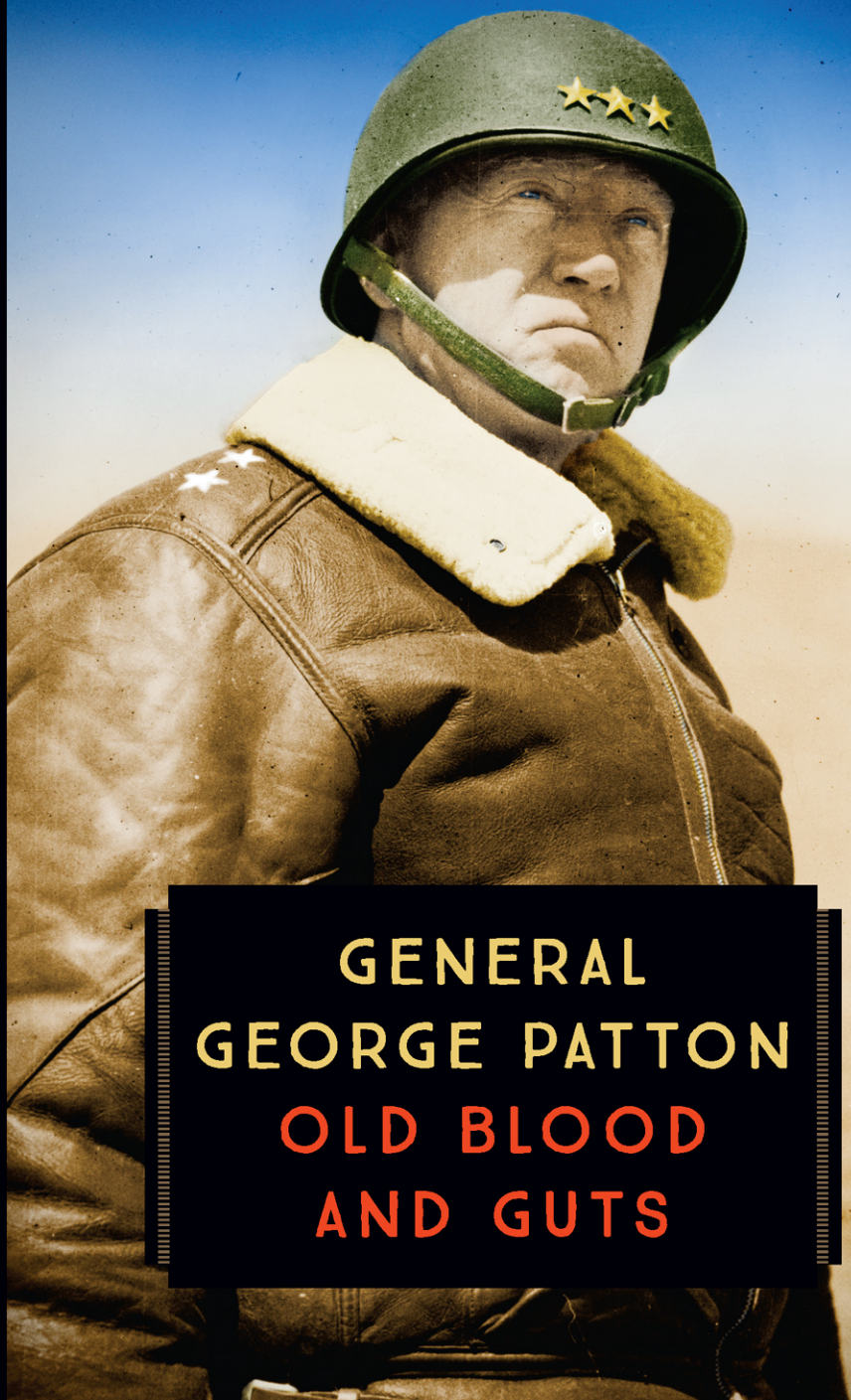


◦ ALDEN HATCH ◦



**GENERAL  
GEORGE PATTON  
OLD BLOOD  
AND GUTS**



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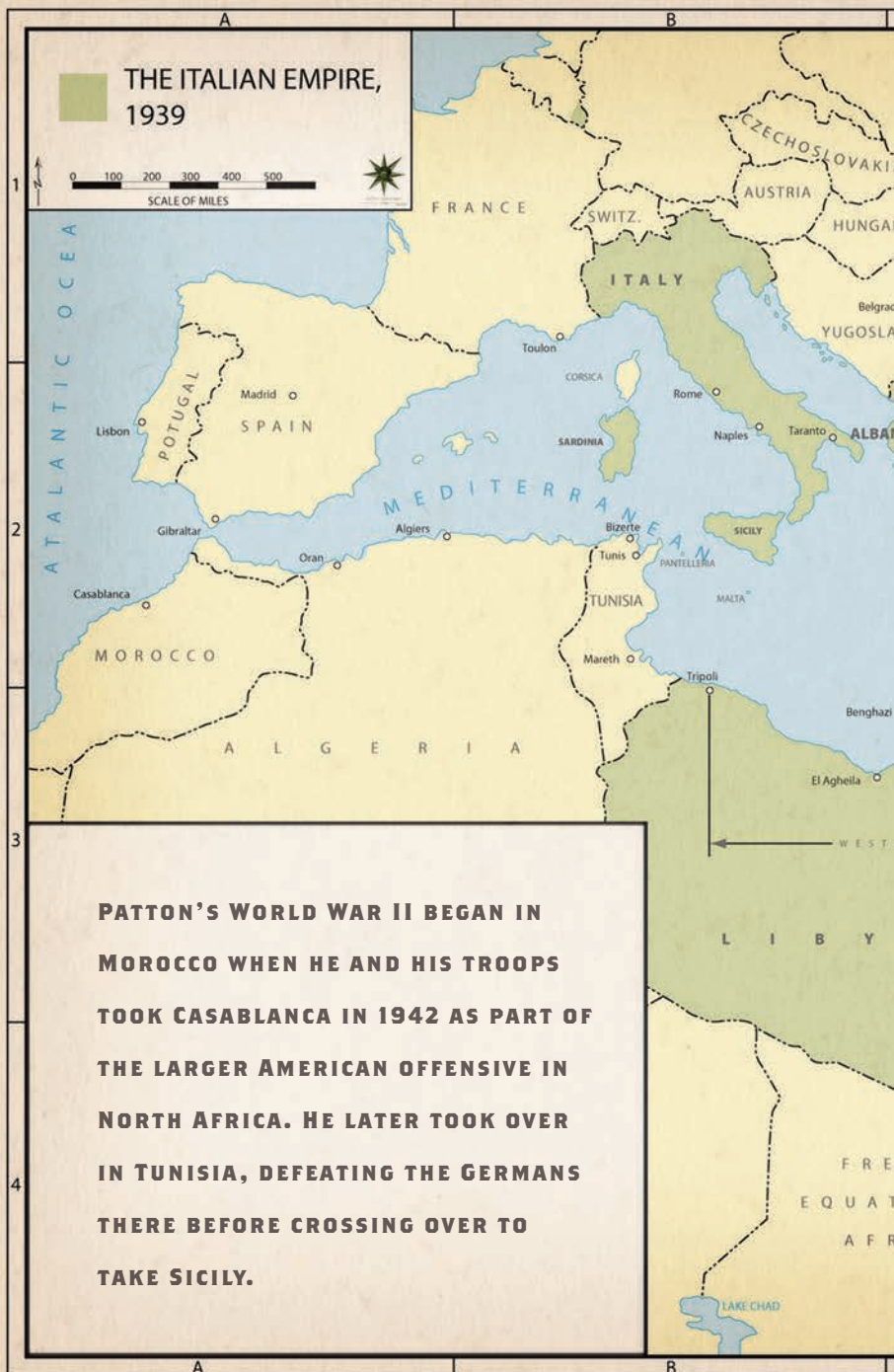
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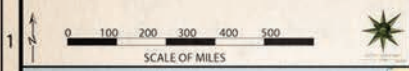
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THE ITALIAN EMPIRE,  
1939



