



# Bloody Good: Chivalry, Sacrifice, and the Great War

Allen J. Frantzen

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In the popular imagination, World War I stands for the horror of all wars. The unprecedented scale of the war and the mechanized weaponry it introduced to battle brought an abrupt end to the romantic idea that soldiers were somehow knights in shining armor who always vanquished their foes and saved the day. Yet the concept of chivalry still played a crucial role in how soldiers saw themselves in the conflict.

Here for the first time, Allen J. Frantzen traces these chivalric ideals from the Great War back to their origins in the Middle Ages and shows how they resulted in highly influential models of behavior for men in combat. Drawing on a wide selection of literature and images from the medieval period, along with photographs, memorials, postcards, war posters, and film from both sides of the front, Frantzen shows how such media shaped a chivalric ideal of male sacrifice based on the Passion of Jesus Christ. He demonstrates, for instance, how the wounded body of Christ became the inspiration for heroic male suffering in battle. For some men, the Crucifixion inspired a culture of revenge, one in which Christ's bleeding wounds were venerated as badges of valor and honor. For others, Christ's sacrifice inspired action more in line with his teachings—a daring stay of hands or reason not to visit death upon one's enemies.

Lavishly illustrated and eloquently written, *Bloody Good* will be must reading for anyone interested in World War I and the influence of Christian ideas on modern life.



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