



Lives of Hitler's Jewish Soldiers: Untold Tales of Men of Jewish Descent Who Fought for the Third Reich (Modern War Studies (Paperback))

Bryan Mark Rigg

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They were foot soldiers and officers. They served in the regular army and the Waffen-SS. And, remarkably, they were also Jewish, at least as defined by Hitler's infamous race laws. Pursuing the thread he first unraveled in *Hitler's Jewish Soldiers*, Bryan Rigg takes a closer look at the experiences of Wehrmacht soldiers who were classified as Jewish. In this long-awaited companion volume, he presents interviews with twenty-one of these men, whose stories are both fascinating and disturbing.

As many as 150,000 Jews and partial-Jews (or Mischlinge) served, often with distinction, in the German military during World War II. The men interviewed for this volume portray a wide range of experiences—some came from military families, some had been raised Christian—revealing in vivid detail how they fought for a government that robbed them of their rights and sent their relatives to extermination camps. Yet most continued to serve, since resistance would have cost them their lives and they mistakenly hoped that by their service they could protect themselves and their families. The interviews recount the nature and extent of their dilemma, the divided loyalties under which many toiled during the Nazi years and afterward, and their sobering reflections on religion and the Holocaust, including what they knew about it at the time.

Rigg relates each individual's experiences following the establishment of Hitler's race laws, shifting between vivid scenes of combat and the increasingly threatening situation on the home front for these men and their family members. Their stories reveal the constant tension in their lives: how some tried to hide their identities, and how a few were even "Aryanized" as part of Hitler's effort to retain reliable soldiers—including Field Marshal Erhard Milch, three-star general Helmut Wilberg, and naval commander Bernhard Rogge.

Chilling, compelling, almost beyond belief, these stories depict crises of conscience under the most stressful circumstances. *Lives of Hitler's Jewish Soldiers* deepens our understanding of the complex intersection of Nazi race laws and German military service both before and during World War II.

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