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**PATTON'S WORLD WAR II BEGAN IN MOROCCO WHEN HE AND HIS TROOPS TOOK CASABLANCA IN 1942 AS PART OF THE LARGER AMERICAN OFFENSIVE IN NORTH AFRICA. HE LATER TOOK OVER IN TUNISIA, DEFEATING THE GERMANS THERE BEFORE CROSSING OVER TO TAKE SICILY.**

A B







• PROLOGUE •

# THE CAMP IN THE FOREST



Eleventh Armored Division's Combat Command, the advance point of the US Third Army, rattled and clanked through the somber Thüringer Wald late in April, 1945. Tanks, mobile guns, jeeps, truckloads of armored infantry, ambulances, and miscellaneous transport stretched back along the steep, straight road between the towering trees like a loosely articulated, mile-long dragon. The din of motors and the clashing of metal were a shattering accompaniment to their steady progress through the heart of the famous German forest.



A German soldier watches Allied aircraft from behind a hedgerow.

At the crest of a hill, a jeep, scouting ahead, stopped abruptly and the officer in it raised his hand. The dragon halted, snorting. Colonel Wesley Yale, commanding CCB, ordered his jeep out of line and sped forward to reconnoiter. When he reached the ridge the trees thinned out, leaving a clear view of the valley ahead. Perhaps half a mile away and some hundreds of feet below lay a great encampment. Row on row of barracks were interspersed with flat parade grounds, and the whole was ringed by machine guns in pillboxes.

Colonel Yale shouted orders into his radio. Tanks and mobile guns lumbered forward and deployed along the ridge. Infantrymen leaped from their trucks and formed a firing line. As each vehicle reached its assigned position, its engine was shut off to save precious gas. The turret guns of the tanks swung noiselessly, pointing down to blast the valley. For an instant everything was frozen immobile on the brink of action. In that tremendous silence Colonel Yale raised his hand, to give the command to fire, and stayed it in mid-course.

A weird rhythmic sound rose from the valley—the beat of human voices chanting in unison. At first the words were indistinguishable; then suddenly they came clear and loud, lifted up through the trees six thousand voices strong:

*“Georgie Patton, come and get us!*

*Georgie Patton, set us free!*

*Georgie Patton, come and get us!*

*Georgie Patton, set us free!”*



An American M36 tank destroyer, just after firing.

French and English, Russians and Poles, Dutchmen and Belgians and Norwegians, as well as Americans, were confined in that great Nazi prison camp, but the Yanks had taught their fellow prisoners the words of their chant, and together they called on the almost mythical American warrior to rescue them.

The words were sharply defined now; the chant came faster and faster in an urgent crescendo.

*“Georgie Patton, come and get us!  
Georgie Patton, set us free!”*



Sgt. Walter P. Goworek treats two little French girls to some G.I. candy. The girls' costumes are for a Fourth of July party in LaMine, France, after liberation.

Suddenly Colonel Yale shouted, “What are we waiting for?”— and swung his arm.

A hundred motors exploded into life, a hundred vehicles jumped forward. Down the hill they careened—tanks and trucks and jeeps and guns, all mixed up in one wild scramble to the rescue of their comrades in arms.



The incident in the Thüringer Wald was not unique. All over Germany, when they heard the sound of a rescuing column, Allied prisoners broke into that chant to Georgie Patton. It mattered not if Patton were five hundred miles away. The advancing Allies might be First Army or Ninth or Seventh, Montgomery’s British or LeClerc’s French; always the prisoners called on Georgie Patton and, as the American armor roared up, the waiting men half expected to see that stern spare figure with the ice-gray eyes, the six-guns swinging at his hips and the stars glittering on his helmet, step from the leading tank. Sometimes they did at that!

For Georgie Patton, during his lifetime, was both devastatingly real and a legendary folk hero, the symbol of victory to Americans, everywhere, and of terror to the Nazis.



• CHAPTER ONE •

# LAKE VINEYARD



Georgie Patton was up a tree. It was a splendid walnut tree with limbs as symmetrical as the treads of a stepladder. From its upper branches he could survey his whole world. Close behind him was the long, low adobe ranch house with its big veranda and many long windows. Farther back was the wild ravine that rustled at night with animal noises. In front of him the ground sloped down to a great plain that stretched toward the Sierra Madre Mountains, floating in ever-changing splendor on the edge of infinity.

