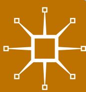

A Forgotten British War

The Accounts of Korean War Veterans

Edited by Michael Patrick Cullinane
Iain Johnston-White

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This book is dedicated to all those who served in the Korean War. We hope it will be a small but lasting memorial that goes some way to remembering.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Michael Patrick Cullinane and Iain Johnston-White

The seventieth anniversary of the Korean War, which began on 25 June 1950, passed prosaically. The global pandemic of 2020 and 2021 led to nationwide lockdowns and stay-at-home orders, suspending social gatherings of all kinds. No memorial or tribute to the surviving veterans could take place, and the inability to organize commemorative events has further dulled the public awareness of the war.

Korean War veterans are used to being overshadowed. The conflict is commonly referred to as "forgotten," a three-year clash obscured by the looming legacy of the Second World War. In the United Kingdom, the war hardly registers in popular memory despite the deployment of nearly 100,000 British and Irish soldiers to the peninsula. Veterans of the war have struggled to earn recognition for their sacrifice, and, most distressingly, successive UK governments have refused to fund memorials. Only with the help of Korean private enterprise and the South Korean government did

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the United Kingdom erect a memorial in 2014, outside the Ministry of Defence headquarters in London.

This oral history collection offers an alternative memorial as means to better observe the war, its veterans, and their service. As a published volume, the book provides a record of those who experienced the war and a platform for understanding the war's significance from those best placed to describe the circumstances. As historian Megan Hutching points out, commemoration with parades, Cenotaphs, and tombs "is a simplistic way of looking at times of conflict," designed to establish collective memories, whereas "contextualizing the individual experience" through oral histories "adds texture to those collective narratives."[1] It allows us to see the intricacy of a moment, the intimacy of action or inaction, and the emotional connections that extend from the war across a lifetime. Oral histories plumb the multitudes of human experience, revealing one person's understanding as a unique and venerable perspective. No single veteran experienced the Korean War the same way.

When the war began in June 1950, the North Korean Army attacked the South and put UN forces, including British and Commonwealth soldiers, on the back foot. The North Korean offensive pushed beyond the 38th Parallel, where the country had been divided since the Second World War. UN forces retreated to the southern city of Pusan and formed a 150-mile perimeter around it before regrouping and repelling the North Korean invasion. The UN counter-attack proved so effective that allied forces invaded North Korea in September 1950 and reached the Chinese border the following month. The proximity of UN forces prompted China to deploy the People's Volunteer Army, and, by January 1951, the front had receded back toward the 38th Parallel. There, belligerents traded positions before the war settled into a stalemate. By July 1951, trench warfare replaced the dramatic offensives and counteroffensives.[2] For soldiers that joined the war at its outset, they recall intense marching across the peninsula, makeshift engineering, and quick adaptation to new landscapes. Sergeant Raymond Rogers, a signalman in the South Staffordshire regiment, said, his war "was a very mobile action" that when compared to

[1] Megan Hutching, "After Action: Oral History and War" in Donald A. Ritchie (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 241–2.

[2] For a concise assessment of the military history, see Max Hastings, *The Korean War* (London: Simon and Schuster, 1987). For a comprehensive appraisal, see Allan Reed Millett, *The War for Korea*, 2 vols. (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2010–2015).

his friend Private Walter Coote, a rifleman in the Royal Fusiliers, seemed completely different. Coote's war, Rogers explains, "was, more or less, a stagnant one" because he arrived in 1952, after the fighting settled into the trenches. While Rogers remembers his boots wearing out from walking over mountains and through valleys, Coote talks about monotonous patrols and startling ambushes.

In July 1953, the stalemate ended with an armistice, an agreement that created a demilitarized zone across the 38th Parallel. For British and Commonwealth soldiers still arriving in Korea in 1953, their war seemed different still. Landing after the fighting ceased, Arnold Schwartzman, an artist that did his national service with the Sussex regiment, recalls soldiers clearing a mine field so he could build a temporary memorial to the Gloucester regiment that defended against Chinese troops at the Imjin River.

