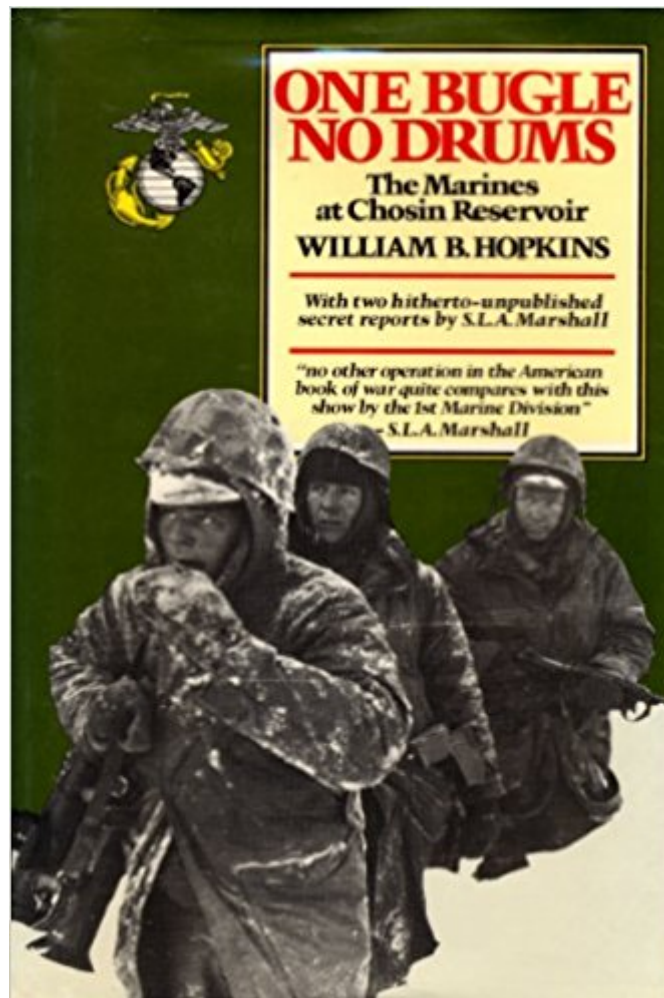




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One Bugle, No Drums: The Marines At Chosin Reservoir



Synopsis

Korea, December 1950. The temperature has plunged to 20-degrees below zero. Cold enough to crack rocket-launcher ammo wide open. But not cold enough to stop a massive Communist assault against U.S. forces. As the 8th Army retreats, the Marines dig in at Chosin Reservoir and are quickly cut off and surrounded. This is the riveting account of what happened next. The brilliant Marine attack that was to become a classic in military operations. The personal heroism, private ordeals, bitter fighting, and final victory. Told in the powerful words of a man who was there, it is a story you will never forget.

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Customer Reviews

Hopkins', "One Bugle, No Drums" is a marvelous look at one small slice of the Korean War; the battle near the Chosen Reservoir in North Korea. In a battle against four to one odds and in the coldest weather ever ought in, the 1st Marine Division, surrounded by a Chinese and North Korean Army numbering several 100,000's fought their way to safety and literally destroyed the fighting ability of their adversary. The Korean War was the last of its kind, and likely will be the last, unless

one considers the still to come Battle of Armageddon, where there were identifiable front lines across which the adversaries face off against each other. Initially, the war suffered from a number of serious short-comings: America was unprepared for war, with insufficient and largely untrained soldiers (with the exception of the Marines) and poorly equipped as well, American military High Command remained in Japan, far removed from the fighting men,. The intelligence gathered and disseminated from Japan was almost universally faulty and bore little semblance to the conditions on the battlefield. Lastly, the belief on the part of America's political leaders and the Military High Command that the Chinese would not enter the war proved to be totally wrong and resulted in a number of serious miscalculations resulting in unnecessary loss of life. Another miscalculation was the decision to separate American forces into smaller units and move rapidly toward the North Korean border with China. This resulted in large numbers of American forces being surrounded causing the destruction of a large part of an Army Division and the 1st Marines having to battle their way to safety. This book is a tribute to the quality of the leadership of the 1st Marines and the quality and ability of the American Marine serviceman who fought in the Chosen Reservoir Battle in the first ever face-off between the United States and the Chinese military. It is well worth your effort to read.

After reading the account of the debacle at Chosin Reservoir, I was amazed how one individual in command could disregard so much given information, and make such poor decisions. As a child in elementary school, I remember being sent home to watch the senate hearing commission, which General Douglas MacArthur was to speak. I watched his "Old Soldiers Never Die..." and was very impressed...as a child, of course. Through the years, I learned that many mistakes were made during the Korean conflict, but never has one book told the whole story, good and bad, as "One Bugle No Drums" I learned that no other General in the history of the United States received so much input from the front lines on a day to day basis as MacArthur, yet he discounted the information as rumor only and made decisions based upon his own thinking. The result was the near disastrous loss of a division of soldiers and his ultimate loss of a job, hence his retirement speech. Had the general public known the truth then, his station in history would have been greatly reduced. I am a retired navy Hospital Corpsman having served 17 of 30 years attached to the USMC and was very much touched by this factual book. It is definitely a must read for anyone interested in military history.

The author, a participant in the combat about which he writes, offers at least four strands of information emerging from the Marines response to the Chinese incursion into the Korean War: first,

the human side of being a member of the Marine Corps in combat; second, the organizational response of the Marines to Chinese combat strategy; third, combat under conditions of extreme cold; fourth, opinions about the highest levels of American military and political decision-making in the movement North to the Chosin area. The last strand one can take or leave, since they are the ground level observations of one who had no intimate knowledge of the basis for the decisions. My own reaction was to take note and pass on since there is now so much detailed and informed discussion available elsewhere. It is the three other elements which continue to make the book useful reading for the lay reader wanting to know something about what is often referred to today, as the "forgotten war". On the first point, he is able to convey something of the feelings of an ordinary WW2 veteran who stayed on in the Marine reserve after its end and then found himself called up to serve under conditions of extreme difficulty. The second point is a good historical one pointing up some of the factors which made the Marines successful where the Army in that stage did not fare nearly as well. (One element he did not mention at all: ,most of the Army men were the product of reserve units and draftees who had never seriously been trained for combat and, through no fault of their own, went in like lambs to the slaughter). Most useful of all is the front line image of just what extreme cold can do to even the best trained of soldiers and otherwise good equipment (on both sides of the combat line). Having just reviewed a book on the impact of intense humidity and heat in WW2 combat, I found the contrast bizarre but the impact similar: a reduction in efficacy of even the best trained troops. S.L.A. Marshall, in WW2, one of the founders of the modern school of military history (telling the story of the guys who fought at ground level), produced a report for the Military which is seeing its first publication as an addendum to this book. It summarizes some of the most valuable points about performance of men, organization and equipment during this period. For the lay reader, this is a good retelling of one of the most brutal campaigns American troops have had to wage. There is much else to be said of the War itself, but the story he tells is worth attending to. (He speaks of the reserve of Roanoke being called up and marching off to War. I didn't get to live in that area until some years later, but I did see the same picture, Marines being called up and marching, this time, through the streets of Duluth, the Summer of 1950. Little did I think I would be joining these guys, a while later, on that finger of land jutting out from the Asian mass, ...although in a different branch of service and when the prospects were a lot brighter....a matter of pure chance in the draft lottery, but one for which I remain grateful.)

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