



The Top 5 Greatest Generals: Alexander the Great, Hannibal, Julius Caesar, Genghis Khan, and Napoleon Bonaparte

Charles River Editors

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Includes pictures depicting important people, places, and events in each man's life.

Discusses interesting, lesser known facts about each man and answers common myths and misconceptions about them. Was Alexander referenced in the Qur'an? What were Caesar's last words? Was Napoleon really short?

Includes bibliographies on Napoleon and Alexander for further reading.

Includes a Table of Contents.

Over the last 2,000 years, ambitious men have dreamed of conquering vast empires and attaining eternal glory in battle, but of all the men who took steps toward such dreams, few were as successful as Alexander the Great, Hannibal, Julius Caesar, Genghis Khan, and Napoleon Bonaparte, all of whom have been inextricably tied together by their successes and ambitions.

Over the last 200 years, would-be conquerors and generals hoped to rival Napoleon's accomplishments, while Napoleon aimed to emulate the accomplishments of Julius Caesar. But Caesar himself found inspiration in Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.), the Macedonian King who managed to stretch an empire from Greece to the Himalayas in Asia at just 30 years old. It took less than 15 years for Alexander to conquer much of the known world. Alexander was responsible for establishing 20 cities in his name across the world, most notably Alexandria in Egypt, and he was directly responsible for spreading Ancient Greek culture as far east as modern day India and other parts of Asia.

Hannibal has the distinction of being the only man who nearly brought Rome to its knees before its decline almost 700 years later. Rome never suffered a more horrifying defeat in its history than at Cannae, and indeed, Hannibal nearly rewrote the course of Western history during the Second Punic War. Even today there remains great debate on just how he accomplished his masterful invasion of Italy across the Alps. Since his army included war elephants, historians still argue over exactly where and how he crossed over 2,000 years after he managed that incredible feat. Hannibal will always be listed among history's greatest generals, and his military campaign in Italy during the Second Punic War will always be studied, but part of the aura and mystique surrounding the Carthaginian legend is that there is still a lot of mystery.

The ultimate conqueror, statesman, dictator, visionary, and opportunist, during his time in power Caesar expanded the borders of Rome to almost twice their previous size, revolutionized the infrastructure of the Roman state, and destroyed the Roman Republic for good, leaving a line of emperors in its place. His legacy is so strong that his name has become, in many languages, synonymous with power: the Emperors of Austria and Germany bore the title Kaiser, and the Czars of Russia also owe the etymology of their title to Caesar. His name also crept further eastward out of Europe, even cropping up in Hindi and Urdu, where the term for "Emperor" is Kaisar.

In a world fascinated by men like Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar, Genghis Khan is one of history's greatest and most famous conquerors. No man, before or since, has ever started with so little and gone on to achieve so much. From a noble family but raised in poverty that drove him to the brink of starvation, Genghis Khan rose to control the second-largest empire the world has ever known (the largest being, arguably, the British Empire of the 18th and 19th centuries), and easily the largest empire conquered by a single man. And while many empires disintegrate upon the death of an emperor, like Alexander the Great's, Genghis Khan's empire endured and was actually enlarged by his successors, who went on to establish dynasties that in some cases lasted for centuries.

Napoleon Bonaparte was the most successful French leader since Charlemagne and widely acknowledged as

one of the greatest generals ever. Indeed, Napoleon was likely the most influential man of the 19th century, leaving an indelible mark on everything from the strategy and tactics of warfare to the Napoleonic Code that drafted laws across the continent. To defeat Napoleon, the Europeans had to form large coalitions multiple times, which helped bring about the entangling alliances that sparked World War I after Europe was rebuilt following Waterloo and the Congress of Vienna.

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