

The More Things Change....

Description

It was a quiet day Sunday, so I reached for the remote and scanned the guide list of shows playing. "[Patton](#)" was on and had been playing for about an hour....I clicked to the channel and settled back on the couch.

The scene that was playing, when I cut in, was Patton giving a speech to a French audience on Corsica, talking about how he would soon be at work, liberating the homeland of Lafayette. Lots of cheers from the crowd. As he completed the speech, his aide told him the press wanted a few minutes with him.

If this "docudrama" has anything to do with reality, then I'm projecting that George S. Patton suffered as our current day commanders do, but with out instantaneous news cycles:

One ~~an editorialist disguised as a reporter~~ asked him about his future assignments: No comment. Some other questions, then Patton said: "Off the record, they are sending me to Malta." To that, the ~~editorialist disguised as a reporter~~ asked: "will you be slapping any soldiers in Malta?" as Patton was walking away. Patton stopped, but did not turn around. After a moment, he then stepped off through garden and kept walking away. Sound familiar?

A few scenes later, a German staff officer delivers a message to a general. The General expresses dismay (this part was subtitled) that Patton was now moving to the central Mediterrean and starts barking orders to get more troops moved to Greece and Crete, and to let the Italians defend their own country. They had to get ready for the offensive Patton would surely be heading up.

So, once again, if the story presented has a degree of truth, then the media was leaking critical information to the enemy back in the early 40s.

There were other scenes where the press dogged the great military mind and General Bradley had to corral him several times, to prevent the Allies and later the US from being embarassed.

So what has really changed, except the speed of the news cycle?

Just thinking....

Oh, and speaking of the accuracy of the movie, I found [this site that discusses the very issue](#):

Despite the way the movie makes it seem, Patton did not sack men without a momentâ€™s regard to them, he did not curse like a sailor, he did not believe in "victory at all costs" in spite of casualty lists. He had a paternal care for his men unlike any other great military leader " he knew that little things, like a hot meal and dry socks, contributed more to victory than all the ammunition in the world. Why did Patton's men love him so much? Because he never expected more from them than he was willing to give himself. A Third

Army sentry recounted his only meeting with Patton as, "Oh, yes, I knew Patton, though I only saw him once. We were stuck in the snow and he came by in a jeep. His face was awful red, and he must have been about froze, riding in that open jeep. He yelled to us to get out and push, and first thing I knew, there I was with General Patton pushing right alongside of me."

Quoted from "[Patton Uncovered](#)" by B. E. Boland.

After reading this page, the secondary lesson is Hollywood, as now, was distorting the true nature of military leaders in order to grab the audience....so what else is new?

And...for you staff officers, or those subject to a higher headquarters, this quote that indicates the some of the material on B. E. Boland's book:

Yet, incredibly, General Patton himself was removed from the command of Third Army in disgrace. In ["Patton Uncovered"](#), you can delve into the high-level politics surrounding the military maneuvers, and learn of the deceit, treachery, betrayal and backstabbing that were commonplace at headquarters.

So, once more, as I said above: "so what else is new?"

Three lessons, one movie, and discovery of a book that seeks the truth of it all.

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