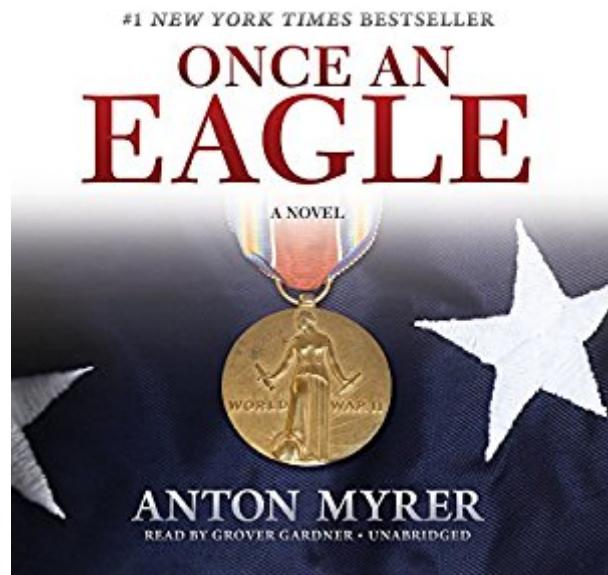


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Once An Eagle: A Novel



Synopsis

Once an Eagle is the story of one special man, a soldier named Sam Damon, and his adversary over a lifetime, fellow officer Courtney Massengale. Damon is a professional who puts duty, honor, and the men he commands above self-interest. Massengale, however, brilliantly advances his career by making the right connections behind the lines and in Washington's corridors of power. Beginning in the French countryside during the Great War, the conflict between these adversaries solidifies in the isolated garrison life marking peacetime, intensifies in the deadly Pacific jungles of World War II, and reaches its treacherous conclusion in the last major battleground of the Cold War. A study in character and values, courage, nobility, honesty, and selflessness, here is an unforgettable story about a man who embodies the best in our nation - and in us all. Anton Myrer (1922-1996) enlisted in the US Marine Corps following the attack on Pearl Harbor and served for three years in the Pacific. Wounded on Guam, he returned to Harvard, graduated, and began an illustrious literary career, during which he wrote such memorable novels as *The Big War*, *The Last Convertible*, and *A Green Desire*.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Once An Eagle" is one of those books that feels like a John Wayne war movie, until you look at it more closely. And when you do, you discover that patriotism can be practiced, even in the face of cynical realities that perpetually threaten to bleed it dry. Anton Myrer does not shy away from the hard realities of a career in the Army of the 20th Century. The peacetime Army with its slum like quarters, maddeningly slow and political requirements to advance; the wartime Army concentrating

on the often forgotten New Guinea campaign instead of the familiar and somehow more antiseptic European war (which, of course, it wasn't), and the ironies that much was learned and ignored by America from Mao and Giap about what it means to fight in the Far East, are all brought out in honest and biting truthfulness. The only reason this review does not have 5 stars is my reaction to the novel's protagonist. Sam Damon is often held up as the quintessential modern officer. Would that anyone can be this perfect for his destiny. His is an example of the ideal that cannot be attained, for we are all flawed to a degree that prevents us from attaining his level of perfection. Even his instance of marital infidelity is somehow OK, a need met with an ironic honor that doesn't exist for the rest of us. But this is a minor complaint. "Once an Eagle" deserves its place in the halls of excellent patriotic military fiction. It is realistic, unflinching and truthful in its depictions of war experiences and the complexities of the politics of war, vivid in its storytelling, and it's sense of loss and sacrifice ring true in an age where sacrifice with little return seems sacrilegious. I am glad it is often required reading among the officer corps of today.

This is the best book I have read in years: a superb, wrenching military novel. It centers on the character of Sam Damon, and spans the World War I era through the early 1960s. It is also a lengthy book, 1291 pages in the edition I read. And while the first 50 pages are decent, I found them slower and less engaging than the main (magnificent) story. If you have heard good things about this book, if you are thinking of trying it, read on past the beginning. This is a book of heft and worth and importance. I am glad that I happened into reading it, and I plan to re-read it.

An indescribably powerful book, especially considering it is fiction, and one I could not--and cannot--stop thinking about. I'm a veteran myself of the USMC, Navy and Army, with two wartime deployments. I have been a student of military history and have read the memoirs of so many--Russian, Japanese, American, German, US Civil War, and Napoleonic invader/survivor of the Russian winter nightmare, so this sort of book is not new to me. Yet....yet....the scope of this book, its era-appropriate language, the observation of generations as they passed from pre-1900 war to the early 60s, the politics, the antics and behavior of everyone from the squad level up to the Army and Corps level, seemed remarkably vivid and accurate. The combat "scenes" were absolutely mind-boggling in authenticity, down to the smallest nitty-gritty details only someone who'd been there would know. War isn't sterilized in this book, and the relationships of command, the commanded and the commanders, are thoroughly gone through. My experiences in Iraq don't begin to approach what Myers described, but they ring true. The misery of forced marches, wet, the pain

and how it feels to be falling-down exhausted and so many countless other things totally GET IT. Massengale is considered the evil of the book, yet he isn't really that. He's different, and based on my experience in both military and civilian management, pretty accurately reflects those who tend to climb the socio-economic-military ladder. I'm rambling here, but can only close with one last thing: my father fought in WWII and Korea, and possibly part of the early Indo-China campaign on "business trips" lasting 6 months or more. He never told us much. My mom described his nightmares from the first two years of their marriage (60-62), where he would jump out of the bed onto the floor while screaming....telling her afterward that he was bailing from an airplane--or trying to--while on fire. The burn scars on his legs were all we had ever seen. This was fifteen years after WWII! Like many veterans of combat, he would only talk about silly and funny anecdotes, but not much else. It wasn't until 2006, when he died, the physician told me that in doing a whole-body CAT scan, they found many fragments, rods and plates scattered in his limbs and skull. Reading this book, a book against war, I could not help but think again....and again of my father. And so many like him. Bottom line? As Staff Sergeant Barnes from the other epic "Platoon" famously says, "Talking about killing? Y'all experts? Y'all know about killing?"

What a book! Yes, it is lengthy but well worth the read. Author has excellent character development and tells the whole story. We were very excited when this came out as a mini-series on TV. It was very good but the book is soooo much better. Meyers pays great attention to detail and gives realistic views into military life and the stockades during that time frame. This is a good read for both sexes. I am not much into history or military books but I thoroughly enjoyed this one (several times!). My husband, who is a military and history buff, has ready it so many times that it was falling apart. First we bought it in hardback and ready it when we were younger. Bought it in paperback when the book got too heavy for our hands. Have been waiting forever for it to come out on Kindle - for three reasons; 1) length of the book-heavy, 2) convenient to care around, 3) love the story. Highly recommend both the book and the movie.

I could not put this down. I hated it, loved it. Refreshed my understanding of the sacrifices made for our freedom and existence mixed with challenging issues of leadership. Should be required reading for any young adult and every citizen of this free country.

As a retired member with over 32 years of active service I loved this book. It is a very accurate in depicting the good and bad leaders in the military which remains true today. What a true depiction of

life in the military, both peace time as well as combat. This is one of the best I've ever. Thank You

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