

***“PS I never got to München”: Teutophilia, Script, Militaria
and the Composition of Keith Douglas’s “Vergissmeinnicht”***
Andreas Lehtinen

The foremost anglophone poet of the Second World War, 2nd Lieutenant Keith Castellain Douglas (1920-1944) served as a tank commander with the mechanized Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry in North Africa. In 1943, he tripped a mine in Tripolitania (Libya). For his service, he was promoted to the rank of Captain and sent to Normandy. He died there three days after the D-Day landings on June 9, 1944.

Douglas was famously fascinated with the phenomenon of war, yet surprisingly little has been said about his relationship to the war machine of Nazi Germany. This paper examines his encounters with German culture and militaria in the North African desert, with a particular focus on the events that informed the composition of his most famous poem, anthologized today under the German title “*Vergissmeinnicht*”.

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Andreas Lehtinen is a doctoral student at the English department. His main areas of interest are poetry, literary theory, ideology and intellectual history. In his forthcoming dissertation he reads Michael Symmons Roberts’s (b. 1963) poetry through a critical, post-Hegelian lens. His article on the Christian reasoning and imagery of Roberts’s “Horsemen” (2008) will be published in a special issue of the journal *Parallax* this December.

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