

Stolen Valour

How the forces of extremism and racism are hi-jacking the good name of Britain's military, and what needs to be done to stop them.

Edited by James Bethell

Foreword by Charles Moore, Chairman of Policy Exchange



There is
Nothing British
about the BNP

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About Nothing British

Nothing British was founded by James Bethell and Tim Montgomerie in March 2009 to help protect Britain's fragile qualities of freedom, tolerance and fairness from the forces of extremism and racism sweeping Europe, represented by the British National Party, its surrogates and other neo-fascist splinter groups.

Our approach is to try to understand the causes of the anger and frustration which leads reasonable people to the popular nationalism that introduces intolerant and confrontational attitudes into the fabric of British society.

Through our news service at nothingbritish.com, seminars and publications, Nothing British seeks to analyse the policy failures that have led to these decisions and advocates brave solutions that sometimes challenge the liberal Establishment's orthodoxy.

And through our campaigning we oppose the BNP by appealing to Britain's inherently benign values and by mobilising traditional British institutions respected by the vast majority of this country.

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Foreword by Charles Moore

Although it stands at elections, the British National Party is not a conventional political party. It recommends the expulsion of British citizens, including many born here, on the basis of race.

It advocates a white-only Britain based on the racial supremacy of white people. It recommends a whites-only British military.

These views are an anathema to the British values of tolerance and equality.

It is a testimony to the British way of doing things that our armed forces have consistently resisted any temptation to involve themselves in politics, remaining a disinterested guarantor of democracy, an honourable force for tolerance in society and the ultimate defender of our freedom.

In more recent times the military has done much to drive racism from the ranks, confronting difficult decisions with courage.

But the military is under a new attack.

A newly-confident generation of neo-fascists are cynically exploiting the reputation of the military with enormous energy.

They are doing it with the slick marketing tools of modern communications - YouTube videos, political roadshows, photo-shopped imagery, Astro-turf community groups, FaceBook communities, even the cover of charitable social action.

Almost everything the BNP does is somehow linked to the commemoration of fallen heroes, evokes the spirit of the Blitz, condemns the broken Covenant and gripes about foreign wars.

It is a deliberate strategy to exploit warm feelings felt towards the Armed Services by the British public, particularly the sort of traditionally-minded families that provide the rank and file of the Services.

And it's working. The European Election campaign – branded “The Battle for Britain” – saw the BNP win two significant electoral victories with nearly one million votes.

The danger to Britain is that the BNP's poisonous brand of racism, segregation and intolerance will worm its way into the fabric of British life.

The danger for the British military is that they will inadvertently provide a leg-up at home for the kind of fascism that so many of our dead and wounded fought in foreign battlefields. This will damage the reputation of our armed services.

To date the military's response has been insufficient. It is time they said, enough.

This audit makes difficult reading for anyone who cares about Britain's military as I do. It makes some tough judgements and some challenging recommendations.

But it is an important step in ensuring that neo-fascists like the BNP can no longer claim to represent the memory of Britain's proud military past and good name of those who continue to defend our freedom.

Charles Moore

Chairman of Policy Exchange

October 2009

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Top Brass letter against extremism and racism.

We, the undersigned, are increasingly concerned that the reputation of Britain's Armed Services is being tarnished by political extremists who are attempting to appropriate it for their own dubious ends.

We deplore this trend for two reasons.

First, the values of these extremists - many of whom are essentially racist - are fundamentally at odds with the values of the modern British military such as tolerance and fairness. Commonwealth soldiers, who comprise about 10% of the Services, represent an invaluable contribution to the success of Britain's military, both in history and the current day. Many have won the highest awards.

Second, the reputation of our Armed Forces was won over centuries of service in some of the most difficult areas of the world. Political extremists should claim no right to share in this proud heritage.

We call on all those who seek to hi-jack the good name of Britain's military for their own advantage to cease and desist.

General The Lord Guthrie GCB, LVO, OBE, DL
General Sir Mike Jackson GCB, CBE, DSO, DL
General Sir Richard Dannatt GBC, CBE, MC
Major-General Patrick Cordingley DSO

October 2009

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Executive summary

The forces of extremism and racism are sweeping across Europe, seeking associations with their national military traditions and institutions wherever possible. Britain's military has an unrivalled history of defeating fascism overseas and, more recently, addressing racism in the ranks. Nonetheless, if it doesn't watch out, Britain's military will have its good name hi-jacked by domestic neo-fascists. (Chapter 1.).

The co-opting of Britain's military heritage by the BNP and its surrogates is a deliberate political strategy designed to strike a chord with their swing voters at a time when patriotism is officially unfashionable and to create a veneer of respectability that disguises the BNP's damaging reputation for criminality, corruption and violence. (Chapter 2.).

The BNP are investing heavily in rhetorical, graphic and organisational associations with the military through a number of sophisticated modern techniques assisted by a small but visible cadre of ex-Servicemen. Increasingly the BNP is using Astroturf organisations like veterans groups and charities to create entry-points for new recruits and create an alliance of friendly-looking organisations. (Chapter 3.).

Ironically, there is nothing patriotic about the BNP. They advocate policies of intolerance, segregation and oppression, which are inimical to British values of tolerance, democracy and fair play. The BNP leadership routinely consorts with enemies of Britain. They support an unethical, non-interventionist form of "armed neutrality" which is virtually isolationist. (Chapter 4.).

To date, the response by Britain's Armed Forces community has been timid. Charities are duped into accepting politically-charged donations. The BNP use military insignia unchallenged in the courts. Senior figures hide behind the excuse that "the military doesn't do politics". In fact, the bravest stands against the military are taken by private individuals like Dame Vera Lynn, Winston Churchill's family and Andy McNab. (Chapter 5.).

Recommendations

Nothing British calls on the Armed Forces, veteran associations and museums to rigorously clamp down on infringements of their intellectual property to stop the BNP hi-jacking their good name. When necessary, legal action must be taken out against anybody using trademarked or copyrighted insignia, symbols or photographs without authorisation.

Nothing British also asks for greater care to be applied to the mental health of troops returning from combat, particularly those suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome. This is to protect disgruntled service personnel from being the victims of prey from racists who seek to exploit their highly specialised skills learned during their time in the military.

Nothing British calls on the Charities Commission to be vigilant about those who solicit donations under false pretences, and calls for a tougher stance to be taken against groups masquerading as authentic veteran organisations. The purpose of these safeguards is to prevent the public from being exploited as they donate money in good faith in the anticipation that groups will become charities.

With regards to charities themselves, we ask they desist from accepting money from politically extreme organisations to avoid being accused of condoning racial hatred and division in society.

To protect national events like Remembrance Day from infiltration by racists and ultra-nationalists, we ask veterans organisations and their local associations for vigilance and to reject volunteers who abuse their position to promote racism and extremism.

Lastly, Nothing British calls on the Westminster establishment to wake up to the threat that popular nationalism will introduce a sinister new element of racism and extremism to our society. The government must address the concerns of hard-working people who lose out to the forces of globalisation. Ultimately, the only way to defeat the BNP is by addressing voter's bona fide concerns on issues such as immigration, job displacement, patriotism, Islamism and European federalism.

1 The threat presented by the rise of nationalism and neo-fascism to Britain's political life

The recent resurgence in popular nationalism and neo-fascism across Europe is a serious challenge to the gentle British values that make our country such a decent place to live: fairness, tolerance and standing up for the little guy. The election of two MEPs with a long-history of neo-fascist advocacy inevitably leads to media promotion of its leaders, an influx of public money and gives a degree of legitimacy to the BNP and its distorted world vision.

Britain now faces the danger of disaffected Britons - searching for answers to their anger and frustration - turning to the politics of racism, segregation and intolerance. We face deliberate provocations by those who profit from social confrontation that will inflame social tensions into full-blown riots and sectarianism. We can expect ostensibly-legitimate parties acting as a conveyor-belt of violence, turning protestors into law-breakers. After a period of reconciliation, can expect the vocabulary of racism and intolerance to re-enter the social lexicon in the play-ground, the work-place and elsewhere.

No one expects the extremists to win. But in losing they can still drag us into the gutter.

Throughout history, totalitarians have sought to associate themselves with the military. Partly to provide a physical dimension to their quest for power but also because of the emotional associations with patriotism, social discipline and sacrifice.

As the 21st century dawns, across Europe neo-fascists are on the rise, capitalising on economic troubles, disillusionment with the political classes, the challenge from Islamism and the consequences of globalisation such as mass migration and the pressure on jobs. In June's European Parliament elections, the British National Party won two seats, an anti-Koran party in the Netherlands won four seats, and there were gains too for extremists in Italy, Romania, Denmark, Slovakia, Finland, Norway and Hungary.