Each soldier's experience was remarkably different, yet they can all agree that the significance of the Korean War for world history should be apparent. It was the first major conflict of the Cold War, and it represented the militarization of competing ideologies. After the Second World War, the United States adopted the policy of "containment" to restrict the spread of communism. Although the containment policy was originally conceived as a political and economic bulwark against the Soviet Union's expansion in Eastern Europe, President Harry S. Truman viewed North Korean aggression and Chinese communism as an identical threat to American security and pursued the policy of containment in Asia. Truman's successor, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, famously equated the spread of communism to falling dominos, a chain-reaction that would end with the collapse of democracy in Asia. The same metaphor existed in Truman's day. Secretary of State Dean Acheson referred to the spread of communism as rotting apples infecting a bunch.[3] Many Korean War veterans reprise this metaphor. Royal Fusilier and Lance Corporal Mike Mogridge told interviewers that he believed the war "stopped the march of

[3] On the containment policy and the domino or apples metaphor, see Robert J. McMahon, *Dean Acheson and the Creation of an American World Order* (Lincoln, NE: Potomac Books, 2009), 53, 65. On the Korean War and early Cold War geopolitics, see William Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 3–46; William Stueck, *Rethinking the Korean War: A New Diplomatic and Strategic History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 11–60. On the legacy of the conflict for the remainder of the Cold War, see Bruce Cumings, *The Korean War: A History* (New York: Modern Library Chronicles Book, 2010), 205–21.

communism" and that if the UN had not "combatted against the North Koreans and the Chinese, virtually half the Far East would have been under communist Chinese rule."

Regardless of the domino theory's validity or the efficacy of the UN's action in Korea, British and Irish veterans understand the war in this global Cold War context, and for good reason. Setting the war in a longer history helps derive meaning from the experience. It might, for some, give purpose to their actions. It can offer an explanation for involvement. For others, it allows them to transition from the violence of the front to the peaceful domain of home. As psychiatrist Robert Jay Lifton suggests, the stories that veterans tell can allow them "to feel he had performed a dirty, but necessary job."[4] Even those that eschew customary narratives or see the war as imprudent can countenance their deployment as a product of Cold War hubris, youthful ignorance, or national duty. As varied as their experiences could be, so are the veterans' conception of the war in global history. Perhaps the only common belief they share is that the war played a crucial part in shaping our current condition, a conviction that makes the lack of public attention so frustrating.

One group has not forgotten them: the Koreans. For Koreans, the war inflicted lasting devastation. Over three million civilians died; UN bombing campaigns levelled the North; and Seoul, the capital of South Korea, fell to communist forces four times, resulting in widespread destruction of the metropolis. The wider region suffered from a prolonged refugee crisis as displaced Koreans fled to safety. The war shattered hopes of reconstruction and peace after the trauma of the Second World War. Instead, the Korean War might be seen as the first of several Asian wars that pitted imperial American or European aspirations against indigenous nationalist and communist movements. The French and American wars in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia certainly fit that description. Insurgencies in Indonesia, Burma, Thailand, and Malaysia do, as well. "The Korean War was thus the occasion for recasting containment as an open-ended, global proposition," according to historian Bruce Cumings.[5]

While many of the Cold War conflicts have since been resolved, the war in Korea endures. A force of 28,000 US soldiers under UN Command continues to patrol the 38th Parallel, as do thousands of North Korean

[4] Robert Jay Lifton, *Home from the War: Learning from Vietnam Veterans* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 39.

[5] Cumings, *The Korean War*, 219.

troops. Over the last seventy years, low-level skirmishes have erupted and faded from memory. War games annually simulate what a contemporary battle would look like.[6] The peace remains tenuous. North Korea's isolation and nuclear weapons program make it a dangerous state with unpredictable impulses. In 2017, North Korea successfully tested an intercontinental ballistic missile capable of carrying a nuclear warhead, and on several occasions, it has fired missiles into the Sea of Japan or beyond, into the Pacific Ocean. Paradoxically, signs of reconciliation sometimes follow these acts of intimidation. North Korea's Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un signed declarations of peace in 2018 with South Korean President Moon Jae-in and even entertained nuclear disarmament in a summit with President Donald Trump.[7]

The partition of Korea serves as a constant reminder of the war, and while the British and Irish public has largely forgotten, the border remains a salient part of everyday life for Koreans. Partition has not been relegated to the history books, and the veterans of the war link the past to the present, a living connection to the endurance and survival of the South Korean state. Disregarded at home, British and Irish veterans of the Korean War are revered in Seoul. The Government of South Korea invites foreign veterans back to the nation they helped save. Visits are complementary, a token of gratitude. When Brigadier Brian Parritt was awarded the prestigious Korean Order of Civil Merit in 2018, he was surprised at the extravagance and pomp with which veterans were received:

> My American grandson was in Tokyo and they flew him out as well, they paid for his taxis, and they paid for his hotel and they had a big ceremony in Seoul and then the two of us—they invited him up as well onto the stage—in front of some 2,000 people and the prime minister of Korea hung this Order around my neck and gave me a very special watch. They gave my grandson a huge bunch of flowers which he was a bit embarrassed about, but he took a rose, I think, and brought it back to his mother in Boston.

