



Eisenhower

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EISENHOWER: SOLDIER AND STATESMAN is a revision and condensation of Stephen E. Ambrose's highly regarded two-volume biography of Dwight D. Eisenhower: EISENHOWER: SOLDIER, GENERAL OF THE ARMY, PRESIDENT-ELECT, 1890-1952 (1983) and EISENHOWER: THE PRESIDENT (1984). As such it is the welcome distillation of the author's many years of researching and pondering his subject's career. Ambrose does not mask his admiration of Eisenhower. He regards Eisenhower as both a great American leader and a great man. Eisenhower's place in history was secured by his service as Supreme Commander of Allied forces in Western Europe during World War II. As President he achieved much as well, ending the Korean War, maintaining the peace for eight years, balancing the federal budget, and presiding over one of the most prosperous periods in American history. In private, Eisenhower was warm and gregarious. He held no grudges against political opponents, and had a knack of making people like him. Ambrose, however, does not hesitate to point out his hero's flaws. Eisenhower tended to emphasize short-term crisis management, rather than seeking out long-range solutions to problems, and he only reluctantly supported the Civil Rights movement which began to gather momentum during his presidency.

The secret of Eisenhower's success was his genius for leadership. He forced himself always to exude optimism to keep up the morale of his subordinates. He adroitly balanced the conflicting interests of the men he worked with, never losing control of his temper or losing track of his own goals. Ambrose concludes that the United States was lucky to have Dwight D. Eisenhower rise to prominence when he did, and any reader of this masterful biography will heartily agree.

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