And in many cases these parties are seeking to build links with their country's military.

In some cases these have an overtly violent dimension. In Russia the Movement Against Illegal Immigration, the ultra-nationalist neo-Nazi party with strong links to the BNP, are building their own militias for service in trouble spots. In Belgium eight soldiers were arrested and thrown out of the army after it was discovered they had strong links to the neo-Nazi group "Blood and Honour".¹ Police found bomb making equipment, weapons, and ammunition alongside neo-Nazi propaganda. Sources claim the group had even used army grounds for paramilitary exercises, shooting practice, as well as the spreading of neo-Nazi ideology.² In Hungary, the fascist party Jobbik, which Nick Griffin has been building strong ties with³, has a several thousand strong militia called the Magyar Gárda (Hungarian Guard) that wears SS style uniforms.⁴

The British military faces a different kind of threat, but one no less severe.

1.1 The British military's history of resisting totalitarianism at home and overseas

In a century when continental Europe yielded to militarist governments, Britain remained democratic and its military remained aside from domestic politics. We have every right to be proud of this history.

There were, of course, efforts by fascists to align themselves with British military institutions, notably by Oswald Mosley's black-shirts.

¹ Jerusalem Post, "Belgium arrests neo-Nazi soldiers", (8th September 2009)

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1154526033055&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>

² Euro-News, "Belgium police foil alleged neo-Nazi plot", (8th September 2009) <http://www.euronews.net/2006/09/08/belgian-police-foil-alleged-neo-nazi-plot/>

³ 23rd October 2008 Nick Griffin spoke at a Jobbik rally in Hungary. YouTube, "Nick Griffin - Jobbik", (24th October 2008) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w8Urf_SXiYk

⁴ The Times, "Jobbik: Meet the BNP's fascist friends in Hungary", (9th June 2009) <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/politics/article6457752.ece>

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More recently, on Remembrance Day the National Front under the leadership of John Tyndall used to march annually to the Cenotaph. In 1999, Tyndall delivered his BNP election broadcast in front of the Cenotaph.⁵

However, these puny efforts to launch popular fascism or inspire a militarist coup dismally failed. In Britain there has always been a sense that fascism was deeply alien. Mosley's antics during the 1930s were regarded more clownish than chilling⁶. Britain, unlike its more volatile, European neighbours, simply wasn't that kind of place. Our affection for the monarchy and our pride in the Empire meant we were never susceptible to the egotistical charms of fascism.

1.2 The military's record in dismissing racism from its ranks

Until relatively recently, racism deeply affected the way Black and Asian troops in the British Armed Forces were treated, managed, equipped and deployed.

It is well documented that during the early 1990s, the military's public image was tarnished by reports of bullying and abuse of black soldiers. In 1997, the Office of Public Management released a damning report that found evidence of widespread racism in the armed forces.⁷

In response the following year the Ministry of Defence signed a 'Partnership Agreement' with the Commission for Racial Equality to promote employment through improved racial equality practices. This aimed to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination and harassment in the army. Measures included a campaign aimed specifically at recruiting ethnic minority officers.

However, the army has faced down its own problems with race with candour and integrity.

In 1998, when Major-General Sir Evelyn Webb-Carter took over as head of the Household Cavalry and Guards, there was an unwanted reputation for white exclusivity and racial harassment at the heart of the British army. But after two years and with the support of Lord Guthrie, former Chief of the General Staff, he managed to increase the number of black and Asian recruits from eight to fifty.⁸ Similar progress was made elsewhere in the navy and air force.

Problems inevitably remain. In 2004 Richard Stokes revealed that he resigned from the Grenadier Guards in 1990 not only because of racist abuse, but also because he felt he was being used as a "mascot". The Armed Services still finds it difficult to increase its levels of recruitment from ethnic minorities because of accusations of racism.⁹ However, the intervention of people like Major-General Webb-Carter has worked and the time of racial bars and white-glass-ceilings is largely over.

The BNP's efforts to infiltrate the forces, however, could derail all this vital and hard work.

⁵ For the European Parliament elections. 21st May, 1999.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Nn30I6N4_M&feature=player_embedded.

⁶ The Economist, "Booted and Suited", (11th June 2009)

http://www.economist.com/world/britain/displaystory.cfm?story_id=13837354

⁷ The Independent, "Forces accused of condoning racist abuse. Racist abuse still entrenched in the forces", (21st March 2009)

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/forces/forces-accused-of-condoning-racist-abuse-racist-abuse-still-entrenched-in-the-forces-challenged-over-pervasive-racism-1274052.html>

⁸ The Guardian, "General goes to war on racists in the Guards", (20th July 1999)

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/1999/jul/20/race.world>

⁹ April/May 2009 percentage of UK Regular Forces from ethnic minority backgrounds accounts for 6.5 per cent of UK Regular Forces. MOD Statistics (28th May 2009)

<http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/DefenceNews/DefencePolicyAndBusiness/UkArmedForcesAt972PerCentFulltimeStrength.htm>

Also see The British Army Museum, "Black, Asian British Army", <http://www.national-army-museum.ac.uk/exhibitions/baba/files/Equality.pdf>

2 How the BNP uses the military to build bridges and tell the story of broken promises

The BNP's winning formula exploits the reasonable fears of hard-working voters on issues that directly affect their day-to-day lives and outcomes. These are the failure of public services to deliver what people need, the competition for jobs particularly for semi-skilled workers in Britain's manufacturing and agricultural heartlands, and the deteriorating environment in their (often failing) communities. Quite reasonably these people blame the Establishment for failing to protect the least capable from the effects of globalisation, particularly on the labour markets. These tangible complaints are recently compounded by the recession and the crisis in public finances.

Their narrative pins the blame for these complaints on an immigration system which is clearly unfit for purpose, on a tiny but highly-visible conspiracy of Muslim extremists, the politically-correct attitudes of a metropolitan elite that stigmatises Britain's white working class and a flawed democratic system in a crisis of trust.

In cosmopolitan Britain only a tiny minority share the BNP's sociopathic xenophobia or their dystopian view of the future. But large numbers of perfectly reasonable Britons are beginning to think that they have a point. The BNP use discussion of Britain's military past to reach out to these people.

From interviews with Nick Griffin MEP and his senior lieutenants it is clear that they see the next three years providing a "perfect storm" of factors that can provide a breakthrough. He is inspired by Jean-Marie Le Pen's 2002 Presidential Election when he came second to Jacques Chirac with nearly a quarter of the popular vote.

This might seem like a far-off dream in the Britain of today, but there are undoubtedly good reasons why Griffin is hopeful for this breakthrough.

The economic downturn has made voters anxious about their future, particularly workers in the blue-collar manufacturing heartlands. Disillusionment with Westminster politicians exemplified by the expenses scandal has driven voters into the hands of fringe parties. Policy failures have left many Britons unable to compete in the global jobs market. The impact of 2.3m immigrants over a 15-year period has put pressure on public services.¹⁰ There are issues of social cohesion connected with a growing Muslim population with a highly-visible radicalised minority. This is all takes place in the context of an electorate that feels increasingly remote from institutions of power because of increasing European integration, a centralised Whitehall and remote, unaccountable Quangos.

However, instead of seriously addressing any these pressing issues, BNP propaganda is focused heavily on Britain's military.

Why, then, does the BNP talk about the military so much?

2.1 Why is the BNP targeting the military?

Britain's military provide the perfect cipher for the BNP to talk about everything that is commendable about this country.

The BNP make the military a central component of their narrative for three reasons.

¹⁰ Balanced Migration's reports on the effects of migration on the UK

<http://www.balancedmigration.com/briefingPapers/Update2.pdf>

A YouGov and Migration Watch survey found that 78% of voters were concerned about the UK population hitting 70 million, "Survey Results", (16th-17th July 2009)

http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&source=web&ct=res&cd=1&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.migrationwatchuk.com%2Fexcel%2FPoll_YougovonJohnson_230709.xls&ei=BYSzSo3WH5aZ4gb5tcF8&usq=AFQjCNGjB6T9xHUIj6SLiK8LnEkdIaTcNw&sig2=5dRcOjPm9lAKmtBi4i0gw

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First, BNP voters are generally pessimistic about the state of Britain and her future. The BNP's messages of being "the only party that cares and supports our troops" and its populist military policies are obvious dog-whistles that prick the ears of anyone who thinks the country has lost its way from its glorious past.¹¹

They are angry about the Establishment's neglect of Britain's institutions and the replacement of our Imperial glory by a multi-cultural British identity. In their minds, the Armed Forces represents everything that was once great about this country. Time and again, opinion polls show how the Armed Forces persistently come top in the way it is regarded by voters - regularly outstripping its rivals in medicine and journalism by a long way.¹²

Secondly, it is an attempt to lend credibility to the BNP's dubious patriotic credentials. The Armed Forces provide a perfect cloak of respectability to a party mired in criminality, corruption and violence. The party is conscious of its image, especially its association with Nazis and the neo-fascist links of leaders like Nick Griffin. By aligning itself with a well-respected institution like the Armed Forces, the party hopes voters will be distracted and not notice the obvious irony of them using Second World War imagery to promote divisions on race.

