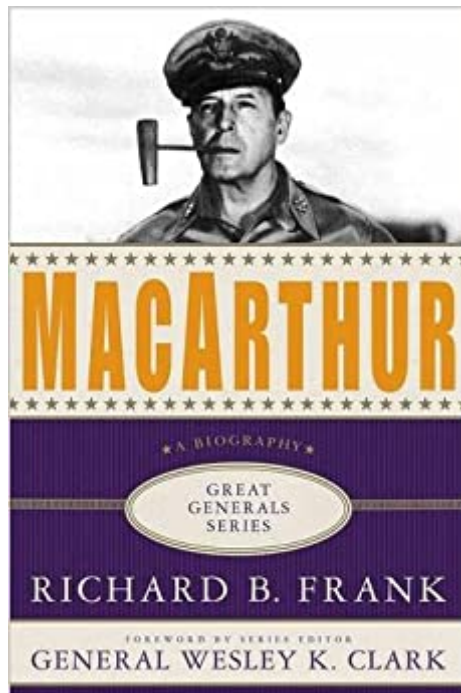


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MacArthur (Great Generals (Hardcover))



Synopsis

Douglas MacArthur is best remembered for his ability to adapt, a quality that catalyzed his greatest accomplishments. Adaptability has become an indispensable trait for military leadership in an era of technological leaps that guarantee the nature of war will radically change during the span of an ordinary career. One of the first proponents of a new dimension in warfare--the Air Force--MacArthur was also unmatched historically for his management of peace during the U.S. occupation of Japan. For generations to come, MacArthur's legacy will yield profitable--and entertaining--examples to Americans in and out of uniform.

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Customer Reviews

A classic example of good things in small packages, this addition to the Great Generals Series owes much to its author, an expert on the Pacific war and a particularly accomplished writer. Those attainments allow him to do a remarkable degree of justice to his subject, one of the most controversial leaders in American history. From early on, MacArthur, scion of a military family, exhibited great talents and a colossal ego that made it difficult for him to cooperate with either his fellow commanders or his civilian superiors, leading one of the latter, President Truman, to terminate his career during the Korean War. MacArthur's insensitivity to politics didn't, however, prevent him from practicing a high level of statesmanship as military governor of occupied Japan. Frank's portrait of him is that of a man clearly related to the little girl who had a little curl in the middle of her forehead. When he was good, he was indispensable; when he was bad, he made

colleagues and superiors think of firing squads. A good addition for any and all twentieth-century American history collections. Green, Roland

"A vivid, compelling portrait of our most enigmatic battlefield commander. Richard B. Frank strips away both myth and malarkey to reveal both Douglas MacArthur the general and Douglas MacArthur the man."--Rick Atkinson, Pulitzer prize-winning author of *An Army at Dawn: The War In North Africa, 1942-1943* "Richard B. Frank's incisive biography of General Douglas MacArthur offers not only a great read, but a timely and useful study both of the dilemmas of civil-military relations and the challenges facing American military leaders thrust onto a global stage." "The writing is always clear, the history always accurate, and the analysis consistently stimulating." "For all his faults, MacArthur was indisputably a great man among great contemporaries--this book will make the reader ponder the disappearance of such greatness among our nation's leaders, military or civilian."--Ralph Peters, author of *New Glory and Never Quit The Fight* "Douglas MacArthur was either the greatest American military commander of the 20th century--or a dangerous meglomaniac. In this shrewd, fair, but unblinking biography, MacArthur is both- at once-brilliant and deeply flawed and, in Frank's skillful telling, an endlessly fascinating character. Rich Frank has long been a premier historian of the Pacific War. Now he has shown that he is first rank biographer as well."--Evan Thomas, Newsweek editor-at-large and author of *Sea of Thunder* "A classic example of good things in small packages, this addition to the Great Generals Series owes much to its author, an expert on the Pacific War and a particularly accomplished writer. Those attainments allow him to do a remarkable degree of justice to his subject, one of the most controversial leaders in American history. From early on, MacArthur, scion of a military family, exhibited great talents and a colossal ego that made it difficult for him to cooperate with either his fellow commanders or his civilian superiors, leading one of the latter, President Truman, to terminate his career during the Korean War. MacArthur's insensitivity to politics didn't, however, prevent him from practicing a high level of statesmanship as military governor of occupied Japan. Frank's portrait of him is that of a man clearly related to the little girl who had a little curl in the middle of her forehead. When he was good, he was indispensable; when he was bad, he made colleagues and superiors think of firing squads. A good addition for any and all twentieth-century American history collections."--Booklist "Frank (Guardalcanal) presents the reader with a fair assessment of both the man and the soldier, covering the failures and triumphs in an assured and dispassionate tone."--David Lee Poremba, Haines City P.L., FL "His own unique take on this historic figure."--NewsMax "No general in American

