<u>**Transcript of Keynote Lecture:**</u>

Adaptive Forces?
How does Military Culture Inhibit, Manage, and Engender Organizational Change?

Professor Victoria Basham

NATO HFM RWS Workshop
May 10, 2023

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ORGANIZATION

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Keynote for NATO Workshop
Understanding of Military Culture to Support Organizational Change:
Systems Approaches, Critical Analyses, and Innovative Research Methods

May 10, 2023, Swedish Defence University

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0:59   Thank you so much to Nancy, to Isabelle for inviting me. I've long followed Nancy's work too, and the feeling is very mutual. I've used it in a lot of my work, and it's been invaluable.

1:09   I'd like to thank everyone on the organizing committee, Eric, Krystal, all their hard work in bringing us together for this event. A lot of people have put a lot of effort into this and it's a real pleasure to be here. So, I want to begin my address with a caveat which has already been mentioned, which is that the way that I understand military culture—the lens through which I understand it—is as an expert, I hope, after 20 odd years, on British military culture. And so, as such, much of what I'll speak about will be focused—all of what I'll speak about really—is about British military culture. But I of course hope that there will be lessons for others. And I know there are areas of divergence and similarity which will hopefully be interesting for us to kind of pick up and discuss over the coming days.

1:58   I also want to make an observation before I kind of launch into this question about how military culture inhibits managers and engenders organizational change. And this observation is about positionality, about utilizing critical analysis, and using more innovative research methods for want of a better phrase. And I want to go right back to about 20 years or so ago, when I began researching British military culture as a doctoral candidate in 2002. And I quickly became aware at that time that there were these boundaries around who produced knowledge about militaries and about how they did that, how they produced that knowledge. And these boundaries for me largely relied on ideas about insider versus outsider knowledge, and knowledge production. So, this insider/outsider boundary.

1:59   And it'll be interesting, I think, for us to think about where that shifts in different military cultures and who becomes an insider and outsider, and in what, what kind of context. So, the first thing for me was I was doing this research, I was a doctoral candidate back in 2002. I had never been, I never have been, never will be, a member of the armed forces. So, in lots of ways, I was very obviously an outsider to this world and outsider to military culture.

3:23   However, my doctoral research and a lot of my subsequent research has centered on the voices and experiences of those who are very much insiders. So, those who do serve, have

served, or for whom military service has had a profound impact on their lives, such as members of military families, the members of military, the families of military personnel, and so forth. So, it's not like I haven't engaged with insiders. I've been doing that my whole career to date.

3:53   And in order to better to try to better understand military culture and organization, I decided that I needed to examine what the British Armed Forces and the Ministry of Defence officially claimed about themselves. Yes, that was an important thing to explore, but it was also important to spend extensive periods of time with people who comprised the British Armed Forces, to see how they experienced military culture—having made military culture—it's their culture. So, I wanted to understand how they generated it. Now, that entailed me visiting and staying on various military bases throughout the UK, attending different forms of training—I often ate breakfast, lunch, dinner, and I went drinking and dancing with military personnel as well—in different mess halls and that was very eye opening. And over the course of the three or so years that I was doing my doctoral research, I interacted with and interviewed men and women from across the three constituent services of the British Armed Forces, of different ranks, trades, cores. These men and women, they came from a range of racial, ethnic, national backgrounds. They were of different sexual orientations.

5:03   I spent time with members of the Special Forces and infanteers. I hung out with cooks and clerks, so a real range. And I listened to those who had deployed—some to Northern Ireland, the Falkland Islands, Bosnia, Afghanistan, Iraq—those who were about to deploy, and those who'd never deployed. So, hopefully quite a broad range of kind of military culture at its best, as it were. Now my aim, as a very young, probably somewhat naive academic, was to essentially share insights with military leaders, with policymakers, of the academics, from the lives of these people who inhabited those military spaces. I wanted to try to facilitate greater understanding of how individuals, but also social groupings within militaries constitute, negotiate, contest, and reconfigure military practices, culture and policy. So, what do they do with those things?