Thirdly, it appeals to people's emotional attachment to the sacrifice of our fallen heroes. Britons deeply admire the military's values of courage and sacrifice for our country. We respect its acceptance of rigid discipline (lacking from civilian life). We have a great sense of pride in its historical achievements and its untrammelled celebration of Britain's patriotic past.¹³ The BNP knows that the use of evocative and emotive imagery plays on voter's heart strings, particularly at a time of an increasingly-unpopular foreign conflict, and it hopes to convert this in to political capital.

2.2 Using the military to recruit

Talking solely about immigration is dry and boring. Talking about our military provides a more exciting narrative.

When the BNP talks to its potential converts about issues such as immigration and race, the party are aware about its ability to turn them off. But talking about the military provides a bridge of trust and adds a veneer of respectability.

2.3 Creating the sparks to inflame racial conflicts

The BNP seeks to turbo-charge high profile incidents concerning the military with a racial dimension to create bitter tensions by conflating the patriotic emotions of sensible people and the threat from violent Islamist terrorists.

For instance, rows over personal kit, compensation claims and hospital resources for injured soldiers, and the bitter row between top brass and the MoD over helicopter support are somehow connected with an incremental "Islamification" of our society and military.

¹¹ Mike Moseley, BNP member and ex-serviceman, "The Betrayal of our soldiers", (2nd May 2009) Part 1:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KtFDzlj08Fo> Part 2: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sK6B45qZgXE&feature=channel>

¹² The PoliticsHome OpinionUK Institution Tracker measures the level of sentiment felt towards sixteen of the UK's most well known institutions with over 1000 members of the public on a daily basis. As of the 11th September 2009, The Armed Forces scores a positive opinion rating of 49 beating its nearest rival, the NHS (+22) by 27 points, and beating 'Broadsheet newspapers' (+15) into third place by 34. This high level of adulation is a real anomaly, as only five institutions manage to score positive ratings.

It is in stark contrast to the sentiment felt towards political establishments. Parliament and the EU lie near the very bottom of the ratings scoring a lowly negative opinion rating of 50 and 42 respectively with only 'tabloid newspapers' faring any worse on -59. <http://www.politicshome.com/>

¹³ For further discussion of Britain's celebration of the military, see Professor Hugh Strachen, "British Society and Armed Forces Day", RUSI, see full article <http://www.rusi.org/research/militarysciences/uk/commentary/ref:C4A42142744AA5/>

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The incidents which provide the most ammunition for BNP rhetoric and blogs include the distasteful Luton demonstration against the Royal Anglian Regiment in March 2009¹⁴ and the alleged abuse at Selly Oak Hospital, where the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine is based, of Company Sergeant Major Neil Powell who was reportedly heckled by three women in June 2006.¹⁵

2.4 The narrative of the lonely patriot

Besides the party political opportunity, support from veterans and the use of military images is very important. It contributes to their story of lonely patriots fighting a corrupt system, it evokes a connection with past glories and it generates a sense of respectability for a party routinely associated with law-breaking and a leadership attacked for their unpleasant views on race and balmy economic policies.

The “Battle of Britain” story of the lonely patriots is one that works well with the BNP’s target audience that is older voters and drawn heavily from economically-threatened, skilled manual workers with a less than average education background.¹⁶

2.5 The search for mainstream respectability

In its search for ways to break out of a past mired in accusations of criminality, corruption and violence, the BNP attaches itself to veterans because it wishes to appear respectable in its attempts to court disaffected middle class voters. It is, as Nick Griffin has said, an “unobjectionable, motherhood and apple-pie concept.”¹⁷

Never before in British political history have nationalists been awarded such an opportunity. In Afghanistan we are fighting a war with declining public support.¹⁸ Concern about the treatment and care of British servicemen and veterans is deepening.¹⁹ And a national crisis of identity and a general decline of patriotism.

The window is open for the BNP to become a mainstream popular nationalist party infecting our social fabric with its extremism and racism unless traditional British institutions like the Armed Services can close down the opportunity making it clear that there is nothing British about the BNP.

¹⁴ The Guardian reports, “Muslim group pledges more protests against UK soldiers” (11 March 2009) <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2009/mar/11/muslim-group-anti-war-protests> - This incident caused the formation of the English Defence League.

¹⁵ The Birmingham Post, “Muslim women abused army man at hospital” (11 June 2006) http://www.birminghampost.net/news/west-midlands-news/tm_headline=muslim-women-abused-army-man-at-hospital&method=full&objectid=19279378&siteid=50002-name_page.html

¹⁶ More than a third of BNP voters are over 55. For more information about the BNP’s target voters, Eatwell, R. and Goodwin, M.J. (eds.) (2010) *The New Extremism in Twenty-First Century Britain*, Routledge. Also see YouGov poll commissioned by Channel Four News http://www.channel4.com/news/articles/politics/domestic_politics/who+voted+bnp+and+why/3200557

¹⁷ Copsey, Nigel, “Contemporary British Fascism” (2008), Pp.103.

¹⁸ BBC News, “Should troops leave Afghanistan?”, (13th November 2008) <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7714828.stm>

¹⁹ BBC News, “Veteran care is a disgrace”, (28th February 2009) <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7916221.stm>

3 BNP communication strategy – the critical importance of the military

The BNP are investing in rhetorical, graphic and organisational associations with the military, assisted by a small but visible cadre of ex-Servicemen.

Most dangerous is the use of “Astroturf” organisations, copied from the French National Front’s “satellite organisation” programme. Griffin hopes that BNP affiliates, based on the precedent set by the French NF, will be able to create a sort of “counter culture” formed from a series of semi-autonomous party associations that will “extend the party’s influence amongst various segments” of British society.²⁰

The BNP believes that through forming respectable-looking analogous networks of party-linked organisations they will be able to build bridges with different social groups and so make the party more ‘approachable.’ These are intended to provide a halfway house for members of the public who aren’t quite ready to commit themselves to joining the BNP proper.²¹

Typical BNP front organisations include a trade union (Solidarity), Christian pressure group (The Christian Council of Britain) and a civil liberties group (Civil Liberty). Its commercial wing includes a record label (Great White Records²²), a publishing and merchandise divisions (Excalibur). Some are barely active but they provide propaganda value out of all proportion to their actual size.

However, the BNP have worked harder on its veteran front organisations than in any other part of life. These organisations include the Association for British ex-Service Personnel and Soldiers off the Street. It mobilises them through its own Armed Forces Awareness Day (9th May) at events like last year’s recruitment drive at Catterick Garrison.²³

3.1 The success of the BNP’s “Battle for Britain” theme for European Elections

The BNP’s June 2009 election campaign was promoted by the theme “Battle for Britain”. The party’s logo for the campaign was the Spitfire.²⁴ With the help of a “Battle for Britain bus” and a series of fund raising dinners, accompanied by World War Two re-enactment props, it managed to raise a total of £13,500 for the BNP, in a matter of a few weeks. The party’s campaign cost a total of £390,000, the largest and most expensive in its history (it nearly bankrupted the party).²⁵

On the night of its launch, Nick Griffin said: “Someone has to make a stand, someone has to tell people what is going on, no one else will do it so we must do it regardless of the possible cost.”²⁶

The use of the Spitfire and Churchill imagery, the Blitz rhetoric and the Battle Bus constituted to a higher profile campaign than ever before. It saw the BNP’s natural vote increase to 6.2% with 10% in some areas.²⁷

As a direct result of the BNP’s successful use of military-themed election campaigns, they now have legitimate access to mainstream media, funding from the EU Parliament and the aura of success.

²⁰ In France, the NF has a whole series of “circles” amongst businessmen, farmers, women and war veterans. (See Nigel Copsey’s “Contemporary British Fascism”, 2008).

