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Germany's Combat Helmets - 1933 - 1945: A Modern Study

Ken Niewiarowicz

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Throughout the 1970s and on occasion in the 1980s while home on leave from the military, I would patrol the wide and bountiful aisles of the Ohio Gun Collectors Association show, which was one of the greatest gun shows of the old era. It was a superb source for military items as well as weapons, because so many gun collectors at that time were erstwhile militaria buffs. Most were also WWII veterans, and they sometimes brought their own souvenirs to sell. It was common to purchase quality original German helmets there, and the favorite thing to do was get there as early as possible and zoom up and down the aisles hoping to find a jewel for the collection. I recall from that era a few faces of the competition other young collectors who pursued the same prizes; one of them being Ken Niewiarowicz.

The reason I tell this story is to provide the reader some indication of how long Ken has been a student of German helmets. Not only the length of time, but the originality of the specimens he was obtaining, are important factors here. Ken learned originality, learned what he liked, and stuck with it, building upon his knowledge over the years. The fruits of his efforts include a world-class website featuring fine original helmets and now, a superbly researched and authoritative work on German helmets arguably the new standard for all authors on the subject.

Delving into the chapters, one can see evidence of exhaustive effort in seeking out original helmets from some of the best US and international collections, the finest examples of which are presented here accompanied by a text composed of facts and observations layed out in a direct and cohesive manner. Myself having trod this path, I can attest to the patience which it requires. But Ken has gotten the job done and the quality and value of this effort are evident.

In terms of enhancing the modern study of original German WWII helmets, Ken s methodical approach in analyzing finishes, lot numbers, and corresponding decals of so many fine examples constitutes an important building block of updated forensic study that will benefit all collectors into the future. Therefore, it is my view that this book is the most definitive and complete work available on Third Reich helmets, and will quickly become the cornerstone of helmet collecting literature.

Kelly Hicks, LTC, US Army (Ret.)

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