact, whatever he is talking about, Eric uses the Anzac discourse to narrate it. He tells a further story about getting one over officers, this time those of the class-conscious British Army:

The British have a different rank structure, and I was an [certain rank] which is, I think [designated by a certain symbol] [...] Now myself and [a colleague were] the only [ones of that rank] in the group, everyone else was [a higher rank]. Because [...] [the colleague] wore [his rank], if you wanted to get something off the English, because they'd look down on you and well you're only just ...“get out of here” they would just ignore him or give him the run-around. And he found that a bit difficult, but I'd cottoned on to that and never wore my [rank] so they never ever knew which way to take me. So I never had a problem.

Eric also narrates Anzac prowess: *We're a little backwash country with five Hercs or whatever, but what we contribute and how we do it is very, very professional and, I would say in a lot of cases way and above better than what some of the larger militaries can do.* Like Dennis, Eric conflates the Anzac discourse with the career one with the word professional. If the New Zealand military (*we*) is good, then Eric and his mates are good soldiers and good at their jobs. Similarly, Eric employed a “Better Britain” discourse, narrating that the Kiwis were seen as more intrepid than the British:

My understanding is, from the pilots that they did task us generally to go into places first off, and, you know like, send the Kiwis in and see how it is and if it is not too bad, not so much into dangerous areas, it was just to new airports, or ones that they hadn't used before. So they, the Kiwis would do the recces and come back with the information.

With Eric's narrative of his conquering the butterflies brought on by his second thoughts on leaving for the Gulf, he begins a construction of stoicism that runs throughout the narrative. Of the scud missile attacks, he said:

But it did become part of life, part of how you played the game and then we, you just accept it and just carry on. Basically. It's oh well if you get hit you get hit and you're dead and that's it, no use sitting there worrying about it. And I think most people had that general, from the group, would have had that general...mentality, so.

Eric said that *there was huge threat of chemical warfare* but that he stopped taking the NAPs tablets designed to improve his chances of surviving such an attack: *we were supposed to take these things every six hours on the hour and I think we did it for the first day, and "oh, bugger this."* Eric said he *basically* stopped taking them all together, and in another show of fatalism added *well I suppose it just comes back to, oh well, if I get attacked I get attacked*. Thus Eric narrated both that he was in real danger and that he dealt with this stoically.

And of course, like any true Anzac, Eric narrates that although he joined the Air Force to emulate his grandfather, what he ended up doing was nothing as compared to his boyhood hero. This is very effectively achieved by narrating his war as a holiday! Eric does not believe that the Gulf War will ever be commemorated on Anzac Day, because *no one really died there, and when you consider what Anzac Day means, we don't even pale in comparison, so no*. When I asked how Eric thought his experience compares to his grandfather's he answered: *It doesn't. It doesn't even, it doesn't come even close. None of it does. Yeah. I wouldn't even, I wouldn't even put it in there, closely, closely aligned. Yeah*. Later, when taking me through his photo album, Eric told me about 40 Squadron's brief stay in a holiday resort in the Maldives en route to the Gulf. His wife interrupted to ask, *think your grandfather did that?* to which Eric replied, laughing, *nup. That's what I mean*. Thus although Eric defines his Gulf deployment as only the first and least warlike of his military operations, he constructs himself as already having had the character of an Anzac soldier.

Geoff's War Story

Geoff's war story is different from every other one examined so far in that it is not structured by one consistent definition of what the Gulf deployment was. Geoff, who is still in the military, does not consistently narrate that it was a war, or attempt to do

so, like Dennis or Sam. He presents himself as being fulfilled in his career whether he was part of a war or not. Nor does he constantly categorise it as a peacekeeping mission, like the National Government. He does not consistently, or even directly, construct it as a holiday as Brian and Eric do. However I have included his story in this section for two reasons: firstly because he uses tourist imagery, and secondly because his lack of investment in narrating that he was at war in the Gulf makes him much more similar to Brian and Eric than anyone in the first two chapters.

Geoff did at some points state that he was at war. For example, when talking about the media coverage of 40 Squadron, he said: *I think the government at the time were pretty keen to say we were doing purely, you know, a peace-type role. Very hard to get that across during the middle of a war, but [laughs]...* However when I mention a specific example of the deployment being presented as a peacekeeping mission (the Air Force museum) Geoff can see some validity in it. *I guess that's how the government wants to play it. Yeah. Umm, and dare I say it I guess we were just supporting the war we weren't actually [pause] yeah. I suppose that's peacekeeping. Well its sort of peacemaking, if, if that's the right word. Yeah.* When I therefore asked, *So did you feel that you were at a war? At war?* Geoff responded *I certainly felt like that, yeah, yeah. Certainly umm, yeah. It was definitely a war.* However, he immediately followed: *I think. There were people getting hurt. Not necessarily, or definitely not where we were, oh, I shouldn't say that, the odd scud obviously had some very messy casualties.*

At another point, I asked Geoff *did you want New Zealand to participate in the war, before they made the commitment?* My other informants interpreted this clumsily articulated question in the way I intended it- before you knew that 40 Squadron would be deployed, did you hope that the New Zealand military would be involved at all? This interpretation carries with it the assumption that in the end New Zealand did participate in the war, with 40 Squadron. Geoff by contrast responded *In the, in the real war? War, no I don't [...] - realistically I don't think we could have been like, ah, frontline and aggressive type forces, definitely not.* Geoff here appears to be negotiating for himself what his deployment was. He can see some basis for both interpretations, and his *dare I say it* suggests that he also may be encountering

pressure from some source (fellow veterans? War discourse?) to narrate the deployment as a war. Geoff does not come to a definitive conclusion.

Geoff joined the Air Force because he had had enough of school. He said *It was just a, just a job. I didn't really know quite what I was getting into.* He continued to talk about his military experience in career terms, saying *it just, the way it works your trade progresses and you go to a number of different jobs just sort of developing your career.* However, unusually, Geoff did not see deployment to a war as necessary to career fulfillment. He said ambivalently of the deployment *I guess it was an opportunity to do something different, and what in theory we were sort of trained for.* His use of the phrase *in theory* suggests that he is not thoroughly convinced that war was in fact what they were trained for. It implies an unspoken “in practice, we were actually trained for...”. His ambivalence is further highlighted by the *sort of* in front of *trained for*. The following passage may shed some light on this: *40 Squadron's definitely, what I see as what's the Air Force is all about. So, whatever the Air Force does, no matter what it is, it always involves 40 Squadron. Whether it's taking people there or actually taking the army there, or whatever.* Thus Geoff already sees himself as doing what *the Air Force is all about* in the course of normal routine.

Geoff did not invest in being part of a war. He said *I've got to be honest with you, we all thought it was going to be a non-event. We thought we'd go over there, sit there for a few weeks, Saddam would back down and we'd all come home.* Geoff did not expect to participate in a war. He expected to *sit there*- an extremely passive image. Geoff also said that they expected the deployment to be *a matter of waving the flag, and then coming back* which indicates no action or real contribution, just a display that New Zealand had come. Furthermore, Geoff did not want to be part of a war:

Geoff: It's a funny feeling for the first time to think someone's actually aggressively trying to bomb you or shoot you. [...] And I've got to be honest, we all thought, right, okay, the government won't allow this, they'll get us out. [...] 'Cause we were told that, if we were ever under any threat, we were going in a non-aggressive, non-aggressive role, if ah, if it became aggressive, nah, we'd, New Zealand would pull out. But, but, we didn't [laughs]. And I guess I understand now how the government

would have looked at that, it wouldn't have been too flash to pull out when everyone else was sort of pulling their weight.

Nina: Were you surprised at the time though, that you weren't pulled out?

Geoff: Yeah, I guess everyday [the younger men in the deployment were asking] surely we're going home, sort of thing. [...] So yeah wee bit surprised, but in hindsight, I can understand why the government didn't pull out there.

The phrases *I guess I understand now* and *in hindsight* imply that unlike Eric and those men discussed by Sam, Geoff would not have been unhappy to be pulled out of the war at this time. Geoff said he still *assume[s] the government would have got everyone out* if there had been chemical or biological warfare.

