



"Reading *Lady of the Army* was like reading an encyclopedia! Stefanie Van Steelandt brought Beatrice Ayer Patton back to life as a multifaceted person with so many talents that she could not be appreciated fully if she were only known as "Mrs. George". I consider Stefanie's book to be a triumph, for taking on a worthy subject as no other author or researcher has, and for having the courage to do it as a first-time writer."

—**Joanne Holbrook Patton**

"A unique book in the military biography field, Van Steelandt does a masterful job detailing the life of Beatrice Ayer Patton, General George S. Patton's wife ... *Lady of the Army* is an enjoyably readable book about an important woman of the 20th century, as well as an academic book with extensive references and background."

—**Ross Rojek, *Manhattan Book Review***

"A masterpiece of seminal research, *Lady of the Army* is an extraordinary, detailed, and unique biography of a remarkable woman married to a now legendary American military leader in both World War I and World War II."

—**Midwest Book Review**

2023 Silver Winner – Benjamin Franklin Award (Biography & Autobiography).

If anyone considered an army wife to be merely the kite's tail, Beatrice Ayer Patton had the perfect retort, "How high can a kite soar without its tail?" After all, she shaped the man, fortified the soldier, and created the legend.

General George Patton once remarked that WWII undoubtedly would have lasted a lot longer were it not for his soldiers and his wife. Those who knew the Pattons were aware of the vital role Beatrice played in his reaching his destiny, but few others understood the singular impact of this remarkable woman whom people described as having "a personality which radiates like a brilliant gem."

The arduous army life was alien to Beatrice growing up on Boston's Commonwealth Avenue, but her adventurous spirit and insatiable curiosity allowed her to adapt quickly. She became an immediate asset to her husband's career and continuously fanned the flames of his burning ambition, walking beside him on his path to glory while maintaining her own identity. As comfortable on the back of a magnificent steed as at the helm of a great schooner, she became an authority on Hawaiian legends while stationed on the islands twice.

Straddling the line between the home-and-war front and hailed for its extensive research and factual reporting, *Lady of the Army* tells the story of the General's greatest champion in life and fiercest defender in death while shedding new light on a complex man who wanted nothing more than to die a glorious death on the battlefield.

#### **About the author**

An independent scholar who spent the last twenty years studying biography, Stefanie Van Steelandt grew up near Belgium's Liberty Road, which General Patton and his Third Army followed during WWII. Currently living in New York City and working on her second book, Ms. Van Steelandt spent nearly four years researching and writing *Lady of the Army*.

## **Praise for *Lady of the Army***

General George S. Patton is one of the most studied military leaders in history ... but now comes a unique book that completes the story of Patton the man and the warrior. *Lady of the Army* is the remarkable history of Beatrice Ayer Patton ... a true renaissance woman and backbone of the famous military family. Author Stefanie Van Steelandt set out to tell a story largely unknown to the public and even those who may know much of the Patton legacy. She has done so with a book that combines extraordinary detail with a captivating biographical narrative. To truly know George Patton is to truly know Beatrice Patton.

It is not an exaggeration to write *Lady of the Army* is the most complete study ever undertaken to chronicle the life and times of Beatrice Patton and owing to Van Steelandt's extensive research, it will also rank as a first-rate look at the life and career of General George S. Patton. This book is magnificent and a literary triumph!

—**Brian M. Sobel, Author of *The Fighting Pattons***

A magisterial recounting of the life of George S. Patton's wife Beatrice, Stefanie Van Steelandt's *Lady of the Army* offers a frank and sympathetic portrait of the woman behind the general.

*Lady of the Army* is a handsome contribution to women's history, but it hardly conforms to this pattern. As Van Steelandt points out, Beatrice Patton was no Eleanor Roosevelt when it came to championing the rights of women (though she befriended her and wrote approvingly of her ideas). On the contrary: she was so devoted to her husband and his conception of himself as one of the "great men" of history that she directed her life's efforts to helping

him achieve his ambitions. It was, as Van Steelandt notes, a fascinating life, but it was one lived in Patton's shadow, and Beatrice was happy for it to be that way, anointing their house in Massachusetts with the trophies of war that Patton so proudly sent back to her—a German helmet riddled with bullet holes; a bust of Hitler, which he instructed should be put in a place where their pet dogs might find it of use.

What shines through time and again is the genuine closeness of the bond between husband and wife. The Pattons wrote to each other regularly, and the affection and love is plain in their correspondence, from which Van Steelandt liberally quotes.

*Lady of the Army* ... is a meticulously researched, cogently expressed, and richly detailed portrait of a woman whose contribution to the successes of her husband have never been fully acknowledged. Van Steelandt's achievement is to elevate them to a position of dignity, and to deny the trappings of marginalization that so often accompany subservience. Beatrice may have been, as it were, the tail of the kite, but as she once suggested to a group of army wives, "How high can a kite fly without its tail?"

—**Craig Jones, for *IndieReader***

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## **Lady of the Army: The Life of Mrs. George S. Patton**

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"An especially and unreservedly recommended addition to community, college, and university library 20th Century American Biography and World War II History collections." —**Midwest Book Review**