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Military 'Manliness':

The Construction of Masculinity and Emotional Expression within Ministry of Defence Advertising Campaigns

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Aims and Background:

- **Previous paper:**

- The construct of military masculinities moderate how emotion(s) are understood and managed

- **Current paper:**

- Preliminary analysis

- Still image recruitment campaigns for The Royal Marines, Royal Air Force and The British Army.

1. Explore how these messages of being '*real*' man/recruit are constructed
2. Consider possible implications these messages have for understandings of emotion

Previous Research(1):

- Dominant discourses of **masculinity within the military endorse characteristics** such as **competitiveness** (Higate, 2005), **stoicism** (Kovitz, 2003), and **physical and mental strength** (Higate, 2003). These attributes provide the basis of a '**military masculine identity**' (Ward and Callaghan, 2012).
- Ward and Callaghan (2012):

Emotional expression and the ability to *feel* are represented as *feminised*, e.g.

*'it's **not in a man to get upset like a woman anyway**'*

(Ron).

Emotions and femininity positioned as a **hindrance and potentially life threatening**:

*'**Women will cry at the silliest things. But you can't afford that in the military environment, you can't risk that. Just the way women are, they like cuddly things that are pink and fluffy. Whereas the big boys don't cry.**'*

(Patt)

Previous Research(2):

- However, **contradictions** in previous research on how emotions are understood/managed:

*'the whole culture of the military is that you **don't talk about feelings or emotions**'*

(Marshall, 2006, p.32).

Vs.

*'**Emotion is not entirely 'unmasculine'**, rather emotional expression is dichotomised as either '**appropriately masculine**', or '**inappropriately feminine**'*

(Ward and Callaghan, 2012)

Method:

- **6 images for recruitment campaigns:**

4 Royal Marines- *presented today*

1 Royal Air Force

1 Territorial Army

- Found via Google with keywords
- Analysed using **Discourse Analysis**
- Focus on MODs interpellation of potential recruits;

‘Creators of the advertising industry realized representing and selling products also means representing and selling identities.’

(Pajnik and Lesjak-Tuse, 2002, p.281)

Background: The Royal Marines(1)

Background:

- Considered internally as the 'elite' organisation:
*'well first and foremost the **commandos they are elite** infantry, erm. They are recognised as defiantly erm the **best in this country** along with the para's in the army **and definitely one of the best units in the world.** '*
(Mark)
- Women are excluded from service, several 'explanations' have been cited to justify this exclusion:

Background: The Royal Marines(2)

Background(1):

1. Issue with creating and solidifying recruit bonds:

*'the continued **exclusion of women from ground close-combat roles was a proportionate means of maintaining the combat effectiveness of the Armed Forces** and was not based on a stereotypical view of women's abilities but on the **potential risks associated with maintaining cohesion in small mixed-gender tactical teams** engaged in highly-dangerous close-combat operations.'*

(MOD, 2010)

2. Women (and associated characteristics) put other recruits at risk

*"The UK looked at this same issue some years ago and decided this was not a good idea, in 2002 and 2008. **Thirty years of studies, reports and actual experience have shown that in direct ground combat units, the infantry, women do not have an equal opportunity to survive or to help fellow soldiers to survive.** The physical aspects of it are only part of the reason."*

(The Express, 2013)

Background: The Royal Marines(3)

Background(2):

'the nature of the activities in question and the context in which they are carried out... such exclusion...were proportionate, appropriate and necessary for the purpose of guaranteeing public security.'

(MoD, 2010)

3. Women as inferior, burdensome and (of course), 'hormonal'

- *"I think teh [the] record of women doing anything in combat situations apart from nursing behind the lines is questionable. As to them walking into combat zones carrying 60lbs of kit, I think we all know the answer to that one. Unless they are Fatima Whitbread lookalijkes [lookalikes], they will be sharing their weight around on all the unfortunate male team members. Not sure I'd give a weapon to a hormonal woman either..."*

(Thread comment from The Standard, 2013)

- Advertising campaigns largely centre on the **'It's a State of Mind'** Slogan

Analysis: The Royal Marines(1)

‘Its a State of mind’



“Ads are loaded with images of ways to be”
(Williamson 1978, 13).

