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## **NON-FRATERNIZATION IN OCCUPIED GERMANY, 1944-45**

### A Working Bibliography of MHI Sources

Allied occupation policy toward Germany included non-fraternization, a prohibition against friendly relations between conqueror and conquered, which became a controversial aspect of the early occupation. With non-fraternization, Allied planners sought to avoid the earlier intimacy that arose during the 1918-23 occupation of the German Rhineland. In addition, the planners supposed that non-fraternization would shield Allied soldiers from leftover Nazi propaganda and from any die-hard resistance forces, and that by so-ignoring the German people, it would remind them of their total defeat. However, such suppression of amicability required that Allied field commanders regulate the social behavior of the occupying troops, a command problem that became increasingly problematic.

The non-fraternization approach had been decided upon at the Anglo- American diplomatic conferences of early 1944. The U.S. War Dept sent implementing instructions to the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF), which integrated non-fraternization into its planning for victory and occupation. Thus, when Allied forces penetrated the western frontier of Germany, Sep 1944, Supreme Commander Dwight D. Eisenhower announced the overall occupation policy and began applying it to the German territory that increasingly fell under Anglo-American control. Thus, even before the final surrender, non-fraternization was tried and proved difficult to enforce.

Definition of this non-fraternization appeared in General Eisenhower's 1944 announcement as "the avoidance of mingling with Germans upon terms of friendliness, familiarity or intimacy, whether individually or in groups, in official or unofficial dealings." The policy specifically prohibited marriages, integrated seating at religious services, visiting private homes, attending dances, and even shaking hands. To counter temptations of sociability, commanders were encouraged to intensify training, promote education and sports participation, and otherwise preoccupy the occupation troops with alternatives to mingling with the civilian population.

In the event, close social contact with local Germans proved difficult, if not impossible, to avoid. For one thing, the Allied occupying forces needed civilian interpreters, clerks, and laborers. Beyond this official need arose the human tendency toward social and other forms of intercourse. After victory in Europe, the major enemy of Allied soldiers became boredom and loneliness. Turning to native resources, the soldiers sought local companionship and entertainment and thereby chafed against command restrictions against fraternization. Moreover, British, Canadian, and French enforcement of the non-fraternization policy never matched the rigidity of American enforcement, which led to resentment over an apparent double standard. Mounting violations of non-fraternization by American soldiers did not escape the attention of the American press.

The policy's overwhelming unpopularity among American troops, coupled with the prospect of mass disobedience to its restrictions, helped soften restrictions and soon led to virtual abandonment of the policy. (Known Nazis and suspected war criminals remained outcasts.) In Jun 1945, the first official loosening of strictures excepted small children. Soon afterward another easement permitted conversations with adults in public places. The troops considered such steps as a "fraternization" policy and acted accordingly. By Oct 1945, after nearly four months of unsatisfactory application, non-fraternization quietly ended, with the exceptions of restrictions against marriage and billeting troops in private homes. The overall policy had proven unsuccessful at controlling social conduct.

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## Non-fraternization

p.3

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### See also:

-Examples and incidental commentary in many archival collections, such as letters of Robert W. Hasbrouck.