[6] On the second Korean War and episodic violence in the demilitarized zone, see Don Oberdorfer and Robert Carlin, *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History* (New York: Basic Books, 2013), 22–66.

[7] "North Korea Conducts New Intercontinental Missile Test," *BBC News*, 28 July 2017; "Koreas Make Nuclear Pledge after Historic Summit," *BBC News*, 27 April 2018; "Trump-Kim Summit: US and North Korean Leaders Hold Historic Talks," *BBC News*, 12 June 2018.

Even those who had not received a distinguished medal felt the same deep appreciation from the Koreans. Corporal Jim Tait of the British Military Police returned in 2012, amazed at the "five-star" treatment: it's "all paid for" by the Korean government, and "that's not just for us; they do it for the different countries at different times in the year." In Britain, Private William Shutt of the Royal Artillery says that Korean expats have the same regard for veterans of the war. "Nine times out of ten it's a free meal," when he goes to a Korean restaurant in London, "I couldn't get that in a British restaurant."

We believe these oral histories demonstrate a contrast in the memories we have about the Korean War. We know that perspective changes our attitudes about the past. We also recognize that oral history is shaped by the interviewers and the questions they choose to ask. Our project attempted to capture some specific elements of the experience of the British armed forces in Korea. We addressed the central questions of day-to-day life, including any interactions with Koreans, experiences of combat, and general duties. Some of these questions elicited answers that capture one's imagination with unsettling effect: veterans tell us about patrolling in complete darkness at the dead of night to locate enemy forces, when wildlife quietened and silence would suddenly descend. Private Christopher Garside of the Durham Light Infantry was one of the veterans who had to do night patrols. He calls them "the worst possible things."

Beyond these foundational topics, we asked veterans about their journey to Korea. The veterans we spoke to did not know where Korea appeared on a map. When they found out they were being sent there, they had to look it up. They told us this was overwhelmingly the case for others, too. The journey could stand out for the events that occurred on ship, the entertainment, or the interactions along the way. For some, it was the preparation that proved memorable—training, or informational lectures about mosquitos and snakes. For Private Edgar Green of the Middlesex regiment, it was the inoculations that the soldiers received on the flight deck of the ship:

> You just formed up in two single lines with your hands on your hips and then there's one medical chap one side, and one the other side. You got a jab in one arm, and a jab in the other arm, and a bit further along you got

> another jab and [then] another one. But in those days, we didn't get a fresh needle for every man like it is today. The same needle was used for the majority of the chaps. First in you had a sharp one, but if you was quite a way down the list you got a nice, blunt needle in your arm.

We were as curious about the feelings the men had when they were told they were being shipped to Korea. Most of them did not volunteer for a post on the other side of the world. Private Anthony James White of the Royal Ulster Rifles described the news as "a bit of a shock," explaining that "he didn't particularly want to go, but he wouldn't have said no." Christopher Garside felt for the family he left behind, his parents and siblings who were unhappy about his posting, but for him it "was so unknown." Others had a more positive approach. Private Jim Bridges of the King's Own Scottish Borderers volunteered to serve in Korea because he was "fed up" of the routine at his Berlin posting. He remembers having the exuberance and arrogance of youth and a desire for excitement. At the officer level, there was less space for emotional reflection. Second Lieutenant Willie Purves of the same Scottish infantry regiment explains that his feeling was that he "had been trained to command thirty men, and that was what I was going to try and do."