6:02   More often than not, this has entailed my critiquing those very practices and policies, and wider military culture on the basis of what I've seen and what I've heard from those

within, as it were. Now, in reaction to that, there have been three especially common sort of responses to my methodological approach of centering these voices of serving military personnel and using that to critique longstanding military practices. And all three of these positions could be characterized as what I'd call kind of positions of suspicion. And these depend on that idea of insider versus outsider knowledge, I think. So that's why I think this is important to reflect on.

6:47   So firstly, for most of the scholars studying armed forces that I encountered around 20 years ago, my emerging work was regarded as both too questioning and too qualitative, and at this point I would like to caveat this because I've got a lot of Canadian colleagues in the room. These guys listened to me, actually, because they were doing it, and they were doing it a long time ago. But the Americans and the British and others not, not so much. They weren't so keen. And that's sort of beyond the Canadian kind of context, the role of the outsider academic who was studying military culture was often broadly understood, quite in very sort of specific terms. It was about shedding light on which cultural forces and variables affected how militaries functioned. So, how can we make the military more functional rather than necessarily solve the problems that are, you know, it's confronting?

7:42   There were a number of kind of so-called "soldier scholars", some of whom were able to provide some insights and critiques based on their insider status, and some of them were a little bit more listened to, if you like. But again, there's caveats to that. But outsiders were assumed to be unable to fully understand or interpret military culture. How can you possibly understand military culture if you've never served? If you've never been in it, how can you understand it—was the kind of common refrain. And there are still many people, I'm sure some of whom might be in this room, who believe that to be the case. But what that does and what it did, was largely limited outsiders to examining these things around how civilian cultural change might produce new challenges for military organization and culture. And that produces a particular sort of take on military culture, in a particular way of approaching and generating knowledge about militaries.

8:36   Often the best methodological approach for examining which variables changed or challenged military functions was considered to be large scale quantitative research. So, there

was a kind of understanding of what was scientific and what was robust, and what mattered and what counted, as they were. Literally counted. And these studies were useful to militaries, of course, because they enabled them to generalize findings about shifts in military culture and to avoid, essentially, the messiness of what were considered often subjective experiences that were embraced by qualitative researchers.

9:15   By employing qualitative methods, such as ethnography and observation, carrying out focus groups and interviews with military personnel, and then using their voices to critique military practices, I, therefore, often very obviously reconfirmed my status as an outsider for many of my fellow military sociologists, at the time, it was. I broke rules about how outsiders are supposed to produce knowledge about military organization and culture, and to what ends. And that's why I just hang out, hung out with the Canadians, right? Second, my doctoral research and of course all my research since, was motivated by feminist questions about understanding women's experiences and, indeed men's experiences, and also around embracing feminist methods—around listening to women's voices and elevating them—and you know, highlighting them.

10:10   That also marked me as an outsider for many of my fellow academics, because my project was seen as too normative, I immediately was political. I'd taken a side. On the other hand, for many of the feminist scholars I was engaging with at the time, I was akin to a leper. I was, it was regarded as highly problematic—my work—because I was engaging directly with military personnel. And back then at that time, and still for some in the community, as it were, it's a broad church. The military was just seen as: well, this is an organization of patriarchal violence, and you shouldn't, you shouldn't be speaking to anyone within it. It's not something that feminists directly engage with. So, my desire to speak directly to military personnel was seen as "you're risking becoming too much of an insider."

11:04   So, I was, you know, caught between a rock and a hard place. It risked me becoming too militarized or not feminist enough, as it were. Finally, the third kind of positionality, as it were, as a critical outsider and using this qualitative, engaged approach was just unsettling to a lot of people, particularly to military personnel leaders and policymakers. And this position was once summed up really well for me by a British woman army major. So, I was at

Ministry of Defence in London and at an event on Women, Peace, and Security and, you know, gender mainstreaming and all of these issues in the armed forces, talking to a network of scholars and military personnel engaged in in gender issues and gender training, and all these kinds of things.

11:58   And, after hearing me speak about some of the gendered experiences of some of the British servicewomen I'd interviewed, she basically said something along the lines of, "Alright, everything you've said rings true in my experience, can't question any of it, it's all true. However, having to hear it from a civilian researcher is really hard. It's really hard. It's a bit like," she said, "I can moan about my mother all the time, you know, she gets on my nerves. She drives me nuts, you know, she's always phoning me at inconvenient moments and you know, interfering and whatever. She's got her quirks. But if someone else comes along, criticizes my mother, insults her, I'll be there, you know, defending her to the front. Even if I know everything they're saying is true, I will defend her to the last, as it were."