²¹ Copsey, Nigel. “Contemporary British Fascism” (2008). Pp.108-109.

²² Which produced “Corporal Fox”. A song about a homeless Falklands veteran with lyrics penned by Nick Griffin. Great White Records, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5S_ufQgrmNs

²³ BNP Armed Forces Awareness Day (9th May 2009) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dbq0c2J2rS4>

²⁴ The Daily Telegraph, “BNP uses Polish Spitfire in anti-immigration poster”, (4th March 2009) <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopping/politics/4935429/BNP-uses-Polish-Spitfire-in-anti-immigration-poster.html>

²⁵ BNP, “200 new members per week, 100 new enquiries per day – and TV broadcast dates set”, (10th May 2009)

<http://bnp.org.uk/index.php?s=%C2%A3390%2C000>

²⁶ YouTube, “BNP – Battle for Britain Morley 2009” (4th March 2009) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=THJPz4BLFk>

²⁷ See June 2009 EU election regional data on The Guardian website <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/european-election-results-map-2009>

3.2 Red White and Blue Festival – veterans parade

The RWB is a BNP festival spanning over a weekend period. It is an imitation of the French National Front's "*Fête Rouge, Blanc et Bleu*" and has been going for over ten years. Nick Griffin believes that through careful marketing the rally will help cultivate an image that the BNP is family friendly. Griffin believes RWB can do more in terms of normalising the BNP's image than a "thousand marches or tub thumping rallies" could ever do.²⁸

During this year's 2009 festival, a central element of the programmes was a military parade for war veterans where Nick Griffin got to do a "salute and meet the troops". It was organised by Peter Molloy, a former *veteran who tours of garrison towns to recruit veterans*.²⁹ The purpose of the parade was to "honour these brave men and women who risked their lives to protect the nation."³⁰ Veterans were told they must wear their regimental blazer/suit, medals and veterans badge. (Blazer and tie were optional). Photographs were given prominent display in BNP newsletters and on-line communications. The RWB festival is a shabby affair consisting of little more than caravans in a field. But the pictures of veterans parading give credence to those who say the BNP support our troops at a time when other parties do not overtly celebrate the military.

There was also a "Patriots Encampment" with the Army, Navy and RAF flags, which sat distastefully next to flags bearing the symbols of white supremacist groups and neo-Nazis such as the Confederate's flag and Odin's cross (which is also the symbol of Stormfront, the neo-Nazi internet forum).³¹

3.3 Nick Griffin's rhetoric

Nick Griffin's speeches increasingly contain wartime, military rhetoric. The 22nd May 2009 4-minute "BNP Renaissance" election broadcast evoked the memory of fallen soldiers when talking about immigration. "The heroes who laid down their lives to prevent past invasions must be turning in their graves," said Griffin.³²

In his newsletters, Nick Griffin routinely bases his appeals for money and support on concepts like "The British Resistance". He also makes appeals to the national conscience through the anachronistic use of Britain's war-dead and the spirit of British heroes like the Duke of Wellington, Field Marshall Montgomery, Sir Winston Churchill and events such as El Alamein, Dunkirk and D-Day (See appendix for pictures). A typical example is his newsletter entitled "Join the British Resistance" (July 10th 2009):

*"We modelled our entire Euro Election campaign on the Battle of Britain and the sacrifice willingly made by hundreds of thousands of brave Britons to defend our homeland during the Second World War.
What a fitting end to that campaign when the British National Party achieved a momentous victory, a mighty blow against the enemies of the British people. It is hard to imagine living in today's twin-turbo, computerised consumer society the enormous bravery, heroism and sacrifice gladly endured by the legions of dead war heroes who gave their lives for our island homeland. The heroes who fell in Dunkirk, the Battle of Britain, the Convoys, D-Day, North Africa and the Far East did not give their lives for 'multiculturalism', or 'political correctness', or for the 'EU', or for immigration, or to see their homeland become a bankrupt slum inundated with asylum seekers and immigrants. They died to keep this country British, to keep our nation free, sovereign and independent.
Why did they do it? Why did they brave bombs, bullets and the threat of imminent death?
There is no glory in war. War is a horrific experience that can and does leave many people mentally destroyed, dead or grievously injured. So why did millions of our forbears fight and die?"*

²⁸ Copsey, Nigel. "Contemporary British Fascism"(2008). Pp.109.

²⁹ Also known as BNP Pete through his YouTube videos.

³⁰ BNP, "Calling all ex-armed service personnel who are BNP members", (26th June 2009) <http://bnp.org.uk/tag/armed-forces-day/>

³¹ Stormfront is run by Don Black, who was banned from the UK by Jacqui Smith, former Home Secretary, in May 2009. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2009/may/05/list-of-people-banned-from-britain>

³² BNP election broadcast saying how veterans "fought like lions to stop Britain being swamped by foreigners" saying how our ancestors would turn in their graves because immigration had become "an invasion". Youtube "BNP – European Election Broadcast" (22nd May 2009) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7f8lprxi0Fc>

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They did so because they understood that they were not just individuals whose only consideration is their own existence. They realised that they were part of something much bigger than simply themselves. They realised that they were only alive during that time because generations before them had defended the British Isles and handed down a country worth living in to future generations.”³³

He then goes on to plead for donations and adds: “This is the spirit of British Nationalism: the knowledge that you are an individual with your own life to lead but that you also live within a national community of ethnically and culturally identical people who constitute your nation.”

3.4 The use of veteran supporters

BNP political managers take full advantage of the support of veterans from World War Two and the Falklands. World War Two veterans such as George Johnson and 82-year old Joe Randall are regularly used to attack political figures that publicly criticised the BNP. ³⁴ Besides World War Two veterans, the BNP also have modern day veteran sympathiser. Frequently used is Mike Moseley (see section 4.1) an Iraq war veteran, who passionately attacks the Government’s treatment of soldiers. Adam Walker and Pete Molloy (regularly seen wearing his regimental blazer while distributing BNP propaganda) are also put out on show and used as proxies.

3.5 Evoking the memory of Churchill

In a video broadcast, Nick Griffin gave a response to the anger that erupted after the BNP used Winston Churchill’s image. On the former wartime leader, Griffin ironically said: “[he] would have been full-square behind the British National Party”. ³⁵

Simon Darby, the Deputy Leader of the BNP, also waded into the debate. Darby said that if Churchill was alive today he would be a BNP supporter. If Churchill “was here today and had a choice of voting Tory or BNP I think he’d vote for us. He would have more in common with the BNP than with the Tories, that’s for sure.”³⁶

3.6 Association for British ex-Service Personnel (ABEX)

ABEX was first founded in 2000 and re-launched in 2007 as a front group for the BNP designed recruit disgruntled ex-servicemen to its racist standard and provide a voice. It also acted as a counter movement to the Royal British Legion.

The re-launched version of ABEX existed primarily on the internet and was operated by Simon Bennett, BNP website manager, and Peter Mullins, ex-RAF and the BNP’s Defence Spokesman. ABEX’s online forums contained content about “Muslim wars” in Europe to exaggerate claims of an impending “race war”. The forums also contained plenty of anti-Semitism and links to the Holocaust-denial publishing houses Heretical Press and Historical Review Press. ³⁷

³³ Email, “Join the British Resistance”, (July 10th 2009)

³⁴ BNP, “David Cameron is a disgrace to British politics”, (28th May 2009) <http://bnp.org.uk/2009/05/david-cameron-is-a-%e2%80%9cdisgrace-to-british-politics%e2%80%9d-says-wwii-bnp-supporting-veteran/>

³⁵ “Nick Griffin Speaks on Winston Churchill” <http://video.google.co.uk/videoplay?docid=8951128356292095336&ei=080vSpzVHcnm-Aax49mZBQ&q=Nick+Griffin+Churchill&hl=en>

³⁶ The Daily Telegraph “Nicholas Soames in battle with BNP for using Churchill to promote party” (20th March 2009) <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/politics/conservative/5019404/Nicholas-Soames-in-battle-with-BNP-for-using-Churchill-to-promote-party.html>

³⁷ Hope not Hate, “A-Z of the BNP”, (12th May 2009) <http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/the-real-bnp/A-Z-of-the-BNP.php>

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Interestingly, ABEX did not comment when the BNP dismissed Lance Corporal Johnson Beharry's gallantry as "routine" and claimed he won the Victoria Cross only because he was black. At the time The RBL condemned the BNP over their remarks.

ABEX's website is no longer operational.