We asked about their equipment, a line of questions that resulted in a material history of the war. The .303 Lee-Enfield rifle, veterans said, was accurate even if it had a slow rate of fire. The unreliable submachine Sten gun had a short range and was liable to jam. The veterans thought more highly of the Bren gun, a light machine gun of Eastern European design. Other weapons got less mention, such as the water-cooled Browning, a heavy machine gun. Strikingly, these were the same weapons that had been used in the Second World War battlefields, drawing a line of continuity with a previous generation's experiences. These guns were the basis for formative stories in their upbringing before they used them in Korea. Other equipment, or lack thereof, stoked memories. Clothing could greatly differentiate. The soldiers present for the earliest phases of the conflict often found themselves poorly clad. Truly terrible winters tested the men. In the winter of 1950–1951, Korea experienced the coldest winter in recorded history to that date, a cold snap not matched until 2017. Temperatures dropped to -40°C. Tinned food and alcohol froze; handling equipment became difficult; and Major John Lane of the Royal Artillery told us he started his day with twenty minutes of calisthenics to warm his

men from their frosty slumber. Conversely, the summer brought a tortuous heat. British soldiers ditched their wool jumpers, Private Alan Maggs of the Durham Light Infantry explains, and "you just wore a pair of PT shorts and socks and boots—bare-chested at the top." As the war dragged on, the provision improved and soldiers adapted to the extreme weather.

Almost all veterans compared their kit and provisions to that provided by other armed forces. The British did not serve in isolation; in this multinational UN force, there was a likelihood of some interaction with the service personnel of other countries. Given the substantial forces committed to the conflict, Americans understandably loomed large, whether as suppliers of key equipment, as the source of medical care, or the band that played for the arriving British troops. In the first winter, American forces supplied the ill-equipped British with insulated parkas. Raymond Rogers remembers eating fistfuls of American peanut butter—then a relatively unknown food product to British taste buds. The veterans framed their alliance in terms of mostly good relations, bolstered by a consistent awareness that they were shoulder to shoulder in a shared war. Nevertheless, there were a fair number of jocular interactions. Jim Bridges tells us that when his unit heard that US troops had eaten ice cream on the front line, he and his fellow Scots hollered to the next set of Americans replacements that they had managed to "rough it three days without ice cream!"

British units also served within the Commonwealth Division comprised of Australians, Canadians, New Zealander artillery, and the Indian Field Ambulance. Private Roy Painter jealously remembered that the Australians he met got small boxes that could keep a fire lighted in their tents, and that Kiwis had a good sense of humour. Other nationalities crop up in memories, such as the Norwegian Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (M.A.S.H.) and a French battalion that drank wine with every meal.

Korea was not the only location that the soldiers experienced during their service. Some spent significant periods of time in the New Territories in Hong Kong, as an initial posting before the conflict in Korea erupted or as a site for training until they reached nineteen years of age and could be deployed in the war zone. Some saw Hong Kong only as a point of transit in and out of Korea. Likewise, Japan was a common place they visited. In the interviews we asked the veterans about periods of leave, and after the initial period of fighting it was common for soldiers to receive a seven-day "rest and recuperation" break in Japan if they were fortunate (others were not able to leave Korea). Japan was also the site of some medical care for

soldiers withdrawn from Korea with injuries. After the war, many soldiers travelled to Egypt to patrol the Suez Canal during the 1956 crisis.

Our questions considered the longer-term views that veterans hold about their time as soldiers. We asked them how they felt when they left Korea and arrived back in Britain, in addition to how their views on the conflict changed over time (if at all). We were keen to probe their feelings on the ways in which Korea has been remembered or memorialiszd and whether they considered themselves to be "veterans"—all of these themes tying in with the image of the Korean War as a "forgotten war." The general consensus was that the Korean War deserves that moniker, especially in Britain where commemoration has been inadequate. The question about being a veteran elicited a range of responses. For some, the term "veteran" is accepted without much consideration. For some, it does not feel appropriate. John Lane says that "it wasn't a word [he] would use," preferring instead an "old soldier, perhaps." For a generation following so closely behind those involved in the Second World War, it could feel uncomfortable. Anthony James White explains: "one year in the front line didn't compare much with what people in the Second World War" did, they "spent six years in that sort of situation. We really had no comparison with what they did." Others wear the term as a badge of honour, seeing the designation as one they deserve or earned.