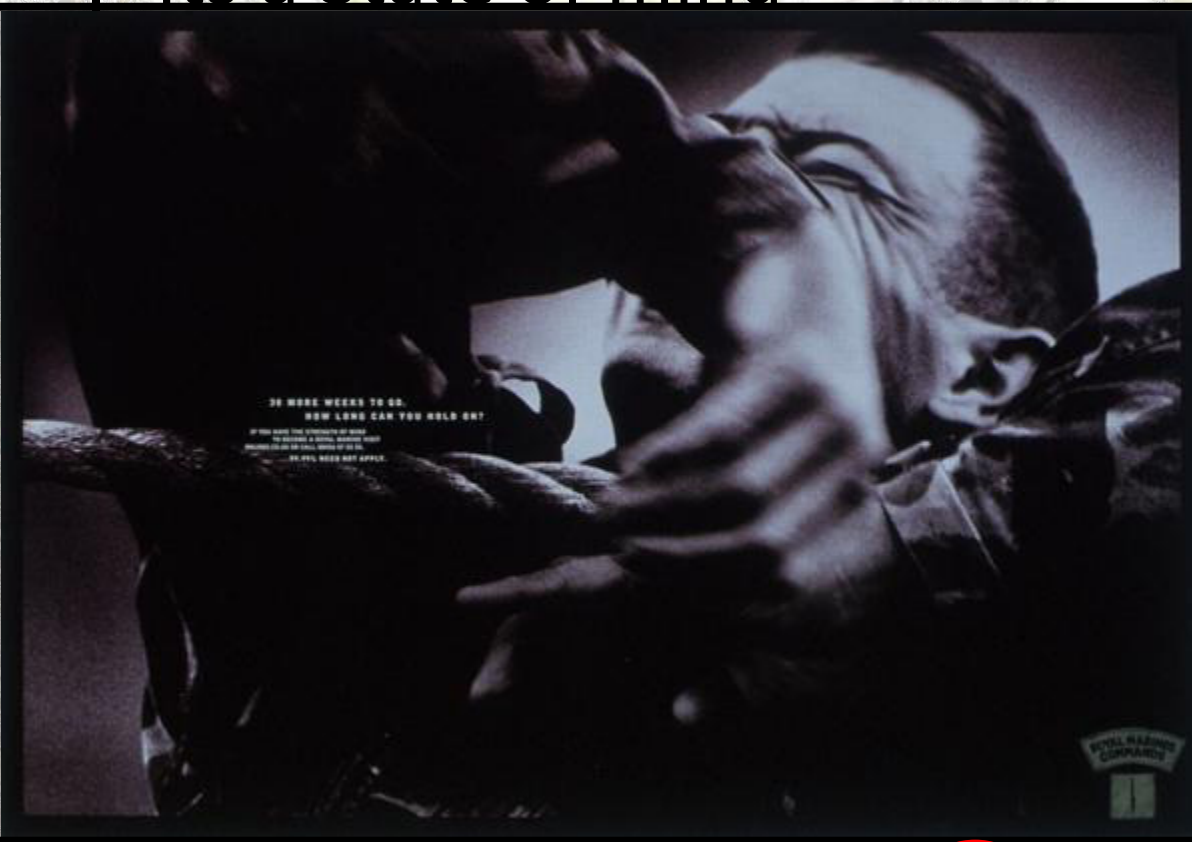
•Advertising mark,
identity of a ‘good’
Marine:

1. Competitive
 2. Overcoming perceived barriers
 3. Have initiative
 4. Obedient
- Functions to ‘sell’
images about being a
‘real’ masculine male,
with a ‘real’ masculine
career, and pose as a
challenge to be
accepted (to those
deemed special enough)

‘There's another 30 miles to run. What else can
you come up with?’

Analysis: The Royal Marines(2)

‘Its a State of mind’



• ‘Inner voice’ presents several questions to the reader;

1. Being a **marine is an achievement; can YOU hold on?**
2. Are **YOU** good enough to hold on?
3. Do **YOU** want to find out?

• Interpellates reader as a subject; *telling you* what *you* want

‘Ten more weeks to go. How long can **you** hold on?’

Analysis: The Royal Marines(3)

'Its a State of mind'



YOU'VE NEVER KNOWN SO MUCH PAIN.
WANT TO KNOW MORE?

IF YOU HAVE THE DETERMINATION AND WIT
TO ENDURE A HARSH, DEMANDING, RIGOROUS
RECRUITING AND TRAINING PROCESS IT IS US
TO 100% READ NOT APPLY.

