



Gratz Insider, Spring 2015 - Story Continuation

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## **Richard Goldstein: Fighting Hatred with Education**

Richard Goldstein spent eleven years in the Marine Corps and ten years in the army. During his service, he earned his bachelor's degree in World War II military history, completing his final paper online while stationed as a JAG officer in Iraq. After retiring from the military in 2008, he worked as a 911 dispatcher in Washington State, first in Seattle and then in Spokane. In June 2011, he became a criminal intelligence analyst in the Spokane Police Department.

In that capacity, Goldstein worked with local police departments, as well as with the FBI and other federal agencies, to target gangs and hate groups, including neo-Nazis and white supremacists, in order to thwart future acts of violence. Goldstein explains that the most effective way to ferret out these groups, predict their movements and chip away at their support is to understand who they are and what their beliefs are.

“Whether it’s the Third Reich or a hate group in a local town, they use the same methodology to manipulate and recruit people,” says Goldstein.

Given his personal interest in World War II history and his professional need to understand the workings of local hate groups, Goldstein enrolled in Gratz’s online master’s program in Holocaust and Genocide Studies in the fall of 2012. He expects to graduate by the end of this summer.

The director of the program, Gratz professor Dr. Michael Steinlauf, describes Goldstein as “an amazing guy, dedicated to learning as much as he can, which in his case, means devouring books and lectures in order to be a more effective force against hate crimes in America. He’s always the first to respond to questions and the first to pose them, always eager to learn more: an exemplary student and a man with a mission.”

Demonstrating how he applied his new-found knowledge to his work, Goldstein recounts a story about his interview with a neo-Nazi prisoner who had been taken into custody in the Spokane Police Department. The prisoner was tattooed with the image of a Nazi leader, whom he believed to be Rudolph Hess, one-time deputy *Fuhrer* under Adolf Hitler. Goldstein pointed out to the prisoner that he had been

misinformed by his neo-Nazi pals because the tattoo was actually a picture of Rudolph Hoess, the commandant of Auschwitz.

In addition to inaccuracies, hate groups feed their members propaganda in the form of misconceptions and downright lies. By debunking these falsehoods with knowledge and education, Goldstein believes that law enforcement can undermine the hate groups' recruitment efforts and start to drive their members out. "The more education that's out there," he says, "the less likely it is for these groups to gain traction."

Goldstein has since retired from the Spokane Police Department and is currently working on his thesis for the Gratz master's program. His research focuses on determining the consequences - if any - faced by members of the German SS and *Wehrmacht* who refused to follow execution orders. While on vacation in Europe this summer, Goldstein is scheduled to meet with an official from the German archives to get an overview of the cases in this area.

Finally, Goldstein also spends his time volunteering in local schools, where his work is colored by his commitment to combating hatred with education. After presenting programs on the history of World War II, he uses what he learned from Gratz to take the lesson to the next level, discussing issues of hatred, prejudice and racism with the students.

"I think it is especially important in this part of the country," he says, "where historically white supremacy has had a foothold, and the kids aren't as exposed to diversity as in other more metropolitan parts of the world."

Upon reflecting on his own education at Gratz, Goldstein says, "I've learned more than I thought I would. I got the knowledge I was seeking and then some."