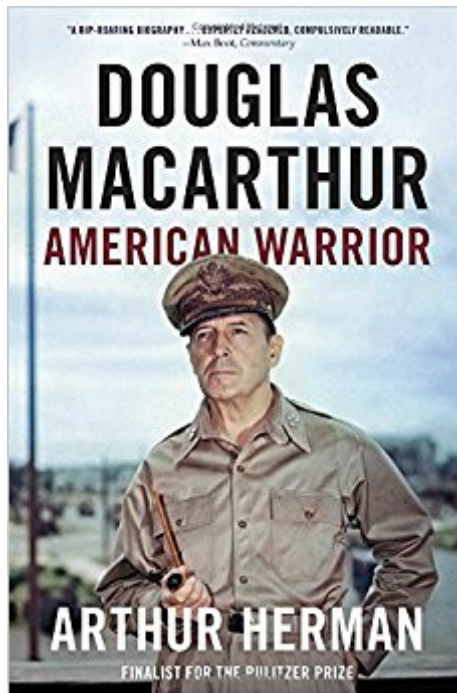




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# Douglas MacArthur: American Warrior



## 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. “MacArthur 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 "Unfailing 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. •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. •Commentary From the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Praise for Douglas MacArthur "A rip-roaring biography . . . an exciting account of a grand old soldier, who, contrary to his mock-modest protestations, never seems to fade away. . . . 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. •Max Boot, Commentary "Unfailing 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. •The New Criterion "Herman presents a superb reexamination of MacArthur and his role in American

history. **•Booklist (Starred Review)** “Arthur Herman peels back the layers of myth to reveal the marrow of this man’s career in his powerful new history, *Douglas MacArthur: American Warrior*. . . [This book] stands above two dozen previous biographies on MacArthur due to Herman’s well-researched, balanced evaluation. He has drawn upon vast sources, including Soviet and Chinese archives and even Jean MacArthur’s private oral history. . . . *American Warrior* is engaging throughout and significant in capturing the brilliance of a man whose vision helped define the United States in the twentieth century and beyond.”

**•The Dallas Morning News** “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** “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.”

**•Bookreporter** “Many books have been written about General MacArthur’s leadership and bravery, but this one has brought to the fore his seminal contributions to geopolitics: that he foresaw the growing importance of Asia to the United States and to a rapidly changing world. . . . A compelling new biography.”

**•Henry A. Kissinger** “With clarity of vision and honest conviction, Arthur Herman has painted an important and enduring portrait of an enigmatic and essential American life. Douglas MacArthur was, with the Roosevelts, Woodrow Wilson, and Harry Truman, one of the most globally influential figures of the nation’s rise to imperial status. Herman’s excellent book is readable, engaging, and timely.”

**•Jon Meacham**, winner of the Pulitzer Prize and author of *Destiny and Power* “Douglas MacArthur was brilliant and arrogant, captivating and infuriating. He smote America’s enemies and vexed America’s leaders. He is a wonderful subject for biography, and in Arthur Herman he has found a wonderful biographer: thorough, balanced, insightful, and engaging. This is the best life of MacArthur in a generation.”

**•H. W. Brands**, finalist for the Pulitzer Prize and author of *Reagan: The Life* “Arthur Herman has achieved two near-impossible coups with this well-researched, well-written, and groundbreaking book. He has managed to present Douglas MacArthur in a fully rounded, properly objective way that doesn’t fall into the hagiography or revisionism of so many previous biographies, and he also reestablishes MacArthur’s central place among the greats of the Allied high command, alongside Dwight Eisenhower, George C. Marshall, Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and the other giant figures of World War Two. This book is a towering achievement.”

**•Andrew Roberts**, author of *The Storm of War*

“A sympathetic yet fair portrayal of a majestic but forever controversial figure. It remains indisputable that Douglas MacArthur led one of the most interesting and consequential lives of the twentieth century, and this fine biography captures all its scope and significance.”—Robert L. O’Connell, author of *Fierce Patriot*  
From the Hardcover edition.

Arthur Herman is the bestselling author of *The Cave and the Light*, *Freedom’s Forge*, *How the Scots Invented the Modern World*, *The Idea of Decline in Western History*, *To Rule the Waves*, and *Gandhi & Churchill*, which was a 2009 finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. Dr. Herman taught the Western Heritage Program at the Smithsonian’s Campus on the Mall, and he has been a professor of history at Georgetown University, The Catholic University of America, George Mason University, and The University of the South at Sewanee.

