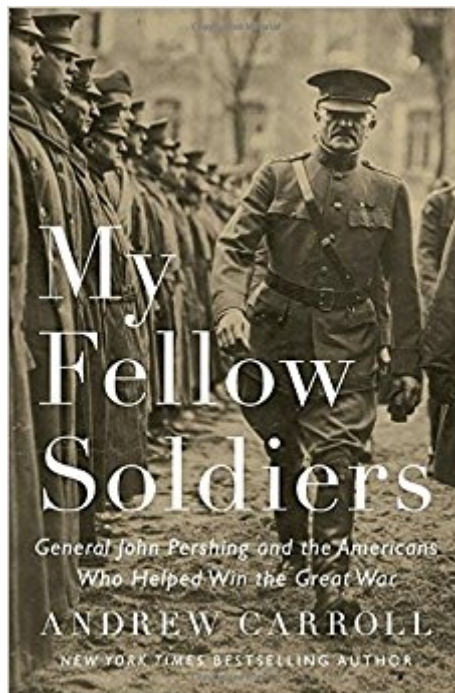




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My Fellow Soldiers: General John Pershing And The Americans Who Helped Win The Great War



Synopsis

From the New York Times bestselling author of *War Letters* and *Behind the Lines*, Andrew Carroll's *My Fellow Soldiers* draws on a rich trove of both little-known and newly uncovered letters and diaries to create a marvelously vivid and moving account of the American experience in World War I, with General John Pershing featured prominently in the foreground. Andrew Carroll's intimate portrait of General Pershing, who led all of the American troops in Europe during World War I, is a revelation. Given a military force that on the eve of its entry into the war was downright primitive compared to the European combatants, the general surmounted enormous obstacles to build an army and ultimately command millions of U.S. soldiers. But Pershing himself—often perceived as a harsh, humorless, and wooden leader—concealed inner agony from those around him: almost two years before the United States entered the war, Pershing suffered a personal tragedy so catastrophic that he almost went insane with grief and remained haunted by the loss for the rest of his life, as private and previously unpublished letters he wrote to family members now reveal. Before leaving for Europe, Pershing also had a passionate romance with George Patton's sister, Anne. But once he was in France, Pershing fell madly in love with a young painter named Micheline Resco, whom he later married in secret. Woven throughout Pershing's story are the experiences of a remarkable group of American men and women, both the famous and unheralded, including Harry Truman, Douglas MacArthur, William "Wild Bill" Donovan, Teddy Roosevelt, and his youngest son Quentin. The chorus of these voices, which begins with the first Americans who enlisted in the French Foreign Legion 1914 as well as those who flew with the Lafayette Escadrille, make the high stakes of this epic American saga piercingly real and demonstrates the war's profound impact on the individuals who served during and in the years after the conflict—with extraordinary humanity and emotional force.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“Selecting excerpts from thousands of letters to highlight the human perception of the war, Carroll embeds these recollections in a clear, chronological war narrative that takes the reader from the beginning of the war in 1914 through President Wilson’s decision to enter the war in 1917 and the U.S. military’s combat experience for the remainder of the conflict. Carroll uses the personal correspondence of Gen. Pershing, the U.S. commander in France, as a means of establishing the war timeline. Varied American perspectives of the war are included, and the letters of African-Americans and women figure prominently in the work...Carroll has produced an engaging and informative introduction to a war that has been largely relegated to the shadows by the subsequent global conflagration.”

• Publishers Weekly

“Illuminating first-hand letters and diaries, including some newly discovered, enable the author to credibly deliver another historical non-fiction masterpiece.”

• The many stirring first-person accounts of soldiers, aviators, and volunteer American nurses combine to make this superbly crafted history highly recommended.

• Historical Novel Society

“A fascinating and timely history.”

An accessible account of the American Expeditionary Forces in World War I and its commander, General John Pershing.

• Shelf Awareness

The title of *My Fellow Soldiers* comes from a general order Pershing issued to thank his troops before returning home. Like Pershing’s note, it is a fitting tribute to the more than two million Americans who stepped forward a century ago to rescue the Allies and bring the United States onto the world’s stage.”

• Weekly Standard

Andrew Carroll is the founding director of the Center for American War Letters at Chapman University. Along with editing the New York Times bestsellers *War Letters* and *Behind the Lines*, Carroll edited *Operation Homecoming*, which inspired the Emmy-winning documentary of the same name. Carroll lives in Washington, D.C. and Orange, California. (For more information, please visit: www.WarLetters.us).

