



General Patton: A Soldier's Life

Stanley Hirshson

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"War is my work and I know I sound sometimes as though I liked it; perhaps I do -- how can I tell? -- but this war hurts everybody."

-- Patton to Henry J. Taylor, 1945

General George S. Patton, Jr., an inspirational leader and outstanding tactician, has intrigued and confounded his biographers. Now, utilizing untapped archival materials in both the United States and England, government documents, family papers, and oral histories, Stanley P. Hirshson creates the most balanced portrait of Patton ever written. It reveals Patton as a complex soldier capable of brilliant military maneuvers but also of inspiring his troops with fiery speeches that resulted in horrendous acts, such as the massacres of Italian civilians. It explains Patton's belief in a soldier's Valhalla, connects the family's wealth to one of America's bitterest labor strikes, and disputes the usual interpretation of Patton's relief from command of the Third Army.

In investigating this complex man, Hirshson has uncovered surprising material about a series of civilian massacres in Sicily, about the two slapping incidents, about attempts to exploit Patton's diary after his death, and about Patton's relations with top Allied generals. Patton emerges as a soldier of great imagination and courage, and his military campaigns make for edge-of-the-seat reading. All the drama of Patton's life comes alive in this meticulously documented volume.

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