

Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life

By Carlo D'Este

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From the bestselling author of *Patton: A Genius for War* comes a compelling new account of the transformation of General Dwight D. Eisenhower, from apprehensive soldier to one of our greatest heroes.

In the weeks leading up to D-Day, Dwight D. Eisenhower seethed with nervous energy. He had not expected his military career to bring him to this moment. The son of pacifists, Ike graduated from high school more likely to teach history than to make it. Casting new light on this profound evolution, *Eisenhower* chronicles the unlikely, dramatic rise of the supreme Allied commander.

Beginning with the lasting effect of Eisenhower's impoverished youth, bestselling biographer Carlo D'Este follows his subject through West Point and a sometimes troubled marriage; toil under MacArthur in the Philippines during the 1930s; the inner sanctums of the War Department; the general's painful North African apprenticeship; and, finally, the dramatic events leading to the Allied victory in May 1945.

Exposing for the first time numerous myths that have surrounded the war hero and his family (such as his romance with his wartime driver, Kay Summersby), D'Este also probes Eisenhower's famous clashes with his American peers and the British chiefs of staff, as well as his relations with legendary figures, including Winston Churchill and George S. Patton.

Unlike other biographies of the general, *Eisenhower* captures Ike's true character, from his youth to the pinnacle of his career and afterward.

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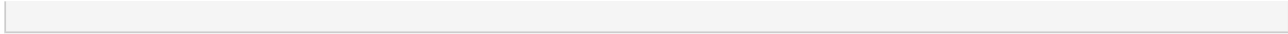
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Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life By Carlo D'Este Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

There is hardly a shortage of books about Dwight Eisenhower, but Carlo D'Este's *Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life* stands tall in this forest by virtue of the author's insistence on a too-often forgotten rule of biographers: show--don't tell about--the subject. Though D'Este doesn't neglect Eisenhower's early years (his sketch of the man's rambunctious West Point years is hearteningly entertaining), the book concentrates on his military career, including his years of treading water in the Philippines. By far the most trenchant sections, however, deal with World War II (including a keen look at the little-discussed North African campaign.) We see Ike, who had a famous temper and, when angry, a most indelicate vocabulary, chain-smoking cigarettes and unable to sleep in the weeks leading to D-day; refusing--out of disgust for German atrocities--to be present at the signing of the articles of surrender; bantering, though his heart was heavy, with enlisted men; wrestling contentiously with MacArthur and Field Marshall Montgomery. We read excerpts of his letters to Mamie and are privy to, perhaps, his laying the groundwork for a political career. *A Soldier's Life*, long but brisk, sympathetic but not adoring, rigorous but never tedious, is a commendable biography. --H. O'Billovich

From Publishers Weekly

A lieutenant colonel at 50 with no military future ahead of him in the stifling between-the-wars promotion system, Eisenhower became, in little more than three years and three months, a five-star general. D'Este (Patton: A Genius for War) sees Ike's rise as predicated upon his having been recognized as "the ultimate career bureaucrat he so disdained." Never having had hands-on command of a unit in combat, Eisenhower would pay heavy prices for his inexperience. Yet D'Este seems to agree with General Omar Bradley that Ike lived an "extraordinarily charmed life" on the basis of likability, desk-officer brilliance and the active patronage of influential men. Although D'Este, who carries Eisenhower's career only through victory in Europe in May 1945, leans heavily upon Russell Weigley's masterly *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, he goes well beyond Weigley in indicting the supreme commander for so grossly playing favorites as to keep incompetents in major positions, for command indecision and indifference about such crucial dimensions of combat as logistics, and for a litany of strategic blunders that lengthened and raised the price of the war. He also attempts but fails to bypass the delicate matter of Eisenhower's attentions to his British chauffeur and aide, Kay Summersby. Although at first he contends loyally that their names would be "wrongly" linked, later he notes that it was "common knowledge among war correspondents that something was going on between them." At the close, our knowledge of the future eminence of D'Este's flawed hero seems to validate the implied if reluctant verdict of a charmed life. Still, its dramatic objectivity about Eisenhower's significantly flawed career as a WWII commander will earn this volume attention and controversy. 16 pages of b&w illustrations, 4 maps not seen by PW.

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From Library Journal

Having assayed Patton, retired U.S. Army lieutenant D'Este here fries an even bigger fish.

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From reader reviews:

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