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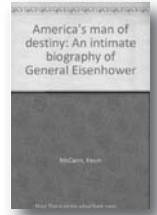


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America's man of destiny: an intimate biography of General Eisenhower

by Kevin McCann

William Heinemann: Melbourne; 1952; 201 pp.; Ursula Davidson Library call number 501.2/19296.



America's Man of Destiny is a short biography of Eisenhower prior to his campaign and election to the United States presidency.

When America joined World War II in 1941, "Eisenhower's greatest ambition was to command a single American Division". This book succinctly explains how he developed beyond his ambition to become the Supreme Allied Commander Europe.

Eisenhower grew up in Kansas in a rather strict pacifist family from which he gradually moved on, especially after gaining an appointment to West Point, the United States military academy. This background, however, ensured that men like my father from America's heartland trusted him to lead them wisely as they served in World War II.

Eisenhower's early career was similar to that of most of his peers. By March 1941, he held the temporary rank of colonel only one grade higher than the rank he held during World War I. Rather than play politics, he attended to the job at hand. When he was assigned to the War Plans Department, he did send a well-worded letter stating that he did not want to be considered *unfit* (in italics!) for command!

He was eventually posted to be chief-of-staff, Third Army, in Texas, to prepare war games which were highly successful. But instead of a command, he was promoted temporarily to brigadier general and was ordered to Washington DC. General George Marshall outlined the current situation in the Pacific and asked Eisenhower what he should do. Eisenhower asked for and was given a few hours to provide a written answer. In March 1942, he was promoted to major general (temporary). By February 1943, Ike was head of the War Planning Department and had written the "Directive for the Commanding General, European Theatre of Operations". When he asked General Marshall to read it in detail, General Marshall said "I certainly do want to read it. You may be the man who executes it. If that's the case, when can you leave?"

The book covers Eisenhower's subsequent 'crusade' in Europe; and his later terms as United States chief-of-staff, president of Columbia University, and commander of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. It concludes with his decision to enter the 1952 United States presidential campaign. In all, there emerges well-written and succinct portrait of the man, the soldier and his achievements.

Priscilla Leece