12:49   And that really summed it up for me. That there is something about loyalty, about the relationship between individuals and the military, and around military culture, that can make it hard for some people to listen to outsiders, right? And I understand that. I appreciate that. So, in sum, as an outsider critiquing military organization and culture by drawing on insider experiences, I've frequently broken quite a lot of boundaries around insider versus outsider knowledge, that are drawn on by a range of academics and non-academics alike.

13:25   Now, it was from my frustration and that of some other scholars that I was talking to, and working with, around these very binary understandings of knowledge production that the field of critical military studies was largely born. Whilst many CMS scholars have sought to - what many of us Critical Military Studies scholars—or CMS scholars as I'll abbreviate—have sought to do, is to engage with militaries and defense organizations and actors, not to dismiss them and their claims. Now that doesn't mean we accept their claims, that we don't question them. But we want to try to understand where people are coming from, right? And that's what a lot of CMS scholars are interested in doing.

14:10   However, unlike the field of military sociology, as I saw it 20 years ago, which focused on how social change usually seemed to come from forces external to militaries, would affect military culture and how much the organization functioned, CMS scholars often turn the gaze back onto militaries themselves, and questioned how their own practices can inhibit change and sometimes a significant cost for their own military personnel. And that's why that's quite challenging at times, right? Because being presented with someone who says, "I'm giving you the voices of your people here," it's very—it's often easier to say—"No, no, no, you're the crazy woman at the front with the pink hair. I'm not going to listen to you, right?" Even if it's your own people that you're trying to get people to listen to.

14:57   Now, the title of my paper questions the notions, the notion, of adapted force, adaptive forces. Because one of the core principles that guide militaries like the British Armed Forces, and security organizations such as NATO, is adaptation. Official statements and doctrine tell us that to react to threats and crises, militaries and military organizations need to be able to quickly adjust, acclimatize, and modify it in light of those challenges.

15:25   But how adaptive is military culture? How does it, as I'm suggesting, inhibit, manage, but also sometimes engender organizational change? This question of adaptation was central to my doctoral search, which more specifically examined how military policy pertaining to equality and diversity was understood, interpreted, and negotiated by British military personnel who were serving in the British Army, Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy. And when I began my doctoral research in 2002, this was quite an exciting time because the UK Armed Forces was being asked to do a lot of adaptation around equality and diversity.

16:08   It also was facing some interesting external security challenges, posed by the War on Terror, but it was also undergoing these—at the same time undergoing—these really profound changes to personnel policies, which were contesting some very long-standing elements of military culture and organizations. So, it was a really interesting time to start studying the armed forces. Now, though military's often spoken about in operational terms as being capable of rapid reactiveness. Culturally, the pace of change around equality and diversity issues within the British Armed Forces has been slow. I mean glacial, let's be honest. But slow is a generous idea.

16:47   Now, what I want to do in the remainder of my time is to illustrate why I think that's the case, by drawing some insights from the snapshot of military culture that I provided between 2002 and 2006 with my doctoral thesis to highlight the difficulties as they existed then. I'll also then offer some thoughts on the extent to which British Armed Forces has adapted to these challenges. In the just-shy-of-two-decades since. I'll examine some of the reasons why I think the British military culture inhibits organizational change pertaining to equality, diversity, and inclusion, and why I think some of the ways that it seeks to manage difference makes organizational change difficult.

17:26   But I'll also try to end with some more positive observations, just a few, on how aspects of military culture can engender organizational change. So, it's not all doom and gloom. It's a bit of hope at the end. I hope. Okay, so military culture is inhibiting organizational change. Let's start with that. One of the most—and this might sound really obvious but I'm going to say it out loud—but one of the most significant barriers to organizational change in the British Armed Forces is that, like many militaries the world over, it's traditionally been a bastion of white, heteronormative masculinity. Right? It's just how it is. Men have traditionally performed the burden of warfare. In certain societies, whiteness comes with that, and heteronormativity very much often comes with that. In some societies it's a bit different. Sometimes in some societies, militaries are actually over—there's overrepresentation of racial minorities. But in the UK, that's not the case. We're talking a very white, heteronormative, masculine institution, and the effects of that traditional culture were especially evident in 2002, when I first embarked on this doctoral research project.