3.7 "Soldiers off the Street"

Nothing British has uncovered a new organisation set up by the BNP called "Soldiers off the Street", the latest and possibly most distasteful example of Astroturfing by the BNP.³⁸

SOTS "aims to provide clothing and food for [homeless] ex-service personnel throughout the UK, actively finding locations that will accommodate them, attempting to reunite ex-service personnel with their families, setting up offices all over the UK and finding volunteers to help run them."

SOTS claims it "is not and never will be affiliated to any political party, it is dedicated to physically help as many ex-service personnel gain as normal a life as possible". Nowhere on SOTS's site does it mention that it is in any way connected to the BNP and it carefully avoids stating who its organisers are.

However, SOTS's Director is Hugh William Murray, former Regional Secretary of the BNP in Wales³⁹. SOTS's office telephone number matches that of Mr Murray's home telephone number found on the leaked BNP membership register.⁴⁰

SOTS have told Nothing British they no longer have any involvement with the BNP. But according to our research Mr Murray was still calling himself a member of the BNP four days after SOTS was incorporated as a company. One day later Mr Murray committed himself to joining a BNP march to bring soldiers back from Afghanistan being organised for St George's Day 2010.

In order to lend credibility to itself as an organisation SOTS has approached a number of authentic organisations including the British Limbless ex-Servicemens Association (BLESMA), Chaseley Trust (a charitable hospice) and a number of veterans associations. Nothing British even discovered a one association which was duped into exchanging links with SOTS.

It is not yet registered as charity, but it is apparently seeking charity status.⁴¹ Nothing British has learnt that the Charities Commission has not received an application to become a charity. It is unlikely to be awarded charity status because groups run by political parties are not allowed to be charities.⁴²

3.8 Armed Forces Awareness Day and the BNP's recruitment of supporters at military garrisons

In May 2009, the BNP held a nationally co-ordinated "Armed Forces Awareness Day" with teams of activists spreading out across Great Britain to pre-selected military locations (*not to be confused with the government-sponsored Veterans Day which became Armed Forces Day in June 2009*).

In Yorkshire, a troop of twenty members headed by Andrew Brons visited Catterick Garrison for a recruitment drive.

Teams handed out specially designed military friendly leaflets with populist slogans about the EU and immigration.

³⁸ <http://www.soldiersoffthestreet.com/index.html>

³⁹ Also known as "Bill Murray". Mr Murray's "BNP Forum" profile: <http://bnp.org.uk/members/billmurray/>

⁴⁰ Wrexham is also where the BNP's merchandise wing (Deeside), Excalibur, which is managed by Arthur Kemp, a neo-Nazi and white supremacist with links to the murder of the former head of the South African Communist Party.

http://www.searchlightmagazine.com/index.php?link=hate_factory

⁴¹ SOTS <http://www.soldiersoffthestreet.com/Mission%20Statement.html>

⁴² Charities Commission <http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc9.asp>

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According to the BNP, the teams divided the garrison into six zones by the veteran recruitment and ex-servicemen duo Adam Walker and Pete Molloy (who served in Catterick). The team leafleted the garrison's married quarters and erected a stall in the main shopping area for service personnel and civilians. The BNP also distributed its newspaper and information packs to serving soldiers.⁴³

3.9 BNP St George's Day 2010 "March on London" - Bring them back campaign

BNP activists are planning to "March on Westminster" on St George's Day 2010 - just a few weeks before the General Election - to call on the government to repatriate British soldiers fighting in Afghanistan.⁴⁴

The parade, organized by party activists, will feature sympathetic ex-servicemen leading a march to put pressure on policy makers to "bring the troops home" and to stop what the leader of the group has called "[propping] up Zion." Activists are expecting the support of sympathetic organizations such as Soldiers off the Street (Bill Murray, director of SOTS, has said that he will be present) and the BNP's Scottish based veterans charity of choice - FEBA.

Some activists plan to conceal their political identities when approaching bona fide organizations to support the march. Reputable charities being approached include Combat Stress, a charity for soldiers suffering from the mental stresses of war, and Afghan Heroes, which was set up by the mothers of eight soldiers killed in Helmand to help raise awareness of the conflict.

The leader of the organizing group is believed to be Ian Holt⁴⁵. He has blogged on the BNP social network that he has written to Afghan Heroes and is intending to write to the Royal British Legion for support. He has also said that he is seeking permission from London's Metropolitan Police.

Other members have said that they are speaking to members of the Territorial Army and are believed to be organizing an online petition on the Number 10 website.

⁴³ BNP reports: "BNP Yorkshire honours armed forces in Catterick" (15th May 2009) <http://bnp.org.uk/2009/05/bnp-yorkshire-honours-armed-forces-in-catterick/>

⁴⁴ BNP Social Network, "Bring them back": <http://bnp.org.uk/groups/bring-them-back>

⁴⁵ Ian Holt's website: <http://www.masheduk.co.uk/>

4 What they believe – a muddled collection of racist, non-interventionist and warped populist ideas

Men and women from Africa, Asia, the Indian sub-continent and the Caribbean have all willingly served on the front line, as soldiers, pilots and seamen throughout Britain's modern history. Ethnic minorities play a vital role in every aspect of the Armed Forces and are taking increasingly senior positions. They are risking their lives every day in Afghanistan as they bravely battle against the enemies of Britain. Without their sacrifice, we would not enjoy our freedom.

Nick Griffin's policy of wanting to make Britain 99% white would see a depletion of our Armed Forces and seriously affect our frontline fighting capability⁴⁶. In short, the BNP's bizarre policies of racial hygiene are not only disrespectful to the contributions made by those who are not white, but would also be a dereliction of duty and seriously compromise our national security.

It is imperative that our Top Brass take a stand. At stake is the good name of Britain's non-white servicemen and the military's ability to recruit and retain a valued component of our Armed Forces.

The contribution made by Gurkhas to the British Army, and the involvement of troops from Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa during the two World Wars are well documented.⁴⁷ But, the role made by servicemen from other parts of the British Empire and Commonwealth is less publicised. Men and women from Africa, the Indian sub-continent, Asia, Hong Kong and the Caribbean have all willingly served on the front-line, as infantrymen, pilots and seamen for Britain. We also owe a debt of gratitude for the vital work carried out by non-whites who serve as medics, logistics and in transportation.⁴⁸ Without this cosmopolitan effort, by the Britain's commonwealth allies our armed forces would have collapsed long ago and we would not enjoy our present day freedoms.

In today's Armed Forces there are a total of 11,300 ethnic minorities serving as regular forces.⁴⁹ Without their contribution the full time strength of Britain's Armed Forces would be a mere 90.7%, thus severely weakening our frontline fighting capability through an acute man power shortage.⁵⁰

Whether you agree with the politics of the interventions in Afghanistan or Iraq, Britain's Armed Forces are overstretched and fighting daily battles to defend us from extremely dangerous enemies – to remove non-whites from today's Armed Forces would be a dereliction of duty.

The well publicised Gurkha campaign lent support to the public feeling that if you are prepared to die for Britain and you want to live in this country you should be considered British, irrespective of the colour of your skin or whether you were born here.

Nick Griffin's racist definition of "Britishness" would, however, disqualify ethnic minorities from their right to call themselves British.⁵¹

Lee Barnes, BNP legal director, has recently said that serving in the British should not equate to citizenship and said that it would be an "absurdity" to do so.⁵²

⁴⁶ Nick Griffin, "No time for Peter Pan", (November 1998), Spearhead
<http://web.archive.org/web/20000118155247/bnp.net/pan.html>

⁴⁷ Ministry of Defence (24th July 2009)

<http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/DefenceNews/HistoryAndHonour/InPicturesColchestersMilitaryFestival.htm>

⁴⁸ "We were there" http://www.wewerethere.defencedynamics.mod.uk/wewerethere_old/1914.html

⁴⁹ Full time strength of British Armed Forces is 97.2% (6.5% ethnic minorities). Ministry of Defence statistics (28th May 2009)

<http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/DefenceNews/DefencePolicyAndBusiness/UkArmedForcesAt972PerCentFulltimeStrength.htm>

⁵⁰ The Guardian "Army weakened by recruitment failure" (27th April 2008)

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2008/apr/27/military.defence>

⁵¹ Nick Griffin has defended BNP literature that claims that Black and Asian Britons "do not exist". BBC 23rd April 2009

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/politics/8011878.stm>

⁵² Lee Barnes, "Andy McNab and the BNP", (10th September 2009) <http://leejohnbarnes.blogspot.com/2009/09/andy-mcnab-and-bnp.html>

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Examples of dismissive and racially charged language used by the BNP against Britain's non-white servicemen include:

Lance Corporal Johnson Beharry won Britain's highest military honour, the Victoria Cross, for saving the lives of 30 British soldiers from his unit in Iraq.⁵³ The BNP said that his bravery was "routine" and suggested that he was awarded the VC because of "politically correctness". Also, the BNP disrespectfully called L/Cpl. Beharry, who lives in London but was born in Grenada, an immigrant.⁵⁴

The Ghurkhas were contemptuously labelled as "mercenaries" by Nick Griffin on BBC Radio Five Live. He also said he didn't think "the most overcrowded country in Europe, can realistically say, 'Look, you can all come and all your relatives.'"⁵⁵

In June 2009, Andrew Brons declared Dame Kelly Holmes MBE⁵⁶, a veteran and former army physical trainer, as "not British".⁵⁷

4.1 The BNP's racist recruitment policy

27th September 2008, the BNP wrote an online article attacking the Governments proposed 15% cap on the number of foreign recruits in the British military (which was enforced in February 2009).⁵⁸

The BNP wrote that the British Army should have the right to remain "British" through the introduction of a top limit on the number of non-British soldiers in its ranks.⁵⁹ It went on to say that it was the "British-origin" of the military that "made it great".

