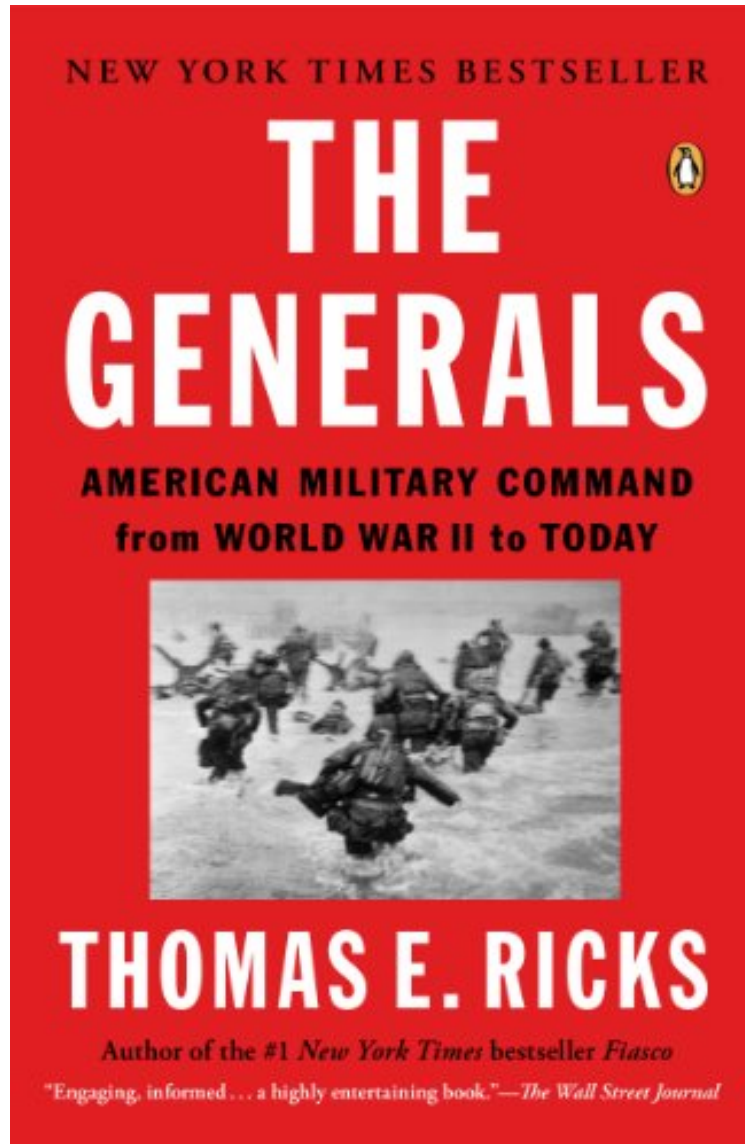


[Ebook free] The Generals: American Military Command from World War II to Today

# The Generals: American Military Command from World War II to Today

Von Thomas E. Ricks

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Von Thomas E. Ricks : The Generals: American Military Command from World War II to Today before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Generals: American Military Command from World War II to Today:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Eine

