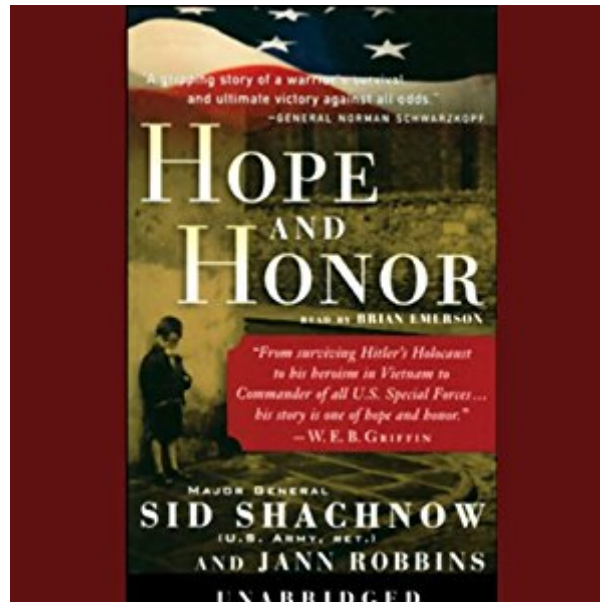




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Hope And Honor



Synopsis

Major General Sid Shachnow is more than a highly decorated Vietnam War veteran with two Silver and three Bronze Stars with V for Valor. He survived a crucible far crueller than the jungles of Vietnam: Nazi-occupied Eastern Europe, spending three years in the notorious Kovno concentration camp as a child. At age ten, with nothing but rags on his back, he was finally able to flee that hellhole. Most of those he left behind died. After returning to his home in Lithuania, now occupied by the Soviets, and finding it unbearable, Shachnow and his family decided to head west, often on foot, across Europe to the U.S. zone in Germany, where they found refuge. To earn a living in the grim aftermath of war, he smuggled black market contraband for American GIs. His next journey was to America, where he worked his way through school and enlisted in the U.S. Army, volunteering for U.S. Special Forces, where he served for thirty-two years. His primary goal was to save others from the indignities he had endured and the deadly fate he so narrowly escaped. From Vietnam to the Middle East to the Berlin Wall, Sydney Shachnow served in Special Operations. He grew as Special Forces grew, receiving both a master's and a doctoral degree. He traveled the world, rising to major general, responsible for American Special Forces everywhere, but the lessons of Kovno stayed with him wherever he turned, wherever he soldiered. *Hope and Honor* is a powerful and dramatic memoir that shows how the will to live---so painfully refined in the fires of that long-ago death camp---was forged, at last, into truth of soul and wisdom of the heart. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Sid Shachnow had an extraordinary life, part of it kind of random, having been born in the wrong place at the wrong time, a young Jewish boy in a Jewish family who ends up going through the hell of the Nazi's entering their town in Lithuania at the beginning of the gradual extermination of millions. To get a quick synopsis of the story, go to his daughter LeeAnne's review on Goodreads:[...]... Here are some of the things that impressed me about his story:1. There were several reasons Sid was able to navigate himself out of the horrible Nazi situation: he had the courage to live, forage for food in guarded gardens, under the floorboards of party member's homes, to make loyal friends along the way, he had a resourceful Uncle who got intel that helped him get out of impending doom just in time and there were people, not always perfect people, who took him in and hid him. He had the kind of personality that wouldn't give up, a positive way about him that people liked and it served him well all throughout his life. He was a friendly gutty guy and somehow was able to keep a positive attitude. These characteristics served him well his whole life.2. He didn't blush about telling the whole story, even a little bit about the sex lives of his parents, that his dad was a bit of a wuss, the way the other prisoners tricked him into compromising situations, that even as a leader, he had reservations about Viet Nam, that when questionable things happened in his career he came up with politically correct answers, that he was lucky in many ways. And although he received many combat awards, many for valor, it never felt like bragging. He did what it took to get through a situation, many times not even knowing or acknowledging that he had been hit, and finished the task. He remained humble and positive at all times.3. Part of the story is of family, family relationships, to some extent, from the perspective of having been born Jewish. There are many philosophical comments about how unfortunate it is that people are raised from the time of childhood to hold bigoted and horrible contempt toward other people. But he's very fair about how this works in reverse, his own parents having held a negative feeling and irritation at Sid's own beautiful and loving positive wife Arlene who happened to be a Catholic. Their treatment of her was heart breaking. Sid was always devoted to his own family and three of the four daughters ended up with military husbands, the fourth married an AOL guy, LOL.4. It was interesting to get a feeling for the way the military works with its promotions, discipline, sometimes heavy drinking, training, etc. Sid was an uneducated guy, didn't even graduate from high school, wasn't yet a citizen of the US when he volunteered for the army and yet he rose to the top. Part of the story is the amazing American story, how a guy with guts and integrity with little background can get to the top. I enjoyed his descriptions of the other men he dealt with in the military. It is also the story of the Special Forces and how that started small and with Sid's help,