The BNP argue that the dilution of white stock in the Armed Forces is one of the reasons why the military have difficulty in recruiting. The party's policy is to reduce the "far too high" 15% cap and restore it to its former "British" glory.

However, recent reports, by the MOD, have proved that the BNP's claim, about having ethnic minorities in the Armed Forces is turning away recruits, is factually baseless. The Armed Forces have said that the economic down turn has helped recruitment figures increase, as job seekers look for "recession proof" careers. Recruits have been turned away from a military life because of economic and social factors and not racial bigotry and hatred, like the BNP have claimed.⁶⁰

⁵³ Ministry of Defence, "Lance Corporal Johnson Beharry's full citation", (18th March 2005)

<http://www.operations.mod.uk/telic/ophons05/beharry.htm>

⁵⁴ British National Party, "Johnson Beharry: Latest media lie against the BNP", (17th May 2009)

<http://bnp.org.uk/index.php?s=Johnson%20Beharry>

⁵⁵ Daily Mirror, "Keep brave Gurkhas out of Britain says BNP", (13th May 2009) <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/top-stories/2009/05/13/keep-brave-gurkhas-out-of-britain-says-bnp-115875-21354161/>

⁵⁶ The Independent, "Dame Kelly Holmes: Inspirational tale of a long dark journey", (2nd August 2009)

<http://www.independent.co.uk/sport/general/athletics/dame-kelly-holmes-inspirational-tale-of-a-long-dark-journey-1766164.html>

⁵⁷ The Daily Telegraph, "Dame Kelly Holmes is not fully British, says BNP MEP Andrew Brons", (13th June 2009)

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopping/politics/5524684/Kelly-Holmes-is-not-fully-British-says-BNP-MEP-Andrew-Brons.html>

⁵⁸ The Guardian "Army puts cap on foreign recruits" (3rd February 2009) <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2009/feb/03/army-commonwealth-recruits>

⁵⁹ BNP, "British army demands right to be British: Race Gestapo upset", (27th September 2008) <http://bnp.org.uk/2008/09/british-army-demands-the-right-to-be-british-race-gestapo-upset/>

⁶⁰ The Daily Telegraph "Army faces recruiting surge" (21st February 2009)

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopping/politics/defence/4740309/Army-faces-recession-recruiting-surge.html>

5 How the military responds – examples of good and bad practice

To date the response by Britain's Armed Forces community has been timid. Examples of appeals to decency and attempts to negotiate with the BNP have proved counter-productive. The few examples of military figures taking a tough stance against the BNP come mainly from brave individuals and not the mainstream organisations of military life.

There seems to be an unspoken concern about the older generations that passed through the Armed Services in a different age before the current emphasis on stamping out racism in the ranks. At a time when military institutions rely on their alumni for donations and moral support, it may seem unwise to drag them into a political dust-up over racism and extremism that might uncover some unpleasant attitudes amongst ones' friends.

They should not worry. The truth is that, like any bully, the BNP retreats from serious opposition. Media attacks are shaken off with bravado because their supporters care little about grand-standing professional politicians and are alienated from liberal metropolitan attitudes. But the BNP's leadership are troubled by attacks from Britain's traditional institutions because their core vote have an instinctive respect for the monarchy, the military and the serious bits of the Church.

And whilst Grandad's after-Christmas-dinner jokes get a bit fruity, the military should have more confidence in the inherent decency of the British Service personnel (past and present), their positive experiences of serving alongside comrades of many backgrounds and the high esteem regarded towards overseas regiments like the Gurkas and soldiers like Lance-Corporal Johnson Beharry.

The current recession has hit all charities hard. They are feeling an enormous amount of pressure with the increase in demand for services and the drop in income from a lack of donations as households begin to tighten their belts. 2009 has been the first year when charities are not expecting an increase in revenues. This gives the BNP publicity opportunities based on social action.⁶¹

This “wolf in sheep's clothing” strategy by the BNP is working and allowing them to worm their way into the fabric of British society. The danger, if this activity is not rapidly halted, is that we allow neo-Nazis, with values that are inimical to those which veterans fought for, to become tolerated and accepted as a legitimate force in British politics and society.

5.1 Publicity coup. The British Legion accepts the BNP's donation

The British Legion has faced a concerted attempt by the BNP to infiltrate its poppy appeal in the past. Local BNP branches are encouraged to join poppy teams as a way of reaching out to the public, and it is difficult to stop them.

More recently Nick Griffin has sought to associate himself with the Legion by wearing a poppy – the trademarked emblem of the British Legion - during the European Election campaign. On May 27th the Legion wrote privately asking him to desist. After he provocatively wore a poppy at his election celebration press conference, The Royal British Legion wrote an open letter that formed an advert in The Guardian, saying “Stop it, Mr Griffin. Just stop it.”⁶²

This represented a significant blow to the BNP.

But not all of the BNP's attempts to politicize veterans and military have been met so strongly. This allows for the BNP to think it is acceptable behaviour and, more seriously, it undermines and damages veteran heritage.

⁶¹ BBC, “Have charities been hit by the recession?” (11th March 2009) <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/7937183.stm>

⁶² RBL open letter (9th June 2009) <http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/news/general/an-open-letter-to-nick-griffin-chairman-of-the-bnp-and-mep-for-north-west-england>

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Simultaneously, on 29th August 2009, after an initial denial and a week's prevarication, The Royal British Legion accepted a donation from Rachel Firth, a member of the BNP ("Babe in the Box"), who had slept in a box for 24 hours to raise funds for both the BNP and RBL. The RBL said that it had not accepted money from the BNP, but from an individual who happened to be a member of the party.

Disappointingly, the donation was swiftly turned into a propaganda coup for the BNP, who proclaimed: "British Legion agrees to take BNP members money after all."⁶³

This angered many who felt that the RBL, as a non-party aligned organisation, were naive to have accepted the donation. Most commentators could see that Ms Firth's donation had more to do with linking the Royal British Legion with the BNP than about a genuine effort to raise funds for a much-loved and respected institution.

What's more, many pointed out the obvious irony about the BNP, neo-fascist party, donating money to the RBL, an organisation with many members who fought against fascism during the Second World War.

5.2 Andy McNab – "Griffin, I want my books back"

On the 8th September 2009, Nick Griffin announced at a BNP rally in Shropshire that the party was auctioning two signed copies of books by Andy McNab, the ex-SAS, Gulf War veteran and best-selling author, and donating the proceeds to Help for Heroes. Nothing British broke the story about Andy McNab's fury with the BNP.⁶⁴

"When someone called me to say that the BNP was using one of my books in a publicity stunt, I was sick to the stomach," said McNab, asking for his books back. The response from media and blogs very positive.

Andy McNab's tough stance against the BNP was very effective. After the affair, Lee Barnes, a Legal Director of the BNP and senior member of the party, gave a relatively mute response to Andy McNab: "It is never good publicity to be attacked by a bona fide war hero." He also said, "The words of Andy McNab are particularly stinging." And finally adding, "Harsh words indeed, and coming from a man like Andy McNab they carry great weight, and therefore they must be responded to [*sic*]."⁶⁵

Meanwhile, a spokesperson for Help for Heroes was more circumspect in a written statement for the BBC Radio 4's PM programme: "We accept donations from all who wish to join us in providing that support and we make grants that will benefit all who are injured in the service of our country, regardless of colour or creed."⁶⁶ Many felt disappointed by Help for Heroes response.