Although Geoff then does not display much investment in the role of war veteran, he may have some investment in the role of peacekeeper. Unlike John he said that the refugee runs were consequential:

[The refugee runs were] meaningful too, these people are getting back to their families, you know, walking out of the desert basically with an armful of , you know, a couple of sacks with all their, that's it, that's all they've managed to take. [...] Anything, anything like that, like I've been to East Timor and did some time there and helping out those needy, it's always worth it.

A key theme of Geoff's narrative is that going to the Gulf War awakened in him a keen interest in the Middle East. The experience gave him a *little bent* towards Middle Eastern cultures that he did not have before the war. He said *I could quite easily live in Dubai. I'd love to*. Unlike many informants, Geoff did not criticise the hierarchy in Saudi Arabian society. He noted that a lot of the men had problems with the culture, saying *I know it doesn't feel right, but, that's their culture, leave it alone and just 'cause we, you know, do things this way doesn't mean that they have to or should*. When asked what place he sees the Gulf War as having in his life as a whole Geoff said:

I suppose... it's given me an experience that most people haven't, don't get the opportunity. Ah and in some ways it's sort of a good experience, I mean it was a good outcome in the end. Ah, yeah, expose those cultures. I guess very hard to visit Saudi

Arabia, it's a bit of a closed country, that's interesting. Ah, I guess it's given me a taste, that's why I'd jump at a chance to get back to the old places like that. Yeah, so it guess it's ah enriched the experiences I suppose. Life experience of seeing.

This is a narrative of a tourist experience. When asked about the deployment's overall significance to his life, what Geoff chooses to specifically focus on is the *opportunity* to visit Saudi Arabia, which he would not have got otherwise. The deployment *expose[d] those cultures which enriched the life experience of seeing*. He said *I actually enjoyed those different cultures*. Note that Geoff constructs it as an experience of *seeing*, thus positioning himself as a spectator, and a consumer of Saudi Arabian culture, rather than an actor in a war.

This passive, viewer-based tourism narrative is very similar to Rob's narrative. However, unlike for Rob, this does not create any problems for Geoff, because Geoff is not heavily invested in narrating himself as a war veteran. Geoff to certain extents and at various times narrates himself as a member of 40 Squadron, a peacekeeper, and a tourist. None of these identities require him to construct the Gulf deployment as an experience of being at war.

Summary

Although the narratives in this section are quite different from one another, taken together they illustrate the point that how individuals narrate and thus define an event that occurred many years ago is determined by the concerns of the present and the identity they construct for themselves today. The 40 Squadron members in this section either did not want or did not need to use their Gulf deployment as a site for narrating themselves as war veterans. However, it can be seen in Brian's narrative that this was not always the case; for a few years after the event, he interpreted the deployment differently than he does now. As Brian's priorities changed over the years and he came to privilege subject positions such as family man over that of war veteran, his war story also changed. Eric's definition of the deployment is also determined by events that occurred up to ten years after the Gulf War took place, as once he was deployed on additional missions the Gulf came to look like a comparative holiday. Eric cannot have held this interpretation in 1991, when he had no such basis for comparison. Those same missions that for New Zealand became

better sites for the construction of the peacekeeping nation than the Gulf War ironically became for Eric better sites for the construction of a military identity. Lastly, Geoff's narrative demonstrates that definitions of a single event may be multiple and fluid, and that just one individual can see the merits of more than one categorisation.

Chapter Six Summary

40 Squadron's deployment to the Gulf War came at a time of transition for New Zealand nationhood. Although it was a deployment to a war, 40 Squadron's mission in the Gulf was defined in the public sphere as a peacekeeping one in order to construct New Zealand as a humanitarian nation. This was achieved through assigning 40 Squadron peacekeeper identities. This chapter illustrates that this national story of the Gulf War did not work for the majority of the servicemen that I interviewed who were most closely involved in the event. That is, none of my informants primarily narrated their personal account of the war through the discourse of a peacekeeping mission in order to construct their identity. Rob and Sam explicitly rejected this discourse, whilst Dennis and Stephen did not acknowledge its existence. It may appear that two men, Dennis and Eric, did narrate that they had the qualities of a stereotypical peacekeeper, but this is because these are the exact same qualities of the Anzac Spirit that soldiers possess. Both men connect the Anzac Spirit with war rather than with keeping the peace. Geoff's war story is the closest of any of the narratives to the national discourse, and even he said laughingly that the representation of a *peace-type role* was *very hard to get ...across during the middle of a war*. Even those informants who did not define the deployment as a war did not define it as a peacekeeping mission. Not all were angered by the government's categorisation, but no one unilaterally agreed with it. This means that the informants rejected the national story of the Gulf War. This rejection is not for the straightforward reason that 40 Squadron was on the wrong side of the transition, however- it is not simply that New Zealand had transformed itself into a peacekeeping nation whilst 40 Squadron would prefer to belong to a martial, World War Two-era New Zealand. Many of the informants' narratives are structured by neither of these national discourses, but rather by the career discourse that they share with American and British servicemen. To

achieve subjective composure through this discourse, a serviceman must be able to narrate that he was at war and therefore fulfilled his professional training and achieved soldierhood. The peacekeeping discourse cannot be used to this end. 40 Squadron did not train to be mailmen and potential victims. The discourse of the Anzac Spirit, however, which first emerged in the days when New Zealand created itself as a nation through war, was used by two informants to achieve subjective composure in this way. Dennis constructed the Gulf deployment as a war and subsequently himself as a war veteran through the Anzac Spirit. Eric too used the discourse, to bolster a military identity that he constructed with regard to other deployments, deployments which like the Gulf War were also constructed as peacekeeping missions in the public sphere. Eric and Dennis may not have knocked out three enemy machinegun nests like Charles Upham did, but the Anzac discourse is egalitarian and accepting- in fact embracing- of ordinary men. The rejection of the peacekeeping categorisation demonstrates that the stories of 40 Squadron were far from determined by that national discourse. Neither were they determined by the older Anzac discourse, as the fact that it did not feature predominantly in all of the narratives (Stephen's, for example) shows. The fact that New Zealand nationhood was in transition meant that multiple discourses were available in the public sphere through which the deployment could be interpreted, and thus 40 Squadron had a degree of choice. This choice was still available in 2006-2007, when 40 Squadron told me their stories. Despite the idea of the peacekeeping nation having stabilised further since the early 1990s, the discourse consolidated at Gallipoli is still powerful in New Zealand society. This is partially because both discourses are connected by the underlying aim to make a difference in resolving the world's conflicts, and both discourses construct the defence force members who do this as possessing the same Anzac qualities. Despite being in contradiction to the martial discourse, at least on the surface, the peacekeeping discourse carries with it strong connotations of the traditional martial Anzac discourse, and therefore brings it with it into the public sphere.

Chapter 7

Visual Stories:

40 Squadron's Gulf War Photo Albums

The last chapter explored how members of 40 Squadron told their stories of their deployment to the Gulf a decade and a half ago in order to construct their identities in the present day. This chapter examines three photo albums (and one scrapbook) that were compiled by members of 40 Squadron at the time of or shortly after the Gulf War. When I interviewed them in 2007, the owners showed me through these albums, pointing out photographs and telling me what they represented. These albums therefore provide two insights into the airmen's identity construction. Posing for, taking, and arranging the photographs in 1991 was one act of storytelling. Taking me, a stranger-interviewer, through these albums 16 years later and selecting certain photos to talk about was another. Here I analyse both the albums and the informants' recent reflections on them. The informants also very generously allowed me to take digital photographs (or in one case, photocopies) of the photo albums. These imperfect methods of copying account for the poor quality and blurriness of the photographs reproduced here. As the example of Brian shows, a man may choose to highlight different aspects of his history and thus construct a different identity now than he did back in his 20s. It is possible therefore, that in the second act of storytelling in 2007 the photographs were reframed and given new meaning by the informants. This chapter will again largely focus on if and how 40 Squadron presented themselves as being "at war," and on whether or not the same story is told in the albums as in the interviews. Some of the albums were compiled by the same servicemen whose stories have already been featured, and some were not. All albums will therefore be referred to by number so as not to undo the anonymity of the previous chapter, but it can be noted that none of the albums represent any major disjuncture from their compiler's interview.

