



# **An Intimate History of the Front: Masculinity, Sexuality, and German Soldiers in the First World War**

*Jason Crouthamel*

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The epochal shifts that the First World War effected in political, economic, and intellectual history has long been an object of scholarly inquiry, but the war's impact on ideas of gender and sexuality have received far less attention. This eye-opening study gives a nuanced but provocative account of how German soldiers in the Great War experienced, articulated, and enacted masculinity. Drawing on an impressive array of relevant narratives and media - including front newspapers, family correspondence, diaries, and military court records - it explores the ways that both heterosexual and homosexual soldiers expressed emotion, understood romantic ideals, and approached intimacy and sexuality. As author Jason Crouthamel demonstrates, German soldiers both transgressed and reinforced gender roles, developing complex notions of masculinity that diverged from national ideals of self-sacrifice and emotional self-control. As a result of their often traumatic experiences on the front, these men experimented with emotions and behaviors otherwise considered "deviant," redefining them as acceptable or even necessary for surviving modern war.

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