The BNP has not publicly said if it has donated money to Help for Heroes. But in response to accusations that the BNP were cynically exploiting the charitable good will of people, Simon Darby, deputy leader of the BNP, said: "I don't mind being accused of cynically exploiting the issue as long as the issue gets some coverage."

5.3 Publicity coup: BNP donate to struggling Scottish veterans organisation

21st August 2009 FEBA, a veterans organization based in South *Lanarkshire*, accepted £3,000 from the BNP in Scotland. Tommy Moffat, a former soldier with the Queen's Own Highlanders and founder of FEBA, said: "I am in turmoil. We don't believe in the BNP's policies but this offer of help would save us."⁶⁷

⁶³ BNP, "British Legion accepts money from BNP member after all", (30th August 2009) <http://bnp.org.uk/2009/08/british-legion-agrees-to-take-bnp-member%E2%80%99s-money-after-all/>

⁶⁴ BNP, "BNP Leader announces fundraising effort for ex-soldiers", (8th September 2009) <http://bnp.org.uk/index.php?s=Andy+McNab>

⁶⁵ Lee Barnes, "Andy McNab and the BNP", (10th September 2009) <http://leejohnbarnes.blogspot.com/2009/09/andy-mcnab-and-bnp.html>

⁶⁶ BBC, Help for Heroes' statement to Radio Four's PM programme, (11th September 2009) http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/8250086.stm

⁶⁷ BNP, "BNP Scotland steps up to help ex-servicemen's organisation", (21st August 2009) <http://bnp.org.uk/2009/08/bnp-scotland-steps-up-to-help-ex-servicemen%E2%80%99s-organisation/>

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FEBA is not a member of either COBSEO (the membership body for veteran associations, charities and organizations) or Veterans Scotland. Worryingly, it is working alongside the BNP's front organization Soldiers off the Street (see chapter 6.2).

To date, only Ron Smith, Veterans Scotland and board member of COBSEO, has forcibly spoken out against the BNP. Mr Smith said:

*"Many of our veterans fought in a major world war against a fascist regime. Look at the armed forces and you have multi-ethnicity. What would you do with BNP money – not spend it on soldiers of Afro-Caribbean descent? It's a complete nonsense. Of course the BNP is a completely legal party with elected representatives. But its efforts to make donations to charities dealing with the welfare of former servicemen are clearly raising difficult questions."*⁶⁸

5.4 Taking a tough stance against the BNP

The brave and direct approaches taken by the likes of Ron Smith and Andy McNab, both with charitable and commercial interests at stake, are not isolated incidents. Over the last year alone, a series of figures, associated with the military and veteran heritage, have taken tough stances against the BNP, all have had desirable effects. A few examples include:

- 19th February 2009 - The BNP was caught up in a dispute with Dame Vera Lynn, the wartime singer, after she objected to the party selling copies of her "White Cliffs of Dover" CD on its website to fund its European election campaign.⁶⁹
- 19th May 2009 - Stuart Walker, an ex-Guardsman, complained about the BNP's use of his image during the Euro elections.⁷⁰
- May 26th 2009 - Winston Churchill's family sought legal means to prevent the BNP from using the former Prime Ministers image and quotes in its campaign.⁷¹
- 28th August 2009 – Robin White, Chairman of the Royal British Legion's Wells branch in Somerset, expressed his anger at the BNP's tribute to Harry Patch. He accused the BNP of trying to politicize "one of the nation's most treasured and beloved symbols".⁷²
- 20th September 2009 – Colonel William Shuttlewood, a director of the Gurkha Welfare Trust, said it would never knowingly accept money from the BNP and added that he wanted the BNP to remove any reference from his charity on the BNP's website. He said: "We are very firmly a non-political organisation and we want to keep it that way, especially when Gurkhas themselves are a political issue." The Institute for Fundraising Scotland warned charities to beware of donations from the BNP.⁷³

The media's response to direct action has been generally positive. In the case of Dame Vera Lynn, the Daily Telegraph reported how "furious" she was about the BNP's attempts to imply she supported the neo-fascist party.

Perhaps more interesting was the unusually timid response from Simon Darby, who tried to avoid a confrontation with a much-loved wartime icon. In response, Darby said: "It is a commercially available piece of music and it is not as if we have bootlegged it. It is something you could buy off Amazon and we

⁶⁸ BBC Radio Four PM Programme, Ron Smith speaking to the BBC, (11th September 2009)

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/8250086.stm

⁶⁹ RBL article criticizing the BNP for using Dame Vera Lynn's music in election broadcasts. <http://www.legion-magazine.co.uk/news/defence/dame-veras-song-hijacked-by-bnp/>

⁷⁰ The Sun, Veteran's anger at BNP's use of his image in election campaign literature without permission. (19th May 2009) <http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/article2436087.ece>

⁷¹ The Guardian, "Nicholas Soames denounces the BNP's use of Churchill's image in their political literature." (May 26th 2009) <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2009/may/26/churchill-grandson-denounce-bnp-election-broadcast>

⁷² BBC, "BNP Patch tribute angers Legion", (28th August 2009) <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/bristol/8226716.stm>

⁷³ The Sunday Times, "Alert over BNP cash for Scottish Charities", (20th September 2009) <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/scotland/article6841377.ece>

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are proud to stock. There are a number of songs on the album and by no means are we implying Dame Vera is a nationalist.”⁷⁴

Unfortunately, these examples come from brave individuals operating outside the chain of command of mainstream military organisations. The story from Britain's military establishment and veterans organisations is more ambiguous.

⁷⁴ The Daily Telegraph, “Dame Vera Lynn takes on BNP over White Cliffs of Dover”, (18th February 2009)
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/politics/4687730/Dame-Vera-Lynn-takes-on-BNP-over-White-Cliffs-of-Dover.html>

Conclusion - no one can save the military but the military

The BNP's populist policies and cynical hijacking of commendable causes to improve their unflattering reputation represents a real danger to the reputation of the Armed Forces.

The only people that can rescue the honour of the military are the military. Any attempt by Westminster's elite or the media would be ridiculed by disillusioned patriots and would only aggravate the problem further.

Nor can our Top Brass leave the job to Lily Allen, the only public figure to speak out effectively against the BNP this summer.

There are many dangers of allowing our military to be regularly exploited:-

Firstly, and most worryingly, is the spread of disillusionment and dissent amongst the rank and file. In other countries this is being taken as a serious domestic threat. In the US, the Department for Homeland Security has stated that disgruntled ex-servicemen are easy prey for neo-Nazis. In the UK, the obvious risk is that ex-servicemen pass through the ranks of the BNP and become lone wolves spreading terror across our streets.⁷⁵

Secondly, if the military fails to tackle this problem or is seen to condone the BNP's attempts to hijack veteran heritage, it could severely affect its ability to recruit new members from non-white backgrounds, who will perceive the Armed Forces as being racist. This, in a time of war, would be nothing short of a dereliction of duty.

And finally, any association with a party mired in violence, criminality and extremism undermines the hard work necessary to restore the Armed Services reputation as an embracing and much-respected institution. The military needs to put more effort to preserve this deserved reputation from being permanently damaged.

Britain's mainstream military, associated institutions, politicians and British society need to act before election-fever is upon the country:-

The Ministry of Defence

- To stop political extremists from implying they have the backing of our Armed Forces through the use of insignia, symbols and imagery (see chapter 3.2. and appendix I), we urge the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and Her Majesty's Office of Public Sector Information to rigorously clamp down on the abuse of Crown Copyright imagery.
- We encourage the relevant bodies, departments, organizations etc to take legal action against anyone using trademarked or copyrighted military insignia or photographs without authority.
- To protect our Armed Forces from being groomed by political extremists (see chapter 3.8.), we strongly recommend the MOD to work hard to ensure that political parties - of all persuasion - are prevented from gaining access from military bases and grounds to recruit military personnel.
- In the interest of national security, the MOD should be doing everything it can to look after veterans, particularly those who have served in Afghanistan and Iraq who suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome, and help prevent them from falling into the hands of extremists.

⁷⁵ US Department of Homeland Security, "Right-wing extremism: Current economic and political climate fuelling resurgence in radicalization and recruitment", (7th April 2009) <http://www.fas.org/irp/eprint/rightwing.pdf>

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Charity Commission

- To protect the public from those soliciting donations under false pretences, we call on the Charities Commission to take a tougher stance on organizations masquerading as authentic veteran's organizations (see chapter 3.7.).
- We ask for the Charities Commission to introduce more transparency and improve its safeguards to protect the public from organizations claiming they are in the process of obtaining charity status to encourage the public to donate money in good faith.

