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Review of *Military Maverick: Selected Letters and War Diary of 'Chink' Dorman-Smith* by Lavinia Greacen (Ed.)

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brought some of the equilibrium they had so desperately sought' (p.188). The burial of the Unknown Warrior permitted families the opportunity to say goodbye to their loved ones, especially after years of anticipating their unknown fate. While the funeral brought relief to some families, many more remained in mourning for the rest of their lives. Their loved ones were still missing on the Western Front with no known graves, waiting to be found, collected, and buried. In many cases, the bodies of the missing were never found.

Nichol's *The Unknown Warrior* is a heart-wrenching narrative that captures the emotional distress of the First World War. It is a riveting story that depicts the raw violence and destruction of the war, as well as the countless casualties of an entire generation of young British men. Nichol's text is recommended for general historians, including history undergraduates, and does not specialise in a specific area of the history of the First World War. *The Unknown Warrior* is also a reminder that grief is unparalleled. Even in the twentieth century, as Nichol recounts, the families of those military personnel who served in Afghanistan are still impacted by the losses of war and the need to somehow rebuild their lives without the presence of their loved ones. While the nature and technological impact of warfare has changed over the last 100 years, 'the ceremony of death and remembrance goes on' as grief can be a unifying presence across multiple generations (p.148).

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Lavinia Greacen (Ed.), *Military Maverick: Selected Letters and War Diary of 'Chink' Dorman-Smith*. Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2024. xii + 316 pp., 8 maps & 8 b/w photos. ISBN: 978-1036102272 (hardback). Price £29.95.

Eric Dorman-Smith has been described as his own worst enemy but many of his contemporaries would also have been happy to claim that honour. An intelligent, complex and difficult man it is no surprise that Dorman-Smith has strongly divided opinion amongst historians with Correlli Barnett (no fan of Montgomery, one of many senior officers who Dorman-Smith did not get on with) being his most vociferous supporter. Barnett wrote a typically trenchant foreword defending Dorman-Smith in Lavinia Greacen's *Chink: A Biography* (1989). In it she argued that while Dorman-Smith was his own worst enemy he was also a military genius. Thirty five years later, comes

Military Maverick, her edited collection of his private papers and letters which formed an important source for her while writing *Chink*. While her biography was sympathetic it was not a hagiography and in this volume takes the same approach of being a critical friend. The inclusion of 'maverick' in the volume's title forewarns us that the military genius argument is no longer propounded by her.

The book covers the period from the outbreak of the First World War to Dorman-Smith's death in 1969 (by which time he had changed his name to Dorman-O'Gowan – a mark of his change from defending the British presence in Ireland to believing Dublin should govern all 32 counties of Ireland. The letters from the First World War are to his parents, are personal in nature, and describe army life; and from them there is no hint of how his experience affected his thinking in the Second World War, the letters and diaries between 1939 and 1944 discuss this in retrospect. From 1919 to 1939 there were two significant influences in his life. Firstly, his close friendship with Ernest Hemingway, his letters offer an insight into why Dorman-Smith did not fit in with his fellow officers. Secondly he started to make connections with what were considered by the War Office to be unorthodox military thinkers and treated with hostility by many. While at the Staff College he contacted Basil Liddell-Hart, which he was not permitted to do. The letters to Liddell Hart show the development of his military ideas and that he struggled to exercise patience with those who didn't share his views. Conflicts with men such as Montgomery and Ronald Penney at the Staff College would lead to his downfall.

By the outbreak of war in 1939 he was Director of Military Training in India where he continued to make enemies with his arrogant and impatient attitude. When the opportunity came, his superiors in India placed no obstacles to him taking up a new post in Haifa. He started to keep a diary and this together with his letters, from 1939 to 1944, form over half of the volume. They offer an insight to why he was never able to achieve the high rank his natural intelligence made him capable of. For much of the war he was underemployed, apart from the brief periods when he served on the staff of Auchinleck before and during First El Alamein, and then at Anzio. When he was underemployed the entries are brooding, filled with exasperation and contempt for those he considered to be inferior to him. Wavell, Auchinleck and Major Rex Cohen, his Brigade Major in England and a successful businessman, who he respected, all warned him about the need to suffer fools gladly. It was advice he admitted in his diary he was incapable of taking. His ability to easily make enemies led to the end of his army career. When he arrived at Anzio, Penney who was his Divisional Commander made it clear he did not want Dorman-Smith. After Anzio, Penney engineered his dismissal from the army in a way which was unfair but most were happy to look the other way, such was his unpopularity. The final two chapters cover the period after his dismissal which is of less interest although it does include his attempts

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to defend himself against post-war criticism of him, some in the deluge of memoirs by politicians and senior officers, and sometimes in the courts.

This edited volume is a welcome addition to the historiography of the Second World War as it draws on papers not available to the researcher, unlike the papers of other senior officers such as Alanbrooke. It's not unknown for an editor to select papers which show the subject in a favourable light but in this case the selection is one which shows both the strengths and weaknesses of Dorman-Smith. There are also numerous footnotes which provide extra information both about events and the individuals mentioned. Greacen does not claim to be a military expert and her commentary is supplemented by that of a military historian, John Lee, who provides explanations of the events before and during First El Alamein. The volume offers a valuable insight into why Dorman-Smith was a military maverick but certainly not a genius. It shows a picture of a complex and difficult man and as a result there was no shortage of candidates to be his worst enemy, one of whom was happy to end his army career.

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Richard Dannatt & Robert Lyman, *Korea: War Without End*. Oxford: Osprey, 2024. 328 pp., 7 maps, 31 photographs. ISBN 978-1472869753 (hardback). Price £25.00

The Korean War (1950-53) is often referred to in the West as having been 'forgotten'. Sandwiched between the unconditional surrender of Axis forces at the end of the Second World War and the failed intervention in Vietnam during the subsequent couple of decades, it is too often seen as an adjunct to the former or a precursor of the latter. Fought by Second World War commanders, using weapons that would not have been out of place on the battlefields of 1944 and 1945, it is perhaps far too easy to dismiss the conflict as 'more of the same'. However, the Korean War was an early manifestation of East-West tensions which would dominate the geo-political agenda through to the early 1990s and, so it seems, well into the twenty first century. In this ground-breaking book, the authors offer up a reassessment of the Korean War which will, no doubt, accentuate its' historical relevance. Additionally, elements of this book can be viewed as a case study supporting conclusions reached by the authors in their 2024 collaboration, *Victory to Defeat*. Richard Dannatt and Robert Lyman, are, after all, particularly well qualified to address this topic. The former is a highly