

Institution: University of Aberdeen		
Unit of Assessment: UoA31 (Theology and Religious Studies)		
Title of case study: The Military Covenant		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2000-2014		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Iain Torrance	Professor	1993-present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>The research of Professor Iain Torrance, Kt, KCVO, into the ethics of moral community formation has impacted upon military policy and funding in the UK and beyond. His work on the army as a moral community and on the covenant between the army and civilians has led to a re-description of military communities in terms of 'the military covenant'. During the assessment period, this research insight has significantly impacted Ministry of Defence policy and practice as well as the Armed forces, and derivatively thereby military personnel.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Ethical and theological engagements with the armed forces and military have usually taken the form of discussion of proportionate action and behaviour in the theatre of conflict: accounts of <i>ius in bello</i> historically have been framed in a Thomist or Augustinian way through the approach of a cost-benefit account which leads to a key focus on proportionality. In Torrance's article (1.1), 'The Moral Component' (2000), he shifts the discussion, and focuses instead on the idea of covenant. He argues that there needs to be a complete reframing of the discussion of just war arguments in terms of the <i>ius in bello</i> aspect of the discussion, and in terms of the obligations of a state to its armed forces. Torrance offers an account of <i>ius in bello</i> which discusses the ethics and moral formation of military personnel in relation to the broader nation. On his account, the key feature related to dealing with these matters is to rethink the armed forces as a moral community within the state with which the state covenants. Just engagements within war have to rest on soldiers having an internal ethical formation as part of the moral community through which they are formed. The soldier's offer of service and sacrifice is the core way to think of the activity of the military and the root of the covenant to which the public responds in gratitude, covenanting with the military which itself covenants with society at large. Torrance refers to this idea as '<i>the military covenant</i>'—and was in his research the first person to coin this phrase and conceptualisation, which has subsequently been used across the Ministry of Defence. For him, a covenant is a 'binding agreement reached without conditions': covenants are not based on conditions which most legal agreements are. Both parties are beholden to the covenant; but this is not by fulfilment of a legal contract or non-breach of legal obligations, but rather through the keeping of promise and moral obligation. The fundamental difference between a contract and a covenant is the presence of a transcendent reference and commitment (a higher good)—in this instance, the commitment to serve to the degree of offering the sacrifice of one's life, and the commitment to gratitude by the civilians for whom this is done. This direct utilisation of biblical and theological frameworks of covenant as a means of describing the mode of engagement with <i>ius in bello</i> theory and the relationship between army and civilian communities captured the imagination of Chaplain-General Victor Dobbin. This became (according to Dobbin and attested in the research of Ingham) the basis for the current concept of the Military Covenant through its direct influence on Adjutant-</p>		

General Sir Michael Rose and, through him, the Armed Forces and the Ministry of Defence. As the first to employ the idea of a military covenant in this way (with the need for the society at large to engage in gratitude to its service personnel who sacrifice so much for that society), all subsequent uses of the concept of a military covenant owe their origins to Torrance's research presented at an Oxford conference and published in this book chapter (1.1).

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

1.1 Iain R. Torrance, 'The Moral Component' in Hew Strachan (ed.), *The British Army, Manpower and Society into the Twenty-First Century* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), 202-213. This essay is the only theological or ethics essay in a key volume on the nature of the British Army, arising from an Oxford conference convened by Professor Strachan. That Torrance was the only ethicist or theologian involved is indicative of his international standing. It is international significant work from a world-leading interdisciplinary conference on the military. Adj Gen. Sir Michael Rose wrote the foreword.

1.2 This work was the subject of the PhD and then informed the subsequent book by Sarah Ingham, *The Military Covenant* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), esp. p.69 (cf. pp.54,71,197).

