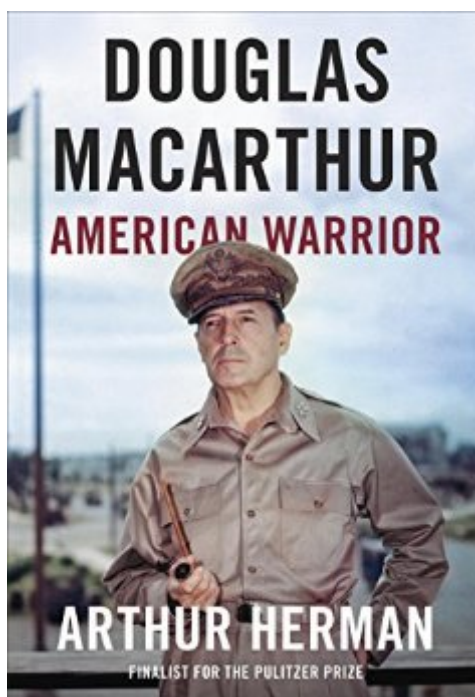


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Douglas MacArthur: American Warrior



Synopsis

A new, definitive life of an American icon, the visionary general who led American forces through three wars and foresaw his nation's great geopolitical shift toward the Pacific Rim—from the Pulitzer Prize finalist and bestselling author of *Gandhi & Churchill* Douglas MacArthur was arguably the last American public figure to be worshipped unreservedly as a national hero, the last military figure to conjure up the romantic stirrings once evoked by George Armstrong Custer and Robert E. Lee. But he was also one of America's most divisive figures, a man whose entire career was steeped in controversy. Was he an avatar or an anachronism, a brilliant strategist or a vainglorious mountebank? Drawing on a wealth of new sources, Arthur Herman delivers a powerhouse biography that peels back the layers of myth—both good and bad—and exposes the marrow of the man beneath. MacArthur's life spans the emergence of the United States Army as a global fighting force. Its history is to a great degree his story. The son of a Civil War hero, he led American troops in three monumental conflicts—World War I, World War II, and the Korean War. Born four years after Little Bighorn, he died just as American forces began deploying in Vietnam. Herman's magisterial book spans the full arc of MacArthur's journey, from his elevation to major general at thirty-eight through his tenure as superintendent of West Point, field marshal of the Philippines, supreme ruler of postwar Japan, and beyond. More than any previous biographer, Herman shows how MacArthur's strategic vision helped shape several decades of U.S. foreign policy. Alone among his peers, he foresaw the shift away from Europe, becoming the prophet of America's destiny in the Pacific Rim. Here, too, is a vivid portrait of a man whose grandiose vision of his own destiny won him enemies as well as acolytes. MacArthur was one of the first military heroes to cultivate his own public persona—the swashbuckling commander outfitted with Ray-Ban sunglasses, riding crop, and corncob pipe. Repeatedly spared from being killed in battle—his soldiers nicknamed him “Bullet Proof”—he had a strong sense of divine mission. “Mac” was a man possessed, in the words of one of his contemporaries, of a “supreme and almost mystical faith that he could not fail.” Yet when he did, it was on an epic scale. His willingness to defy both civilian and military authority was, Herman shows, a lifelong trait—and it would become his undoing. Tellingly, MacArthur once observed, “Sometimes it is the order one disobeys that makes one famous.” To capture the life of such an outsize figure in one volume is no small achievement. With *Douglas MacArthur*, Arthur Herman has set a new standard for untangling the legacy of this American legend. Praise for Douglas MacArthur “This is revisionist history at its best and, hopefully, will reopen a debate about the judgment of history and MacArthur's place in history.” —*New York Journal of Books* “Unfailingly evocative . . . close

to an epic . . . More than a biography, it is a tale of a time in the past almost impossible to contemplate today as having taken place, with MacArthur himself as a figure perhaps too remote to understand, but all the more important to encounter.ââ "The New Criterion" With Douglas MacArthur: American Warrior, the prolific and talented historian Arthur Herman has delivered an expertly rendered, compulsively readable account that does full justice to MacArthur's monumental achievements without slighting his equally monumental flaws.ââ "Commentary" From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

Without a doubt, Arthur Herman has written a superior, fair - and devastatingly compelling biography of "America's Warrior." Drawing on primary sources, oral history of interviews with MacArthur's widow Jean Faircloth MacArthur, formerly classified files - and the super secret Archive of the President of the Russian Federation (released in 1991 by President Boris Yeltsin following the fall of the Soviet Union), Herman updates and clarifies many crucial passages found in earlier MacArthur biographies. Among them, Manchester's masterful work, American Caesar, published in

1978. Focusing on MacArthur and the Korean war, Herman takes another look at Washington's old view (shared by many historians) that an impetuous MacArthur, "advocating use of atomic bombs," will force Stalin to go to war with the U.S. Joining Herman in updating this Cold War issue is, in my view, Simon Sebag Montefiore, whose Stalin biography, published in 2003, also draws on recently released sources from the former Soviet Union. Both historians, in fact, vindicate MacArthur's prescient assessment in 1950 that, in contrast to Truman's view, Stalin is unlikely to risk dragging a still recovering WW II-ravaged Russia into another catastrophic war, this time a nuclear one - and against the world's sole super power. We now know the Soviets at the time have no atomic arsenal nor strategic delivery system. Stalin knows full well his country does not stand a chance. As it turns out, he decides to take a pass, as MacArthur has surmised. After his success at Inchon and sensing the path to a quick and decisive victory lies ahead (North Korea's capital city of Pyongyang falls on Oct. 19, 1950), he decides to take a pass, as MacArthur has surmised.

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