



Patton: A Biography

Alan Axelrod , Wesley K. Clark (Foreword)

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George S. Patton embodied contradiction: a cavalryman steeped in romantic military tradition, he nevertheless pulled a reluctant American military into the most advanced realms of highly mobile armored warfare. An autocratic snob, Patton created unparalleled rapport and loyalty with the lowliest private in his command; an outspoken racist, he led the only racially integrated U.S. military unit in World War II; an exuberantly profane man, he prayed daily and believed God had destined him for military greatness; a profoundly insecure individual, he made his Third Army the most self-confident and consistently victorious fighting force in the European theater. From Patton's boyhood battling dyslexia and becoming an avid reader, to his leadership strategies that modernized the U.S. army, Alan Axelrod delivers a fascinating account of Patton's life and legacy.

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From Reader Review Patton: A Biography for online ebook

Hans says

Summing up an entire person's life is always a challenge. Patton, like many leaders and Generals before him was much more nuanced than how he is often portrayed. His biography reminded me a lot of General Sherman, another extremely capable and competent leader. The shocking similarity is that both Patton and Sherman on the surface appeared confident but under the surface were both deeply insecure. Patton worked hard to keep a lid on those insecurities by presenting a polished image, however they often leaked through the cracks in his facade and when they escaped it was usually in the form of some damning outburst. Many people and soldiers love Patton for his "Tough Guy" image but if that is all you see than you miss the more human part. Patton suffered from depression and fought to keep his intense emotions and deep feelings at bay. He hurt, ached and suffered over the dead and wounded under his command. He believed that taking and keeping combat initiative would ultimately save more lives than the more cautious approach taken by his superiors. So it might be odd to think that he saw constant aggression as a more compassionate way to fight because it would bring the fight to a close quicker. His thinking has left a permanent mark on the American military and his fighting spirit and model of leadership is still emulated.

Steven Voorhees says

"He was one of those men born to be a soldier." Dwight D. Eisenhower's assessment of General George Smith Patton, Jr. In Axelrod's concise biography of Patton, I saw very powerfully this cradle-to-grave certitude. Both the gung-ho warrior and the complex human being Patton was are on full display. This contradiction shines most brightly in Axelrod's description and analyses of the military campaigns Patton either led or fought in (or both). Patton was the greatest military LEADER since Ulysses Simpson Grant (one of Yours Truly's heroes). Not bad for a (seemingly) born soldier.

Geoffrey Hazelton says

A very balanced biography of the hero of WWII. It shows the impact he has had on today's Army via his leadership, tactics, and training methods. The book is certainly not hero worship as it describes in great detail the shortcomings of the man. I would liked to have seen the use of maps in the book. When you read it keep a good world atlas handy.

Le Cuong says

A great book about one of the greatest military minds in history. Lots of good lessons about leadership, military strategy and global affairs. 4 stars for a book about a 4 star general.

Lauren Rev says

Interesting overview of the main points in Patton's career and personal life. Quoted extensively from letters and diaries written by Patton and his contemporaries. Most interesting was the final chapter which fit Patton's initiatives, and their development into today's Army. However, book was in some ways very similar to the the Academy Award winning movie & the follow up TV movie, Last Days of Patton. In fact, you can see both of these and skip the book.

Jeff says

Awesome quick read about a man so revered, hated, and ultimately admired. There has never been another General quite like him for his leadership, tactical aptitude, and caring of subordinates and dare I say we might never see such a man again as society wouldn't be able to handle his brash nature. Having served in Germany and visited ol' Blood and Guts a few times I can say I respect this man for what he did even when people didn't agree.

Dr. Barrett Dylan Brown, Phd says

General Patton was truly an amazing military personality; born to be a soldier like Arjuna in the Bahagavad Gita. He claimed to remember all of his past lives and in all of them he was a warrior. When he fought the Nazi's in Africa he remembered being a Spartan fighting the Greeks in the same place, a thousand years ago. He was also a prolific poet, with no apologies to anyone for either his past life memories or his poetry.