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Since the publication of Torrance's research in 2000, there has been continued significant impact arising from Torrance's conceptualisation of the military covenant. This began immediately and has grown throughout this time to mature in the current REF census period. The pathway to impact between 2014 and 2020, as the work of Ingham (1.2) on the topic has confirmed, is that the original research insight around in the conceptualisation of a military covenant was brought to collective military attention directly by Torrance. His research was directly drawn upon by Adjutant-General Sir Michael Rose, and subsequently informed all engagement with the idea of the Military Covenant in British public policy. From 2000 onwards, Rose became increasingly interested in defining the fighting force and its moral component, and the relationship between this moral component and society at large. Rose was deeply impressed by Torrance's contributions to the Oxford conference and the publication of his chapter on this topic (1.1), and he and Torrance gave speeches to NATO on the issue. Rose adopted Torrance's concept, beginning to reshape the conceptualisation of the military and society at large in terms of Torrance's phrase and ethical concept of a 'military covenant', both in terms of soldiering as a moral community and especially the idea of the covenantal relation between the armed forces and civilians. From there, Major-General Sebastian Roberts then used the concept to inform his reflections on the relationship between the military and society at large, and the concept was heavily promoted by General Sir Richard Dannatt, Chief of the General Staff from 2006 to 2009. The concept coined by Torrance began to have governmental influence under Blair, with the then Prime Minister invoking the need for a 'military covenant' in 2007. However, fulfilling a manifesto pledge, it was with the coalition government and post 2015 Conservative governments that Torrance's idea of a military covenant began to be applied in practice, leading to significant impact in the current REF period on government policy, practice and finance, as well as on third sector organisations, and through this on military personnel and veterans. While between 2000 and 2014, there had already been significant impact on the military from Torrance's research and publication, the adoption of his concept has informed government policy directly during this REF census period: Torrance's original concept of the 'military covenant' has moved in its pathway to impact, therefore, from initially directly influencing senior military personnel to, in this census period, informing British public policy, and the ensuing effect of that policy on military personnel and veterans. As General Victor Dobbin has stated: 'There is no doubt ... that the covenant relationship that exists today between HM Government and the British Armed Forces, as well as that between the army and the soldier, stems from the seeds sown by...Torrance'. (1)

Most notably, as a result of Torrance's research, a government sponsored national Armed Forces Covenant has been established, using directly Torrance's conceptualisation of 'covenant' as a way of understanding the armed forces and its relation to the state. This has informed military policy and civilian commitment to the armed forces in the assessment period (2 & 3). A significant

means of bringing impact about has arisen from notable stakeholders investing in the covenant more broadly in British society, aiding and supporting veterans in their transition to civilian life. Since 2015, through the Armed Forces Covenant, all kinds of bodies have signed up to the covenant in the UK as a way of helping veterans and those suffering PTSD, and as a means of understanding the military and their role in relation to society at large. Businesses, public bodies and charities are invited to sign the nation's commitment to serving members of the armed forces and veterans. Organisations are asked to pledge that together they 'acknowledge and understand that those who serve or who have served in the armed forces, and their families, should be treated with fairness and respect in the communities, economy and society they serve with their lives'. This reflects precisely the conceptualisation of the covenant relationship between armed forces and society at large, as advocated in Torrance's research, embodying the covenant of service and gratitude in its self-description. The covenant has been signed by a large range of governmental and non-governmental civilian agencies. All 407 local authorities in mainland Great Britain and 4 Northern Ireland councils have pledged to uphold the Armed Forces Covenant, as well as 4,000 organisations, including businesses and charities. By signing the Armed Forces Covenant an organisation demonstrates its intention to support the Armed Forces community and provides the signatory with the opportunity to be recognised by the Employer Recognition Scheme award. The award shows that the recipient is delivering tangible support for the Armed Forces community. (4)

Since 2013, GBP80,000,000 has been allocated by the government to ensure the continued achievement of the government's Armed Forces Covenant commitments, with a commitment of GBP10,000,000 per annum to be given to this end in perpetuity (3). This Covenant Fund is completely new and is not a replacement for any previous grant schemes or funds. Funding priorities are set annually by the Covenant Reference Group, but are focused around: non-core healthcare services for veterans; removing barriers to family life; extra support, both in and after Service, for those that need help; measures to integrate military and civilian communities and allow the Armed Forces community to participate as citizens. The Secretary of State for Defence has been required annually during the current assessment period to lay a report before Parliament on the implementation of the covenant. Indeed, the Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP, Secretary of State for Defence from 2017 to 2019, highlights that in the post Iraq and Afghanistan era UK Armed Forces are engaged in more operations than ever before and 'the legacy of past conflicts continues to be felt by our people', but—despite this level of operations—he states: '*... the work of the Armed Forces is less prominent in the minds of the public, which is why for me, the principles of the Covenant are more relevant today than they have ever been.*' (4) It is these principles which have led to the continued financial and policy investment by the government in relation to the covenant.