Beyond the topics that arose from our set of questions, several other themes emerged extemporaneously. A notable example was the vast difference in experience and perspective between officers and regular soldiers. Comparative elements open up throughout the chapters, for example between the interviews of Christopher Garside, a private in the Durham Light Infantry, and Brian Parritt, a second lieutenant in the 20th Field Artillery. Both were there when the ceasefire took effect. Parritt explains how he witnessed the flares of the Chinese forces go up in a show of reds, blues, and yellows. A "huge cheer went up" around him, and he celebrated with a beer, along with the platoon commander. By contrast, Garside said the privates felt as if they "were in service one day and the next day someone said the war was over … It was all very quiet, and people were too shattered" to celebrate. When they arrived back in England, Garside was left at the port in Liverpool and had to find his way back to Durham. As a Royal Artillery officer, Parritt was returned directly to Woolwich, where his father met him from the train. Second Lieutenant Willie Purves noted of his journey aboard the ship to Korea that he had "a small cab[in], which you share with another officer or two other officers,

but I don't suppose it was much fun down in hammocks underneath." Private Edgar Green, although he didn't find it a hardship, confirms this, saying we "just slept where we were. A chap with me, we decided to sleep in one of the aircraft carrier's workshops and we slept on top of a work bench." Anthony James White explains why the experiences were so different: the British Army at the time "didn't really treat normal soldiers as intelligent people; they thought they were just cannon fodder."

Another strand that runs through the interviews is British imperialism, which is fitting for one of the last conflicts in which Britain's global empire formed a prominent backdrop. The British Empire affected how the conflict was experienced and the self-identification of the soldiers themselves. The journey to Korea represented a mini-tour of the British Empire. It was "all those red places on the map" as Arnold Schwartzman explains, the Suez Canal, Aden, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Singapore, and Hong Kong. The trip was infused with imperial encounters, including an Arab man in Aden who greeted Schwartzman with the Scottish expression "a wee deoch an doris." Many of the veterans we interviewed served within the Commonwealth Division, alongside colonies and dominions of the British Empire. John Lane describes how the fighting force was a "nucleus of colonials" before laughing and adding "and us." Lane explains the toughness of Australian soldiers as a legacy of empire: "You know, if you're a settler … you're bound to be tough." The elements of imperialism could extend to understandings of the conflict itself. Raymond Rogers describes the conflict somewhat playfully as part of the "White Man's Burden," while Christopher Garside talks about the value of the conflict in terms of saving lives, questioning whether the war was "a bit Christian, isn't it?" As these latter three examples show, the imperial dimension—perhaps more accepted as a fact at the time—is the source of gentle humour for veterans looking back from today's vantage point, providing us with a window into how the British Empire is remembered by those who lived through its demise.

And humour is central to the testimonies. There is a lot of laughter in the interviews, as the veterans recall a series of amusing anecdotes. Sometimes the laughter is wry, but often it is open and full. Indeed, humorous events punctuated the intense fear of potential, imminent, or live combat. Joking broke up the monotony of the soldier's life. These moments of emotional release appear to have left an indelible mark on the memories of most of the veterans. Of course, one must also consider how humour can help a person deal with difficult circumstances, both at the

time or in the process of recollecting. In post-interview correspondence with Jim Bridges, for example, he noted that occasional laughter was a response to his nervousness during the interview, and he hoped it had not come across as frivolity. Some of the stories, and responses to challenging circumstances, are likely to raise a smile from the reader. After John Lane recounts how he was almost killed, and left with permanent deafness by a 120mm shell that struck his observation post, the interviewer followed by asking whether Lane required medical care. Quick as a flash John responds, "Yes, half a bottle of whiskey!" Historian Joanna Bourke explains this particular function of humour: if "death could be construed as a joke," then "the terror of death was diminished."[8]

It would be impossible to discuss the war without reference to violence and death. Understandably, some veterans preferred not to discuss these aspects in any detail. Willie Purves, for example, is the only National Service Office to be awarded the Distinguished Service Order. He won this for managing an unlikely withdrawal of his own men and another platoon from a significant battle. The stranded group was without a commanding officer, making Purves's rescue even more remarkable. When asked for specific details of the events, he responds that "one doesn't like to talk" about combat. Some of the veterans are more at ease discussing the injuries they sustained than those suffered by friends or foe. Walter Coote, for example, tells us how he was flung down a slope by a fierce explosion and of his subsequent recovery in the M.A.S.H. unit. In other examples, Jim Bridges recounts how hearing air support targeting the enemy would make him cringe, knowing they would drop napalm on opposing forces. Anthony James White expresses his discomfort when his unit was commanded to fire on civilians potentially harbouring enemy forces, something he felt they should not do.