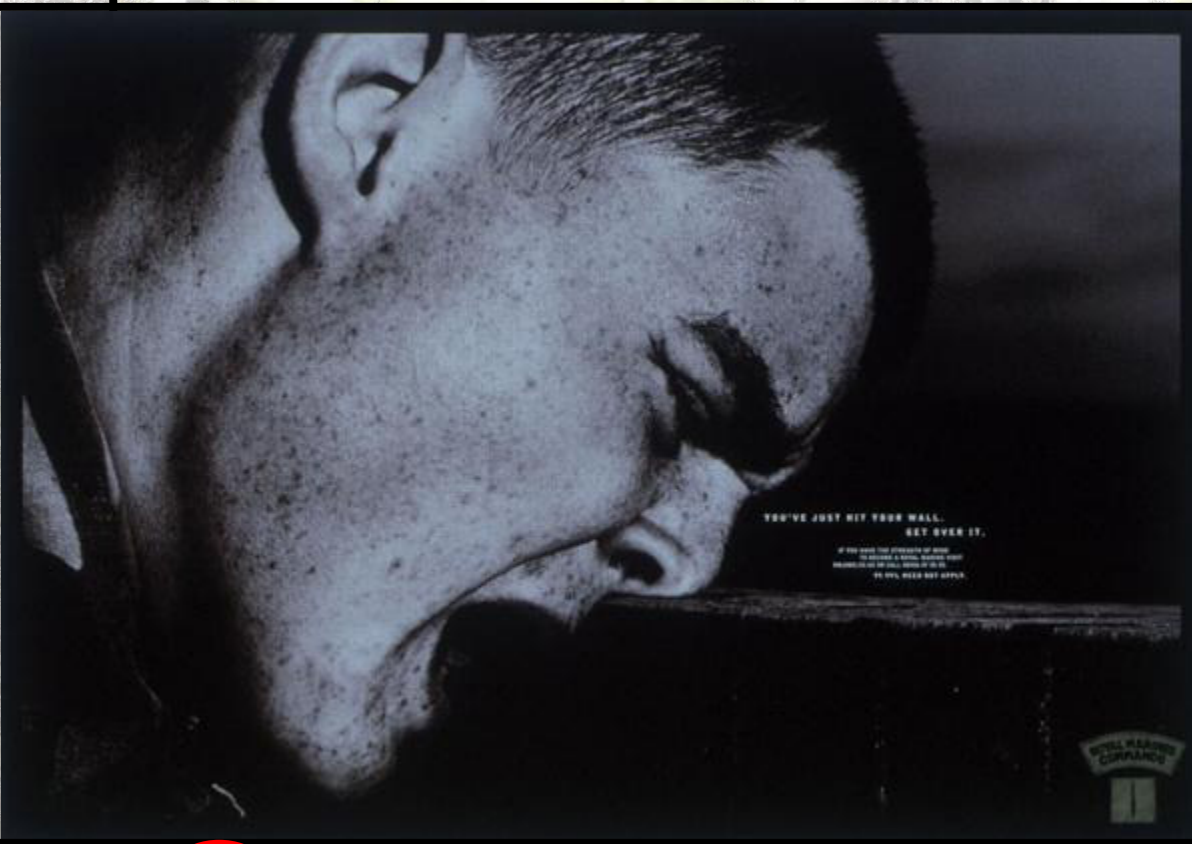
ROYAL MARINES
COMMANDO

You've never known so much pain.
Want to know more?

M: 'I mean **anyone else would have keeled over** but I ran (Takes a deep outward breath and pauses for a moment), nearly sixty miles in 72 hours with blood poisoning which, I mean septicaemia is dangerous it would fuckin' kill ya. ... ' And I ran nearly sixty miles with it. That's, that's not, and **well yeah I was fit, but that was all in the head, that was me mentally going nah there's nothing wrong** with you but your fucked. So that's the kind of erm, the **mental determination that we have.'**

Analysis: The Royal Marines(3)

'Its a State of Mind'



'You have just hit your wall. Get over it.'

•Emotions as:
1. and if you cant?

1. concrete, visible,

SEEN

2. As a barrier
3. A challenge; get over it.
P: 'If you're at work doing what you meant to be doing and you stop to have a cry your seen as letting the side down, so you create a weakness in that group that is not necessarily necessary.'

REAL men do not show feminine emotions (Connell, 2005).

Emotions= challenge to overcome, used to *prove* commitment

Discussion

1. **Concretisation of emotion**; feeling as something that is concrete, 'etched' on someone's face.
2. **Being a 'Good' and 'Proper' Marine**; Selling an identity, a lifestyle (e.g. 'Its a State of Mind').
3. **Implications for understanding emotion?**
 - **Emotion as a barrier to overcome**; there are no 'limits' for the 'good' marine.

'well you do see it all the time, in training you **just get pushed, someone gets pushed too far, too much, and they break.** You just snap...

Or they **go right fuck you, excuse my language, I'm gonna, you think you can break me I'm not gonna break and you just carry on. You just get up.'**

- **A degree of masculine emotional expression as showing commitment to the ideology.** Too much? Burdensome and thus feminine.

Final Thoughts

'The *stiff upper lip*

*Talking about our
and widespread*

is a deformity and its causing so much damage'

M: '...and I tell you what, climbing
a rope with 30 pounds of weight is
a fucking man test....'

(BBC, 2013)

Good

Messages about being a 'good' masculine recruit,
presents emotion as a barrier to overcome

Emotion Vs. Reason

Bad

'personally *I can see why it's stigmatised* (and proving it) *I think if it wasn't lots of*

*young
some*

"girls can do better" or "you bunch of girls are always at
the back"

(Hockey, 1986, in Higate, 2003, p.17).

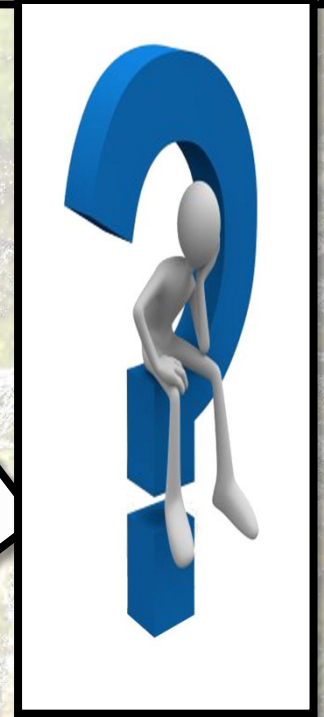
(ratt)

*I tell
you*


Thank you for listening!

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Feedback is appreciated (notepad at the ready...)

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