

To be featured on
NBC-TV's *Dateline*

"Startling and unexpected, Rigg's study conclusively demonstrates the degree of flexibility in German policy toward the *Mischlinge*, the extent of Hitler's involvement, and, most importantly, that not all who served in the armed forces were anti-Semitic, even as their service aided the killing process."

MICHAEL BERENBAUM, AUTHOR OF *THE WORLD MUST KNOW: THE HISTORY OF THE HOLOCAUST*

"An impressively researched work with important implications for hotly debated questions. Rigg tells some exquisitely poignant stories of individual human experiences that complicate our picture of state and society in the Third Reich."

NATHAN A. STOLTZFUS, AUTHOR OF *RESISTANCE OF THE HEART: INTERMARRIAGE AND THE ROSENSTRASSE PROTEST IN NAZI GERMANY*

The thousands of pages of documents and oral testimonies (8mm and VHS video) the author collected for this study have been purchased by the National Military Archive of Germany. The Bryan Mark Rigg Collection is housed in the *Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv* in Freiburg, Germany.

"Through videotaped interviews, painstaking attention to personnel files, and banal documents not normally consulted by historians, and spurred by a keen sense of personal mission, Rigg has turned up an unexplored and confounding chapter in the history of the Holocaust. The extent of his findings has surprised scholars."

NEW YORK TIMES



"Half-Jew" Horst Geitner was awarded both the Iron Cross Second Class and the Silver Wound Badge

Soldiers taking the oath of allegiance to Hitler



"An original, groundbreaking, and significant contribution to the history of the Wehrmacht and Nazi Germany."

JAMES S. CORUM, AUTHOR OF *THE ROOTS OF BLITZKRIEG AND THE LUFTWAFFE*



This photo of "half-Jew" Werner Goldberg, who was blond and blue-eyed, was used by a Nazi propaganda newspaper for its title page. Its caption: "The Ideal German Soldier."



General Gotthard Heinrici, who was married to a "half-Jew," meeting Hitler in 1937

Hitler's Jewish Soldiers

The Untold Story of Nazi Racial Laws and Men of Jewish Descent in the German Military

Bryan Mark Rigg

On the murderous road to "racial purity" Hitler encountered unexpected detours, largely due to his own crazed views and inconsistent policies regarding Jewish identity. After centuries of Jewish assimilation and intermarriage in German society, he discovered that eliminating Jews from the rest of the population was more difficult than he'd anticipated. As Bryan Rigg shows in this provocative new study, nowhere was that heinous process more fraught with contradiction and confusion than in the German military.

Contrary to conventional views, Rigg reveals that a startlingly large number of German military men were classified by the Nazis as Jews or "partial-Jews" (*Mischlinge*), in the wake of racial laws first enacted in the mid-1930s. Rigg demonstrates that the actual number was much higher than previously thought—perhaps as many as 150,000 men, including decorated veterans and high-ranking officers, even generals and admirals.

As Rigg fully documents for the first time, a great many of these men did not even consider themselves Jewish and had embraced the military as a way of life and as devoted patriots eager to serve a revived German nation. In turn, they had been embraced by the Wehrmacht, which prior to Hitler had given little thought to the "race" of these men but which was now forced to look deeply into the ancestry of its soldiers.

The process of investigation and removal, however, was marred by a highly inconsistent application of Nazi law. Numerous "exemptions" were made in order to allow a soldier to stay within the ranks or to spare a soldier's parent, spouse, or other relative from incarceration or far worse. (Hitler's own signature can be found

on many of these "exemption" orders.) But as the war dragged on, Nazi politics came to trump military logic, even in the face of the Wehrmacht's growing manpower needs, closing legal loopholes and making it virtually impossible for these soldiers to escape the fate of millions of other victims of the Third Reich.

Based on a deep and wide-ranging research in archival and secondary sources, as well as extensive interviews with more than four hundred *Mischlinge* and their relatives, Rigg's study breaks truly new ground in a crowded field and shows from yet another angle the



Side and front photographs of "half-Jew" Anton Mayer, similar to those that often accompanied a *Mischling's* application for exemption

extremely flawed, dishonest, demeaning, and tragic essence of Hitler's rule.

Bryan Mark Rigg received his B.A. with honors in history from Yale University in 1996. Yale awarded him the Henry Fellowship for graduate study at Cambridge University, where he received his M.A. in 1997. Currently an adjunct professor of military history at American Military University, he has served as a volunteer in the Israeli Army and as an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps. His research for this book has been featured in the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *London Daily Telegraph*.

"An impressive work filled with interesting stories. . . . By helping us better understand Nazi racial policy at the margins—i.e., its impact on certain members of the German military—Rigg's study clarifies the central problems of Nazi Jewish policies overall."

NORMAN NAIMARK, AUTHOR OF *FIRES OF HATRED: ETHNIC CLEANSING IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY EUROPE*

"An illuminating and provocative study that merits a wide readership and is sure to be much discussed."

DENNIS E. SHOWALTER, AUTHOR OF *TANNENBERG: CLASH OF EMPIRES*

Front cover photograph: Military service book of "half-Jew" Hermann Aub

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