Posed Pictures

I will begin this chapter by examining those photographs that most overtly attempt to construct 40 Squadron as being at war. These are several sequences of photos in which the airmen featured present themselves as what Dawson (1994) would term soldier heroes. Strangely enough, two of the clearest examples of this feature not only military poses but also stuffed toys. There were at least three stuffed toys in Riyadh with 40 Squadron that I know of, and they seemed to have been used as mascots. One of the stuffed toys was a Kiwi that could be turned inside out to form a rugby ball. Another of the toys was in fact the mascot of 75 Squadron, part of the Air Force's since disbanded air combat force. At the time of the Gulf War 75 Squadron was still operative, and their mascot (*their little man*) was Fanshaw, a bear. The compiler of what will here be called Album 1 informed me that Fanshaw *is a fighter pilot*. 40 Squadron *nicked him and took him to the war*. They would then send postcards from Fanshaw back to 75 Squadron with messages like *Hey, it's great to be with a real operational squadron...you pussies never go anywhere!* Album 1's compiler said *so we got photos of Fanshaw everywhere*. The following are photos from Album 1 featuring Fanshaw that were presumably taken at the time in order to send to 75 Squadron.





Figure 4: Sequence of photographs featuring Fanshaw, Airman and A-10 Thunderbolt. These photos appeared over three pages in the album.

Although in the first photo of the sequence, the airman featured looks much like one would expect a soldier hero to look- arm nonchalantly draped around the weapon of a combat jet- in the second especially but also in fourth, we see something unexpected: the airman appears to be hugging a teddy bear. Yet these photos do construct 40 Squadron as being at war, if you understand the role played within them by Fanshaw. The purpose of these photos was, as explicitly stated, to mock 75 Squadron about the fact that 40 Squadron was at war, on active service, and 75 Squadron was not. Fanshaw is therefore posed in order to show that he is at war- with and on a combat aircraft. The photos are of Fanshaw but are really about the status of 40 Squadron, for which Fanshaw is a stand-in. Although Fanshaw is 75 Squadron's mascot he is being used as 40 Squadron's mascot as well in the sense that he is a representative of the group. What is being said about Fanshaw through these photos is being said about the airman in the photos with him, and by extension about all of 40 Squadron.

The following sequence of three photographs, also prominently featuring a toy and taken in the men's hotel room, appears in Album 3.



**Figure 5: Airmen posing for photographs with stuffed toy and rifle in their hotel room.
These photos appeared in sequence over two pages of the album.**

In the first photograph, an airman poses with what also appears to be a stuffed toy (in two of the photos wearing a hat?) that has been placed on top of the television set. Perhaps this picture was taken to show the man in his accommodation; perhaps the centre was meant to be the toy- the man has his arm around it and his body is oriented towards it. The toy appears again in the next photo. Here, as with Fanshaw, it appears to be being used as a sort of mascot. The airman holding it is dressed in military uniform and is holding his rifle in a state of preparedness. With his wide-legged stance, his sunglasses and his direct, challenging gaze, he looks tough and soldier hero like- no mean feat considering that he is holding a toy. Yet stuffed toys are not tough and thus in the third photo, we get the perhaps inevitable conclusion: the stuffed toy becomes the victim of the airman's soldierhood. The toy is used to occupy the place of someone to target, and shows that the airman is willing to kill- the gun appears to be aimed where the victim's temple would be (if the hat was not in the way). This is the ultimate step in this series of pictures, as it depicts action- someone is to be shot; the man is not just standing around with his gun. It is interesting that the photos were put in this order, which shows an escalation of events, as the clothes worn by the airman suggest that this third photo was probably taken before the second one; that is, before the man in it (wearing the same bandana and glasses) decided to change into his uniform to enhance the effect.

When the compiler of this album was taking me through it, and came to these photos, he commented *boys being boys*. The phrase *boys will be boys* is used in relation to children but is also “often applied to grown men who act childishly” (*Boys will be Boys*, 2008). It thus compares men to children and connotes having fun and playing around, sometimes at the expense of responsibility and being a grown-up. It carries with it a sense of inevitability and resignation- one cannot expect men to do anything other than do such things to amuse themselves. The important connotation here is the one of play. By saying *boys being boys*, the veteran is telling me that in these photos he and his mates are fooling around. He continued, *And it’s funny because you never ever, that thing [his rifle] I think, stayed in my locker at work the whole time*. Here he is telling me that these photographs do not represent what his Gulf War experience was really like. He never carried a gun with him in preparedness, let alone aimed it at anyone. And the very fact that these two sequences of photos feature toys as integral parts of the photos’ composition only further illustrates that these are photos of play. In this latter sequence the airmen are at leisure in their hotel room, not out on duty doing their actual war jobs. In the former sequence with Fanshaw the men were presumably also not working but rather having a look around, as they worked with C130 Hercules and not American combat aircraft. Thus although when the airman took or posed for the photos and then placed them in his album he may have been constructing himself as a soldier hero, when he talked me through the album 16 years later he gave the photo the meaning of play and ascribed to himself and others the identity of boy fooling around. This is similar to young Brian’s lad identity.

In fact, one of the other informants used the word *playing* in reference to himself and his fellow airmen. Anthony (who first started thinking he might want to be in the military as *a young fellow reading Commando comics*) told me that at Kuwait airport he and his mates were *playing silly buggers... around... their triple A weapons and stuff like that*. He explains:

We were quite silly too...it was a big adventure, and, one of the guys that we were with...he was playing around on one of these Triple A guns and there’s an Apache helicopter flying around and he was getting [it] in his sights and going *Brr-brr-brr!* And to fire these they’ve got a foot pedal, so all you do is push the foot pedal down and it fires. When the Marines had gone in there to disarm them, all they’d done is, its

battery operated, so they'd just disconnected the terminal from the battery. So all you needed was a spark to go from the battery to the terminal, and it would have shot off a couple of rounds and you would have had an angry bloody chopper [laughs]. So yeah we just did stupid things like that.

The airman in this story was playing at being in battle- he was pretending to use a weapon, and even himself making noises to indicate it firing (as a child would make car noises). Anthony further states that they were all doing such things. He now sees this as something quite irresponsible (the airman could have hit an American helicopter) although it still amuses him.

The following passage reveals Anthony's thoughts on war (note that for him, the opposite of benign is exciting):

East Timor was pretty benign as well, from our perspective. We were just flying in and out. Afghanistan was a little bit more exciting [...] The self-protection kits [on the aircraft] they popped every now and then, so when they go off you, you can only assume someone's shot something at you, yeah. So that's always exciting. But again you know you get dressed up, and you get into character, you get all your weapons and your armour and all that kind of stuff on, it's just a feeling you get and, preparing for battle I guess, yeah.

When I asked *What character do you get into?* Anthony replied laughing, *oh, your going-to-war character!* Thus, Anthony speaks of himself as taking on a role for war that is not his everyday identity, which requires some sort of transformation. An integral part of this appears to be putting on his uniform and weapons, which in this passage seem almost like a costume. When I asked *did you feel safe when you were over there?* Anthony replied, reminiscent of Brian striding around the tarmac, *Oh we were ten foot tall and bulletproof [laughs]*. When asked what place he sees the Gulf War as having in his life as a whole, Anthony said *Well it's just a, I think it was just an experience, [stammer] it's umm, I guess it was a slice out of my life, you take it away and, yeah.* The Gulf War was a slice *out of* his life, not an integrated part of his life as a whole. The airman in the photos above was also getting into character- into a soldier that would have a gun to someone's temple.

A similar reframing of photographs occurs in Album 1.