gelungene Darstellung in Englisch Von scipio42 With his book *The Generals* long time military correspondent Thomas E. Ricks presents an interesting and scaring perspective on US Army military leadership since the Second World War. Ricks starts out to present the ruthless personnel selection of Army Chief of Staff General George Marshall as the baseline for his argument. Under conditions of war Marshall wanted flag officers who were professional, cooperative but not overly aggressive or individually outstanding officers. By promoting successful officers rapidly and firing incompetent officers from their positions but often with the chance to later regain important leadership positions Marshall supposedly tried to enhance competence, weed out incompetence but also recognized flag officers might be uniquely suited for one position while utter failures in others. The argument Ricks presents is, Marshall used the relief from a position as a means to ensure accountability and enhancement of competence within the organization, while after Marshall the Army supposedly viewed relief as a sign the organization failed by promoting a flag officer to a position he should not have held. To support this argument Ricks reviews important Army flag officers during and since the Second World War in short descriptions and tries to extrapolate and explain the changes in organizational culture the Army underwent during the time. This makes an interesting if scaring read as Ricks sketches the demise of generalship after the Second World War during the Korean and Vietnam Wars and then the rebuilding of the Army as a tactical fighting force with its triumph during the Second Gulf War, its loss of strategic vision after the Cold War and its tactical triumphs but strategic failures in Iraq and Afghanistan. Ending with a recommendation how to restore good military leadership with hindsight on the historical record, Ricks makes a good but somewhat incomplete argument, the reader be it layman or professional can at least partially agree to. Although the book is well reasoned and draws on a number of internal Army sources some critique is still in order. The biographical sketches for one are very short and although the scope of the book could not have supported deeper dwelling into individuals, generals like Bradley, MacArthur, Westmoreland, Powell or Petraeus can not easily be analysed in a few pages. Secondly the selection of individuals to describe appears incomplete. While the author dwells on generalship during the Second World War rather leisurely he omits key individuals of recent times like General Wesley Clark and General Stanley McChrystal. The author thus forfeits the chance to look how the stabilization operations of the 1990s and the increasing importance of Special Operations assignments impacted on the thinking of Army flag officers. Finally this book is not a historical description of Army leadership as Ricks only supports his argument with selected biographies in an unsystematic and one-sided way. The reader nearly gets the impression most Army generals did not deserve their positions, as Ricks does not bother to also depict many good generals by systematically analysing large numbers of representative biographies to support his thesis, as a historian probably had done. While his argumentation thus is open to criticism and much more could have been included in this volume, Ricks has to be credited with presenting an important perspective on the Army as an organization and the wars it has been involved in. While it has long been known to not only study tactics but also logistics, Ricks reminds us of the importance of organizational culture and personnel politics. Therefore this book is interesting to military historians and interested civilians alike and should be recommended reading for all staff officers, if only to discuss the relevance of the thesis. 0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Auch für Nicht-Militaristen Von Alexander Josef Die Geschichte zur amerikanischen Militärführung vom 2. Weltkrieg bis zu aktuellen Konflikten ist interessant geschrieben und durchaus auch lesenswert für Leute die - wie ich - kein besonderes Interesse an Militär oder militärischen Konflikten haben. In vielen Mini-Biografien lernt man die verschiedenen Akteure der jeweiligen Zeit kennen. Spannend ist vor allem die Beschreibung von Georg Marshalls Wirken im 2. Weltkrieg sowie der verheerenden Zustände im Vietnamkrieg, die vor allem auf die Führungsschwäche von General-Offizieren zurückzuführen sind. Ein gutes und relativ leicht lesbares Geschichtsbuch!

Kurzbeschreibung From the #1 bestselling author of *Fiasco* and *The Gamble*, an epic history of the decline of American military leadership from World War II to Iraq History has been kind to the American generals of World War II Marshall, Eisenhower, Patton, and Bradley and less kind to the generals of the wars that followed. In *The Generals*, Thomas E. Ricks sets out to explain why that is. In part it is the story of a widening gulf between performance and accountability. During the Second World War, scores of American generals were relieved of command simply for not being good enough. Today, as one American colonel said bitterly during the Iraq War, As matters stand now, a private who loses a rifle suffers far greater consequences than a general who loses a war. In *The Generals* we meet great leaders and suspect ones, generals who rose to the occasion and those who failed themselves and their soldiers. Marshall and Eisenhower cast long shadows over this story, as does the less familiar Marine General O. P. Smith, whose fighting retreat from the Chinese onslaught into Korea in the winter of 1950 snatched a kind of victory from the jaws of annihilation. But Korea also showed the first signs of an army leadership culture that neither punished mediocrity nor particularly rewarded daring. In the Vietnam War, the problem grew worse until, finally, American military leadership bottomed out. The My Lai massacre, Ricks shows us, is the emblematic event of this dark chapter of our history. In the wake of Vietnam a battle for the soul of the U.S. Army was waged with impressive success. It became a transformed institution, reinvigorated from the bottom up. But if the body was highly toned, its head still

suffered from familiar problems, resulting in tactically savvy but strategically obtuse leadership that would win battles but end wars badly from the first Iraq War of 1990 through to the present. Ricks has made a close study of America's military leaders for three decades, and in his hands this story resounds with larger meaning: about the transmission of values, about strategic thinking, and about the difference between an organization that learns and one that fails.