18:36   So, just to give you a little bit of background to that, between 1998 and 2006, the UK Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces had a, held a partnership agreement with the Commission for Racial Equality. And that followed a formal investigation by that Commission into the Army's Household Cavalry Regiment, which had found clear evidence of both direct and indirect racial discrimination. Which pertained to recruitment and selection, and there was also clear evidence of racial harassment going on there. And although this initial investigation focused on the army, the Commission then broadened its scope and it was really concerned throughout that partnership about things like low levels of

recruitment, and retention of ethnic minorities in the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy, and about strong perceptions among ethnic minority service personnel in all, in all of the forces, constituent forces, that there was a culture of racial discrimination and harassment that pervaded all of those forces.

19:34   So, you know, we could say it was the Household Cavalry. It wasn't. That was the tip of the iceberg, and more was revealed. So, this was all going on while I was carrying out my research. Among the cultural barriers to attacking racial discrimination, harassment, and bullying that I found during my doctoral research were just an unwillingness to adapt, to adapt military culture and the pervasiveness of racial stereotyping, for example. So, often white personnel expressed frustration that they might need to adapt their behavior by not telling racist jokes or using racist language. The idea was, you know, "They should assimilate to us. We're the majority, they're the minority," and so on.

20:18   There were also a lot of stereotypes about certain racialized groups. So, for example, there was a lot of recruitment in the mid 2000s from Commonwealth countries into the British Army in particular, not just the British Army, but primarily. And soldiers who were recruited from Fiji, or just assumed to come from Fiji, they might not actually have been from Fiji, but they looked like they were from Fiji and so they were all sort of regarded as Fijian. They were frequently branded, I cannot—if I had a penny, as it were, for every time I was told, when I was wandering around the military base, that Fijians were wife beaters, I would you know, I could buy a lot of Fika—and this sort of kept being, the stereotype kept being repeated often and often, and it had the effect of making it very hard for individuals who assumed to be Fijians to be judged on their individual merits and actions.

21:10   And it also had the impact, I think, of concealing violence in the home that was perpetrated by other military personnel, by characterizing it as a Fijian problem, which it's not. It's a huge problem across the armed forces, as many of my colleagues who work on these issues can tell you. So, that was the kind of ethnic, racial, sort of background. Just two years before I began my doctoral research, anyone discovered to be of a non-heterosexual orientation was excluded from enlisting or serving in the British military. The UK Ministry of Defence fiercely fought changes to this policy. They discharged the last member of the UK

armed forces to be expelled under this ban, just three days before the court ruling that it had to be lifted, which they knew was coming. So, they were not keen to change this policy. I think we can safely say.

22:02 Now with the lifting of the ban, the official position of the MOD moved very quickly, however, from the claim that allowing openly gay, lesbian, bisexual and other non-heteronormative people to serve in the armed forces profoundly threatened unit cohesion and operational effectiveness, to it being a nonissue. It was a very quick move. And whilst many of my interviewees came to similar conclusions, the fact that the ban was lifted on the grounds of sexuality being a private matter, did make it very difficult for some service personnel, including many of those that are interviewed, who did not identify as heterosexual, to engage in simple conversations about their families and to come out of the closet, essentially. And the fact that the ban had been in place for several decades, also led many heterosexual personnel to assume that everyone they served with was also heterosexual. And this meant that bragging around heterosexual relationships and displays of affection between heterosexuals would continue to be considered as perfectly normal.

23:01 Which sometimes either inhibited individuals post-ban from disclosing, disclosing that they were not actually heterosexual, or if they did, just make them really highly visible. Here's the gay guy in the unit, that's different, because of this assumption that you've got a heteronormative institution. By 2002, when I'm starting my doctoral research, servicewomen were no longer serving in all women cores which had been disbanded in the 1990s. They were now allowed to go to sea, which was big progress, and they were no longer being made redundant on becoming pregnant, which was also good—as they had until 1991. But servicewomen were still excluded from post combat cores, submarines, and mine clearance diving roles.

