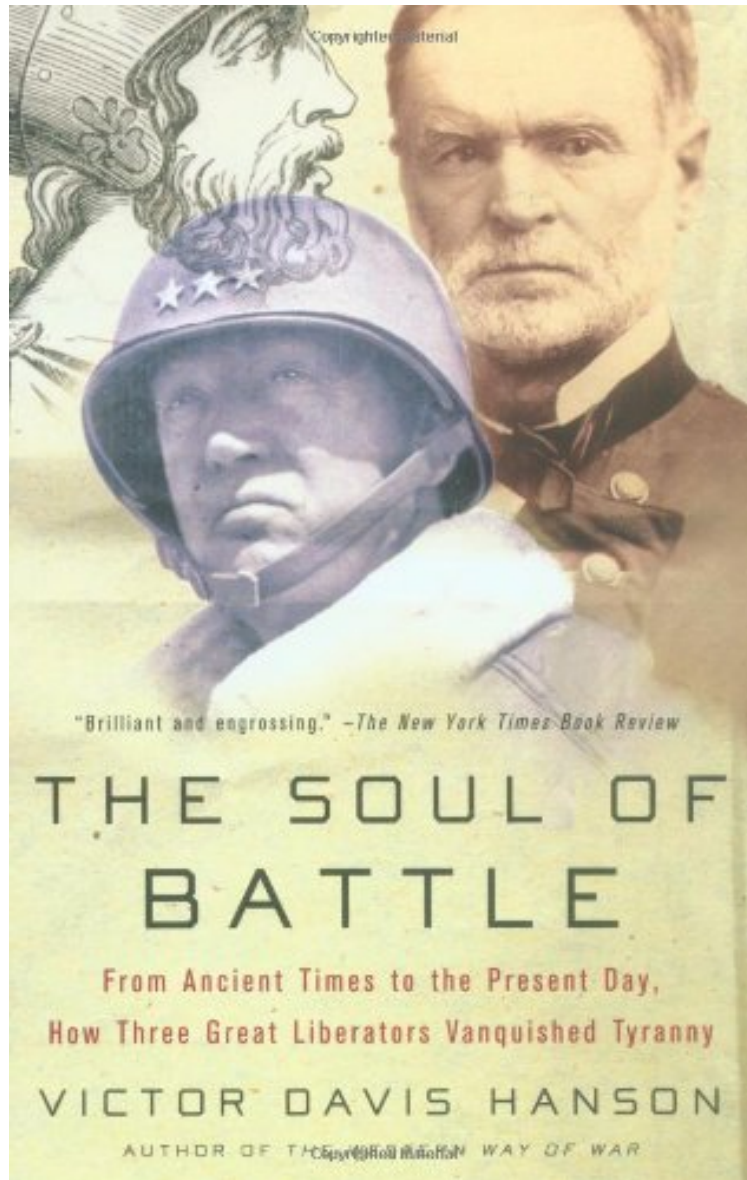


[Download] The Soul of Battle: From Ancient Times to the Present Day, How Three Great Liberators Vanquished Tyranny

The Soul of Battle: From Ancient Times to the Present Day, How Three Great Liberators Vanquished Tyranny

Victor Davis Hanson

ePub | *DOC | audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#71123 in Books Victor Hanson 2001-04-17 2001-04-17 Original language: English PDF # 1 7.98 x 1.01 x 5.181, .89 #File Name: 0385720599496 pages The Soul of Battle From Ancient Times to the Present Day How Three Great Liberators Vanquished Tyranny | File size: 50.Mb