Only soldiers never die...they just fade away said General Douglas MacArthur (1880-1964) in his farewell appearance before Congress. MacArthur had been fired by President Truman for his desire to cross the Yalu River and challenge China during the Korean War. MacArthur was born on an army base in Little Rock Arkansas. His father was the famed Arthur MacArthur who led his Wisconsin troops up Lookout Mountain during the Chattanooga Campaign shouting "On Wisconsin." Douglas and his older brother grew up in military forts in the West resembling those pictured in John Ford’ movies. He graduated first in his class at West Point in 1903 and was the most decorated soldier to serve in World War I in fierce fighting in France. He won countless medals and became the youngest brigadier general in the Army. MacArthur courageously defended the Philippines during the terrible fall of Manila. In a daring escape he made it to Australia. MacArthur led the army in the victorious battle against Japan and was the presiding officer who saw the Japanese surrender on the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay in 1945. He had earlier served as Army Chief of Staff and in the early 1920’s was the reforming Superintendent of West Point. His landing in Inchon during the Korean War was a success. MacArthur was a man of contradictions. He was vain and egotistical but a great fighting and commanding general. He was a mama’s boy but was also a man’s man. He had mistresses and his first wife Louise Brooks was a shallow flapper. His second marriage to the much younger Jean Faircloth was loving and the couple produced his son Arthur. Arthur Herman writes like a novelist! His book bristles with insights about Mac. This is one of the best military biographies I have read in a long time. I recommend it highly!

Very thoroughly researched and well written. I was eleven years old when President Truman removed MacArthur and while I was too young to understand the politics of the decision, I soon came to believe Truman made the correct decision; and I have held and re-enforced that view since then. Mac Arthur was a great general who served this nation well, but his overweening pride seems to have led him to believe he alone could and should determine the destiny of this nation. For me, the most important information in this book was to realize the importance of MacArthur and his father in pointing the way to the significance East Asia would play in America's future. Without them doing so, I would hate to think where we might be today in our East Asian policies. SCSmithscs1939@gmail.com

To be brief: MacArthur's life is well known, the numerous accomplishments and controversies fully accounted for, pro or con. So where does this new biography fall? It is a comprehensive, well-written and basically sympathetic study of the general, though the author never glosses over MacArthur's shortcomings. And there were plenty. Herman seems to be willing to give the general the benefit of the doubt in many instances (his defense of the Philippines, for example), and without failing to note criticisms, he offers explanations. You may draw your own judgments, of course, but this soundly researched biography merits a lot of praise, not least for its readability.

An extremely detailed chronicle of a great man. I knew little about Mac before this book. But I found that he is one of the most important people this nation has ever produced. Without him, we would be living, if at all, in a very dark and tyrannical world. This is a must read for every serious and responsible student of history. In my opinion, a very small portion of our population can even spell his name. Read the Book and see if you agree.

Arthur Herman's new biography of General MacArthur is a long-overdue modern examination of the General's life and deeds. Herman makes a conscious and successful effort to chart a middle ground between the almost-worshipful tone of some works on MacArthur and the often-overheated criticism of later years. Instead, he presents a straightforward and honest picture of a man whose fighting career spanned the first half of the 20th Century and who managed to be at the center of the storm through some of the most dramatic moments in American history.

MacArthur was the last of a long gone breed. A giant among giants. Yet his life was even more interesting than expected and Arthur Herman tells that story very well.

I was excited to read this book about Douglas MacArthur, one of America's most famous generals. I had read Manchester's book, *American Caesar* as well. I loved that this book benefits from a detached perspective (Manchester had served under MacArthur as a grunt Marine during WWII) and that the book does not dwell on MacArthur's childhood and drag us through in a slog through early childhood adventures. This isn't to say the reader doesn't learn of MacArthur's father or his childhood, but it isn't a dominant feature of the first part of the book. As to the writing, it grabbed me and moves on effectively. MacArthur had such a lengthy career and was around for so much history the book is massive. Yet the book, and in effect MacArthur's life was just so compelling. And yet, Herman gives us warts and all of this vainglorious man. I found the chapters on Japanese occupation and the Korean War to be more interesting in a certain way because I didn't know much of that history. Very good book, not a slog and worth the effort.

An enjoyable and even-handed treatment of an amazing life! Well-researched and documented, this account of Douglas MacArthur's life strikes a refreshing balance between the positive and negative aspects of his career. Hindsight is, indeed, 20-20, but I believe America is in need of more men just like him.

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