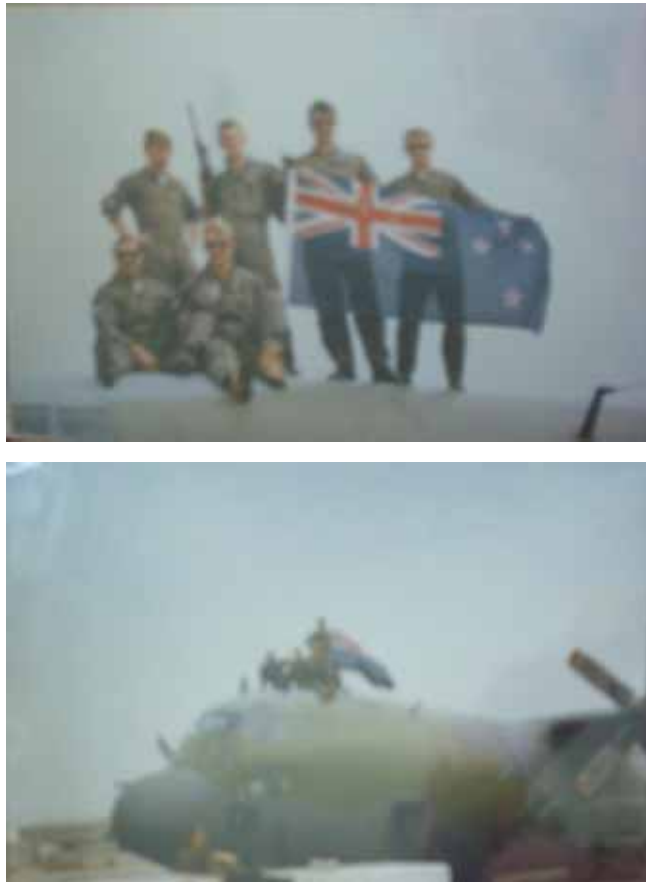


Figure 6: Airmen pose on top of their Hercules with the New Zealand flag.

When we came to these two very patriotic (the flag) and gung-ho (the raised gun) photos, the compiler said, *that's us in our war pose*. To pose means “to assume or hold a physical attitude” but it can also mean, and thus to some extent carries the connotation of, “to present oneself insincerely” (*Pose*, 2008). At the least, a posed picture is not a candid picture- it does not show the airmen as they would be on a normal day. The following two photos appear in the same album:



Figure 7: Airmen in the Hercules with rifles and a quarter of a million rounds of ammunition.

The airman said of these *Okay, so we're doing the old war shots there, you know. Pretty ridiculous really, isn't it, when you look back on it. It's pretty embarrassing actually.* Thus, he has an awareness that he and his friends were deliberately arranging themselves in war-like poses to construct themselves as soldier heroes, and his older self is now embarrassed by this.

Whilst taking me through their photo albums, the compilers of Albums 1 and 3 are not still trying to construct themselves as the soldier heroes that the pictures taken 16 years ago present. This does not, however, mean that the photo albums do not present the men as having been at war. The photos examined so far are reframed as play and come across as not entirely sincere because their central elements are rifles or fighter jets, but operating combat aircraft and guns was not 40 Squadron's role in the Gulf. Saying that they were playing when they presented themselves as men who would use them does not invalidate that had another, different role in the war. There is another type of photograph in the albums in which 40 Squadron are again posed with elements of the war that were not in their purview. These can be classified as tourist photographs, and they mirror Rob's description of the battle zones he flew over as *touristy* sites.



40 Squadron airman and Scottish nurses in front of a burnt-out Boeing 747, Kuwait International Airport.



Airman standing on top of a shot-down Scud Missile booster



Airman sitting on empty Patriot Missile canisters



Airman sitting in an OV-1 Mohawk (military observation and attack aircraft)

Figure 8: 40 Squadron posed with war scenes.

Although in the above photos and all those like it, 40 Squadron are in war scenes, they are not of them. They are not interacting with the machinery or technology in a soldier role. They are not piloting the planes or launching the missiles. Rather, they are posed with them- perched on used patriot canisters, hugging in front of plane wrecks, oriented towards and looking straight at the camera rather than towards the aircraft's controls. These are tourist photos in that 40 Squadron have gone and visited something fascinating and have then taken photos of themselves with it, as one would with the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Three of the four above photos (and two of those below) actually come from two trips made after Iraq had surrendered, to Kuwait City after it was liberated, and a thank you visit made to the Patriot Battery situated across the road from where 40 Squadron was stationed. The photos are very similar to photos in the exact same albums that would automatically be recognised as tourist shots- the ones in which 40 Squadron are posed with objects of interest in Saudi Arabia.



Airman with shot down Scud Missile booster



Airman in front of King Fahd International (Football) Stadium



Airman with used Patriot Missile canisters



Same airman in front of Riyadh's Old Fort

Figure 9: Comparison between photographs posed with war weaponry and with Saudi Arabian tourist attractions.

The poses of the same men in both groups of photos are almost identical. The men have positioned themselves in the same way in photos with used weaponry as in photos of Riyadh's tourist attractions: casually leaning up against the item of interest with hands on hips. 40 Squadron were tourists to these aspects of the war.

Candid Pictures

When we look at photos that depict the aspects of the war in which 40 Squadron *was* involved, the difference is clear. 40 Squadron's role was support, and the elements that made up their war were fixing and flying transport planes, and coming under Scud missile attack.



Figure 10: 40 Squadron's workspace at King Khalid International Airport.



Photos of 40 Squadron's workspace appear in the albums (notice the spare Hercules prop in the right corner of the top left and right of these photos for example). The difference between these photos and the others examined so far is immediately obvious: these photos are candid. A photo has been taken of the scene as the action was taking place. Men in the photos are stretching and walking around and drinking coffee, not, for the most part, posing. These photos are less frequent in the albums- but who does not take more photos of fascinating tourist type attractions than of themselves at work? Further, one album compiler said that most of the photos were taken after Iraq had been defeated, as cameras was rarely taken out before then. He implied that taking photographs may have been banned. There are also candid photos of air raids, in which the men are just sitting or lying around. As the handwritten caption in the top right photo illustrates, (*Routine (almost nightly) wait for all clear*), this was a regular part of their war.



Figure 11: 40 Squadron in gas masks during air raids.



There is also one photo of a Patriot missile intercepting a Scud (that must have been circulated as it turns up in two albums) that cannot have been pre-arranged:



Figure 12: Patriot Missile intercepts a Scud outside 40 Squadron's hotel room.

In fact, 40 Squadron's role in and therefore view of the conflict was very similar to contemporary media representations of the Gulf War. Cheney described a typical news report: "We heard air raid sirens and saw the moving lights of missiles over Dhahran, then we were shifted to a close-up of a jet engine before take-off" (1993, p.72). Air raids and aircraft: 40 Squadron's experience exactly. The image of the war iconic enough to make the cover of Time Magazine on January 28, 1991 was a shot of the lights of battles in the sky.



Figure 13: Cover of Time Magazine, January 28, 1991

In the case of the Gulf War, the media were in a similar position to 40 Squadron. My informants were support troops, and the media in the Gulf were journalist-REMFs compared with the Michael Herrs¹⁷ of Vietnam. The American military believed, rightly or wrongly (most think wrongly), that media coverage of the Vietnam War, especially of the Tet Offensive of 1968, and the subsequent decline in public support for the war, led directly to American defeat (See, for example, Fox, 1995, pp.136-137; Hoskins, 2004, p.34; Taylor, 1992, p.26). There would therefore be no journalists roaming around the Gulf at will as in Vietnam. A strict media pool system was implemented in which only a certain number of journalists were attached to military units and the rest had to remain back in Riyadh (where, of course, 40 Squadron were). Those that were attached to units had to follow rigorous guidelines and their copy was censored (For detailed explanations of the pool system see Fox, 1995; Taylor, 1992). By 1995 Walsh could still write that “not a single photo of the ground war battle was ever released publicly” (1995, p.7). Thus, the images that circulated in the public sphere and came to represent the war did not come from the frontlines, but rather were those shots that could be taken in the rear, along with videos provided by the military in press briefings. Shots taken in the rear consisted of “endless shots of planes taking off and landing”; machines firing projectiles; and the “fireworks extravaganza” of patriot and scud duels (Engelhardt, 1994, p.90). Shots of Scud-Patriot duels became

¹⁶ Retrieved 30 November 2007 from <http://www.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,7601910128,00.html>

¹⁷ Michael Herr is a former war correspondent who spent time with various combat units whilst reporting from the frontlines in Vietnam, as detailed in his memoir *Dispatches* (1977). He traveled around Vietnam at his own discretion, catching rides on American helicopters.