23:50 And a history of being separate to and still-excluded from core parts of the armed forces reinforced a culture of sexism that pervaded the British military at the time of my doctoral research. I don't think it's controversial to say that. Among the most common characteristics—characterizations, sorry—of service women that I encountered, were that women only join the military to have sex with men or find husbands. That women were great

administrative jobs or as nurses, but little else, given that they were so physically weak. That women responded in overly emotional ways to orders or in training, something that Nancy's written about extensively, and that getting pregnant inconvenienced others who had to pick up their work or even deploy instead of them. So, they were a problem, essentially.

24:40   Despite some significant policy changes, various drives that have existed to recruit a more diverse military workforce, some wider societal changes—since I finished my doctoral research in 2006—I think that a culture where whiteness, heterosexuality, and masculinity are the norm still haunts and inhibits organizational change in the British Armed Forces. And I'll just give you a few examples. So, since 2016 in the UK, there has been an independent Service Complaints Ombudsman. The Ombudsman's annual reports since 2016 have consistently highlighted that ethnic minority service personnel and servicewomen of all ethnic backgrounds are overrepresented in the service complaint systems. With bullying, harassment, and discrimination being the most common complaints. So, they're a minority, but they are overrepresented in the complaint system. The Ombudsman has also reported that only 1 in 10 personnel who experience bullying, harassment, and discrimination actually make a service complaint.

25:41   So, it's the tip of the iceberg again. The main reasons that people don't come forward are beliefs that nothing would be done, or that complaining would have a negative impact on the complainant's career. And this suggests that the extent of racial and gender bullying, harassment, discrimination, is even more widespread than formal complaint figures show. And that's the Ombudsman's analysis. In the Ombudsman's 2021 report, it was noted that, "the underlying issues which lead to complaints remain the same. There has been very little wider cultural change, particularly around the experience of female and Black and minority ethnic personnel." The Ombudsman also noted that a House of Commons Defence Committee report had found that 1 in 10 servicewomen were still reporting that they had experienced sexual harassment. And that study into the lived experiences of ethnic minority personnel actually just hasn't been released by the MOD, and it's not clear if and how its findings have or have not been acted on.

26:42   An MOD 2019 report was also commissioned on inappropriate behaviors. It was conducted in response to "repeated instances of inappropriate and allegedly unlawful behavior by serving members of the UK Armed Forces," and it noticed several facets of military culture as barriers to addressing inappropriate behavior. These included a "pack mentality of white middle-aged men, especially in positions of influence, whose behaviors are shaped by the armed forces of 20 years ago." The report also noted the ongoing use of inappropriate and offensive language, even if unintentional, as an issue. And that up to 36% of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, service people, have experienced negative comments or behavior from colleagues because of their orientation. Also noted in this report is that military culture in a rigid hierarchy can inhibit interventions from bystanders and prevent those who hold lower ranks from challenging their superiors. It gives examples such as individuals not wanting to be seen as troublemakers and wanting to fit in. And it goes on to suggest that "the level of tolerance and cultural acceptance of inappropriate behavior needs to change across every part and level of defense." So, not great.

28:03   One of the conclusions of the report is that organizational change is possible if there is determination from military and defence leaders to change the culture and it claims that everything else hangs off that because "real cultural change comes only when leaders communicate and role model those behaviors relentlessly." Now, whilst as I'll go on in a moment to suggest, how military leaders have sort of managed greater diversification of the British Armed Forces has not always brought about meaningful culture and organizational change, I also think it's short sighted to focus primarily or solely on the military's upper echelons, and the danger of this is overlooking what some British military personnel call "young dinosaurs." I don't know if this is a phrase you've heard, but I think it's really important to be mindful of.

28:58   So, the term young dinosaurs, for those who are not familiar with it, refers to people who have more recently joined the armed forces. They're not the people of 20 years ago, and they're more likely than the top military leaders to have been educated in mixed-sex schools, boys, girls and, and you know, so on. They've grown up with ideas of gender and sexuality being much more fluid than once thought. They're probably a lot more attuned to the complexities of how racial discrimination and prejudice work, because of the kind of

environment they've grown up in. Despite these experiences, however, such young recruits have actually sought out a military career precisely because they see the armed forces as a last bastion of white, heteronormative, masculinity. In my doctoral research, I did find examples back then of young dinosaurs. They existed back then, but I think there's, they're probably still around now, by the looks of the situation we're in.

