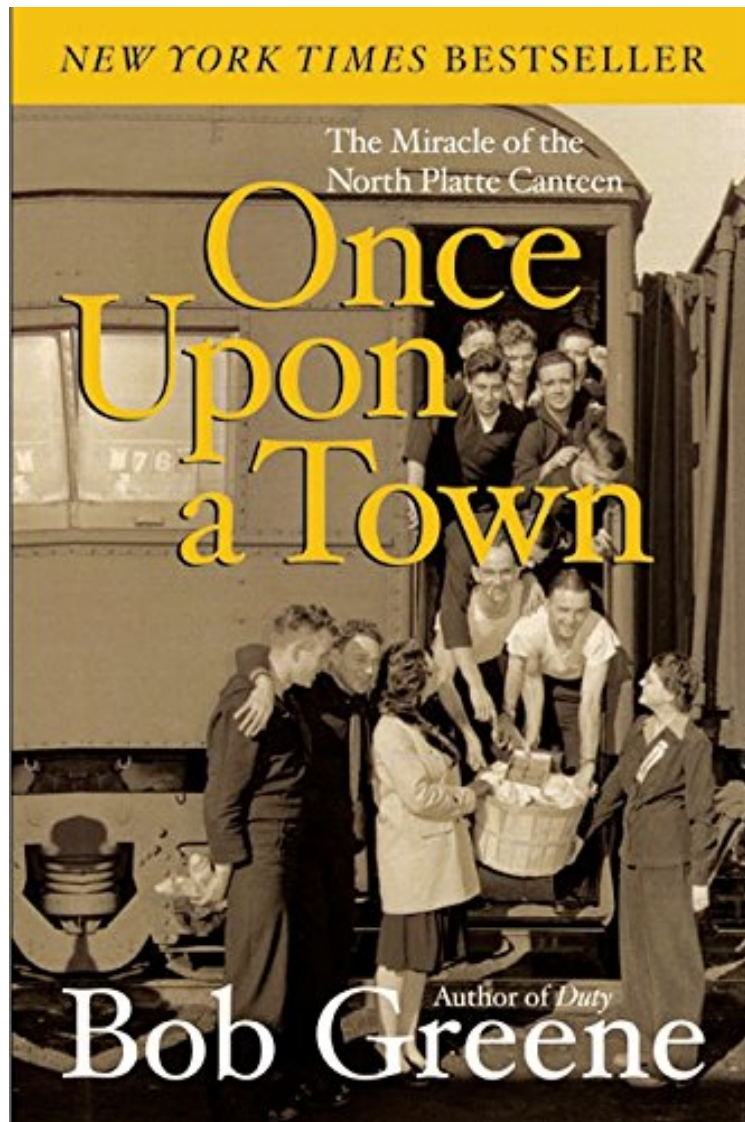


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Once Upon a Town: The Miracle of the North Platte Canteen

Bob Greene

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Bob Greene : Once Upon a Town: The Miracle of the North Platte Canteen before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Once Upon a Town: The Miracle of the North Platte Canteen:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Fitting addition to the obituary of a youngster growing up in 1920s North Plate By B. S. Dungan I am grateful to have read this book. In 1925, my father Roger Allen Dungan was born in North Plate. He moved to Denver w/ his single mother and older sister, joining the Navy upon graduating high school in 1943. Did he pass through North Platte as a sailor and experience the Canteen? Although in the later years of his life

he spoke about growing up in North Platte-> he never mentioned knowing about the wartime Canteen. We buried dad this year (2017) in Fort Logan National Cemetery outside Denver; reading about the North Platte Canteen was a fitting addition to the obituary of a youngster growing up in 1920s North Platte. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Clearly written about the authors sojourn into the past to ...By breachplug Clearly written about the authors sojourn into the past to discover and explain the events that occurred in North Platte during WWII. North Platte, Nebraska, was a whistle stop along the Union Pacific railroad during WWII to obtain additional coal and water for the massive steam locomotives. These troop trains were carrying the men in the military from various bases throughout the US to their ports of embarkation during the war and bringing the veterans home after the war. You weren't normally allowed off the trains while in transit; however, for a very short 10 or 15 minutes they were allowed to disembark at the North Platte Canteen. What the service personnel experienced there was never forgotten by them or to those who served them to this very day. First hand interviews with aging participants brings this historic event to life. Anyone interested in what when in this country during WWII needs to read this book. The attitudes of the volunteers involved, their unselfish giving to others and their dedication to man the canteen could never be duplicated today. The only short coming is there are no photographs of this historical event to highlight the story. However, if there is only one book you must read about the home front during WWII, this is it! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. So it was wonderful to learn about a part of that era that ...By Joann Roskoski Although my father fought in WWII, he spoke very little about his experiences. So it was wonderful to learn about a part of that era that touched so many people's lives. I really liked the effort the author made to find service folks who had experienced the warm generosity of this small Nebraska town and the volunteers who were associated with setting up and running the canteen. It's an easy read, often funny, always poignant, and informative, that stays with you long after you're finished. I only wish that the railroad company had the wits to preserve the station. They still have a huge freight yard operation in North Platte so they could have if they wanted to. I'm sure the station would be a strong candidate to be named a National Historic Site. Opportunity missed.