Victor Davis Hanson : The Soul of Battle: From Ancient Times to the Present Day, How Three Great Liberators Vanquished Tyranny before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time,

and all praised *The Soul of Battle: From Ancient Times to the Present Day, How Three Great Liberators Vanquished Tyranny*:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A mind-opening book
By Stephen Chakwin
This is the kind of book that throws off ideas like sparks from a sparkler. On its surface, it is a sober, if not solemn, examination of how three great generals (Epaminondas, a Theban; Sherman, a Union general; and Patton, in Europe in World War II) commanding forces made up of free men from democratic societies were able to achieve great results against adversaries who were supposedly very powerful, but who were representatives of slave societies and whose power turned out to be less than expected. Hanson argues that the moral power of an army that comes to realize that it is fighting on the side of good against true evil is beyond what could be expected from the sheer numbers. Also, that the forces of evil -- the parasite warriors of Sparta, the oligarchs of the Confederacy who fed the ordinary people into the furnace of battle while protecting themselves and their goods, the madmen of Nazi Germany -- often turn out to be less formidable than one would expect, perhaps because they realize on some level their own moral inferiority or that there is something special about the forces confronting them. Hanson is writing as a military historian (he is a classics professor in a local college in California), but he is not really very interested in the nitty-gritty of exactly how phalanxes worked or what Patton had to do to flummox the Germans. Also, he is a little too reliant on dubious sources such as Goldhagen's polemical indictment of all of the German populace. Yet, he is bright, articulate, and on to something that seems to have gotten past the military technologists: there is something larger than sheer skill and numbers that can sometimes make a difference in how humans on both sides of a battle or a war respond to what they're doing and an army that understands that it is fighting for higher human values against a dehumanizing enemy, like the Spartans, the Confederate slaveholders or the Nazis can do wonders. Also, another point often overlooked in our late 20th century world view, is that leaders who can focus and direct this moral energy are both rare and terribly important. This is a book that should be part of every high school history curriculum and that should be read by every thinking adult. The moral dimension of war (and, by extension, of all that we do in the world) is often either overlooked or handed over to zealots or pious frauds. Hanson is a clear-eyed and down to earth thinker and writer. There are some things he just doesn't get, such as why Alexander really was Great and some basics of proofreading, but this is a fine book that should turn into a historical (dare I say philosophical?) classic. If you want to learn from history and/or are a student of human behavior (are these different?) this book is one that you must read.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This was a great comparison/contrast of three great generals
By Beez
This was a great comparison/contrast of three great generals, spanning the centuries. It also does a great job explaining how to motivate those around you, elevating the 'moral' back to a high ground. Very insightful, thought-provoking, and well-worth the read.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Thought-provoking but a tad repetitious
By physics student
This is an interesting and thought-provoking book. It brings to light little-known facts about three important warriors, and is probably the most coherent account of William Sherman that I have read, more insightful even than the excellent biography of Sherman, "A Soldier's Passion for Order". There is perhaps a willingness to push opinions to extremes - it seems unlikely to me that Alexander's campaigns, or those of Napoleon or even of Julius Caesar were entirely expressions of their commanders' egotism without any moral component, for instance. Hanson's views of Spartan society and of antebellum Southern society are dark indeed, but I think that he supports them well enough. The evil of Nazi government needs no elaboration. Hanson, as one might expect, writes well, and yet ... I wouldn't say that he is exactly repetitious, but he will discuss a subject, go off on another, and then circle back to the first, adding new information and insight. It is an imperfect style, but it does get across a complex of information in a way that a more linear approach might not.

Victor David Hanson, author of the highly regarded classic *The Western Way of War*, presents an audacious and controversial theory of what contributes to the success of military campaigns. Examining in riveting detail the campaigns of three brilliant generals who led largely untrained forces to victory over tyrannical enemies, Hanson shows how the moral confidence with which these generals imbued their troops may have been as significant as any military strategy they utilized. Theban general Epaminondas marched an army of farmers two hundred miles to defeat their Spartan overlords and forever change the complexion of Ancient Greece. William Tecumseh Sherman led his motley army across the South, ravaging the landscape and demoralizing the citizens in the defense of right. And George S. Patton commanded the recently formed Third Army against the German forces in the West, nearly completing the task before his superiors called a halt. Intelligent and dramatic, *The Soul of Battle* is narrative history at it's best and a work of great moral conviction.

