

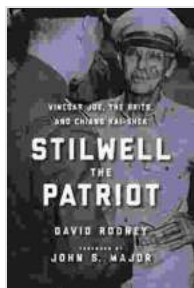
Vinegar Joe: The British and Chiang Kai-Shek, a Forgotten Chapter in World War II



In the annals of World War II, the names of Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin loom large. But lesser-known figures also played pivotal roles in the Allied victory. One such figure was General Joseph "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell, the irascible American commander who led the Chinese Nationalist army against the Japanese. Stilwell's relationship with Chiang Kai-Shek, the Chinese leader, was often tempestuous, but the two men eventually forged a bond that proved essential to the Allied cause.

Stilwell's Early Life and Career

Joseph Warren Stilwell was born in 1884 in Palatka, Florida. He graduated from West Point in 1904 and served in the Philippines and China before World War I. During the war, he distinguished himself as a staff officer with the American Expeditionary Force in France. After the war, Stilwell returned to China, where he served as military attaché from 1920 to 1923.



Stilwell the Patriot: Vinegar Joe, the Brits, and Chiang

Kai-Shek by David Rooney

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

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Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
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In 1942, Stilwell was appointed Chief of Staff to Chiang Kai-Shek. He quickly realized that the Chinese Nationalist army was ill-prepared to fight the Japanese. The army was plagued by corruption, incompetence, and a lack of discipline. Stilwell set about reforming the army, but his efforts were met with resistance from Chiang and his generals.

The Burma Campaign

In 1943, Stilwell was given command of the Burma Campaign. The goal of the campaign was to reopen the Burma Road, a vital supply route between China and India. The campaign was a disaster. Stilwell's forces were outmatched and outmaneuvered by the Japanese. The Chinese Nationalist

army suffered heavy losses, and Stilwell was forced to withdraw his forces into India.

The Burma Campaign was a major setback for the Allies. It also strained relations between Stilwell and Chiang Kai-Shek. Stilwell accused Chiang of incompetence and corruption, while Chiang accused Stilwell of being too harsh with his Chinese troops.

The CBI Theater

In 1944, Stilwell was appointed commander of the China-Burma-India (CBI) Theater. The CBI Theater was a vast area that included China, Burma, and India. Stilwell's mission was to coordinate Allied operations in the region. He also continued to pressure Chiang to reform the Chinese Nationalist army.

Stilwell's relationship with Chiang remained difficult. However, the two men eventually came to respect each other. Stilwell recognized Chiang's determination and patriotism, while Chiang admired Stilwell's military skills and his willingness to speak his mind.

The End of the War

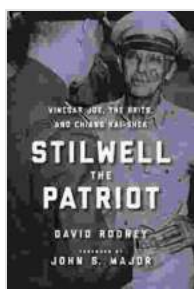
In 1945, the Japanese surrendered, ending World War II. Stilwell returned to the United States, where he was hailed as a hero. He retired from the army in 1946. Stilwell died in 1946 at the age of 62.

Joseph "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell was a complex and controversial figure. He was a brilliant military commander, but he was also a blunt and outspoken man. His relationship with Chiang Kai-Shek was often difficult, but the two

men eventually forged a bond that proved essential to the Allied victory in World War II.

Further Reading

* Tuchman, Barbara. *Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-1945*. New York: Macmillan, 1971. * Romanus, Charles F., and Riley Sunderland. *Stilwell's Mission to China*. Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1953. * Taylor, Jay. *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-Shek and the Struggle for Modern China*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009.



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