George Smith Patton, Jr.

General, U.S. Army

1885-1945

1885

Born in San Gabriel, California, on 11 November.

1897

Enrolls at Stephen Cutter Clark's Classical School in Pasadena, California.

1904

Attends VMI in preparation for West Point.

Enrolls at West Point the same year.

1905

Due to deficiencies in mathematics, he repeats his Plebe year at West Point.

1909

Attains the rank of Cadet Adjutant.

Graduates 46th out of a class of 103.

Commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Cavalry.

Reports to the 15th Cavalry at Fort Sheridan, Illinois.

1910

Marries Beatrice Ayer.

1911

Beatrice Patton, Jr. is born.

1912

Places fifth in the Olympics' Military Pentathlon in Stockholm, Sweden.

1913

Attends the French Cavalry School and studies French sword drill.

Becomes the U.S. Army's first "Master of the Sword."

Designs the U.S. Army's M1913 saber.

Graduates from the Mounted Service School at Fort Riley, Kansas.

1914

Graduates from the Advanced Course at the Cavalry School at Fort Riley, Kansas.

Writes the U.S. Army Saber Regulations of 1914.

War Department refuses permission to serve with the French Cavalry in WWI.

1915

Buys the famous Ivory-Handled Colt .45 "Peacemaker" revolver.

Reports for duty at Fort Bliss, Texas where he meets General Pershing.

Ruth Ellen Patton is born.

1916

Serves as aide to General Pershing in the Mexican Punitive Expedition.

Commands the first use of mechanical vehicles in combat (two Dodge touring cars).

Kills "General" Cardenas, head of Villa's bodyguard, using his new Colt .45.

Carves two notches in the Ivory Grips of his Colt .45 revolver.

Promoted to First Lieutenant.

1917

Boards ship to France on 28 May as General Pershing's aide.

Transfers from the Cavalry to the fledgling Tank Corps.

Organizes the American Tank School at Langres, France.

Trains the 304th Tank Brigade--the first 500 soldiers in the U.S. Tank Corps.

Promoted twice to the temporary rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

1918

Leads the 304th Tank Brigade in combat at St. Mihiel on 26 September.

Wounded in action by machine gun fire during the Meuse-Argonne offensive.

Receives the DSM, DSC, Silver Star, and Purple Heart.

Promoted to the temporary rank of Colonel.

While recuperating from his near fatal wound, WWI ends on 11 November.

1919

Returns to the United States.

1920

Reverts to permanent rank of Captain when the Tank Corps is dissolved and the tanks are assigned to the infantry.

Promoted to permanent rank of Major the day after reverting to pre-war rank of Captain.

Immediatley leaves the almost non-existant Tank Corps and returns to the Cavalry.

Begins playing Polo with a vengence.

1920s-1930s

Two tours in Hawaii.

A tour of duty in the Office of the Chief of Cavalry (War Department).

Three tours of duty with the 3d Cavalry at Fort Myer, Virginia.

1923

George Smith Patton, III is born.

1924

Graduates from the Command and General Staff School.

1932

Graduates from the Army War College.

1935

Promoted to permanent rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Writes a prophetic paper on the possibility of a Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

1939

Promoted to permanent rank of Colonel.

Considers retiring from the U.S. Army.

1940

Promoted to Brigadier General in July.

Assumes command of the 2d Brigade, 2d Armored Division at Fort Benning, Georgia.

1941

Promoted to Major General in April.

Assumes command of the 2d Armored Division at Fort Benning, Georgia.

1942

Appointed to create the Desert Training Center near Indio, California on 1 April.

Assumes command of the 1st Armored Corps at the Desert Training Center.

Plays a leading role in the planning of Operation Torch.

Commands the Western Task Force during the Allied invasion of North Africa.

Enters Casablanca and occupies French Morocco.

1943

Assumes command of II Corps on 4 March following its disastrous defeat at Kasserine Pass on 19 February.

Rejuvenates II Corps and wins victories at Gafsa and El Guettar.

Promoted to temporary rank of Lieutenant General on 12 March.

Assumes command of Seventh Army and invades Sicily on 10 July.

Captures Palermo on 22 July.

Captures Messina on 16 August, beating Montgomery.

Victory in Sicily is spoiled by the announcement of the "slapping incidents."

1943-1944

Precluded from higher command because of the slapping incidents.

Used as a "secret weapon" to fool the Germans into thinking he's planning an invasion of the Pas de Calais area of France.

1944

Assumes command of the U.S. 3d Army in July.

Begins the amazing "breakout" from Normandy, fighting four directions at once.

Captures Avranches on 1 August.

Captures Le Mans on 8 August.

Heads north toward Nancy and Metz (most heavily fortified part of the West Wall) on 13 August.

Kept from destroying a surrounded German army at the "Falais Gap." Montgomery closes the "gap" to late and allows much of the German army to escape.

3d Army continues its amazing advance eventually moving faster, going farther, killing and wounding more enemy, seizing more land, and capturing more prisoners than any other army in history.

Reaches the Seine River at Mantes on 19 August.

French 2d Armored (attached to 3d Army) enters Paris on 23 August. Patton and the 3d Army are not allowed to take the city due to politics.

Runs out of gasoline and other essential supplies near the Meuse River because the majority of supplies are diverted to Montgomery for "Opeation Market-Garden" in Holland.

Begins the Lorraine Offensive in spite of lack of gasoline and supplies.

Operation Market-Garden is deemed a failure. Montgomery fails to take his objectives during 17-25 September.

SHAEF disregards numerous warnings from 3d Army about the German buildup in the Ardennes.

The Battle of the Bulge starts on 16 December.

Despite the worst winter in years, on 20 December Patton diverts 3d Army from eastward attacks, turning ninty degrees to the north, and attacking the Germans in the Ardennes. Most historians agree that no other commander and no other army could have accomplished this incredible feat.

Patton publishes his famous "Prayer Card" to all 250,000 men of 3d Army on 21 December.

Weather conditions improve greatly on 23 December.

Patton relieves Bastogne on 26 December.

Patton's actions at the Battle of the Bulge (the German's Ardennes Offensive) help to crystallize the "Patton Legend."

1945

Montgomery finally begins an attack against the German "bulge" on 3 January.

3d Army reaches the Rhine River near Coblenz on 3 March.

Stealing Montgomery's thunder, 3d Army crosses the Rhine River on 22 March, 1 day before the British in spite of "Monty's" massive buildup and preferential treatment.

Patton stops in the middle of the Rhine River near Oppehneim to urinate on 24 March.

Promoted to temporary rank of full 4-star General in April.

Continues his drive across southern Germany and into Czechoslovakia.

Germany surrenders on 8 May--"Victory in Europe Day."

Begins an on-going argument for a combined campaign of Allied-German forces to push the Communist Russians back to their pre-war borders, correctly stating that the Allies have simply swapped the Nazis for the Communists in Eastern Europe guaranteeing their continued enslavement.

Begins his duties as Military Governor of Bavaria.

Returns to the U.S. for a Bond Drive, giving speeches from Boston to Los Angeles.

Returns to Germany at the end of the Bond Drive.

Removed from command of 3d Army in October following his criticism of "de-nazification" policies.

Assumes command of the 15th "Army" which exists only on paper.

Suffers a neck injury on 9 December in an automobile accident near Mannheim, Germany.

Dies from an embolism on 21 December at the 130th Station Hospital in Heidelberg, Germany.

Buried on 23 December in the American Military Cemetery at Hamm, Luxembourg.