

Making Patton: A Classic War Film's Journey to the Silver Screen. By Nicholas Evan Sarantakes. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2012. ISBN 978-0-7006-1862-0. List of acronyms. Photos. Note on sources. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xiii, 258. \$34.95.

In a conversation with this reviewer, a student once remarked that his “favorite war” was World War II and his “favorite general” was Patton. It was a movie, as much as Patton’s own accomplishments, Nicholas Sarantakes argues, that created this popular, heroic image of the general. Who, for example, having viewed the film can forget the classic opening scene in which George C. Scott as George S. Patton framed by a gigantic American flag gives the now classic “All Real Americans Love the Sting of Battle” speech? Before *Patton* there were sixteen books about the general; there are now at least sixty-eight (p. 178). Since this motion picture has become one of the essential war films, the author’s deep research and imaginative approach to the relationship between military biography, popular culture, and myth making was well worth the effort.

Sarantakes divides the book into clearly defined topics: the general (Patton); the producer (Frank McCarthy); the screenwriters (Francis Ford Coppola and Edmund H. North); the director (Franklin J. Schaffner); the actor (George C. Scott); and the field marshal (Sir Bernard Law Montgomery). In addition, the author provides a history of the film’s production, its reception by the critics and theater audiences, and a discussion of its legacy and impact.

The author relied heavily on the papers of Frank McCarthy – “the bedrock of this study” – housed in the George C. Marshall Research Library at the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) (p. 201). McCarthy had a remarkable career. A VMI graduate, he became, by the nature of his duties as secretary of the general staff during the Second World War, “chief of staff” to George C. Marshall. He was also the officer who planned Franklin Roosevelt’s funeral. At age thirty-nine, he became the assistant secretary of state under James Byrnes, but resigned almost immediately due to emotional stress and exhaustion. Because of connections stemming from the *Why We Fight* wartime propaganda film series, McCarthy found a job after the war with movie mogul Darryl Zanuck. In fact, it was McCarthy’s “vision [that] became the dominant force in the making of *Patton*” (p. 31).

In assessing the influence of *Patton* on American popular culture, consider this sample of the author’s eclectic sources, reflecting the old and new media communities: websites (the ESPN sports channel, Wikipedia, the Muppets Wiki, *3rd Rock from the Sun*, the SyFy Channel, YouTube), television DVDs (*Mystery Science Theater, Seinfeld, The Simpsons*), and broadcast television (*Saturday Night Live, The Tonight Show*).

Also, consider what the author has to say, for instance, about a kind of urban legend regarding what many believe to be Richard Nixon’s favorite movie. According to the story, the president was so impressed with the image of the aggressive commander projected in *Patton* that he became obsessed and had it screened repeatedly. Thus inspired, he launched an invasion of Cambodia. In truth, Nixon

viewed the film three times, but he also saw *Around the World in Eighty Days* three times as well: "Nixon was fascinated with Patton, not *Patton*" (p. 131). Nevertheless, Chou En-lai, the Chinese foreign minister at the time, watched it six times, trying, he reported, to "understand Nixon" (p. 130). And this: the memorable opening scene of *Patton* inspired a certain Captain Oliver North, dressed in full formal regalia, including a cape, white gloves, and medals across his chest, to imitate the Patton speech at a marine recruitment event at Annapolis in 1972. With only the stage lit, "the music from *Patton* filled the auditorium. The curtain pulled away to reveal a solitary marine officer at attention in front of a huge American flag. The audience erupted in applause" (p. 177). There is much to like in this lively, informative book.

Frank J. Wetta

Kean University
Toms River, New Jersey

Niemandsland: A History of Unoccupied Germany 1944-1945. By Gareth Pritchard. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. ISBN 978-1-107-01350-6. Maps. Tables. Notes concerning references to East German archives. List of abbreviations. Dramatis personae. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xii, 250. \$99.00.

In the last days of World War II divergent Soviet and American operational goals, as well as fears of their forces blundering into each other, led to a little known curiosity: a small western portion of the Erzgebirge, on the border between Germany and Czechoslovakia, remained unoccupied by either victorious power. Moreover, this anomaly lasted for two months, so that local German officials in this no-man's-land, swollen by refugees, Wehrmacht personnel, forced laborers, and prisoners of war to 500,000 people, were forced by necessity to take control of their own affairs. In practice, this meant that, with no help from outside, they had to overcome a disastrous food situation, restore public order, find accommodation for the many non-native inhabitants, begin the repatriation process, maintain economic production, and, not least, initiate the process of denazification. Since this self-liberation was promoted by spontaneously organized anti-fascist committees operating free of outside influences, Pritchard aims to treat Niemandsland as a sort of laboratory to test various historians' assertions that these "antifas" could have formed the basis of a democratic, socialist, "third way" between Stalinist oppression and American capitalism.

Although farming, forestry, and tourism were important to the western Erzgebirge, it was also an area where mining and intensive, if small scale, industry played a vital economic role. Thus, although the largest city numbered barely over twenty thousand people, it had a long tradition of labor activism. Before the Nazi takeover both the Socialists (SPD) and Communists (KPD) enjoyed wide support among the working class population. The upheavals of the 1920s and the Great Depression, though, also occasioned considerable support for the burgeoning Nazi Party