The More Things Changeâ€¦.

Description

It was a quiet day Sunday, so I reached for the remote and scanned the guide list of shows playing. â€œPattonâ€• was on and had been playing for about an hourâ€¦.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 â€œdocudramaâ€• has anything to do with reality, then Iâ€™m projecting that George S. Patton suffered as our current day commanders do, but with out instantaneous news cycles:

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One ~~an editorialist disguised as a~~ reporter asked him about his future assignments: No comment. Some other questions, then Patton said: â€œOff the record, they are sending me to Malta.â€• To that, the ~~editorialist disguised as a~~ reporter asked: â€œwill you be slapping any soldiers in Malta?â€• 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 thinkingâ€¦.

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 momentÃ¢â‚¬â„¢s regard to them, he did not curse like a sailor, he did not believe in Ã¢â‚¬Å“victory at all costsÃ¢â‚¬Â• in spite of casualty lists. He had a paternal care for his men unlike any other great military leader Ã¢â‚¬â€œ 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 Pattonâ€™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,Ã¢â‚¬Å“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.Ã¢â‚¬Â•

Quoted from â€œPatton Uncoveredâ€• 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 audienceâ€¦so what else is new?

Andâ€¦for you staff officers, or those subject to a higher headquarters, this quote that indicates the some of the materiall on B. E. Bolandâ€™s book:

> Yet, incredibly, General Patton himself was removed from the command of Third Army in disgrace. In >Ã¢â‚¬Å“Patton UncoveredÃ¢â‚¬Â• you can delve into the high-level politics surrounding the military maneuvers, and learn of the deceit, treachery, betrayal and back-stabbing that were commonplace at headquarters.

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So, once more, as I said above: â€œso what else is new?â€•

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

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