Pressestimmen "Engaging, informed . . . a highly entertaining book." *The Wall Street Journal* "A masterful and critical study of the art of generalship from World War II through Iraq and Afghanistan by one of the smartest military experts out there." *The New York Times* "[An important and timely book . . . trenchant, straightforward." *The Washington Post* "Impressive . . . Stark, fact-based, and strongly argued." *Chicago Tribune* "Ricks shines, blending an impressive level of research with expert storytelling." *The Weekly Standard* "[A] savvy study of leadership. Combining lucid historical analysis, acid-etched portraits of generals from 'troublesome blowhard' Douglas MacArthur to 'two-time loser' Tommy Franks, and shrewd postmortems of military failures and pointless slaughters such as My Lai, the author demonstrates how everything from strategic doctrine to personnel policies create a mediocre, rigid, morally derelict army leadership... Ricks presents an incisive, hard-hitting corrective to unthinking veneration of American military prowess." *Publisher's Weekly* (Starred) "Informed readers, especially military buffs, will appreciate this provocative, blistering critique of a system where accountability appears to have gone missing - like the author's 2006 bestseller, *Fiasco*, this book is bound to cause heartburn in the Pentagon." Kirkus "Entertaining, provocative and important." *The Wilson Quarterly* This is a brilliant book deeply researched, very well-written and outspoken. Ricks pulls no punches in naming names as he cites serious failures of leadership, even as we were winning World War II, and failures that led to serious problems in later wars. And he calls for rethinking the concept of generalship in the Army of the future.

William J. Perry, 19th U.S. Secretary of Defense Thomas E. Ricks has written a definitive and comprehensive story of American generalship from the battlefields of World War II to the recent war in Iraq. *The Generals* candidly reveals their triumphs and failures, and offers a prognosis of what can be done to ensure success by our future leaders in the volatile world of the twenty-first century.

Carlo D'Este, author of *Patton: A Genius for War* Tom Ricks has written another provocative and superbly researched book that addresses a critical issue, generalship. After each period of conflict in our history, the quality and performance of our senior military leaders comes under serious scrutiny. *The Generals* will be a definitive and controversial work that will spark the debate, once again, regarding how we make and choose our top military leaders.

Anthony C. Zinni, General USMC (Ret.) *The Generals* is insightful, well written and thought-provoking. Using General George C. Marshall as the gold standard, it is replete with examples of good and bad generalship in the postwar years. Too often a bureaucratic culture in those years failed to connect performance with consequences. This gave rise to many mediocre and poor senior leaders. Seldom have any of them ever been held accountable for their failures. This book justifiably calls for a return to the strict, demanding and successful Marshall prescription for generalship. It is a reminder that the lives of soldiers are more important than the careers of officers and that winning wars is more important than either.

Bernard E. Trainor, Lt. Gen. USMC (Ret.); author of *The Generals War* *The Generals* rips up the definition of professionalism in which the US Army has clothed itself. Tom Ricks shows that it has lost the habit of sacking those who cannot meet the challenge of war, leaving it to Presidents to do so. His devastating analysis explains much that is wrong in US civil-military relations. America's allies, who have looked to emulate too slavishly the world's pre-eminent military power, should also take heed.

Hew Strachan, Chichele Professor of the History of War, University of Oxford *Kurzbeschreibung* From the #1 bestselling author of *Fiasco* and *The Gamble*, an epic history of the decline of American military leadership from World War II to Iraq. History has been kind to the American generals of World War II: Marshall, Eisenhower, Patton, and Bradley and less kind to the generals of the wars that followed. In *The Generals*, Thomas E. Ricks sets out to explain why that is. In part it is the story of a widening gulf between performance and accountability. During the Second World War, scores of American generals were relieved of command simply for not being good enough. Today, as one American colonel said bitterly during the Iraq War, "As matters stand now, a private who loses a rifle suffers far greater consequences than a general who loses a war." In *The Generals* we meet great leaders and suspect ones, generals who rose to the occasion and those who failed themselves and their soldiers. Marshall and Eisenhower cast long shadows over this story, as does the less familiar Marine General O. P. Smith, whose fighting retreat from the Chinese onslaught into Korea in the winter of 1950 snatched a kind of victory from the jaws of annihilation. But Korea also showed the first signs of an army leadership culture that neither punished mediocrity nor particularly rewarded daring. In the Vietnam War, the problem grew worse until, finally, American military leadership bottomed out. The My Lai massacre, Ricks shows us, is the emblematic event of this dark chapter of our history. In the wake of Vietnam a battle for the soul of the U.S. Army was waged with impressive success. It became a transformed institution, reinvigorated from the bottom up. But if the body was highly toned, its head still suffered from familiar problems, resulting in tactically savvy but strategically obtuse leadership that would win battles but end wars badly from the first Iraq War of 1990 through to the present. Ricks has made a close study of America's military leaders for three decades, and in his hands this story resounds with larger meaning: about the transmission of values, about strategic thinking, and about the difference between an organization that learns and one that fails.