In search of "the best America there ever was," bestselling author and award-winning journalist Bob Greene finds it in a small Nebraska town few people pass through today—a town where Greene discovers the echoes of the most touching love story imaginable: a love story between a country and its sons. During World War II, American soldiers from every city and walk of life rolled through North Platte, Nebraska, on troop trains en route to their ultimate destinations in Europe and the Pacific. The tiny town, wanting to offer the servicemen warmth and support, transformed its modest railroad depot into the North Platte Canteen. Every day of the year, every day of the war, the Canteen—staffed and funded entirely by local volunteers—was open from five a.m. until the last troop train of the day pulled away after midnight. Astonishingly, this remote plains community of only 12,000 people provided welcoming words, friendship, and baskets of food and treats to more than six million GIs by the time the war ended. In this poignant and heartwarming eyewitness history, based on interviews with North Platte residents and the soldiers who once passed through, Bob Greene tells a classic, lost-in-the-mists-of-time American story of a grateful country honoring its brave and dedicated sons.

.com Millions of American soldiers, many of whom had never left their hometowns before, crossed the nation by rail during the years of World War II on their way to training camps and distant theaters of battle. In a little town in Nebraska, countless thousands of them met with extraordinary hospitality--the "miracle" of veteran journalist Bob Greene's title. "The best America there ever was. Or at least, whatever might be left of it." So Greene writes of North Platte, now a quiet town along the interstate, its main street all but dead. It was a quiet town then, too, at the outbreak of the war, but still a hive of activity as its citizens gathered to provide, at their own expense, coffee, sandwiches, books, playing cards, and time to the scared young men who rolled through by the trainload, "telling them that their country cared about them." Greene's pages are full of the voices of those who were there, soldiers and townspeople alike, who took part in what amounted to small acts of heroism, given the shortages and rationing of the time. Greene, generous in his praise if rather disheartened by the modern world, against which he contrasts the past, turns in a remarkable account of the home front. It deserves the widest audience. ---Gregory McNamee From Publishers Weekly Chicago Tribune columnist Greene (Duty) provides a moving, detailed remembrance of North Platte, Neb., and its residents' selfless contribution to the war effort during WWII. The town, located in the middle of the middle of the country, was situated on the rail line to western military bases. Ignited by a letter printed in a local newspaper, the town's residents organized a canteen for soldiers headed for the front lines, bringing food, cigarettes and magazines. Greene interviews locals, war veterans and former residents, offering a genuine but unsentimental glimpse of Americana. LaVon Fairley Kemper remembers one volunteer who learned that her son had been killed in combat, yet said, I can't help my son, but I can help someone else's son. For the soldiers, Greene writes, the canteen and the townspeople's welcome was indicative of the nation's sacrifice, a point driven home in several memorable anecdotes. The young soldiers saw the brief stop in North Platte as one last chance to be carefree, an opportunity to jitterbug and flirt with the fresh-faced teenaged girls for a safe, fleeting moment. Beyond the wartime recollections, Greene reflects

on his travels in the region, skillfully chronicling its citizens, evolution and love for its past, using the intimate, engaging writing style familiar to readers of his syndicated column. Those intrigued with WWII lore will find this well-crafted book an entertaining snapshot of a simpler, kinder America. Greene's skill makes this homage not just a time capsule but a work that will strike a resonating chord in those seeking to remember the generosity and selflessness of many when faced with adversity and peril. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Greene, author of the best-selling *Duty*, here depicts the little North Dakota town that ran a canteen for troops passing through on their way to World War II. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.