

General George S. Patton is one of the most studied military leaders in history. Dozens of books, hundreds of articles, millions of words have been written about his exploits in war, but now comes a unique book that completes the story of Patton the man and the warrior. Written by Stefanie Van Steelandt, *Lady of the Army* is the remarkable history of Beatrice Patton, wife of General George S. Patton, a true renaissance woman and backbone of the famous military family.

This carefully detailed book, impressive in its research, tells the compelling story of Beatrice Ayer Patton, growing up as the daughter of a wealthy Boston tycoon, then meeting and later marrying a young Army officer named George S. Patton. Beatrice, would pour her heart and soul into the career of her soldier, ultimately becoming the strong and central character in the development of George Patton through his long and storied Army career.

While later books about Patton and even the contemporaneous coverage of Patton went to great lengths to explain what motivated his persona and how his training and personal courage impacted his career, very little attention was ever paid to Beatrice Patton, his wife, the mother of his children, and without any doubt, the most important figure in his life. Every decision, every thought, every reaction to events by Patton were shared with Beatrice in daily written correspondence that was a mainstay throughout Patton's career.

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. Her unwavering support of her husband, her motivating letters to him when he was down and letters that scolded him when she felt she should, were one-half of a partnership that transcended time and geography. They were as one and it can be argued Patton would not and could not have accomplished all he did without her support.

*Lady of the Army* is one of the great books about the Patton family because it fully explores the life of Beatrice Patton and, importantly, helps the reader understand and appreciate how the lives of Beatrice and George Patton were intertwined. Importantly, Van Steelandt not only conducted the necessary research to write this book, but then took her journey to the next level by so deeply exploring the Patton-related archives, the massive Patton correspondence, the books and studies of Patton's career, and so much more.

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***