

Books Reviewed

Unless otherwise noted, these books may be ordered from the MCA Bookservice. Subscribers may use members' prices. Include \$3.50 for shipping, plus \$1 for each additional book. Virginia residents add 4½ percent sales tax. Prices may change. Make checks or money orders payable to: MCA, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, or call toll-free: (888) 237-7683.

A FEW GOOD MEN. THE FIGHTING FIFTH MARINES: A History of the USMC's Most Decorated Regiment. By Ronald J. Brown. Published by Presidio Press. 430 pages. Stock #0891417362. \$26.95 MCA Members. \$29.95 Non-members.

In "A Few Good Men," Ronald Brown tells the story of the Fighting Fifth Marines—the Fifth Marine Regiment, First Marine Division. But Brown's book is more than an organizational history of the most decorated regiment in the Corps. In recounting the experiences of the regiment from a Caribbean floating reaction force in 1914 through its participation in Operation Desert Storm, Brown also outlines the growth of the Marine Corps from a naval constabulary to a modern force-in-readiness.

More importantly, as Brown describes the regiment's actions in various conflicts, he also provides the reader with insight into how generations of Marines have translated unit spirit and pride into success on the battlefield. To use John W. Thomason's famous phrase, these are "such things as regiments hand down forever."

Thomason was referring to the often-intangible ingredients that constitute the character of an organization. As one who has fought as a member of the Fifth Marine Regiment, Brown clearly understands its character and the traditions that bond one generation of the 5th Marines to the next. Throughout the pages of this book, he masterfully shares that understanding with the reader.

Brown's book focuses on the 5th Marines' experience in each of the major conflicts of the 20th century, as well as the period between World Wars I and II. In addition to providing an overview of the key battles or events in each era, Brown blends in anecdotes that provide the reader with a perspective on the characteristics and colorful personalities that shaped the regiment. While the book highlights the positive factors and superb Marines that contributed to the many successes of the regiment, Brown doesn't hesitate to share less complimentary perspectives.

In the chapter on WW I, Brown points out the significance of the regiment's aggressive approach to training throughout its time in France. In particular, he highlights that despite French skepticism, Colonel Charles Doyen, the regiment's first commanding officer, placed significant emphasis on marksmanship training. The wisdom of this focus was validated in battle. After the action at Belleau Wood, one 5th Marines' leader said, "Our rifle fire seemed to take the heart out of the Germans. ... Suddenly [those still alive] broke and ran."

Brown also brings to life some of the individual Marines like Gunnery Sergeant Herman Tharau, Captain George Hamilton and Sergeant Louis Cukela, whose leadership and bravery significantly contributed to success at Belleau Wood, Soissons, St. Mihiel and Blanc Mont. But the author doesn't romanticize. He also points out that the regiment's success was often achieved despite the fog of war, a lack of proper equipment, poor logistical support, missed opportunities and even poor leadership. The less than flattering characterization of the 2d Bn commander's performance at Belleau Wood is an example of the latter.

In Brown's description of the regiment's interwar activities, the reader can trace the transformation of the Marine Corps under the leadership of General John A. Lejeune and the development of Marine Corps amphibious expertise. In relaying the regiment's call to arms in WW II, Brown describes the difficult jungle fighting of Guadalcanal, the horrors of Peleliu and the weeks of grueling combat on Okinawa. Again, the author doesn't pull any punches when he discusses some of the war's tactical and logistical blunders, or the leadership of the division commander at Peleliu.

Prominently illustrated in the chapter on WW II are stories about Marine icons such as Master Gunnery Sergeant Lou Diamond and Lieutenant Colonel Lewis W. "Lew" Walt, as well as other determined and brave Marines. Brown makes it clear that it was these inspirational individuals and the pride each Marine

felt in his unit that brought success to the Fighting Fifth and the Corps.

Equally compelling is the book's chapter on Korea. In the descriptions of the fighting at Pusan, Seoul and Chosin, the reader gains an appreciation for the impact of the leadership and bravery of the regimental commander, LtCol Raymond L. "Ray" Murray, and the courage of Marines such as Private Whit Moreland.

There is a consistent theme found in the coverage of the Vietnam era. Que Son Valley, Hue City and An Hoa are put in perspective by the stories of Capt James Graham, Private First Class Melvin Newlin, Sgt Lawrence Peters and Lieutenant James Webb. Brown closes by describing how the regiment emerged from the darkness of the post-Vietnam era to a performance in Desert Storm consistent with its proud heritage.

Frederick the Great said, "All that can be done with the soldier is to give him esprit de corps—a higher opinion of his own regiment than all the other troops in the country." As an institution, the Marine Corps has always achieved that end by ensuring each Marine has an appreciation for the contributions of those who have come before.

In chronicling the first 83 years of the Fifth Marines, Ronald Brown has helped to ensure that his regiment will continue to hand down to future generations the sense of honor, courage and commitment that has come to define the title United States Marine. All past, present and future members of the Fighting Fifth Marines will treasure this book. All who have an interest in our Corps will be informed and inspired.

Col Joseph F. Dunford Jr.

Editor's note: Col Dunford is a career Marine infantry officer and is currently the commanding officer of the Fighting Fifth Marines at Camp Pendleton, Calif.

KOREA: The Last of the Fun Wars. By Kal and Anette Kalnasy. Published by Luminary Media Group. 123 pages with photos. Soft-cover. Stock #1930580126. \$15.25 MCA Members. \$16.95 Non-members.

The title caught my attention first. How could a war, so vicious and fought

