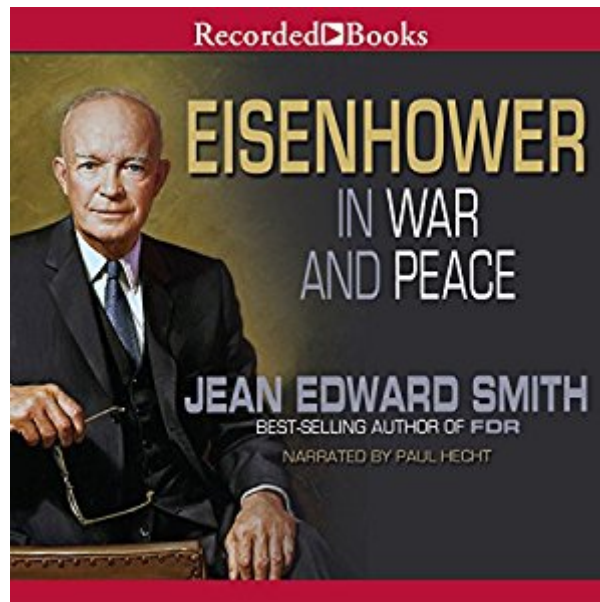




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Eisenhower In War And Peace



Synopsis

Author of the best-seller FDR, Jean Edward Smith is a master of the presidential biography. Setting his sights on Dwight D. Eisenhower, Smith delivers a rich account of Eisenhower's life using previously untapped primary sources. From the military service in WWII that launched his career to the shrewd political decisions that kept America out of wars with the Soviet Union and China, Smith reveals a man who never faltered in his dedication to serving America, whether in times of war or peace.

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Customer Reviews

I read this on the Kindle after trying a sample, and immediately ordered the hardcover upon completion just so I had it in my home for re-visiting certain passages. It's that good. Smith maintains an objective view but still infuses his carefully-researched biography with character and spirit. I took this as an opportunity to learn more about the WWI and WWII periods of American history, and found it informative when seen through the lens of Ike's life. Unlike some other biographies, I found this one to be well-paced and Smith does well to break up some of the more arduous parts with humorous situations and personal exchanges for color. Smith also manages to round out the image of an imperfect man from a deeply troubled time in the world, who was driven enough to become a wise leader the world sorely needed. I personally took away many lessons from this biography, and Smith's notations spurred me to buy Grant's memoirs for future reading. Where Smith is fair to Eisenhower, he is less charitable in his depiction of others. After reading this book, I shiver when I hear the name "De Gaulle" even in relation to the airport. Similarly,

he is candid in re-counting the inappropriate decision-making of General Patton, in contrast to the quiet excellence of General Montgomery. This is a long read, but perfect for anyone looking to learn more about the man and the world during his life. I was very happy to invest time in this one and had to give it five stars.

This is an excellent appraisal of Ike. The author rightfully criticizes Eisenhower's WWII mediocre generalship, including his failures in North Africa by General Fredendall who was totally wrong for command. He faults Eisenhower for many combat decisions and for often letting the enemy get away, unlike what Patton would have liked to have done. However, Eisenhower's wisdom, or political wisdom was particularly important in keeping General de Gaulle engaged and in charge of France as the allies moved forward. Ike realized how fragile France was before and during the war, and was concerned that France might come apart and the Communists take over France while the allies were concentrating on defeating Hitler's Germany. de Gaulle prevented this from happening. If only General Tommy Franks had had this kind of foresight, maybe Iraq would have been saved and ISIS would not be roaming the Mid east. Smith's discussion of Eisenhower's presidency shows just how smart, wise and capable Eisenhower was as President. He was likely a much better Commander-in-Chief, then General of the Army. Smith compares Ike to General Grant of the Civil War and comes to some interesting conclusions about the similarities of the two men and their concern for their country post war and how they desired to see the country heal. Only a wartime general intimately familiar with death would make this kind of conclusion. Smith does an excellent balancing Eisenhower's full life so that the reader can understand how Ike built each part of his life on his prior experiences. This is an excellent, thoughtful, even handed book.

An interesting book. I'm still trying to figure out the quality of her writing. Everything is very well footnoted, details of battles are sufficient for the non-military person. And the book gets into his personal life as well as the personal of the lives who served with him.

A good accounting of the successes and failures of one of America's more influential persons of recent history. It makes one pine for a time when the American political process functioned at a more reasonable level. How can current statesman face the problems of Eisenhower's life experiences?

I recently finished this great narrative, and would like to share my thoughts. First, the review by: By

Metallurgist TOP 500 REVIEWER on December 24, 2011 is accurate and well written - I can hardly improve on it. But the elements I might add are: I was 9 when Ike was re-elected in 1956 and I remember the night. I was 13 when Kennedy replaced him. So, my recollections were dim and reflected mostly the perceptions of the time. He played golf, recreated and seemed to float through the Presidency. But there were incongruities: He, a lifelong military man, warned us of the Military-Industrial power we have felt ever since. He moved when the economy slowed to assure the finest road system in any country ever. And then I saw a documentary where he worked behind the scenes to shore up our defenses and spying capacities in the Cold War. What I got from Smith was a real guy, and he pieced all the loose elements I had felt and heard into a vision of a real President. Eisenhower was not the war general many of us believed him to be. He was, as the reviewer said, the quintessential politician who winnowed us through the war with great skill. He picked generals far better than himself to carry on the war. He used excellent judgment with a conscience about the lives of the men. Guys like my bomber pilot dad rightfully revered him as their leader. And as President, what little Bush Jr and Obama might learn if they would merely read this book! Would Eisenhower have launched the Iraq war? I don't think so. Would he have expanded our efforts into Afghanistan over these past 5 years? I don't think so. As Smith points out, Eisenhower, probably more than any other President, made the transition into the nuclear age with the supreme discretion that kept us from crazy war. Judging from GWB's comments about the consensus for war at the outset of the Iraq war, would he have resisted ALL of the senior military and cabinet advisers in using nuclear options as Ike did? God help us, thanks that Ike was there and not GWB. So, I came away with a far greater appreciation for the man, for his unique and perhaps divinely guided place in this World during the awful war and as he gently and deftly glided through the Presidency. Ike made the presidency look effortless, but only because he had the managerial skill to keep himself largely out of lots of frays, great and small. In this time when we elect men, Democrat and Republican, so obviously unqualified for the office, I miss Ike. Read this well-written and non-judgmental story and you might agree..... And Ike earns a far better place in history for me than he did before. This is a great read and a giant piece about the greatness of America.

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