Military and veteran charities

- To protect the integrity of charities from associations with racism and extremism, we urge all charitable organizations to publicly condemn the use of their symbols / logos as political propaganda.
- To avoid being accused of condoning or supporting racism, all charities should turn away money from all politically extreme organizations and any money received where political affiliations were not made clear at the time of donation should be returned.

Suggested wording

- To avoid being dragged into a political row or racism, charities need to use tougher wording when refusing money from organizations like the BNP. As well as saying, "we are not a political organization", charities should state their commitment against racial hatred by adding:
 - *"we do not accept donations from groups that advocate racism and division"* or
 - *"we only accept money from groups and individuals who seek to promote social cohesion"*.

Remembrance Day

- To prevent the infiltration and hijacking of events like Remembrance Day, national organizations and their local associations must be more vigilant and turn away any volunteers who abuse their position to promote racism and extremism.

The Covenant

- To enshrine the Covenant between Britain's servicemen and the government into some kind of formal agreement that provides clarity and certainty for Service personnel and their families that feel confused by existing arrangements.⁷⁶
- Further consideration should be given to the recommendations of the Ministry of Defence report into national recognition of UK armed forces by Quentin Davies MP such as:-
 - A Veterans Day bank holiday, possibly replacing one of the existing Bank Holidays. Examining the revival of the Royal Tournament, a televised military tattoo last held in 1999
 - Relaxing the rules regarding contact with the media for senior officers
 - Allowing commanding officers to accept hospitality invitations for cultural or sporting events
 - Encouraging closer contacts between individual military units and local MPs
 - Servicemen given a day on duty to visit their old school to meet teachers and pupils
 - Up to £750,000 of the budget for military museums to subsidise transport for school groups⁷⁷

⁷⁶ "Soldiers will be called upon to make personal sacrifices - including the ultimate sacrifice - in the service of the Nation. In putting the needs of the Nation and the Army before their own, they forego some of the rights enjoyed by those outside the Armed Forces. In return, British soldiers must always be able to expect fair treatment, to be valued and respected as individuals, and that they (and their families) will be sustained and rewarded by commensurate terms and conditions of service."
<http://www.army.mod.uk/join/terms/3111.aspx>.

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- Increasing uniformed military attendance at major sporting events, including the 2012 Olympics

Dealing with the anger and frustration that causes intolerance and confrontation

Lastly, society must move away on from generalised attacks on “fascist thugs”, stigmatising Britain’s white working class and blaming extremism on the discussion of difficult issues like immigration and Islamism.

It must stop seeking refuge in easy excuses for inaction such as “depriving the BNP of the oxygen of publicity” or submit to lazy temptation to try to legislate the BNP out of existence.

Instead, the Establishment must seek to understand legitimate concerns of reasonable people driven to extremes by adverse circumstance, and seek policy solutions to the effects of globalisation on those least capable of looking after themselves.

And the Establishment must use the full force of existing laws such as the Race Relations Act (1976) to crack-down on malcontents seeking to promote confrontation to achieve their political objectives.

⁷⁷ http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/19_05_08_mod.pdf.

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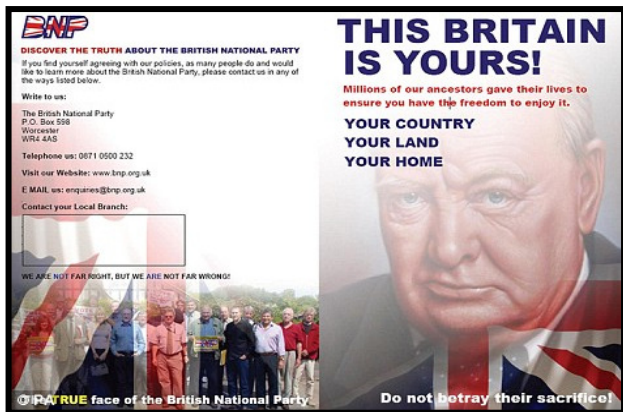
Appendix I – examples of the BNP's use of military imagery



“A Call to Arms — The BNP’s Battle for Britain Road Show Reaches Manchester” – BNP launch of ‘Battle for Britain’ (25/3/09). Date accessed: 4th August 2009. See [here](#)



“Cumbria’s Last Battle for Britain Road Show Raises £2,000” – BNP launch of the ‘Battle for Britain’ (1/4/09). Date accessed: 4th August 2009. See [here](#)



“This Britain is Yours!” – Welsh BNP leaflet. Date accessed: 5th August 2009. See [here](#)



“200 New Members per Week, 100 Enquiries per Day—and TV Broadcast Dates Set” – Article on BNP membership (10/5/09). Date accessed: 4th August 2009. See [here](#)



“Leaflets out, Broadcast Let Loose, Adverts Everywhere—The New Battle for Britain is in Full Swing!” – Article by Nick Griffin on support for the BNP (23/5/09). Date accessed: 4th August 2009. See [here](#)

Appendix II - Nick Griffin's Battle for Britain speech

"Someone has to make a stand, someone has to tell people what is going on, no one else will do it so we must do it regardless of the possible cost. That is why in this election are using the logo, the campaign slogan of "The Battle For Britain" 1939/2009. We are using the Spitfire logo that is the iconic symbol of this country's resistance to Europeanism, of a different strand; to totalitarianism, of a different strand; to alien way of doing things that is not our way, of different strand to the modern leftist Euro project but in many ways and in its roots quite similar. Just as totalitarian. Just as foreign to us in this country. Just as dangerous to our core values and beliefs and the things that we hold dear. So that is why we are using this slogan and that is why we are using the Spitfire. And you can bet they are going to go berserk over this they have already started by saying, "What are you doing appropriating the heroes who fought against fascism?" You know the stuff that they will come out with. They are going to go berserk about that and say that we are not entitled to use the Spitfire and the memory of the pilots of the Battle of Britain, and the crews who supported and the nation who watched with baited breath as they fought over the skies of southern England. Yes we are entitled to use their memory to identify with their iconic images, to talk in terms as their fight being our fight. We are entitled to talk like that because the fight is so similar. They were fighting for the self-determination for the right of this country to rule itself - and so are we when we stand up to the European Union. They were fighting for a country, which even those who weren't Christians, based on Christian values; which was based on a certain hierarchy of decency and goodness; and which was not based on the deification of a massive and powerful state. Which is what Nazi Germany was based on and it is what the European Union is based on. They were fighting for the identity of Britain and the British people against a master race theory and so are we. Because you only have to turn on the BBC, you only have to look at your kids, your grandchildren, your nephews and nieces are taught in schools and you will see indeed that there is indeed a new master race theory. The master race of the liberal elite is a coffee coloured, mongrelised rootless proletariat and you cannot even turn the television on without seeing it ... we are the people whom the head of the BBC referred to as being "hideously white" ... we are the new sub-humans ... we are the new Jews."

Nick Griffin, "Battle for Britain – 2009 Morley", 1st March 2009.

Photographic credits

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"A Call to Arms — The BNP's Battle for Britain Road Show Reaches Manchester" – BNP launch of 'Battle for Britain' (25/3/09). Source: BNP website. Date accessed: 4th August 2009.

Cumbria's Last Battle for Britain Road Show Raises £2,000" – BNP launch of the 'Battle for Britain' (1/4/09). Source: BNP website. Date accessed: 4th August 2009.

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"Leaflets out, Broadcast Let Loose, Adverts Everywhere—The New Battle for Britain is in Full Swing!" – Article by Nick Griffin on support for the BNP (23/5/09). Source: BNP website. Date accessed: 4th August 2009.

What is the threat posed by racists like the BNP to Britain's way of doing things? Why does Nick Griffin talk continuously about Britain's military past, the glory of our fallen heroes, the Blitz and the country's failure to meet its obligations to the Armed Services? Is the response of our military institutions enough? What more could be done?

In an age when the liberal Establishment has sought to marginalise popular nationalism as the work of "fascist thugs", **Nothing British** is a campaign that seeks to understand the causes of anger and frustration, and opposes racism and extremism with appeals to British values and the mobilisation of traditional British institutions.

In Nothing British's first research paper, the "Stolen Honour" details the BNP hi-jacking of Britain's military heritage and makes recommendations on how Britain's traditional institutions can use patriotism to fight back against the racists and extremists.

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