.com On first glance, *The Soul of Battle* appears to be three different books: biographies of two well-known generals-- Sherman and Patton--and one who is virtually unknown today, the ancient Greek leader Epaminondas. Yet Victor Davis Hanson, a classics professor and author of *The Western Way of War*, makes a compelling connection between these three men. They were "eccentrics, considered unbalanced or worse by their own superiors" who led democratic

armies on missions of freedom. Epaminondas crushed Sparta's military dominance of Greece in a single winter, Sherman delivered a deathblow to the slaveholding South in the U.S. Civil War, and Patton was the general most feared by his Nazi enemies in the Second World War. Hanson disputes the conventional notion that soldiers fight only for their buddies, rather than abstract ideals. He writes: "Theban hoplites, Union troops, and American GIs were ideological armies foremost, composed of citizen-soldiers who burst into their enemies' heartland because they believed it was a just and very necessary thing to do. The commanders who led them encouraged that ethical zeal, made them believe there was a real moral difference" between what they and their opponents stood for. Epaminondas, Sherman, and Patton each became extremely controversial for his success, but Hanson argues persuasively that their efforts demonstrate "that on rare occasions throughout the ages there can be a soul, not merely a spirit, in the way men battle." With this idiosyncratic approach, Hanson makes a unique contribution to our understanding of not only these three men and their troops, but also the role of the military in a democratic society. --John J. Miller

From Publishers Weekly
Hanson, a scholar of classics as well as of military history (*The Western Way of War*), depicts three great armies under three great captains: Epaminondas of Thebes, William T. Sherman and George S. Patton. Their enemies—respectively, Sparta, the Confederacy, the Nazis—had been considered unstoppable. Yet they were defeated not by professional soldiers but by citizen-soldiers turned quickly into ruthlessly efficient fighting forces. It is no contradiction, Hanson argues, that democracies can produce such fierce killers. On the contrary, democracies, he writes, are uniquely suited to quickly mustering forces, imbuing them with "near-messianic zeal... to exterminate what they understand as evil, have them follow to their deaths the most ruthless of men, and then melt anonymously back into the culture that produced them." To accomplish this, he says, a democracy requires both a clear cause and a leader of genius. Hanson presents his three generals as examples of such leaders. Each man led forces seeking to liberate others, whether serfs in Sparta or slaves in the American South or Europeans tyrannized by Hitler. Hanson's thesis, however, is not self-evident: it is still a matter of debate, for example, whether Epaminondas fought to liberate Sparta's serfs or, less idealistically, to strike a decisive blow against Thebes's mortal enemy; similarly, the Union did not fight the Confederacy solely or even mainly to liberate the slaves (and the Confederacy, too, was made of citizen-soldiers who had, if anything, more devotion to their cause than most Union fighters). Nevertheless, Hanson delivers an eloquent reminder that democracies under great captains, facing enemies challenging the essence of their cultures, can make war at levels beyond the worst nightmares of their warrior opponents. (Oct.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal
A simple recipe: take three unorthodox, unpredictable, intellectual military leaders; mix them up with an army of free men; and give them a democratic mission. You have created what Hanson (*The Western Way of War and Fields Without Dreams*) calls *The Soul of Battle*, "a rare thing that arises only when free men march unabashedly toward the heartland of their enemy in hopes of saving the doomed." Hanson describes the military careers of Epaminondas, a Thespian philosopher-general who organized an army of free men and destroyed forever the despotic state of Sparta; Gen. William Sherman, who organized Midwestern farmers and marched through Georgia, destroying cities and plantations while freeing slaves; and Gen. George Patton, whose Third Army rapidly thrust through France and Germany to the Czech border. This is a great book. Hanson has a gift for grasping the personality traits and failings that made these three military leaders so unique. He gives the finest account of the exploits of the little-known Epaminondas this reviewer has seen in English and comes closer to grasping the essence of that complex character Patton than his biographers. The reader may wish to consult Alexander Bevins's *How Great Generals Win* to see how these three leaders utilized many of the same approaches. For all public and military collections. ARichard S. Nowicki, Emerson Vocational H.S., Buffalo, NY Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.