



War as I Knew It

George S. Patton Jr.

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The personal and candid account of General Patton's celebrated, relentless crusade across western Europe during World War II

First published in 1947, *War as I Knew It* is an absorbing narrative that draws from Patton's vivid memories of battle and his detailed diaries, covering the moment the Third Army exploded onto the Brittany Peninsula to the final Allied casualty report. The result is not only a grueling, human account of daily combat and heroic feats—including a riveting look at the Battle of the Bulge—but a valuable chronicle by one of the most brilliant military strategists in history. Patton's letters from earlier military campaigns in North Africa and Sicily, complemented by a powerful retrospective of his guiding philosophies, further reveal a man of uncompromising will and uncommon character, which made "Georgie" a household name in mid-century America.

War as I Knew It Details

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Martin says

What a strange and funky little book! This is controversial American General George S. Patton's "memoir" published first in 1947 . But since he passed in 1945 in a vehicle accident, it's not the smooth finished product it might be to make it truly comparable to most other WWII memoirs. It's rough and seems to be a hodge-podge of extant materials cobbled together for a quick book profit. It's basically his war diary, with lots of details and stories dropped in almost randomly. Through it all there's tidbits for everyone- enough pithy stuff to preserve his reputation as an decisive commander, but enough random bits of inane racism/sexism/elitism to remind you that personally the guy could be a difficult boor.

The book covers the whole American European Campaign from Operation Torch in North Africa to the end in Central Germany/The Czech Republic, with plenty of fun stops along the way. I found Patton's imperfect memory for Ancient and Modern European history and literature charmingly real- but it does debunk the "Patton as Renaissance Man" narrative that his hagiographers prefer. There is no rest, however from compelling content, so even when the conjecture or the false explanations get bizarre, they never get boring.

This is a great book for a Junior reader to attempt, as long as context from more reliable sources on the period are at hand. for the Military Enthusiast/Gamer/Modeller, this is clearly a goldmine. Plenty of anecdotes to improve both Dioramas and Scenarios, and some good directives to guide the gamer/tactician. Certainly a data point for any serious student of the era.

Kevin says

One of my great uncles was part of Patton's 3rd Army, and when he died, his rotten f-ing grandkids attacked his house like locusts, tossing out 80+ years of keepsakes & antiques that they couldn't pawn or sell on ebay. One of my little treasures that my mom snagged was his copy of "War as I Knew It". The only truly charismatic person I've ever been in the presence of was Pope John Paul II, and that was simply stunning. I cant imagine what it was like to be around Patton. The man truly was larger than life.

Dwain says

Patton's memoirs of WWII are interesting on many levels. First, it is interesting to gain a glimpse into the man. Most of what people know about Patton is his brashness, his reputation for profanity, and his aggressiveness in battle. His memoirs show him to be much less crass in his private life than he acted around his men. They also showed him to be a surprisingly well-rounded person who obviously admired and knew a lot about architecture and was an avid reader and student of history. He was obviously outspoken about his opinions, even when those opinions were not 'politic,' but it was equally obvious that he was fairly unbiased and willing to change his opinions.

Second, Patton includes his lessons on war toward the end of his memoirs. This was a collection of tactical advise that I thought was fascinating. For example, Patton says that a commander should never stop an

advance on the near side of a river. He should always cross the river as quickly as possible before the enemy has an opportunity to prepare to oppose the crossing. It is far easier to withdraw if necessary than to make an opposed crossing against a determined enemy.

Third, the final section of the memoirs is Pattons collection of instances in which he feels that he "earned his pay." These are circumstances in which he feels that made a difference in an event that produced a positive benefit. This included some variety--from overriding what he considered erroneous orders (going so far as to threaten to relieve his commanders) to coming to the rescue of a black soldier accused of raping a white girl and preventing his being lynched by an angry mob. This section provided further insight into Patton's personality.

Having said this, some of the book became tedious towards the middle, and I think if I were to listen to it again, I would just listen to the last two CDs that contained Patton's two sections on 'earning his pay' and tactical lessons.

Martin says

Patton's own eloquent words, hard to put it down.

Mike Salmans says

Great words from an even Greater man!

Brian Finch says

This reads like a travel log through the eyes of one the greatest generals as he treks through war stricken land during WWII. It is interesting what captures his imagination. When he stops in Sicily, Patton spends pages admiring the ancient ruins. It is hard not to wonder how Patton would have fared against some of those Ancient generals who were known for their innovative tactics. Hannibal or Alexander The Great or Scipio versus Patton all with ancient equipment or modern all with modern equipment. The idea is fascinating.

