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Review of *Veterans of the First World War: Ex-Servicemen and Ex-Servicewomen in Post-war Britain and Ireland* by David Swift and Oliver Wilkinson (eds.)

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David Swift and Oliver Wilkinson (eds.), *Veterans of the First World War: Ex-Servicemen and Ex-Servicewomen in Post-war Britain and Ireland*. Routledge Studies in First World War History. London: Routledge, 2019. Xi + 208pp. ISBN 978-0367174620 (hardback). Price £115.00.

The effects of the First World War are central to much study of inter-war Britain, and of course veterans are highly visible in popular culture emerging from and/or portraying the 1920s and 1930s. Yet, as the introduction to this book rightly points out, the academic study of veterans themselves is often not part of what is being 'centrally assessed' in such studies. Ten chapters in this volume seek to address this problem covering a broad range of subjects: veterans' organisations (both for men and women); politics; the wounded; and two specific studies of Ireland which saw different issues for veterans compared to those faced in Britain.

Veterans' organisations are most prominent in the study. Mike Hally explores how the roots of these groups can be found in campaigns during the war itself. Paul Huddie argues that the British government's approach was heavily informed by a desire to make them the responsibility of the volunteer sector. Krisztina Robert, writing on ex-servicewomen, shows how female veterans found their status provided a way into political activism through their own organisations. Politics, specifically the Labour Party and the wider British Left, is covered in one chapter by Marcus Morris and another by David Swift. Morris outlines how the Labour Party did not appeal to veterans as veterans but rather as workers, but suggests that this did not undermine support for Labour since many veterans did not retain a strong identity connected to their wartime service. Indeed, as Swift argues, the act of being engaged in military service was part of men moving to the left. Chapters by John Borgonovo and Steven O'Connor on Ireland engage with now long-running debates on the question of the alienation and exclusion of ex-servicemen from parts of Irish life after the war. Borgonovo's study of Cork points to extremely varied and complex relationships between veterans and the Irish Free State, while O'Connor builds on his important previous work on later service by veterans in both the Irish Republican Army and the Royal Irish Constabulary. Disability and the wounded are examined by Martin Purdy and Jessica Meyer, with Purdy pointing to significant opportunities for some of the disabled in some areas. Meyer persuasively calls for greater attention to the 'domestic spaces and local communities' in which disabled veterans lived out their lives. Oliver Wilkinson's chapter on former prisoners of war points to how such men, faced with the stigma of capture, often dropped any kind of identity as ex-servicemen, pointing to the need to study ordinary civilian life if one is to understand the post-war lives of veterans.

The book is largely about the immediate few post-war years and some readers might query where is consideration of the later 1920s and 1930s, but the absence of much detail on those years in most chapters might point to the extent to which veterans are less easy to identify as veterans once they settled into civilian life. While the cover price will put off some possible buyers, this book should be a key acquisition for many university libraries since its chapters speak to an extremely broad range of historical fields dealing with inter-war Britain. All the chapters are important enough to find places on many course reading lists dealing with issues such as gender and party politics, which might not immediately concern themselves with First World War veterans, in addition to those more directly concerned with the post-military lives of veterans.

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Robert Forczyk, *Case White: The Invasion of Poland, 1939*. Oxford: Osprey, 2019. 416pp. ISBN 978-1472834959 (hardback). Price £25.00.

Roger Moorhouse, *First to Fight: the Polish War, 1939*. London: Vintage, 2019. 342pp. ISBN 978-1784706241 (paperback). Price £9.99.

There are episodes of the Second World War that are well known, there are episodes of the Second World War that could be better known and there are episodes of the Second World War that are barely known at all. Of the latter, one such is the German invasion of Poland in 1939. Short though this struggle was, this was a bitter affair that cost the lives of 250,000 Poles, devastated many towns and cities and resulted in the partition of the country between its two most bitter enemies, and yet details on exactly what occurred are hard to come by. The terrible atrocities committed by the Germans against the hapless Jewish community have been well documented by historians such as Martin Gilbert. However, beyond that there is almost nothing other than a small number of accounts drawn almost entirely from the German point of view. To make matters worse, meanwhile this last does so through the medium of Nazi propaganda: in general history after general history, we hear of little more than Polish cavalry charging German tanks and the Luftwaffe wiping out the entire Polish air force on the ground on the first day of the war, and yet both these claims owe