uniform during World War II was more controversial or more idolized than Douglas MacArthur. It takes a rigidly objective historian and painstakingly careful research to produce a biography of him that is both balanced and accurate. Richard B. Frank has succeeded brilliantly."--Brian John Murphy, *America in WWII* "America is hard on its politicians and generals. Whereas writers and composers are remembered for their creative peaks, and their lesser works are forgiven, politicians are often remembered for their failures, generals for their blunders. Gen. Douglas MacArthur was long an exception to this rule, for he spent a lifetime burnishing his image and training a staff to do likewise. But history is catching up, and we now have a readable and objective biography by respected World War II historian Richard B. Frank, who is immune to the general's considerable charisma."--John M. Taylor, *The Washington Times* "A classic example of good things in small packages, this addition to the Great Generals Series owes much to its author, an expert on the Pacific War and a particularly accomplished writer. Those attainments allow him to do a remarkable degree of justice to his subject, one of the most controversial leaders in American history. A good addition for any and all twentieth-century American history collections." •Booklist on MacArthur

Richard Frank is one of the ablest historians writing on the Pacific War. His "Guadalcanal" is a classic military narrative that will serve as a kind of official history for decades. His book "Downfall" about the end of the Pacific War is another splendid effort that cannot be ignored if one wishes to understand the horrible events between Okinawa and war's end. I believe he is presently working on a larger scale work on WWII in Asia (including China) and I'll be one of the first to read it. The one thing that has marked Frank's major works is extremely thorough and extensive research. The MacArthur book is a real let down. It's part of the "Great Generals" series edited by Wesley Clark. This was not intended to be a definitive military biography of MacArthur. The sources show it too - a lot of secondary stuff and I would guess nothing original. (I apologize in advance if that's wrong.) Frank says that it's "OK to hate MacArthur, you just have to know why." It is not easy to tell what there is to hate by reading Frank's book. Frank is critical of the defense of the PI in 1941-42. I'd be careful there. There were a lot of cooks ruining that broth including Marshall and FDR who decided in a heartbeat (after the oil embargo was declared) that they had been wrong in refusing to arm the soon to be independent PI, and couldn't face the consequences of simply abandoning the American garrison there as was implicit in the last of the Orange Plans. I don't know why MacArthur or Marshall believed war was not likely before April 42, but the American defense plans were based on the assumptions. So when the war came, Mac had to do with what he had which was grossly

inadequate. (Might note he was let down by a still hard to explain failure of 23 modern US subs to do anything against Japanese merchant ships which arrived at exactly the place everyone on both sides expected.) The PI forces couldn't stand against the Japanese, but they were able to get to Bataan in a well guided retreat. Unfortunately for the US, the supplies intended to keep a military garrison in operation for six months were grossly inadequate to the task of supplying a group of civilians and PI soldiers four times that size. As it was, the allied garrison in the PI held out for nearly six months - exactly as foreseen in Orange. It was the decision to send MacArthur to Australia that gets the general in hot water with Frank. While there MacArthur bombarded the Pentagon with an endless string of messages giving advice on every subject concerning WWII (many of them not so unreasonable - others a little nutty) and irritated Marshall and infuriated Stimson. Why FDR didn't tell Stimson to shut MacArthur up is a toughie. Neither men liked MacArthur but seemed to think MacArthur's status as "hero of Bataan" made him beyond discipline. A dubious conclusion in my eyes that says nothing good about our top leaders. Frank doesn't nitpick every move made by MacArthur during the Kokoda-Buna campaign but misses something that should be fundamental starting point for understanding that campaign - the battle was run by the Aussies. Only one regiment plus of the 32d Division was under direct US command and its movements were to coordinate with the larger campaign run by the AIF. MacArthur always manipulated the press (nothing rare for a general) but when the smoke is cleared the Kokoda-Buna campaign was a huge allied victory that, given the extraordinary logistic difficulties faced, could not have been won quicker or with fewer losses. Frank gives MacArthur credit for the "island hopping" campaign that despite paltry forces led back to the road back to Leyte in October 44. As Frank notes it was these campaigns that won for MacArthur the admiration of Alan Brooke and Montgomery. Was the war in the PI needed? We'll never know, but the SWPAC advance caused a complete dislocation of Japan's strategic reserve when the tide turned - nearly a million IJA troops and thousands of aircraft were moved first to New Guinea and later to the PI. If the campaign had not taken place, is it unreasonable to think that the Japanese would have choked the Central Pacific bases with men and supplies while it was still possible to do so? Given the nature of the battles there, GIs and Marines were probably fortunate that there were about 10,000 men on Iwo instead of three times that. Ditto with Saipan and Okinawa. Oddly Frank doesn't clobber MacArthur in Korea where I think it probably should have been done. Despite the spectacular nature of Inchon, it's not at all clear that a reinforcement at Pusan would not have led to crushing breakout. If MacArthur wanted to continue to the Yalu - a no doubt blunder - he did so with the cheers and support of the Truman administration across the board. (I suppose it's possible that had MacArthur not reacted as quickly as he did in mid