If you're interested in military history or war tactics, you probably have read this book, but if you haven't, it is worth your time.

Donald Kirch says

He was much more than a general who "slapped" a soldier. We need more like him.

Henry B. Davis IV says

This was a surprising good read. I'm definitely not a Patton fan, but his widow who was instrumental in getting this book published kept some of Patton's more hairbrained ideas out of this work and significantly toned down portrayal of his famous ego. I recommend this book to anyone with even a casual interest in World War II.

Jeanne says

I'm more enamored with Patton than ever! I read this books and simultaneously watched a few films about Patton. And now I can say from experience, that "you are what you listen to." (this was a book on tape). Just after finishing the book, I taught a class at church. I got so passionate about one story I was telling that I swore!! -- (The 'd' word.) It was a perfectly good Patton word to use. I had just told Hal that swearing didn't bother me so much when Patton was swearing. Me and George S!!!

This book actually had very few swear words---and none in his letters---compared to many other WWII books.

I would really give this book 3 1/2 stars---I liked the beginning and the end, but the middle got a little dry. Throughout the book there were plenty of anecdotes teaching leadership skills. Patton was so educated and an excellent writer. This book contained his letters to his wife, from Africa, and the history and culture he shares is fascinating.

I would recommend this to any WWII fan, history buffs, and those wishing to learn more leadership skills!

Robert says

George S. Patton, Jr., in spite of his weaknesses and propensity to enrage General Eisenhower from time to time, whether by comments or actions, was World War II's most brilliant field commander. His near total recall of battles fought, from North Africa to Sicily to Italy, France and Germany is remarkable. Patton describes his wartime experiences in a way that makes the reader feel as if he or she is sitting with him and hearing about the war in great detail...as General Patton perceived it.

Dr. Amiruddin Alauddin says

One of our greatest generals indeed.

Harrison Vetter says

I enjoyed Patton's memoirs, which are really just his diary entries and letters to home edited into a book format. Even if you aren't interested in military history, War as I Knew It is a must-read simply for the

quintessential Patton quotes, entertaining anecdotes, and guidance on leadership. Further, I think it preserves General Patton's true beliefs. The fact that he died shortly after the conclusion of World War II, with *War As I Knew It* being published after his death, prevents the book from becoming biased or overly critical of others on account of hindsight. The opinions expressed in this book are what Patton was really thinking as the events occurred, and nothing more. This allows the reader to actually participate in his thought-process as he led the Third Army in its mad dash across Europe. Often at the forefront of his mind was the almost insatiable desire to attack (thus preventing the enemy from attacking him) and a commitment to keeping the morale of his own troops high. I read this immediately following a biography on Generals Eisenhower, Patton, and Bradley, and *War As I Knew It* complimented this bigger-picture book nicely. The more I read of Patton, in conjunction with his own writings, the more impressed I am with him. He was always in control of the situation, surprisingly quite wise, and a master motivator.

Mark Singer says

Published in 1947 just two years after his death, General George S. Patton's "War As I Knew It" was assembled and edited from his wartime diary. It is fascinating reading, but needs to be read as a diary, not an autobiography, and if the reader has a knowledge of events beyond what is in the diary it helps.

Nathan says

non-fiction. excellent and highly relevant

Hank Hoeft says

There are many war histories that focus on the "big picture," there are many war histories that focus on small units, and there are war memoirs that focus on individuals. Most of the memoirs I've read have been those of low-ranking soldiers, sailors, and airmen--I haven't read all that many written by generals or admirals. So *War as I Knew It* was a change of pace for me. I was interested in Patton's relating of strategy and tactics, as filtered through his philosophy of how war should be waged--that is, the more aggressive a military force is, the shorter the war and the fewer the casualties in the long run. And I was fascinated by his reasoning as to why the M4 Sherman tank (the main tank of the American army), which was under-gunned and under-armored as compared to the German Panzer IV, Panther, and Tiger tanks, was not inferior to German armor. Of course, Patton's account mostly (but not entirely) omits mention of those aspects and events of his command that were the most controversial, but that was not unexpected...and that's what Ladislas Farago's excellent and definitive biography *Patton: Ordeal and Triumph* is for.