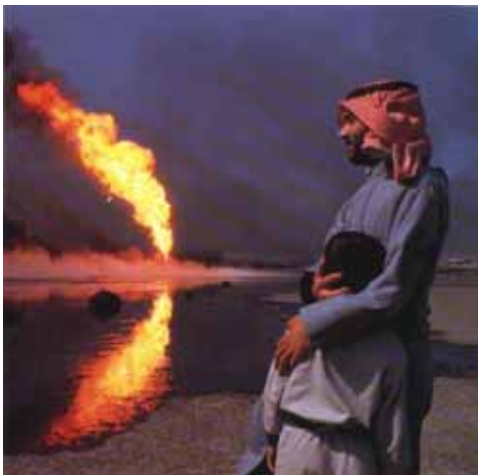
prevalent, even though they may have been only “a small facet of the overall conflict” because the majority of the media, confined to the rear, seized on the chance to be able to report a facet of the war from their own point of view, rather than relying on official channels (Taylor, 1992, p.68). The videos provided in press briefings meanwhile were primarily footage shot from the nose-cones of “smart weapons” as they detonated on targets (Brothers, 1997, p.210; Fox, 1995, p.144), as the U.S. were discursively emphasising amazing new technology over what could be more divisive policy issues. Thus, shots focused on planes and missile attacks became the dominant visual vocabulary of the war. Because New Zealand journalistic presence in the Gulf region during the war was negligible (Donoghue, 1991, pp.29-30; McCulloch, 1991, pp.26-27), it was these primarily British and American media images that represented the Gulf War for New Zealanders, and these sorts of images that they might expect to see in a visual record of the war (such as an album from 40 Squadron). Moreover, 40 Squadron themselves saw these images, before and around the time that they put their albums together. The compiler of Album 1 was one of a few airmen sent over a little later than the main group, but says *When Desert Storm kicked off, I mean I was like everybody else in the squadron, I was watching it on TV. I was watching the [...] tomahawks or whatever they were, going down the, the cruise missiles going down the street, you know, on TV. And we were going, “shit, that’s amazing,” you know.* 40 Squadron also received New Zealand and British newspapers in Riyadh, from family and from nightly British supply flights.

Hoskins uses the term media ‘flashframes’ to discuss such iconic images. He defines flashframes as “images seemingly burned into history through their use as visual prompts in news programmes and other media so that they are instantly and widely recognized as representing a particular event or moment in history” (2004, p.6). Images of patriot missiles say “1991 Gulf War”. Instant recognition and association occurs because certain events are “image-driven into social and global memory via their repetition on television and across other media” (Hoskins, 2004, p.7). Two other key flashframes of the Gulf War, oil fires and the Highway of Death on the road to Basra, appear in 40 Squadron’s albums. An element of Iraq’s scorched earth policy during its retreat was the firing of Kuwait’s oil wells. Saddam had of course also been angered by Kuwait’s over production of oil. Within days of the fires being set, as hundreds of oil wells burned, engulfing Kuwait with poisonous smoke (as described

by Brian) the coalition released aerial photographs (Taylor, 1992, p.260). Photos taken closer up also shortly surfaced. The below, for example, appear in *The Sunday Times*' pictorial history of the war, published the same year the war ended, 1991 (Witherow and Sullivan, 1991).



Figure 14: Images in the public sphere of Kuwaiti oil fields on fire (Witherow & Sullivan, 1991, pp.190, 171 & back cover).



The albums of 40 Squadron also contain photos of these fires (many taken from the Hercules overhead):

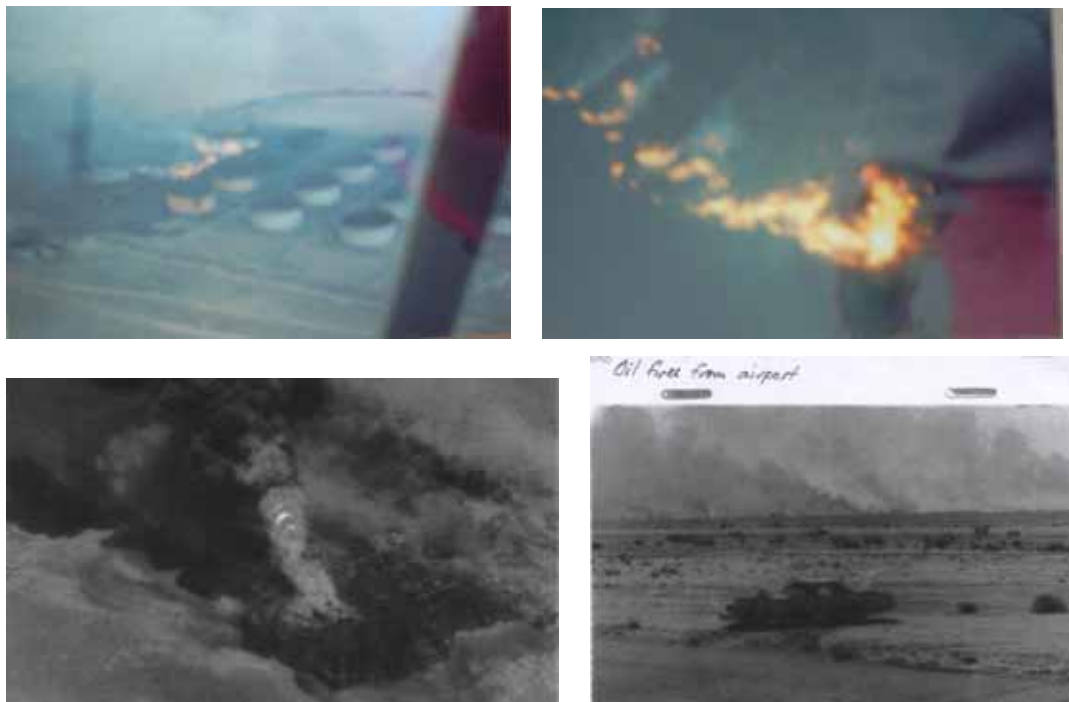


Figure 15: Images in 40 Squadron's albums of Kuwaiti oil fields on fire.

The Highway of Death refers to a road, Highway 80, which runs between Kuwait and the Iraqi city of Basra. On the night of February 26- February 27 1991 Iraqi army units tried to retreat along it and were attacked and cut off by American aircraft in what is commonly referred to as a “turkey shoot.”



Figure 16: Images in the public sphere of the Highway of Death (Witherow & Sullivan, 1991, p.166; *Highway of Death*, 2008).

40 Squadron again took photos of this icon from their aircraft:



Figure 17: Images in 40 Squadron's albums of the Highway of Death.

In the same way that the dominant, humble Anzac war narrative made it relatively easy for support troops to narrate themselves a place in it, this visual vocabulary of the war enables 40 Squadron to compile photo albums that include good examples of it. 40 Squadron did not serve on the frontline, and thus do not have pictures from the frontline, but neither did journalists get to the frontline. Thus if you look at their images side by side, there does not appear to be anything missing from those of 40 Squadron, as say there might be if it was another war in which photos from the front are a dominant part of the visual public record. Had 40 Squadron served in the rear in World War One, for example, photos taken in the trenches would be conspicuously

¹⁸ (Pryce, 2001, p.31).

absent. The photos in 40 Squadron's photo albums are very similar to the predominant media images, and they have shots taken by themselves of the iconic images of the war; and this, of course, constructs them as having been a part of the war. Having a photo that may be indistinguishable from one that ran in the news, but that was taken by your own hand, locates you within the wider event. As in Dennis' narrative, the photo albums construct 40 Squadron as having been a part of the war by "proving" that they experienced those icons that represent the Gulf War internationally; whilst the fact that the photographs of some aspects of the war can be categorised as tourism or play show that 40 Squadron was involved with only one aspect, and was just one cog, in a vast operation.

