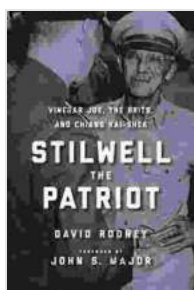


Vinegar Joe: The Brits and Chiang Kai-shek

In the annals of military history, few figures are as enigmatic and controversial as General Joseph Stilwell. A brilliant tactician and a dedicated soldier, Stilwell was also a prickly and abrasive personality who often clashed with his superiors and subordinates alike. But despite his flaws, Stilwell played a pivotal role in the Allied victory in World War II, and his legacy continues to be debated to this day.



Stilwell the Patriot: Vinegar Joe, the Brits, and Chiang

Kai-Shek by David Rooney

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 22684 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 266 pages
Lending : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported



Stilwell was born in 1883 in Pekin, Illinois. He graduated from West Point in 1904 and served in the Philippines and China before being posted to Europe in 1917. During World War I, he served as a staff officer with the American Expeditionary Forces and earned a reputation for his intelligence and hard work.

After the war, Stilwell returned to China and served as a military attaché in Beijing. He was a keen observer of Chinese politics and society, and he

developed a deep understanding of the country's complex history and culture. In 1935, he was appointed military adviser to Chiang Kai-shek, the leader of the Chinese Nationalist Party.

Chiang was a charismatic and ambitious leader, but he was also a deeply flawed one. He was prone to outbursts of temper and could be ruthless in his pursuit of power. Stilwell quickly realized that Chiang was more interested in consolidating his own power than in fighting the Japanese, who had invaded China in 1937.

Despite his reservations about Chiang, Stilwell agreed to help him fight the Japanese. He trained and equipped the Chinese army and led them into battle against the invaders. Stilwell's troops fought bravely, but they were no match for the Japanese, who were better equipped and had more experience. By the end of 1941, the Japanese had overrun much of China, and Chiang's government was on the verge of collapse.

In December 1941, the United States entered World War II after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Stilwell was appointed commander of the American forces in China, and he was given the task of helping Chiang fight the Japanese and the Communists, who were also fighting for control of China.

Stilwell quickly realized that the key to defeating the Japanese was to open a supply route from India to China. The Japanese had cut off all land routes into China, and the only way to get supplies to Chiang's forces was by air. Stilwell organized a massive airlift operation, and he flew thousands of tons of supplies into China. The airlift was a success, and it helped to keep Chiang's forces in the fight.

However, Stilwell's relationship with Chiang was increasingly strained. Chiang was jealous of Stilwell's authority, and he resented Stilwell's criticism of his leadership. In 1944, Chiang demanded that Stilwell be recalled to the United States. President Franklin D. Roosevelt reluctantly agreed, and Stilwell was replaced by General Albert Wedemeyer.

Stilwell returned to the United States a bitter and disillusioned man. He believed that Chiang was a corrupt and incompetent leader, and he was convinced that the United States had made a mistake by supporting him. Stilwell died in 1946, and he is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Stilwell's legacy is a complex one. He was a brilliant tactician and a dedicated soldier, but he was also a prickly and abrasive personality. He was a strong supporter of Chiang Kai-shek, but he also believed that Chiang was a corrupt and incompetent leader. Stilwell's role in the Allied victory in World War II is undeniable, but his legacy is still debated to this day.

Further Reading

- Vinegar Joe: An American Hero in China by Barbara Tuchman
- Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-1945 by Barbara Tuchman
- Vinegar Joe: Stilwell's Battle for Burma by Geoffrey Perret

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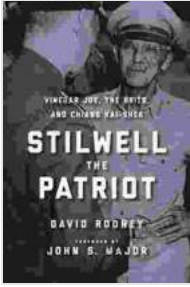
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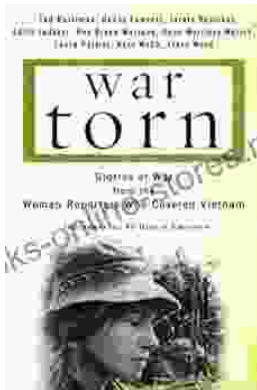
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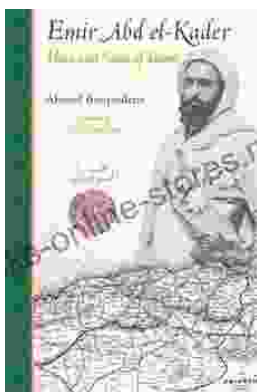


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