Engagement with Torrance's concept of the military covenant by government and users has increased significantly since these initial projects, and in 2017 the Veterans' Gateway (<http://www.veteransgateway.org.uk>) was launched to provide a single point of contact to help veterans access the work of the covenant to find sources of support or information for challenges that they are facing; the Gateway was established through a GBP2,000,000. Military Covenant Grant. In addition, in order specifically to allow the nation to fulfil its covenant obligation to service personnel from past conflicts, the Covenant Grant scheme launched The Aged Veterans Fund as a one-off fund from the Treasury of GBP30,000,000 to support veterans born before 1950 in their particular needs. It funds non-core health, wellbeing and social care needs for older veterans who may need some focused support in relation to their health and social care needs.

The term 'military / armed forces covenant' has also entered political discourse as a way of measuring whether the government and society at large have kept to their obligations to support members of the armed forces and whether armed forces are fulfilling the task they have as moral communities. Through this, Torrance's findings have also impacted NHS provision, education policy, social and financial support, housing policy and provision and employment support for service personnel and veterans during the current assessment period (5 & 6). Each year since 2012 the government publishes the *Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report* which details of activities associated with the covenant, and the extent to which the government's commitment to the armed forces and their families has been fulfilled. Analysis of the extent of fulfilment of the

covenant as well as commitments for following years are also given (7). In April 2018, the government enshrined and focused this commitment to the military covenant in establishing the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust. Through this trust, the government has been to work in an ever more focused way in fulfilling the strategic objectives identified in relation to Torrance's concept of a military covenant, and has been able to track more fully the impact of policy and financial commitment on armed forces personnel and veterans as well as the activities and objectives achieved each year in each area of focus for the government's work with those involved in military service. Indicative items from the 2019 summary in *Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report 2019* (below) provide examples of the way in which the covenant is used to group together and measure the effect of governmental policies in just one year. This example is one which is replicated on this kind of scale in each year, detailing the ways in which there has been progress in fulfilling society's covenantal commitment to service personnel and veterans. All of these actions and impacts are described in relation to, and considered to arise from and contribute to, the military / armed forces covenant—the concept of which was taken directly from Torrance's research. The concerted and coherent engagement with these themes by the state in this manner has arisen as a means of addressing the covenantal responsibilities between the armed forces and society at large. It is a covenantal responsibility that what had previously been fractured activities had been considered cohesively under the covenant, using the notion of a covenant as a means to assess and measure the whole society's responsibility to the armed forces, alongside the armed forces responsibilities to and sacrifices for society.

1. In relation to the healthcare focus of the covenant: a) 4,561 referrals were received for the Veterans' Mental Health Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service (TILS) and the Veterans' Mental Health Complex Treatment Service (CTS), which provide specialist NHS care pathways just for veterans; b) an additional GBP10,000,000 was provided as part of the NHS Long Term Plan to invest in these services to increase geographic coverage and service provision; c) an additional 285 GP practices in England were accredited as 'veteran friendly', increasing the total accreditations to 375; d) NHS England and NHS Improvement, together with the MOD, launched the *Armed Forces personnel in transition, Integrated Personal Commissioning for Veterans Framework* in March 2019; e) in the Autumn Budget, a further GBP10,000,000 was announced to be distributed by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust to support veterans' mental health and wellbeing needs; f) the MOD joined the cross-government National Suicide Prevention Strategy Delivery Group to share best practice and ensure a joined-up and co-ordinated response towards deliberate self-harm and suicide prevention; g) the Scottish Government provided funding of GBP1.4,000,000 per year to Combat Stress for specialist mental health services; and h) the Veterans Trauma Network expanded into Wales to further increase provision for veterans with Service attributable physical health conditions.

2. In relation to the education focus: a) service children were formally identified as an underrepresented group in Higher Education by the Office for Students; b) the Service Children's Progression Alliance established its UK-wide network, with a further six research-practice hubs launched; c) the Service Child Flag Indicator in England was included on all three termly school censuses to help better identify and track service children moves; d) over GBP23,100,000 of Service Pupil Premium was distributed to over 10,000 schools across England to benefit over 77,000 Service children; e) the Welsh Government provided an extra GBP250,000 for the Supporting Service Children Wales Fund; f) the Welsh Government contributed a total of GBP200,442 in the financial year towards the Armed Forces Bereavement Scholarship and the Publicly Funded Further Education/Higher Education schemes.

