



Diary of the Instructor in Swordsmanship

Jr., George S. Patton

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This is a long forgotten work by World War II General George S. Patton, Jr., written while he was still a young lieutenant and fencing instructor at the Mounted Service School in Fort Riley, Kansas. It would most likely have been lost to history if not for the preservation efforts of U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. It is reprinted here in its entirety, including all detailed lessons and original photographs and graphics prepared by Patton to illustrate his points. (You might even recognize a young George Patton in some of the pictures.) More than a course of instruction, "Diary of the Instructor in Swordsmanship" captures the intellect and mindset of Patton and illustrates why he was destined to become one of America's finest battlefield commanders. This was not Patton's first publication on the topic. The year before he had authored "Saber Exercise 1914," the official Army training manual on the topic. But unlike "Saber Exercise 1914" which had been carefully staffed and edited in Washington before its official release, Patton distributed his "Diary of the Instructor in Swordsmanship" informally at the request of his student officers looking for more detailed instruction. Sprinkled throughout are Patton's personal recommendations and opinions. For example, he explains why it is important to teach Army officers the art of fencing but only provide a limited instruction to enlisted soldiers—and how training in swordsmanship helped troopers develop more aggressive instincts for battle. You can almost hear his voice, a little younger perhaps, but still unmistakably Patton.

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