



Ministry of Defence

On Military Memoirs

Soldier-authors, publishers, plots and motives



L.H.E. (Esmeralda) Kleinreesink

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Until now, research into military memoirs was often an Anglo-American and always a qualitative affair. This study, however, takes a completely new approach to researching soldier-authors in order to answer four main questions:

- Who are these soldier-authors?
- Who publishes them?
- What do they write about?
- Why do they say they write?

Every Afghanistan autobiography published between 2001 and 2010 by a soldier, whether published by a traditional publisher or self-published, is statistically researched. Not only all books from English speaking countries such as the US, the UK and Canada, but also every memoir written in Germany and the Netherlands.

In an easy to follow writing style, even for people without a statistical background, it provides factual data on these authors and their work that is often surprising. But this book is not only about numbers, as it combines this quantitative research with qualitative analyses.

This mixed method, cross cultural approach not only answers the basic who, what and why questions, but makes it also possible to answer all sorts of other questions military and egodocument researchers, but also publishers have long wondered about: Are soldier-authors a special breed among soldiers, or not? Do soldiers from different countries write about different things, or is there just one, shared military experience in all these countries? And do self-published books differ from books published by traditional publishers?

This book will provide all these answers, and many more.



L.H.E. (Esmeralda) Kleinreesink is a lieutenant-colonel with the Royal Netherlands Air Force who currently works as an assistant professor at the Netherlands Defence Academy. She published several short stories and an autobiography (*Officier in Afghanistan*, Meulenhoff, 2012) about her own deployment in Afghanistan. She studied Business Administration at the Erasmus University Rotterdam and English and is a certified interpreter Dutch-English.

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Image on cover: 'Rules Of Engagement' (2013), mixed technique painting by Kosovo- and Afghanistan veteran Stef Fridael. Collection Dutch National Military Museum, inv.nr.133689 (photo: Casper van Bruggen).

This painting is a visual self-portrait of a soldier who has been changed by his deployment in Afghanistan. The books analysed in this study are also self-portraits of soldiers who have been changed by their deployment in Afghanistan, although in written form instead of visual.