29:58   And the ones back then constantly questioned the authority and expertise of servicewomen in combat facing roles. That was their particularly big bug there, these women who had been serving for far longer than they had, and so on, and had all this expertise—on the basis that men were the only proper soldiers. So, it would be interesting to see, and for those of you now doing, who recognize this term, young dinosaurs, I'll be really interested to see what you think of what the young dinosaurs of today look like compared to those 20 years ago. That would be a conversation I'd love to have with you.

30:29   And whilst it might be the case that young dinosaurs have grown up in an ostensibly multi-tolerant society, as the journalist and feminist author Susan Faludi reminds us, it's always important to be alert to backlash—where social change that brings back greater rights for marginalized groups can be identified not as progress, but as a sign of impending doom for those who have been privileged by longstanding arrangements. Society may well and does, I'm sure, play a very significant role in producing these young dinosaurs. If we look at the kind of popularity of Jordan Peterson and all of these kinds of things, right, we know there are many of them out there. But if military culture continues to be perceived as somewhere where young dinosaurs are welcome, or at least left to their own devices, another 20 years could well pass with very little organizational change on discrimination, bullying, and harassment. So, that's kind of what my warning was about.

31:22   Okay, so how am I doing on time? Am I okay? I'm running a little low I think, but okay. I'm good, all right. I don't want to rush through and I have [tendency to go] very quickly. So, I'm trying to be a bit slower.

31:39   Okay military culture and managing organizational change. So, this is another area I think that's important. So, military policy and practices that seek to manage organizational change, I would argue are often stunted by both a refusal to revisit longstanding organizational assumptions, and by something linked to this, which I'll call "the defensiveness of the defence establishment," which I'll come back to in a bit. So, just to revisit some earlier examples, whilst military leaders quickly realized that allowing non-heterosexual people to serve in the British Armed Forces was actually a non-issue for military effectiveness, military leaders refused to question their assumptions and conventional thinking on sexuality for decades.

32:20   They did not heed the lessons of scholarly evidence on social cohesion that made clear that sexuality would not threaten operational effectiveness. The MOD only overturned its policy because it was required to, by law, following a legal challenge from military personnel, importantly. The full cost to individuals of this policy are unknown, but currently the subject of an independent review for the UK government, due to report later this year. It would be very interesting to see what comes out of that, hugely.

32:49   By 2010, women were permitted to undertake mine clearance diving roles, and by 2011 they could serve on submarines. Ten years after I completed my doctorate, the then UK Prime Minister David Cameron, announced at the 2016 NATO summit, that the close combat ban would be lifted. But as I've shown in some of my work, these bans were based on a refusal to take scholarly evidence seriously, and instead rely on problematic assumptions about gender and womanhood. In my research, I found that these assumptions, and the way that the British military chose to manage these roles, reinforced the idea that servicewomen were not proper soldiers as they were unable to undertake all military roles. And that those women who did choose roles that were more combat facing were cast as especially deviant and out of place. So, it wasn't just that you restricted women from being in those particular roles, it's that all women as, by proxy, became kind of second-class soldiers.

33:49   As I argue in my 2009 article, I mean that was a while ago, affecting discrimination by clinging to unreflexive claims about the nature of cohesion, and in failing to respond to societal demands, as well as demands from within the armed forces, for greater inclusion,

military officials long undermined the social legitimacy of the armed forces and put some of their own personnel at greater risk of being discriminated against, bullied, or harassed. Through this, they were therefore destabilizing rather than protecting their capabilities, I'd argue. And it's here that I want to come back to my earlier point about insider and outsider boundaries. I think that the MOD and military leaders fell into two major traps around these issues due to the distinctions they drew between insiders and outsiders, which led them to maintain harmful policies. I also think these ideas still pervade contempt for British military thinking, and they're therefore important for us to keep considering.

