



# Pure Soldiers or Bloodthirsty Murderers: The Ukranian 14th Waffen-SS Division

*Sol Littman*

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Between 1950 and 1955, thousands of veterans from the notorious German-led, Ukrainian 14th Waffen-SS Galicia Division emigrated to North America with the full consent of the governments despite immigration regulations in force at the time that forbade entry to all who served in any branch of the SS. The Jewish community fought a brief, but futile, battle to persuade those governments to deny them entry, denouncing them as a "sinister legion" of "bloodthirsty murderers"—war criminals who had engaged in the mass murder of thousands of innocent civilians.

On the other hand, a well-organized body of Division supporters insisted there was nothing "sinister" or "murderous" about the young men who had volunteered to serve in its ranks. They declared them exceptional soldiers who obeyed the international rules of war, praised them for being dedicated soldiers who harbored no hatred for Jews, guarded no concentration camps, and committed no crimes against humanity.

At issue then was the nature of the Division and its war record. Were they "pure soldiers" as many of their supporters contended, or were they, to use Daniel Goldhagen's phrase, among Hitler's willing executioners?

*Pure Soldiers or Bloodthirsty Murderers* traces the 14th Waffen-SS Galicia Division's fortunes from its formation in April 1943, to its surrender to the British in May 1946, from immigrant farm workers in Britain, Canada and the USA, to Cold War CIA assassins. Along the way, it attempts to shed some light on this acrimonious dispute that has continued to the present day.

**Sol Littman** is former Canadian Director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, author of *War Criminal on Trial*, founding editor of *The Canadian Jewish News*, the First Director of B'nai Brith Canada's "League for Human Rights," and also served with the Anti-Defamation League in the United States.

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