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The Sierra Madres, 1910.

The ranch house stood in a small forest, for Grandfather Wilson had loved trees. There were pines and deodars, cottonwoods, pepper trees, eucalyptus, acacias, cedars, and tall Italian cypresses, standing like giant soldiers at attention along the ridge. Beyond the trees were acres of vineyards and the dark green, gold-dappled new orange groves. To the right the sun flashed on miniature Lake Wilson.

Everything the thin blond boy could see, from the wooded hill behind him almost to the mountain wall, belonged to his family. For in the year 1890 Lake Vineyard, comprising more than eighteen hundred acres in the San Gabriel Valley, covered most of what is nowadays the cities of Pasadena and San Marino.

Georgie, in his tree, was not particularly interested in the details of the vast domain which his spectacular grandfather had bequeathed to his father and mother. He was scouting the country for enemies, and, unexpectedly, he saw someone. On the tawny plain appeared a cloud of dust and, in front of it, Georgie's keen gray eyes detected a wildly galloping horseman. He scrambled quickly down the tree, dropped the last six feet, and ran into the house.

"Papa! Mama! Somebody's coming! A horseman riding hard."

Mr. Patton put down a beautifully bound copy of Dante's *Inferno* and followed his excited son out to the veranda, while Mrs. Patton leaned from an upper window.

"It looks like a messenger," Father said. "Can you make him out, dear?"



“I think it’s one of Uncle Captain’s vaqueros,” Mrs. Patton answered. “Probably announcing a visit.”

She was proved right when the dusty horsemen clattered up to the steps and shouted, “The Señor Captain he come, with friends.”

“Many friends?” asked Georgie’s mother.

The Mexican nodded emphatically. “Mucho, mucho!”

“Bueno,” said Mr. Patton, and returned to his book.

Georgie’s mother flew to the outside kitchen to get the servants started on the gargantuan feast the occasion required, while Georgie ran to tell the news to his sister Nita, and his friend Natio, son of the estate manager, whose father had come to California with Don Benito Wilson long ago.

The three children climbed the walnut tree and presently saw another column of dust rising from the plain. It moved toward them very slowly until it was so near that they could clearly see the splendid Concord coach, drawn by six black pacers, that Captain William Banning loved to drive. Georgie expectantly watched the slim figure sitting very erect on the box and, when the coach was perhaps a quarter of a mile from the house, he saw Captain Banning crack his whip in the lead team’s ears. The horses jumped forward and came toward the ranch house at a run, with the coach leaping along behind them over the dusty, rutted road.

With his six horses still at full stretch, Captain Banning swung the circle in front of the veranda and pulled up short with sparks flying, horses plunging, Mexican footmen leaping off and frantically grabbing at bridles. Passengers clambered

hastily off the top of the coach and spilled from its interior. There were Hancock and Joseph Banning with their wives and assorted children, some friends of Uncle Captain from his home at Wilmington, and a few unidentified strangers who had apparently come along for the ride.

For the next two days Lake Vineyard was in a state of continuous fiesta. At night the long table was a sight to see, with a roast turkey at one end, boiled fowls at the other, and a magnificent ham strategically placed at the center. Every available inch of surface was covered with side dishes of vegetables, fruits, gravy, jellies, and huge bowls of ripe olives. All the food and the sparkling wine were grown on the ranch.

Georgie and Nita stayed up late every night—there was no use going to bed, since the noise of singing and feasting made it impossible to sleep anyway. The little boy sat very quietly in a corner of the room listening to Captain Banning's tall tales of his seafaring days and of the time when his father, Phineas Banning, drove stage from San Pedro clear to Chihuahua in Mexico. It was even better when the men began to reminisce about Don Benito.

Georgie's grandfather, Benjamin Davis Wilson—respectfully called Don Benito by the Spaniards—had come to California in 1841, before the Gold Rush. He bought Lake Vineyard from the widow of an earlier settler and made it prosper. He also moved in on local politics and became Alcalde of the little Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reine de los Angeles de Parciuncula. A few years later, when Mexico ceded California to the United States, Don Benito changed his title—but not his office—to Mayor of Los Angeles.