Although the informants therefore reframed the soldier hero photographs, many of the histories and identities constructed within the photo albums are still meaningful to them today. Identities constructed in the interviews come clearly through the photo albums as well. A large part of the albums is taken up with not only repeated photos of the RNZAF aircraft that 40 Squadron worked with, but also with various other planes and war technology that they encountered and found exciting: refuellers, tankers, helicopters, gunships, C-5 Galaxies, Mohawks, Iroquois, C-141 Starlifters, GR4 Tornado bombers, A-10 Thunderbolts, Marine Corps Hummers, smart bombs. This emphasis speaks of the men's career, undertaken for a love of planes and engineering; many of them are still in this career or are in the same field. The albums also construct 40 Squadron as men who take on and complete challenges. A scrapbook compiled by one of 40 Squadron during the war and around the same time as he was making a photograph album has the effect of categorising the Gulf deployment as a challenge completed; articles and mementos from the war are intermingled with and therefore conflated with one of New Zealand manhood's biggest challenges, the Coast to Coast. These articles include small clippings from local newspapers reporting on how this particular 40 Squadron member was forced to pull out of 1991's event to go to the Gulf, and a letter from the organisers acknowledging this and confirming his registration for the next year. This veteran cites winning an Allied Forces Fun Run at the American compound as one of the major events of his war. The albums also feature photos of other such mini challenges: volleyball matches, rugby matches, a huge rock in the middle of the desert that everybody decided to climb whilst on a Christmas day picnic.



Figure 18: 40 Squadron in volleyball and rugby matches.



Figure 19: 40 Squadron climbing a rock on Christmas Day, 1990.

Finally, one group of posed photographs that were not given new meaning when the compiler showed them to me construct 40 Squadron as having been on an adventure in the Gulf. These photographs, in which members of 40 Squadron are posed with icons of the war, were taken for a very specific and explicit purpose.



Figure 20: Airmen read *Adventure Magazine* sitting on a Scud missile that has been shot down.

Sitting on top of a *Scud that got shot down [...] not far away from the hotel* in which they were staying, the compiler of Album 1 and a friend in the above photo are reading a magazine. The airman first pointed this photo out to me in order to illustrate the fact that a Scud had been targeted quite close to them. He then explains the objective of this photograph: *So we're reading Adventure Magazine here so we can get in Adventure Magazine. It's like, read an Adventure Magazine in strange places and get published, and we did, so.* He says that they *did what we could* to get a photo of themselves published in a regular column in *Adventure Magazine* in this way. Thus throughout Album 1 there are other such photographs of airman reading *Adventure Magazine*, such as the one below posed in front of a burnt-out Boeing 747 at Kuwait International Airport. British Airways Flight 149 had landed for refueling a few hours after Iraq invaded Kuwait on 1 August 1990, and was subsequently captured and destroyed.



Figure 21: Airmen read *Adventure Magazine* in front of burnt-out Boeing 747, Kuwait International Airport

These photos, then, were knowingly and purposefully taken to present the airmen in them as being in a *strange place* and on an adventure, in order to be featured in a magazine that showcased adventure. When a few of their pictures were in fact published in the magazine, it served as public recognition and display that they had been on an adventure. One of the photos published was taken in front of the 747. Unsurprisingly, however, in line with the general trend of the New Zealand media, *Adventure Magazine* chose not to publish the photo in which the men have conquered and are dominating over the enemy's attempt to harm them- straddling a now harmless Scud - and instead went with a picture of one of the airman reading the magazine on a hospital stretcher.

Summary

40 Squadron's photo albums, compiled just after their Gulf deployment, are the only narratives that I have examined in which my informants explicitly construct themselves as combatants rather than support troops. However, much like Brian remembering his lad days, when the compilers of these albums took me through them 16 years later, they narrated their past selves, who took and arranged these photos, as playing or fooling around. They do not now claim a combatant identity. This does not however mean that the photo albums do not construct 40 Squadron as having been at war (albeit in a support role). This is achieved through use of the dominant visual vocabulary of the Gulf War. The albums also construct the deployment as a part of their career, a challenge and an adventure. Thus, although the albums tell a slightly different story to 40 Squadron's interviews, in the present day their compilers bring them in line with their interviews by reframing those photos that originally attempted to construct an identity that they do not now narrate. 40 Squadron narrate the identities of professional airmen who served in a war, men who overcame a challenge, and former lads that during this experience played around with the idea of being soldier heroes.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

I suggested at the beginning of this thesis that the narrative construction of subjectivities and nationhood go hand in hand, and are in fact outcomes of the same processes. Nations are constructed through narratives told about their citizens, with idealised subject positions constituted as being occupied by certain groups, which come to embody the country. These narratives both describe the nation as it wishes to represent itself to others - the characteristics of its citizens are the characteristics of the nation- and, at home, provide “a cultural focus around which the national community [can] cohere” (Dawson, 1994, p.1), giving citizens that will never meet a common basis upon which they can imagine their connection. Grounded upon ideal identities as they are, these national narratives/discourses provide subject positions which individuals of the nation take up in the narration of their own life stories. Because these discourses are the valued narratives of the nation the subject positions they provide carry high rewards for those who can occupy them. One of these rewards is the likelihood that resultant subjectivities will receive public affirmation, and that the individual will therefore achieve subjective composure- the establishment of “a version of the self which can be lived with in relative psychic comfort” (Summerfield, 1998, p.17). Individuals who deploy national discourses in this way not only achieve subjective composure for themselves, but simultaneously contribute to keeping the national discourse in question in circulation and thus perpetuating the national identity that it constitutes. In this thesis I have explored these processes through the case study of one event: the deployment by the Royal New Zealand Air Force of 40 Squadron servicemen to the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Because nation-states themselves tend to emerge out of wars over boundaries or sovereignty, and because wars are then one of the few ways in which already established nations can test themselves against each other and in the process display their abilities and qualities on the global stage, narratives of war tend to be central to the nation, and certainly are in New Zealand. The subject position of soldier hero, then, tends to carry high rewards.

What makes the particular case of New Zealand and the Gulf War distinctive is the fact that both the event and its narration occurred during a period of two significant transformations in the narratives that were available for participants to draw on in telling their own stories. The first of these transitions was in stories told about New Zealand, and therefore, because these stories constitute rather than merely describe the nation, in the national identity of New Zealand itself. Through telling stories of its involvement in peacekeeping missions rather than wars, New Zealand sought to be recognised as a humanitarian nation, rather than the martial nation it had traditionally constituted itself as. Similarly, the second transition was in war stories and therefore in what it might mean for an individual to go to war. Western veteran accounts of the Gulf War were of career fulfillment, rather than narratives of disrupted lives and subsequent personal transformations, as had come out of the wars that took place earlier in the 20th Century. These transformations are of course not unrelated to each other, and take place in the context of wider changes in the realms of international relations and warfare. A nation making the choice to deploy troops to an overseas conflict to keep the peace rather than to wage war, or simply not sending them at all, arises out of the particular circumstances of the late 20th and Early 21st Centuries. So too does the fact that it was career servicemen rather than volunteers or the conscripted who were deployed to the Gulf War. This is a very different scenario than that of the World Wars.

I noted in the introduction that even those citizens who occupied such privileged subject positions as males and/or Pākehā may not be able to successfully deploy the dominant national narratives of events in which they were involved in order to make sense of those experiences and achieve subjective composure. This is the case for the men of 40 Squadron and the national discourse of New Zealand's deployment to the Gulf War despite the fact that they were constituted as exemplars and sources of that very discourse. By narrating that 40 Squadron were not involved in warlike activities except as passive victims, the government and media of New Zealand constructed a peacekeeping nation. This however did not interact well with the discourse that provided the subject position in which many 40 Squadron members were invested. This was the emerging career discourse, which made available the subject position of "true" soldier who has put his professional training to its ultimate test in an environment of war. To occupy this subject position, a 40 Squadron member has to

narrate that he was “at war” in the Gulf. 40 Squadron then were in the difficult position of belonging to the Armed Forces of a nation that was in the process of redefining itself through peace. Today, a large proportion of them are invested in the identity of war veteran in a country in which, to re-quote Harper, citizens “have tended to regard military tradition and ceremony with great suspicion and hostility” (2005, p.13). Thus despite belonging to society’s most powerful groups, 40 Squadron actually face some of the same challenges that marginalised groups do: their subjectivities are appropriated to narrate the nation in a way that does not match their lives as they experience them. In the same way that Maori may struggle to occupy an urban subject position because narratives of the nation constitute authentic Maori culture as “simpler” (Thomas, 1994, p.185) than that of the bustling city, 40 Squadron have difficulties occupying a war veteran subject position because narratives of the nation constitute them as not having been “at war.” However 40 Squadron are not as marginalised, because they can still draw on other dominant discourses in structuring their narratives, discourses that allow them to occupy subject positions that actually have a longer and much more embedded history than that of supporter of peacekeeping and decier of war. I refer here not only to the subject positions of Pakeha and/or male but also to the subject positions available in the more established war discourses- the patriotic narrative and especially the Anzac Spirit- which continue to circulate in the public sphere. These discourses are still available to draw on because the two transitions are either partial, as in the National Government’s merging of the new peacekeeping discourse with the older Anzac Spirit, or as of yet incomplete.