evolved into the important role that it plays today. Sid's background in the ghettos in Europe gave him part of the special training and language skills he needed to become such a major part of this important development.⁵ It sometimes reads like historical fiction. Having read so much fiction, I sometimes had to remind myself that this was a true story. I found it fascinating and interesting from the first page. I know Sid and Arlene almost as well as my own parents and I know more about Sid's parent's than my own grandparents. Thanks Sid for having the guts to tell an honest and open story in the true but humble way you told it. It's leaders like you that make this a great place to live. The title of the book is perfect. You are a good good man and I learned a lot. (less)

I was stationed in Berlin under Gen Shachnow, and to be completely honest, I don't think the officer corps understood what he had gone through in his life to be where he was then. I would have very much liked to have listened to Gen Shachnow tell his story over a quiet beer in the officer's club.

General Shachnow was commander of the Berlin Brigade while I served there from 1988-1991. I remember shaking his hand and receiving an award in the NCO club across the street from Clay Headquarters. I had heard his story from my chain of command in Building 3, and was in awe. Thank you sir for your kind words of encouragement that day.

Hope and Honor is the true story of the life of Sidney Shachnow, who spent the formative years of his childhood in Lithuanian concentration camp and would years later rise to become a General in the US Army. General Shachnow and his talented co-author Jann Robbins make us feel we are right there every step of the way as we follow his life from the camps to life as a refugee in post war Lithuania and Germany to coming over to America and going through the hard process of assimilating to US culture. The book was an eye opener to me as I never really gave much thought, sad to say, of the struggles immigrants from other cultures must face when they come to America to forge a new life for themselves and their families. Though some of the passages are difficult to digest to the intense brutality and violence (both physical and emotional), Hope and Honor is a compelling read and you'll be all the richer for having read it.

This is the best book I've read recently and I heartily recommend it. The first and most harrowing part of the book deals with General Shachnow's childhood and miraculous survival of the Holocaust. The protagonist of the story is primarily Shachnow's mother -- an extraordinary, quick witted and determined woman. It is mainly due to her efforts and incredible daring that both her children (one of

whom was a mere toddler) survived, while pretty much everyone around them perished. Her strength through the war and the heartbreaks and challenges of the family's post war experiences were to me the most touching and heartrending aspect of the book. Shachnow does a fine job at crediting his mother's extraordinary sacrifices and bravery, but also touchingly describing her weaknesses and eventual failures. The second part of the book, which in some ways is just as touching, deals with the Shachnow family's move first to post-war Germany and then to the US. The immigration experience was particularly rough on General Shachnow, who arrived in the US as an unschooled and traumatized teenager, but managed, through toil and faith to complete high school successfully. Shachnow's parents fared less well. They seemed unable to transition to the new culture and its demands. Shachnow speculates that his mother had used up all her strength and ingenuity to survive and therefore found herself unable to cope with the new world. Shachnow tells us how the graceful heroine of the Kovno Ghetto turns into a nagging, selfish and small-minded woman, whose behavior inhibits her and her husband from succeeding in their new life. In one of the saddest parts of the book, Shachnow describes his break from his family following his marriage to a non-Jewish girl -- an event that his family treated with neither wisdom nor grace. The final part of the book is devoted to General Shachnow's military career, starting with his enlistment as a private at the end of his high school studies. His rise to the rank of general is described with humility and is of much interest, though, like other reviewers, I wish it was more extensive. This is an extraordinary book. In part it made me cry (the touching love between the brothers and the terrible heartbreak of Sidney's parents experiences in the US) and in part it made me wonder. But most of all -- the book inspired me. This is the story of the incredible power of love to save lives, to give meaning to existence. It's the story of familial ties and their challenges. This is the story of the ultimate inevitability of success to those who are sufficiently persistent. And finally -- it's the story of true patriotism and leadership. It's a must read. I heard the book on CD (Blackstone Audio), read by the excellent Brian Emerson.

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