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Review of *Martial Masculinities: Experiencing and imagining the military in the long nineteenth century* by Michael Brown, Anna Maria Barry and Joanne Begiato (eds.)

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Michael Brown, Anna Maria Barry and Joanne Begiato, (eds.), *Martial Masculinities: Experiencing and imagining the military in the long nineteenth century*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019. 17 images. 270pp. ISBN 978-1526135629 (hardback). Price £80.

This collection grew from a conference in 2015 marking the bicentenary of the Battle of Waterloo. The editors compare this with two other moments in the history of military masculine anxieties, each a century apart: first, the failure of the Artois offensive in 1915 as a masculine crisis point in the First World War; then the recent withdrawal from Afghanistan which saw 'the resurgence of an equally politically charged valorisation of British military masculinities'. The eleven contributions to this volume explore understandings of military masculinity lived and constructed in the long nineteenth century. Split into two parts, there are five essays on experiencing, and six on imagining, martial masculinities. As an edited volume that builds on the exchanges of a successful conference, many of them read as fresh exercises for the scholars involved, with some risking abstraction and speculation in their arguments and raising many questions for further debate.

There are some very focused pieces here. In Part I, Louise Carter's 'Brothers in Arms? Martial Masculinities and family feeling in old soldiers' memoirs, 1793-1815' builds precisely and effectively on Catriona Kennedy's incisive work in this area. Carter traces the 'stubborn endurance of civilian conceptions of masculinity in the psyches of serving soldiers' despite the Army's efforts to erode them. There is substantial overlap between this and the essays from Julia Bannister and Helen Metcalfe, all drawing on soldiers' narratives from the Napoleonic Wars. Their arguments are more tentative than Carter's, but along with the strong essay on sailor-singer Charles Incedon's self-fashioned and publicly shaped persona by Anna Maria Barry, they raise intriguing points of discussion about material and discursive cultures in homosocial military communities.

Domestic and familial influences are discussed further in the final contribution on experience by Michael Brown and Joanne Begiato, 'Visualising the aged veteran in nineteenth century Britain'. It begins with a familiar juxtaposition of generations, discussing examples from 1900 and 1914 to illustrate a fatherly passing on of soldierly principles. They trace this to the 'marked proliferation of veterans in visual and literary culture' through the 1870s, with reverence accompanied by familiar condemnations of the state for failing to adequately support them in old age, while demonstrating the meeting point between experience and imagination effectively.

BOOK REVIEWS

The next section deals with imagined military masculinities. Barbara Leonardi reads James Hogg's *The Three Perils of Man* as an exercise in deconstructing the 'ideology of self-sacrifice' of the English soldier, playing with the familiar characterisation of the Highland soldiers as a 'Martial Race'. By dissociating this ideal warrior from Romantic soldierly ideals of chivalry, Hogg effectively challenged assumptions of post-Enlightenment progress by critiquing the destructiveness of the Napoleonic Wars. Susan Walton follows this by exploring how, in Charlotte Yonge's novels, characteristics related to an idealised kind of military masculinity were embodied in her own father. The close attention on the Yonge family here raises the question of whether this was a broader phenomenon.

The next three essays highlight a growing literary influence on a preparatory masculine culture that shaped anxieties and ambitions of boys and young men as civilians and aspiring soldiers in militarised terms. Lorenzo Servitje uses Alfred Lord Tennyson's 1842 poem 'Locksley Hall' to demonstrate the centrality of purpose and belonging to a rhetoric of manly readiness. Karen Turner turns to 'Charlotte Brontë's "Warrior Priest"' St John Rivers to illustrate the construction of 'heroic virility, morality and martial adventure' as key tenets of an increasingly militarised national male identity, although this elides the significance of national-imperial masculine expectations that are surely key in a character who meets his end in colonial India. Elly McCausland turns to knightly masculinities in Edwardian children's Arthuriana to make a clear argument about the escapist self-discovery implicit in adventure stories that responded to 'John Tosh's 'flight from domesticity'', although again that national-imperial influence is not explored here.

Finally, Helen Goodman argues that H. Rider Haggard and his contemporaries 'blurred the lines between military and leisure pursuits' to encourage a martial masculine identity by glamorising imperial careers. Goodman has succinctly re-appraised Haggard's works as composed disseminators of a national military male culture. She makes a valuable point on Haggard's blurring of divisions between the characteristics of civilian and soldier and pulls together threads from some of the earlier pieces in this section by closing that imperial-domestic feedback loop decisively.

Edited volumes run the risk of being less than the sum of their parts to a cherry-picking readership. With this collection's interdisciplinary range of approaches, these essays when read together bolster the ideas in the more tentative contributions and enhance the debates that reach across the themes the editors laid out. This is an

engaging contribution to the conversations of scholars working across the humanities on British military and domestic masculinities.

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Peter Duffell, *Gurkha Odyssey: Campaigning for the Crown*. Barnsley: Pen & Sword Books, 2019. 290pp. ISBN 978-1526730572 (hardback). Price £25.00.

My first encounter with Gurkha soldiers was back in 1979 when I was at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. One of their battalions supplied the Demonstration Company which turned out every so often to show us embryo officers how various tactical drills and skills should be carried out properly. Needless to say, we were hopelessly outperformed by their example when we tried to replicate them.

My second, and last, engagement with Gurkhas came when I was on the Company Commanders' course at Warminster where, once again, they supplied the Demonstration Company. This time, however, I joined them in the field for a few days of practical training to confirm that I was indeed fit to command my own sub-unit. They were bivouacked up a steep slope with their backs to the hill just as it was getting dark, all cammed up and ready to go. I was given my first mug of hot, sweet Gurkha tea and settled in for the night. What a splendid bunch they were.

In contrast to my somewhat fleeting acquaintance with the hillmen from Nepal, the author, Lieutenant General Sir Peter Duffell, joined his Gurkha regiment in 1960 and was with them in one capacity or another for most of his adult life. He led his soldiers in Malaya, Borneo, Indonesia (clandestinely) and Hong Kong – winning an MC along the way – before becoming the British Army's Inspector General, so has a wealth of personal experience to draw on in writing his book.

By the author's own admission his account is a "fractured story" offering "few insights" and "told in a selective and personal way". If you are looking for an in-depth examination of the role of Gurkha soldiers in British service with dissection of the many campaigns in which they fought for the Crown, this is not the book for you. It does provide some historical background and follows some sort of chronological order, but Duffell's caveats do apply.