34:40   The first is that they clung to the social cohesion ideas, the idea that operational effectiveness depends on tight-knit bonding between personnel. Despite the fact that "all of the evidence indicates that military performance depends on whether service members are committed to the same professional goals." That's essentially, in a nutshell, what the scholarly evidence said. It's often called "task cohesion." The British forces clung to social cohesion in part because they were, and still are I believe, keen to differentiate themselves from the outside. What they see in the UK context is a less cohesive and more individualistic society. Now, the extent to which the British society lacks cohesiveness, and is individualistic is complicated in many ways. We have a National Health Service, we have many charities, community groups, leadership roles in the AIDS sector and all sorts of examples that run counter to that narrative.

35:33   However, that insider/outsider divide is necessary for the second track. And this is for military officials to argue that even if the evidence does point to change being for better, the military cannot possibly experiment with change. Because as a state sanctioned organization of violence, its role is a matter of life and death. It, therefore, has what military sociologist Christopher Dandeker has called "a need to be different." The problem here is not that the claim is untrue. I'm not disputing that. But it's that it can be so easily wielded by military officials, consciously or unconsciously, to ensure that biases inside the military go unchallenged and military culture remains static. These ideas about a problematic outsider society and a different and better military culture inside, also characterize what I call the "defensiveness of the defense establishment."

36:30   In terms of evidence, the UK Armed Forces continues to prioritize quantitative internal research, where it sets the parameters of questions being asked. "We'll do a survey and our personnel will tell us that way. We'll decide the questions, but we'll definitely get to the nub of it, for sure." Doesn't tend to work. Military officials frequently question or reject systematically analyzed and in-depth qualitative research with military personnel, conducted by outsider researchers when it questions conventional military wisdom. I, and other colleagues, have been told that our work is anecdotal—or it's just the usual moaning of "squaddies," and "why would we want to listen to squaddies, eh?" When it's challenging especially, right? That's when it's most often labeled this way.

37:18   I think this comes back to the issues of loyalty, within the armed forces that the major, the woman major I mentioned earlier, expressed. But also, an anxiety that anything critical of the way the military functions could lead to existential crisis in the form of lesser political support and resourcing, and an inability to recruit and retain personnel. That's the bottom line. It, it's not, you know, it's kind of understandable. But the irony of that position, as I've tried to suggest, is the external critique is likely to be far less harmful to the armed forces than its failures to address discrimination, harassment, and bullying in its ranks, which that research illuminates the reasons for. So, its defensiveness is its undoing. So, engendering organizational change. This is my final bit, now. We're in the home stretch.

38:08   So, the final point I wish to make, is that despite everything I've just said, and said to this point, military culture does contain some tools for organizational change. It's not a complete oxymoron. Military personnel, as the research of scholars who prioritize their voices and experiences know, are often hugely smart, very confident, and in part that's due to the military training. Many of them, of course, unsurprisingly, understand the challenges that militaries face, and due to the sense of loyalty that military culture engenders, they are often very articulate about their desire and the need to manage those challenges more effectively. Some have mounted legal challenges against the Ministry of Defence, others have built networks within the military and with scholars outside it, to explore aspects of military culture.

38:55   Many of the major changes that have been made to military policy that I've discussed, whilst often represented as imposed from outside by wider society, would not have been possible without military personnel and members of the wider military community lobbying for change from within, from inside. The armed forces, of course, are not monolithic. Subcultures of tolerance, as well as prejudice, exists within it, and there have always been dissenting voices and they're very interesting to explore. A good example of this in the UK context is in the 1996 Homosexuality Policy Assessment Team report. This report is full of some really quite unpleasant sort of observations about non-heterosexual personnel, and it was used to continue the banning of non-heterosexuals from the British Forces, but it also contains clear evidence that homophobia wasn't universal.

39:49   That some personnel were unfazed by knowing that they served with non-heterosexuals, that some did not believe operational effectiveness would be compromised by a policy change, that some people embraced those subcultures, and so forth. As many critical military studies scholars have tried to show, it's by listening to a wider range of voices, including military voices, by taking a broader range of military experiences seriously, and realizing that different forms of military culture exist that organizational change may become more plausible. I, for one, hope that it doesn't take another 20 years for this to be realized within the British Armed Forces, or in any militaries where the points I've raised may well apply. Thank you.