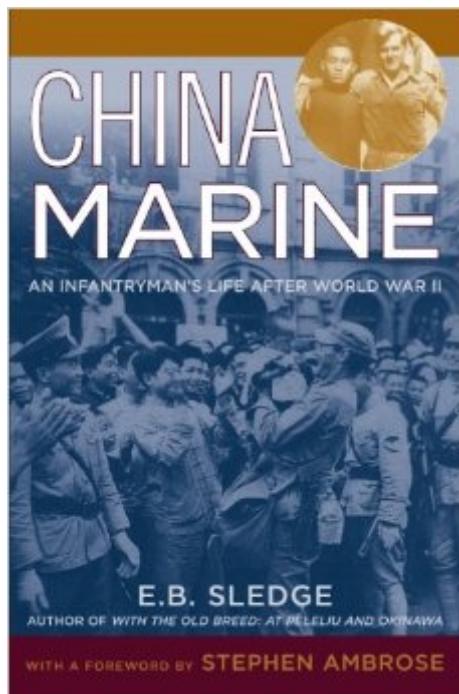


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China Marine: An Infantryman's Life After World War II



Synopsis

See E.B. Sledge's story in the HBO miniseries The Pacific!China Marine is the extraordinary sequel to E.B. Sledge's memoir, With the Old Breed, which remains the most powerful and moving account of the U.S. Marines in World War II. Sledge continues his story where With the Old Breed left off and recounts the compelling conclusion of his Marine career. After Japan's surrender in 1945, Sledge and his company were sent to China to maintain order and to calm the seething cauldron of political and ideological unrest created by opposing factions. His regiment was the first Marine unit to return to the ancient city of Peiping (now Beijing) where they witnessed the last of old China and the rise of the Communist state. Sledge also recounts the difficulty of returning to his hometown of Mobile, Alabama, and resuming civilian life while haunted by shadows of close combat. Through the discipline of writing and the study of biology, he shows how he came to terms with the terrifying memories that had plagued him for years. Poignant and compelling, China Marine provides a frank depiction of the real costs of war, emotional and psychological as well as physical, and reveals the enduring bond that develops between men who face the horrors of war.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

China Marine Gene Sledge is an old friend although I've never met him. Any book by him is more than worth the few dollars it would take to own it. Most Americans have no knowledge of the fact that immediately following WW II 60,000 U. S. Marines were sent into North China. Their real purpose was to keep that area from falling into the hands of Mao Tse Tsung's 8th Route Army when the Japanese withdrew. We Marines were to fill the gap, and then turn this critical ground that

contained much of the coal available in China. The Russians raised hell in the UN about the US not repatriating the Jap troops to their mainland. The US objective was to maintain them in place as additional insurance in order to keep Mao's ChiComs in Manchuria the caves of Yemen where they had been kept in check by the Japs during WW II. With pressure from the UN, the last of the Japs and Koreans were sent home by about June of 1946, leaving a dwindling number of Marines to literally "hold the fort." Essentially, this is what Sledge writes about. Imagine to have survived the battles for Peleliu and Okinawa only to be sent to North China where too many Marines were to be killed. Sledge, because of his time overseas, was able to leave China early in '46, as I recall. Those of us who had arrived late to the Pacific Theater during WW II would remain guarding the railroads and bridges that moved the coal. And so, you say: "How come I haven't read anything about this? It was not mentioned in my History classes in high school or college." I have a story on my web site that may interest you: [...]%20Ho/Hsin%20Ho.

I put off reading this work by E.B. Sledge for a long time. I had read "With the Old Breed" a number of years ago and gave it a reread more recently. In my opinion, and the opinion of many, many others, 'Old Breed' is the best firsthand account of combat experience by an enlisted man ever written. It deals with the battle at Peleliu and Okinawa; both battles of which the author survived...one of only 10 men that made it out of 240. I will admit though that Sledge's first book was a traumatic reading experience. On one hand I did not want to put myself through that again, but on the other hand, I was fascinated that a man could survive this ordeal and, to be quite frank, ever be whole again. I actually worried about this very, very brave man and what became of him. This work, China Marine, begins where "Old Breed" ends. After Japan surrendered, E.B. Sledge was sent to Northern China in order to keep the peace there during the transition after the long Japanese occupation. The majority of the book covers this period of his life; records his experiences and observations and shares with us how he begins the healing process. A goodly portion of the book gives his account of his returning to civilian life; the adjustments and the mental process he went through. The reader should note that if he or she is looking for a blood and guts combat account, then they should look elsewhere. That is not the purpose of this work. No, this is the personal story of a man whose entire world was changed and who lived through an ordeal that was with him through the rest of his life. It is a rather sensitive story and a story that most certainly should have been told. Two years ago a dear friend of mine died.

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