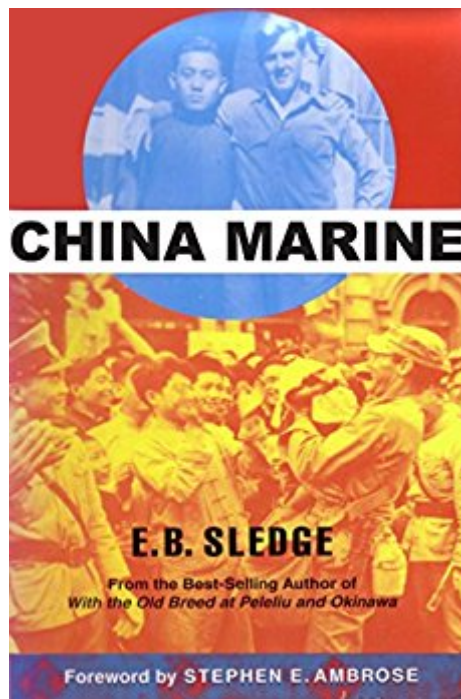


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# China Marine



## Synopsis

From the respected author of one of the best books on World War II combat, comes an equally captivating saga of battle recovery, healing, and homecoming. *China Marine* is the long-awaited sequel to E. B. Sledge's critically acclaimed memoir, *With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa*. Picking up where his previous memoir leaves off, Sledge, a young marine in the First Division, traces his company's movements and charts his own difficult passage to peace following his horrific experiences in the Pacific. He reflects on his duty in the ancient city of Peiping (now Beijing) and recounts the difficulty of returning to his hometown of Mobile, Alabama, and resuming civilian life haunted by the shadows of close combat. Distinguished historians have praised Sledge's first book as the definitive rifleman's account of World War II, ranking it with the Civil War's *Red Badge of Courage* and World War I's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Although *With the Old Breed* ends with the surrender of Japan, marines in the Pacific were still faced with the mission of disarming the immense Japanese forces on the Asian mainland and reestablishing order. For infantrymen so long engaged in the savage and surreal world of close combat, there remained the personal tasks of regaining normalcy and dealing with suppressed memories, fears, and guilt. In *China Marine*, E. B. Sledge completes his story and provides emotional closure to the searing events detailed in his first memoir. He speaks frankly about the real costs of war, emotional and psychological as well as physical, and explains the lifetime loyalties that develop between men who face fear, loss, and horror together. That bond becomes one of the newfound treasures of life after battle. With his hallmark style of simplicity, directness, and lack of sentimentality, "Sledgehammer" has given us yet another great document of war literature.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

E. B. Sledge's "With the Old Breed" is by common consent one of the finest -- if not the finest -- account of the life of a combat infantryman in World War II. At Pelieu and Okinawa, Sledge was one of only 10 men in his Marine company of 240 to escape being wounded or killed. "China Marine" is the follow-up to "With the Old Breed," a lesser work but one that tells of what happened to Sledge after the war. With Sledge's experience, one would have thought that he would have been among the first among the military to be demobilized after the end of the war with Japan -- but no, he and his colleagues were sent to China to disarm the Japanese soldiers there and to maintain order in several northern Chinese cities. This is Sledge's account of the six months he spent in China. His view is that of a Private First Class -- but an educated and sophisticated PFC, the son of a medical doctor from Mobile, Alabama, and an outstanding writer. He delighted in Peking, fresh food, a clean bunk, light duties, and friendship with the sophisticated Soong family -- but the danger from attack by communist armies was always there. Sledge goes on to tell of the trauma of his discharge from the Marines and homecoming to Mobile and, very briefly, his long years of struggle with what we call today Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. It's a brief book, only 160 pages, and an interesting, beautifully written, account of the decompression of a combat soldier and his return home. Sledge died in 2001 but he was often quoted in Ken Burn's recent PBS series on World War II. Sledge is a true American hero. Smallchief

First, a brief note about the binding: I've worn out too many paperbacks to ever believe them to be suitable for long use. This is a book which is best bought in the hardback version. The reader will want to keep a copy forever to re-read, underline and make marginal notes so it is worth the extra price to have this sturdier edition. The few extra dollars for this hardcover edition will be worth it in just a few years of reading. ---China Marine impresses me as being the more moving of Sledge's two autobiographies. With The Old Breed speaks of the power of War but this book speaks of the power of Man. I realize that with the HBO miniseries coming out With the Old Breed will continue to be

more popular but China Marine has points in its favor. Certainly one should read both if they ever expect to understand the subject. As a second book "China Marine" is more readable and I'm not sure that is because he is more experienced in writing or he is not having to stop every few lines to explain to naive civilians the exact color of the mud of war, sound of heavy bombardment and grief of watching his friends being chewed apart. "With the Old Breed" ends with him half starved, abused to the point of exhaustion and with the stench of death in his nostrils but "China Marine" shows him to build on US Marine traditions and support of family and friends to create a new life after the purgatory of battle. Particularly the book shows his depth of character better, since he gives himself time to describe not just his observations but to show the mind and heart behind them. And as one of his former students I can vouch that he had a very big heart.

I just finished this book...once I picked it up I couldn't put it down. I really don't think there is enough written out there about this subject and what these guys went thru there.

I read With the Old Breed back in 2002 when I was at Camp Courtney, Okinawa. China Marine was part of the original manuscript for With the Old Breed, but was chopped by the publisher since they figured no one would be interested in what happened after the war. In China Marine, Eugene Sledge addresses the period after 1st MarDiv was redeployed from Okinawa in the Fall of 1945 to North China, and ultimately the anticlimactic redeployment home by individuals as their points came up. I found this book to be fascinating and something I could really relate to. The war didn't just end with everyone going home and living happily ever after, which is the impression given by many books and documentaries about the war era. There was a lot to be done after the war was officially over, and these men were carrying a lot of emotional baggage. I have to admit that after reading these two books, I feel like I know Sledgehammer like a personal friend. His writing style is both engaging and captivating, and this is a relatively short read. One thing that is rarely addressed in period writings is the problems many of these men had in coming home and adapting to a society that was very detached from much of what happened in the war. Sledge addresses a few chapters to that process, and how he had changed as a person. I consider this a fantastic book and highly recommend it to anyone who read With the Old Breed and wanted to know what happened next.

Another great book from the author of With the Old Breed. Well written memoir of a little known or discussed era of American military occupation abroad. Unfortunately, Sledge had a very limited exposure and time in country so it is not a very expansive narrative. Great book all the same, but it

does not rise to level of adding to the historical record like Old Breed did.

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