The two transitional periods identified in this thesis- from New Zealand as warrior to New Zealand as peacemaker, and from war as disruptive and transformative to war as fulfillment of training undertaken in everyday life- have not yet ended; and indeed will probably not do so anytime soon. What is happening is that both patriotic/disillusionment and career narratives are being told simultaneously. So too are stories of New Zealand willingly going to war and stories of New Zealand forsaking war to encourage peace. Narratives of World War One still circulate in New Zealand, especially in Anzac Day memorial services, which have actually enjoyed a resurgence of popularity in the last few years. Veterans of World War Two and Vietnam, meanwhile, now old men, are still telling their stories. In the case of some

individuals, especially World War Two veterans, they are telling their stories for the first time as they near the end of their lives, and are being encouraged to do so by historians so that knowledge is not lost to future generations. At the same time, veterans of the 1991 Gulf War are beginning to tell their stories. The stories of World War Two and Vietnam are still being primarily told through the discourses associated with each war (the patriotic and disillusionment narratives, respectively) whilst those of the Gulf War are told through the career discourse. In the case of New Zealand, stories of World War Two especially are also still narrated through the Anzac discourse in its original form, as it was consolidated in the battles, such as Crete, that these stories describe. Some of those stories used as examples of the Anzac Spirit in Chapter Three, for example, were published mere years before my informants told me their stories in 2007. Donald's *In Peace and War: A Civilian Soldier's Story* was published in 2005; Hutching et al's collection of veteran accounts from the Pacific War and Parr's collection of stories about D-Day were both published in 2006. Furthermore, the Anzac discourse continues to circulate in society because of its deployment in narratives beyond those of wars, and the continuing power of the subject position of the humble yet proficient Kiwi male within it, as was demonstrated in January 2008 when it was almost uniformly drawn upon to structure the many stories told about Sir Edmund Hillary at his death. Therefore, all of these discourses and narratives circulate in the same public sphere at the same time. Thus the fact that the transitions are drawn-out and incomplete- and we will not know if the career discourse will become as embedded in society or even the military as the Anzac discourse until at least the memoirs of the Second Gulf War and recent New Zealand peacekeeping missions are written – means that there is an unusually large selection of soldier narratives available for 40 Squadron to draw upon. This thesis identifies five discourses that could be used by a New Zealand serviceman to interpret his Gulf War experience: the patriotic, disillusionment, Anzac, peacekeeping, and career discourses. That agents do select from amongst discourses to narrate events in certain ways for their own concerns and to achieve subjective composure is shown by the fact that one event- 40 Squadron's deployment to the Gulf- is defined in three different ways (as a holiday, a peacekeeping mission, and an instance of being at war) in narratives in this thesis. In fact, there was not one discourse that was common to each and every 40 Squadron narrative, not even the career discourse- Geoff did not narrate that he needed to go to war to realise his training. 40 Squadron could reject the

national peacekeeping discourse, which did not work for them, because of the choice provided by the period of transition. Most importantly, they could reject the peacekeeper identity assigned to them by the Government and media because narrating a story through those other choices still offered social recognition. These other discourses provided subject positions that could produce subjectivities that would not only be affirmed but which are in fact highly valued. Dennis and Eric, by drawing on the Anzac discourse in their own accounts, could claim the same subject position as a man who was very recently lauded as a hero: Willie Apiata. And many of the men could claim full soldierhood through the career discourse, an identity likely to be valued, if not in the nation at large, then at least in the military in which they spend their days.

Since constructing 40 Squadron as peacekeepers was the way in which the government and media narrated New Zealand as a humanitarian, anti-war nation in the early 1990s, it would follow that by constructing a different subjectivity for themselves, 40 Squadron potentially challenge the narrative of the nation. It would seem that Dennis, for example, narrates the older martial nation, whilst Stephen narrates New Zealand as having the same goals as nations such as the United States, whose martial polices are now constituted as misguided in the peacekeeping discourse. However, 40 Squadron's rejection of the peacekeeper subjectivity does not threaten the peacekeeping nation. There are two reasons for this, and both relate to the transition from war stories as narratives of change to war stories as narratives of career fulfillment.

40 Squadron's stories do not circulate in the public sphere. There are comparatively few veterans to tell them, and the Gulf War did not become an event of lasting interest in New Zealand. One informant said that besides me, he has not *found anybody else who's ...showed any interest really*. I would argue that the type of war stories told by 40 Squadron would not be likely to be sought out or favoured by the civilian public. Stories of support troops have never been favoured as battle narratives have (Vernon, 2004, p.3), and furthermore, career narratives tend not to be as exciting or thrilling as traditional transformative war stories. An example of this can be seen in the reception of the movie version of Swofford's memoir *Jarhead*, which 40 Squadron veteran Ken identified with and described as *bloody excellent*. Movie critics did not agree, finding

it boring. The movie focused on Swofford's frustration and tedium at his unit's lack of action in the Gulf; resulting in him being unable to realise his training and become a "true marine" (Swofford, 2003, p.247). Whilst the critics understood that this was the point, they did not feel it made a war good story. "Why didn't the movie take a more obvious pro-war or anti-war stance?" asked Wuntch, for example. "By not applying a pro-or-anti measuring tape" – that is, either a patriotic or a disillusionment narrative- "the film loses some dramatic momentum". For Wuntch, war is an event so portentous that it must be divisive. Not taking a pro- or anti- stance, but rather framing war as a career like any other career which does not need to be constantly questioned and debated, is an unsatisfactory construction. Wuntch seems to have trouble relating to a career serviceman, writing that Swofford "sometimes lacks the Everyman sense of empathy necessary in most war films" (2005). The lack of either of the extremely familiar formulas of transformation into a hero or awakening disillusionment also had David Denby of *The New Yorker* labeling *Jarhead's* plot "unstructured" (*Jarhead (Film)*, 2008). Vaux wrote that "the film becomes as much of an ordeal for the audience as it is for the Marines it portrays" (Vaux, 2005), and Vice "[the lack of action is] supposed to reflect the real-life experiences of troops who served in the first Gulf War — in particular, the boredom and tedium between actual fighting. But instead, the film itself feels a little boring and tedious" (2005). Most tellingly, Vice also states that *Jarhead* shows snippets of the famous Vietnam War movie *Apocalypse Now* (Swofford and his friends watch it to hype themselves up for war), "which may make you wish you were watching it instead" (2005). Similarly, Wright writes "the most involving moments take place when the characters watch other war movies" (2005). The career discourse may be becoming more common amongst veterans writing their memoirs, but war stories told through it have not received public approbation. Here movie critics, powerful members of the public whose job it is to advise people on which narratives it is worthwhile to partake in, rejected the career discourse, which then has limited circulation in the public sphere. In the course of preparing this thesis I had a conversation in which I attempted to explain the career discourse to fellow civilians who almost immediately interrupted to disagree that that could not possibly be the way in which servicemen frame war. The idea of war as normalised, always present as a possibility in one's career, rather than a major disjuncture in one's life, is still unfamiliar, even disturbing. Even McNab's *Bravo Two Zero*, which contains a lot of action, is a strange and uncomfortable read

for a civilian expecting a traditional war story, due to his insistence that capture and torture did not affect him. Only one of my informants, Eric, narrated some personal change because of war, and it was not a driving force in his story. Because the public has not *[shown] any interest*, 40 Squadron's stories of their deployment as they experienced it have not been taken up in the narratives of the nation.