Excellent history of the background and US involvement in WWI with emphasis on Gen Pershing.

Reads more like a novel than a history book. Highly recommended.

I will be taking a trip to France in September 2017 to specifically visit the WWI sites prior to a river cruise. We will have about ten days in Alsace, Verdun and around the area. I bought this book to supplement some of the knowledge I had about WWI. I thoroughly enjoyed the read and how it was organized. I learned more about General Pershing and even more about WWI than I expected. I was able to make notes about areas to visit when we do our road trip. I recommend this book.

Well written and easy to read. As an Army infantryman and combat veteran I found that this book to have changed my previous opinions on General Pershing and our Army's role in WW1.

"My Fellow Soldiers" by Andrew Carroll may not be the definitive biography of John J. (Black Jack) Pershing, but it does capture the essence of the man. The story picks up at the Punitive Expedition into Mexico in pursuit of Pancho Villa and then moves into France during World War I. All along the way we are treated with encounters with the movers and shakers of the day: Wilson, Clemenceau, Haig, and Petain. Also profiled are the future movers and shakers that would become instrumental in WWII: Patton, Marshall, MacArthur, and others. There are many letters and diary entries from participants in the fighting which bring into focus the horrors of war. A well written and enjoyable history.

Since we are currently celebrating the centennial of America's entry into World War I, this fine book could not be better timed. Although the central focus is on the commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces ("AEF"), General John J. Pershing (1860-1948), it has a far richer reach than just Pershing. The author covers a variety of related topics in order to put Pershing and his massive contributions into context. The book is also made useful by relying upon and incorporating excerpts from letters, diaries, and official documents into the narrative. Moreover, the author adopts the invaluable technique of focusing upon individuals and their experiences and perspectives, which adds greatly to the impact of the discussion. The author begins with a discussion of the conditions that led up to the war erupting in 1914 long before the American entry in 1917. This allows him to discuss such topics as trench warfare, American volunteers while the country was supposedly neutral, German outrages such as Belgium and the Lusitania sinking, and the execution of nurse Edith Cavell which outraged Americans as well as everyone else. The focus then shifts to Pershing's pursuit in Mexico of Pancho Villa, which brought Pershing to President Wilson's attention

and gave him unique experience in support of seeking the command of the AEF. Another chapter discusses the famous Lafayette Escadrille unit of volunteer American pilots flying for France while the U.S. remained a neutral. Concluding these introductory chapters is an interesting one focusing on Wilson, his political challenges, and his eventual request for a declaration of war (not an easy decision for him by any means). Beginning with chapter 6, the focus falls on Pershing. A continual problem were the French who insisted on merging the American forces into the allied armies--Pershing (on orders from Wilson) would have none of this and AEF forces would fight under American command. A number of officers later made famous in the second war era were mentored by Pershing including, George Marshall, Douglas MacArthur, Bill Donovan (later head of the OSS), Peyton March, Harry Truman, and George Patton. The reader really gets a feel for their attitudes and the experiences that so molded them. Several important battles (e.g., St.-Mihiel and the Meuse-Argonne Forest) are discussed, but the focus here is the human element not military history. What these doughboys were subject to was so horrible as to be beyond belief. There are additional interesting discussions on Army nurses and the dismal hospital conditions, Sgt. Alvin York, the Harlem Hellfighters and the tough situation facing black soldiers, and a fascinating recounting of the seriously-injured Chicago Tribune war correspondent Floyd Gibbons, who believed in getting into the middle of the fighting to cover his story even though he was seriously injured. A postscript chapter carries the story beyond the end of the war into the later activities of many of the actors in the second war and thereafter; Truman is especially well covered. The author's research is solid as laid out chapter by chapter in a "Note on Sources." There is also a short bibliography; an index is also included. There are a number of pictures and maps as well. Right at the start of the book, I found an interesting note "American Expeditionary Forces Chain of Command and Organization" which clarified a lot. So in 353 pages the reader learns a great deal about the war, Pershing's role, several key battles, and a great deal about the heroic contributions of our soldiers in their first major modern war. As for Pershing, he was more than just a great general--he was one of the finest examples of how when America faces major crises, somehow the right man or men come forward to deal with it.

Great insight to the WW I soldiers who fought and died and their leadership.

Very readable history from an average soldier in the trenches perspective to the commander of the American Expeditionary Force.

Casualty count can only be surpassed by a nuclear war.

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