3. In terms of housing and accommodation: a) GBP1,160,000 was invested in improving and modernising Service Family Accommodation (a 40% increase on the previous year) with a further GBP123,000,000 committed for the following financial year; b) as at 30 September 2019, the Forces Help to Buy scheme helped around 19,400 Service personnel purchase their own property at a total cost of GBP293,000,000 (an average of GBP15,000 per claim); c) following a change in policy in April 2019 to permit cohabitation, 250 service personnel in long-term relationships or with residential responsibility for a child have been housed, and a further 109 are waiting to move in; d) the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government launched a consultation on new statutory guidance for local authorities designed to improve how members of the Armed Forces community are allocated social housing and also allocated an additional GBP1,000,000 of bespoke funding to support vulnerable veterans who are or are at risk of becoming homeless.

4. In terms of the focus on family life: a) Flexible Service became law, allowing regular service personnel to ask to temporarily work part-time and/or restrict their separation from their home base, subject to operational need; b) The Covenant Fund Trust's Removing Barriers to Family Life grants programme was created to support the 2018–20 Families Action Plan; c) the Forces Families Jobs website was launched by the Families Federations; d) the DWP, MOD and HMRC refreshed their advice on how eligible spouses and civil partners who accompanied their Service partner on postings outside the UK can apply for National Insurance credit.

5. With regard to transition and life-long support of veterans: a) *The Strategy for our Veterans* was jointly published by the UK Governments and each home nation subsequently conducted its own consultation to inform how they will implement the strategy; b) the Veterans' ReGroup pathfinder service for veterans in the Criminal Justice System was launched in the Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire areas; c) HM Revenue and Customs launched an internship programme for Service personnel in transition; d) Skills Development Scotland established a network of veterans champions across its five regional areas to support Service leavers and veterans along their employment pathway; e) the Welsh Government provided GBP500,000 to continue funding for Armed Forces Liaison Officers from 2019 to 2021 (8).

Indeed, the impact of Torrance's concept of a military covenant culminated with the announcement on 29 July 2019 by the Prime Minister of a new Office for Veterans' Affairs 'to provide lifelong support to military personnel' in order for society to fulfil its covenant to its military personnel as they return to civilian life. This Office is to work with government departments to coordinate and drive government policy on veterans' welfare, spanning mental and physical health, education, and employment. The Office has arisen from the work of the Covenant Reference Group and will work in full coordination with it. Furthermore, the covenant continues to be used to measure broader governmental and societal support of the military and the success of such ventures, and a further GBP5,000,000 boost has been given to support the implementation of the covenant with veterans. (9)

Torrance's work has not only informed but directly led, therefore, to policy in the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces Covenant as an NGO with policy, social and economic impact, as well as direct impact on military personnel and veterans. Indeed, this work for the Armed Forces was mentioned in the citation for the Knight Bachelor he was given in the New Year Honours 2018. General Sir Sebastian Roberts, KCVO, has stated: 'No prime minister, no party, no commentator has or can dispute that the very term "*The Military Covenant*" has become the guarantee of proper treatment, universally respected and supported. Every service, every service charity and ultimately every member of the armed forces would attest to its power. They –we—owe Professor Torrance and his Department at Aberdeen an immeasurable debt.' (10)

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. Email from Chaplain General Victor Dobbin, 4 September 2020.
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/armed-forces-community-covenant/armed-forces-community-covenant>
3. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/armed-forces-covenant-2015-to-2020/armed-forces-covenant>
4. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/668345/6_3923_AFC_Annual_Report_2017_DRAFT_v7_WEB.PDF
5. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-covenant-supporting-information>
6. <https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Veterans-Key-Facts.pdf>
7. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/armed-forces-covenant-activities-and-achievements/armed-forces-covenant-activities-and-achievements>
8. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/854400/6.6025_MOD_Covenant_Annual_Report_2019_Accessible.pdf
9. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmdfence/1899/189905.htm>
10. Statement from General Sir Sebastian Roberts, KCVO, dated 13 September.