The Sierras by Big Bear Lake, looking north.

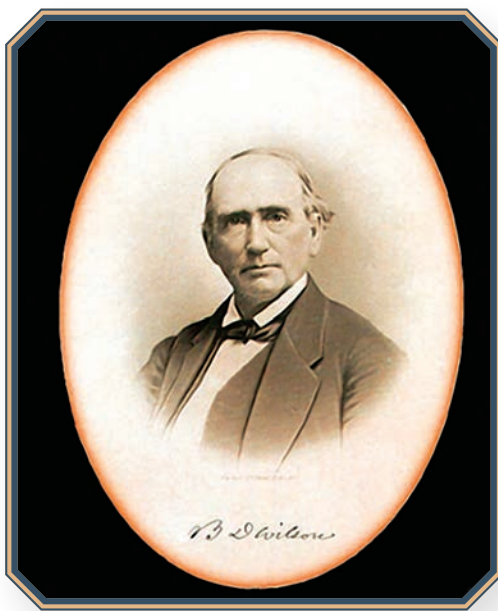
Georgie knew by heart all the fantastic stories about his grandfather, but he loved to hear them again and again. His father and the Bannings told of the Gold Rush days in Los Angeles, when Don Benito, acting as his own sheriff, put on his “killing clothes”—a black frock coat and a white linen vest—and went out to convince the lawless founders of the first families of California that he was the quickest man on the draw south of Frisco.

Don Benito’s favorite sport was roping grizzly bears, and one weekend he and a group of friends lassoed thirty of these ferocious animals at a place that has ever since been known as Bear Lake.

When Uncle Captain and his guests drove back to Los Angeles and Wilmington, life at Lake Vineyard settled back

## GENERAL GEORGE PATTON

Benjamin Davis Wilson  
ca. 1850. Known as  
Don Benito, Wilson  
was Georgie Patton's  
grandfather.



into temporary tranquility. These peaceful periods never lasted too long, for the Pattons were very hospitable and their doors stood open to the world. Georgie liked the quiet evenings almost as well as the exciting nights of fiesta. He and Nita would sit on the floor in the long living room, dominated by Don Benito's portrait, while his father or Aunt Annie Wilson read aloud to them. By the time he was six Georgie knew the thrilling martial verses of the *Illiad* and the adventurous *Odyssey* and many of the classic stories of olden times. He was familiar with much of the Bible and could say the Litany and the Order of Morning Prayer. He always preferred books about soldiers and battles, and when his aunt tired and stopped to rest, he would say imperiously, "Read, Aunt Nannie, read!"

Quite often his father's close friend Colonel John Moseby, the great Confederate cavalry leader, would drop in for dinner. Then Georgie would be enthralled by true stories of the days when the quiet old gentleman and his friend General J. E. B. Stuart were the terror of the Union armies in Virginia.

Georgie's paternal grandfather, the first General George Smith Patton, had served in the Confederate Army all through the war, until he was killed leading his men at the disastrous battle of Cedar Creek. Another Patton brother had been killed at Gettysburg and the remaining two were badly wounded. The Pattons, like the Wilsons, were fighting men.

Georgie's father was an exception. Although he had been educated, in the family tradition, at the Virginia Military Institute, he was a gentle, scholarly man whose delicate health predisposed him to love books more than the rough-and-tumble of active life. He had come to California from Charleston, West Virginia, with his widowed mother soon after the Civil War, and here he had fallen in love with the daughter of rampageous old Don Benito Wilson. They were married in the little Church of Our Savior, at San Gabriel, which was built of bricks fired at Lake Vineyard, and there Georgie was christened soon after his birth in 1885. To that same church General George Smith Patton, Jr. returned in 1945 to give thanks for victory.



• CHAPTER TWO •

# AN EMBRYONIC GENERAL



When Georgie Patton was ten years old, he made up his mind. By that time he had a surprising knowledge of military history, though he had, rather astonishingly, not yet learned to read—for two reasons: first, that there was no good school near the ranch; second, it seemed hardly worth the trouble to him, since Father, Mother, and Aunt Nannie read all the books he wanted to hear.

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Patton at the Virginia Military Institute, circa 1904. He spent a year there before transferring to West Point.