1950 that the North Koreans would have taken all of Korea. Let's not forget that war in Korea proved to be a tremendous strategic victory for the US.) If you want to longer and more detailed trashings of MacArthur, they're out there. William Manchester wrote a adulatory biography that borders on silly. But if any reader wants to examine in detail the extraordinary life of Douglas MacArthur I strongly urge reading "Old Soldiers Never Die" a brilliant and insightful book by the splendid military and political historian Geoffrey Perret. And if you haven't read Frank at his best, I urge you to do so.

Very good. Thank you.

good

I expected a biography of MacArthur, not a detailed review of his WWII operation. Not to my liking.

Gave me a new perspective that got me past the gigantic ego of MacArthur.

Enjoyed it.

When there are multi-volume biographies running 800 to 900 pages each, what can be said about Douglas MacArthur in 198 pages? Read Richard Frank's excellent book and find out. He's crammed at least 12 pounds into a 10-pound bag, providing a taut, concise examination of one of the dominant military figures of the 20th century. Frank's forte' is objectivity: at the end of the book you don't know what he personally thinks of Douglas MacArthur--and that's the mark of an impartial historian. Some reviewers have complained that other Palgrave Great Generals bios address the subject's likely attitude toward current events, as does Frank. But those critics should "read the manual" and recognize that contemporary comparisons are part of the series format. Frank's incisive bio addresses MacArthur's origins (his father was a general with the Medal of Honor), his motivations, his strengths and failings. Arguably his greatest accomplishments were before and after WW II: his spectacular heroism and leadership in WW I, his intelligent if controversial handling of postwar Japan, and his exceptional fortitude in reversing the Korean debacle with the Inchon landings in 1950. Ironically, soon thereafter his talents failed him and he brought dismissal upon himself. Frank stresses a telling point: MacArthur's powerful aura and presence prevented nearly all his superiors from managing his colossal ego throughout his life. That trend apparently was not seen by anyone above him in the chain of command until the massive Chinese intervention in

Korea. That he continually bulldozed his way from one success to another, often "improving" the facts to suit his needs, says much about the nature of geopolitical gatekeeping. Ultimately, MacArthur was, as Frank demonstrates, straight out of a Greek tragedy: a magnificently flawed hero. Aeschylus and Sophocles would immediately understand Douglas MacArthur, and recognize the worth of this book.

In this fascinating biography, author and historian Richard B. Frank tells the story of General Douglas MacArthur, one of only nine American men to be promoted to the 5 star rank. Beginning with MacArthur's childhood in the closing days of the American West, he follows his career as he streaked across the American sky like a meteor. Overall, I found this to be an absolutely fascinating audiobook. The author does an excellent job of presenting the real Douglas MacArthur, showing him at his most brilliant, and at his worst falsifying reports, making tragic blunders, and so forth. And, Tom Weiner does a great job of reading the book, his voice sounding pleasant on the ear, making the 7 hours (on 6 CDs) go by quite pleasantly. Now, everyone seems to mention the book's attempt to give what would have been MacArthur's views on current events. Admittedly, this is a rather subjective exercise. But, that said, I think that the author did do a good job of suggesting what the general would have said and thought. Yep, I think that this is an excellent audio-biography of General MacArthur, one that should be purchased by every armchair student of World War 2.

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