Amy says

Interesting book as it wasn't too heavy on technical war terms, of which I'd know nothing about, but was more on Patton's life as a boy and man, in wartime and peace, and how others perceived him.

I liked that it had many excerpts from his diary and his letters home to his wife Beatrice. You can learn a lot more about what someone writes in their diary and letters than what others say about them.

I thought that author seemed very fair in his assessment about Patton, and in the end I couldn't tell whether he was pro or anti Patton, which I think is excellent as he just portrayed the facts.

E says

A concise yet insightful biography of the triumphant American WWII battlefield commander, General George S. Patton Jr.

General George Smith Patton Jr. was a bold, inspirational American World War II military leader. Known as "Old Blood and Guts" to his troops in Europe, Patton had no equal as a military tactician. As military

historian Eric Larrabee put it, Patton had the unique ability to “think like an army” and possessed a nearly mystical, intuitive understanding of battlefield tactics. As commander of America’s Third Army, Patton achieved notable successes on the European battlefield in the war against Hitler. The Germans established blitzkrieg (lightning) warfare when they conquered Poland in 1939. But Patton shoved this concept down their throats as his Third Army swept across Europe after the Normandy invasion. Alan Axelrod ably tells Patton’s life story in this concise, masterful biography. getAbstract highly recommends this outstanding book about one of America’s greatest, most colorful military heroes.

Paul Lunger says

Alan Axelrod's "Patton: A Biography" is a quick & definitive look at the life of General George S. Patton, Jr who is perhaps one of the more complicated people to ever fight in a major US war. The book goes in depth about Patton's "elitist" upbringing from his days at VMI to West Point & gets into his lust for being in war & fighting for something he believed in. Throughout this relatively brief biography, Axelrod goes in depth about the personality & the tactics of Patton as well as the temper of his which got him into trouble w/ the infamous slapping incidents in Sicily. The book itself is for the most part an easy read & while it's probably not the most in depth biography of the general, it serves as a decent way to understand the life of "Old Blood & Guts".

Hal says

I have read a few of the Great General series books. This one on General George S. Patton, Jr. was superbly done by Alan Axelrod. Though brief it covered Patton's career and character in an easy flowing informative way. I was surprised how many of the incidents covered in the book were paralleled in Academy Award winning movie with George C. Scott as Hollywood can tweak things beyond recognition and truth in such productions. Despite all the controversy surrounding the general and his quirks and antics he delivered the goods on the battlefield. Somewhere between crackpot and genius Patton was truly one of a kind and aptly dubbed a true warrior. His innovations in tactics and leadership is still with us today and is his legacy in military annals

Tedsandi2000 Kinghorn says

Excellent

Debra Pawlak says

When I started this book, I knew next to nothing about General George Patton. I learned a lot about him, (some good, some bad), but I felt that this particular book didn't dig deep enough for me. It focused primarily on his military life and mentioned very little about his private life. If you just want to learn a little about the General then this would be a perfect book for you, but if you want an in-depth story of his life (and unusual death) then I would recommend that you look elsewhere. The details were definitely lacking and I felt that this book only skimmed the surface of what could have been a really good read.

rian says

Ok

It was okay. Short on detailed technical examination of his campaigns. It was fast moving and written well but lacked detail

Jim says

I feel a bit funny giving a 3 star rating to a book about a 4 star General. Anyway, Patton by Alan Axelrod is a more interesting book than his book on General Omar Bradley. Perhaps the two men are so very different that Axelrod was forced to write a rather dull account of Bradley's life but a much more lively account of Patton's life.

This book was less of a biography and more of a series of diary and letter quotes with respect to the timeline of events in Patton's life. Since much of the book's contents were created by Patton, you are left with a stronger connection to what he was thinking at the time of these events. (The Bradley book was mostly a biography from the "outside" of what was happening)

I was pleased to get a slightly different spin on some of the events of which Patton is so famous. Granted that you are mostly getting Patton's "spin" on things, it is still a valid point of view. I will give credit to Axelrod for presenting a well balanced story with clear distinction between Patton's thoughts and those of others.

I can recommend this book. It is a good study of an important person in our history