The second reason that 40 Squadron's rejection of peacekeeper subjectivities does not threaten the idea of the peacekeeping nation is that they do not appear to be *trying* to narrate the nation. War stories told through the career discourse do not feature the nation to the same degree that traditional patriotic or disillusionment narratives did. Both of those discourses were structured by the protagonist's desire to serve his country. In the first, he does so in a blaze of patriotism and through his heroism and sacrifice glorifies his nation's name. In the second he realises that national propaganda has fooled and exploited him, and thus feels betrayed. But the stories told by 40 Squadron, although they include references to the nation, are not structured in relation to it. Rather, it is a man's individual career that provides the framework for the narrative. In this discourse, a man goes to war primarily, or at the least equally, to achieve career fulfillment for himself, rather than *sacrificing* himself and his interests to the nation in its time of need. Even recruitment methods have reflected this change. During the World Wars, propaganda posters encouraged recruitment by employing patriotism. The quintessential such poster is that featuring the United States' Uncle Sam, who points and stares directly at the viewer whilst big letters announce "I want you for the U.S. Army." Because Uncle Sam is an embodiment of the United States, this poster effectively represents the nation itself calling out for help. In New Zealand, Uncle Sam's role, embodiment of the nation, was sometimes played by the everyman soldier (See, for example, King, 2003, p.165). Nowadays, however, as seen in Chapter Five, such patriotism has been replaced by a focus on personal challenges and offers to enhance an individual's skills and professional life. Most of 40 Squadron did not consistently or purposefully speak to the narrative of the nation. If their construction of war veteran or tourist rather than peacekeeping subjectivities also narrated the nation, it was a by-product rather than a primary aim. The nation's story of the Gulf War had more effect on 40 Squadron than 40 Squadron's stories of the Gulf War have ever had on the nation.

Even though they do not draw on the dominant national discourse of the Gulf War to achieve subjective composure, nationhood was integral to the identity projects of the men of 40 Squadron. When they told their war stories to me, a civilian, of a different generation and a different gender, the most obvious way in which we belonged to the same community and were connected was as citizens of the same nation. The story that they could expect me to have heard of the Gulf War was the one that had been used to construct New Zealand nationhood: the peacekeeping discourse. Although 40 Squadron for the most part narrated their war and identities through the international career discourse, they could not escape the influence of national discourses. They might feel they have more in common with a British McNab or an American Swofford, but it is a New Zealand audience which in their day to day lives must recognise and affirm their stories and identities. This is, I suggest, why the national peacekeeping discourse of the war was such a threat to their desire to achieve subjective composure through narrating that they had realised full soldierhood by going to war. A New Zealand male could not tell a story in the exact same way as did Swofford, no matter how connected he may feel to Swofford's dilemma. In a society in which men are supposed to be stoic, no matter which war discourse is currently being employed, a Kiwi male could not write "during the darkest nights you'd even offer your life to go back in time" as Swofford does (2003, p.247). The reason they could escape being determined by the peacekeeping discourse was that they had other choices, other discourses that offered valued subject positions. And those other discourses and subject positions were, of course, also those that had at an earlier stage been used to construct the nation. The 40 Squadron member that countered the peacekeeping narrative the most effectively used another national narrative (the Anzac discourse) to do so. Just an older one.

There was an inherent lack of fit between the identity project of New Zealand as focused on the Gulf War, and the identity projects of the New Zealand citizens who directly participated in that event. Because 40 Squadron's own narratives did not fit into the narrative of the emerging peacekeeper nation, they have been suppressed. Their participation was under-acknowledged at the time of the war, as the Government and media focused their narrative attentions on the humanitarian medical team. This state of affairs seems to only have been exacerbated over the years, as the 2007 newspaper article which defined New Zealand's participation in the war solely

through the medical teams, without once mentioning 40 Squadron, shows (Eaton, 2007a, p.A7). In fact participation in the Gulf War at all did not fit well into the narrative of the nation, and hence it receives very little space in history books or museum displays. What are the implications of this lack of fit? The situation does bother many 40 Squadron servicemen, and their frustration was clear when they spoke to me. However, it has not led to them not achieving subjective composure. It is not experienced as a serious disjuncture because ultimately, many do not construct the Gulf War as pivotal to their identity. Brian constructed it as not relevant at all to his present, non-military, subjectivity. Geoff narrated that he really had no desire to be at war in the first place, and that he fulfills his career training on a day to day basis. Even some of those who are clearly invested in a military subject position do not constitute the Gulf War as key to being able to take it up. Eric constructs it as only the first and least of his war experiences; his other deployments are given more weight. Sam narrates it as a *blind alley* in his military career. Even Dennis interspersed his narrative of the Gulf War with stories from his other deployments.

The implications of the lack of fit for the national identity of New Zealand are even more minimal; one could say negligible. With 40 Squadron's own accounts of the Gulf War not circulating in the public sphere the nation's identity project has not been threatened. New Zealand has achieved continuity in its national identity. It may have seemed incongruous when earlier in this conclusion I noted that Anzac Day has recently increased in popularity, and that World War Two veterans are being encouraged to share their stories, given that I have also argued that discourses of peace are gaining ground, and that because of this 40 Squadron have struggled to narrate their experiences as war stories. However, this is not in fact contradictory. New Zealand's narrative of national identity is a life history. It is still acceptable to discuss, even commemorate, the nation's involvement in war as it relates to the World Wars, because they occurred during the nation's "childhood" or "adolescence," when it was emerging as a nation in its own right out of the role of colony. They were part of the progress towards where the nation is today. It is not acceptable for the nation to have been at war in 1991, because it has since "grown up." Like Brian, the nation has matured and now rejects war as the best solution to international conflicts. New Zealand now puts the proficiency, ingenuity and playful and humble spirit that it used to fight wars into advocating peace.

It is in times such as that outlined in this thesis, when hegemonic discourses have been disrupted, that the processes of identity construction as outlined in narrative theory can be seen most clearly. This thesis shows that individuals are not determined by discourses, but rather use them as resources, selecting those that will best allow them to achieve subjective composure to structure their personal accounts. What this thesis also shows, however, is how difficult it is for individuals to challenge hegemonic discourses and enact any change upon them. National narratives of certain events, told by powerful parties such as the Government and media who may not ever have experienced that event, can in fact trump the narratives told by direct participants and eye witnesses. Such national narratives most certainly “have an apparent life of their own” (Dawson, 1994, p.25).

Appendix: Information Sheet given to Participants

University of Canterbury

Anthropology Programme, School of Sociology and Anthropology

You are invited to participate as a subject in the research project *The Stories of Persian Gulf War Servicemen*.

The objective of this project is to investigate the experiences of the New Zealanders sent by their country to serve in the 1991 Persian Gulf War. I am interested in interviewing you to find out what happened over there and what the experience was like for you. I am also interested in wider life history issues, such as why you joined the Air Force, your feelings about war and things like Gallipoli and ANZAC day *before* 1991, what you expected the war to be like before you experienced it, whether it met these expectations, and whether or not you feel that the media in New Zealand represented the Gulf War accurately.

Interviews would most likely be between one and two hours long and would take place wherever you feel most comfortable, be that your place or a public space such as a café. Whether or not these interviews would be tape-recorded is up to you.

You have the right to withdraw from the project at any time, including withdrawal of any information already provided.

You may be assured of the complete confidentiality of data gathered in this investigation. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality you will be given pseudonyms. Your real names will be written only on consent forms. Any other characteristics that identify you will not be mentioned in notes or final reports. All data (notes/tape recordings) will be kept locked up and at the end of the project will be destroyed; all computerised drafts of the final report will be protected by password.

This project is being carried out as a requirement for the Master of Arts course, by Nina Harding, under the supervision of Dr. Carolyn Morris and Dr. Richard Vokes. They will be pleased to discuss any concerns you may have about participation in the project.

This project has been considered and approved by the School of Sociology and Anthropology Human Ethics Committee.

Nina Harding- phone [xxxx xxx] email njh76@student.canterbury.ac.nz

Carolyn Morris- carolyn.morris@canterbury.ac.nz

Richard Vokes- richard.vokes@canterbury.ac.nz

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