There is also a tendency among veterans to bear witness to injuries acquired by fellow soldiers. However, one of the issues facing soldiers who saw their comrades fall is eloquently captured by Christopher Garside: "if we had somebody who was killed, it was almost impossible to grieve. Because there's nowhere to grieve." Sometimes grieving was only possible after a significant passage of time. The most emotional moments of the interviews come when veterans recount visiting South Korea decades later,

[8] Joanna Bourke, "The Killing Frenzy: Wartime Narratives of Enemy Action" in Alf Lüdtke and Bernd Weisbrod (eds.), *No Man's Land of Violence: Extreme Wars in the 20th Century* (Göttingen, Germany: Wallstein Verlag, 2006), 122.

often seeing the graves of fallen comrades. Edgar Green describes how those fallen were trapped in time. "We think, crikey, they was only 19, 20, ages like that," he related, "You can't consider them like we are ourselves today, but they all gave their lives in those circumstances." We might also consider how the language of narrating war was changing. Joanna Bourke contends that 1939 marked the beginning of a shift in veterans describing war in terms of psychoanalysis and anxiety, moving away from understanding their experiences of combat in terms of instinct and fear. This process was not complete until the 1960s, putting the Korean War in the midst of this change.[9] Roy Painter, in drawing comparisons with today's generation in Iraq and Afghanistan, claims that not one soldier from Korea has post-traumatic stress resulting from their experiences. Then, in a seeming contradiction, Roy later admits to "two or three moments" of post-traumatic stress that overtook him on occasion. Others have similar scars: Christopher Garside tells us he has been treated for post-traumatic stress. Walter Coote's wife suspects Walter has experienced nightmares about the war. Mike Mogridge admits to flashbacks in recent years. The experience and long-term impact of violence and death is not foregrounded in these interviews, but it runs throughout the chapters.

A Note on Sources

The oral history project interviewed more than twenty British veterans of the Korean War. The work began through a collaboration between the University of Roehampton, the National Army Museum, and the British Korea Society, designed to mark the seventieth anniversary of the war. With the number of veterans in declining health the work felt urgent. The project would gather testimonies and allow veterans to have their say on the past. Originally, it was planned for students from the University of Roehampton to conduct interviews with the veterans, which in turn would feed into an exhibition at the National Army Museum, capped with an event commemorating the war organized by the British Korea Society and the National Army Museum. The process began in Autumn 2019, and students conducted more than a dozen interviews before the global pandemic delayed work, reshaped the way we collected testimony, and eventually cancelled plans for commemoration. In 2020, further interviews were conducted online with telecommunication software. On occasion,

[9] Bourke, "The Killing Frenzy," 109.

we returned to veterans to ask additional questions about their account. Many of them mentioned that they preferred face-to-face engagement, and we believe that in-person interviews might have generated deeper and more prolonged accounts.

As editors, we created a list of interview questions, which were reviewed and, in some cases, redesigned in collaboration with Peter Johnston of the National Army Museum and Martin Uden of the British Korea Society. Peter Johnston, for example, suggested that veterans should be asked about the equipment that they used in the conflict, a topic that garnered responses covering weaponry, food, and clothing. The connection between these questions and the potential for a future museum exhibition is clear. Seeing the objects of war alongside the accounts could bring to life the experiences of the veterans for visitors to the museum. Likewise, Peter composed the question on whether the veterans considered themselves to be "veterans"—another query to which there were many fascinating answers. Martin Uden ensured that the wording of the initial communique to veterans and the interview questions were not unintentionally limiting, with references to the armed forces replacing those of the British Army, for example. His long experience of working closely with veterans was invaluable in reaching and engaging with the former soldiers.

At the University of Roehampton, the project was incorporated into the second-year undergraduate work placement module, giving the students experience managing a project and collaboration with the culture and heritage industry. Students were invited to take part in the interview process, and received formal training from staff at the National Army Museum. They also transcribed many of the chapters. The invitation to participate extended to graduate students at Roehampton. In total, eight undergraduates and one postgraduate conducted the first round of interviews. We owe considerable thanks to this group: Maximilian John Crichton, Oskar William George Duellberg-Webb, Taylor Charlie East, Jasmine Anne Haynes-Bell, Vlad Iordachescu, Sarah Ellen Newman, Isabella Rose Smith, Jakub Strzezek, and Fouzia Syed. When the pandemic limited the students' ability to reach the veterans, we as editors conducted the remaining interviews.

The National Army Museum shared its vast expertise in oral history methods. A day-long training session, run by Robert Fleming and Jasdeep Singh, prepared students for interviewing the veterans. In addition to providing the students with a thorough oral interview preparation pack, the trainers from the National Army Museum gave students hands-on