



The Run-Up to the Punch Bowl: A Memoir of the Korean War, 1951

John Nolan

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The noted author and literary scholar, Samuel Hynes, has remarked that there has been no great book on the Korean War, a significant gap in American military letters. It may be hoped that this account will help to meet at least part of that challenge.

This is a narrative of John Nolan's experience as a Marine rifle platoon leader in Korea in 1951, the pivotal year of the Korean War. Much of it reads like a journal, but it also includes the experiences of a half-dozen other Marine lieutenants fighting through the fog-shrouded mountains of the East-Central front during the year the war turned around. Individually, their heroism marked some of the top combat events of that time. Taken together, these accounts tell the story of fighting that year when the last Chinese offensive was stopped cold and the UN forces slugged their way back over the 38th parallel to the final line that exists today, more than a half century later.

The lieutenants came from all over and were educated at the Naval Academy, Notre Dame, Miami University and College of the Pacific. As Marine rifle platoon leaders, they were all wounded, some several times, and abundantly decorated. And since Korea, their lives have spanned a broad range of experience. Charlie Cooper retired as Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific; Joe Reed was a top executive at AT&T and later led the reorganization of Chicago's public schools; Jim Marsh left his enduring mark on the Marine Corps and the vast new USMC building at Quantico is named for him; Walter Murphy, a leading educator, author and novelist, was the McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence at Princeton; Bill Rockey had a distinguished Marine Corps career, as did his father before him; Eddie LeBaron was voted early into the College Football Hall of Fame and later led the NFL in passing during his years with the Washington Redskins and the Dallas Cowboys. John Nolan has practiced law in Washington, D.C. since shortly after returning from Korea.

What People Are Saying

"Great book! John Nolan has written a magnificent account of the Marines in action during the Korean War. It is a story about the Marine spirit and ethos. Every American should read this with pride in the Corps of Marines."

General Anthony C. Zinni, USMC (Ret.)

"It's a wonderful book. The writing is superb; it flows, it's moving, highly descriptive and strikes just the right tone - neither laconic nor emotional. Every Marine should read it."

Haynes Johnson, Journalist, Author

"This is a book about Marines, ordinary Americans who under unimaginable pressures do the extraordinary day after day. You will laugh. You will cry. And after reading John Nolan's memoir, you will have a far more profound understanding of the barbarity of war."

Mark Shields, Columnist; Commentator, The NewsHour

"John Nolan's timeless story of men in battle during the heavy fighting in Korea, 1951, bears all the marks of

a classic - good men, hard men, decent men in brutal, near-constant combat. What they accomplished in those battles would be reflected later in their lives - those who kept them - as many would become highly successful in the Marine Corps and in other careers."

Colonel John W. Ripley, USMC (Ret.) (*The Bridge at Dong Ha*)

"John Nolan learned about leadership the hard way - leading a Marine rifle platoon in close combat in Korea. He is modest, honest and tough. And his memoir is a compelling read."

Evan Thomas, Newsweek

"If you don't know how a few good Marines helped prevent the Korean War from becoming the world's most dangerous war, then join Lt. John Nolan's 1st Platoon, Baker Co., 1stBn, 1st Marines, 1st MarDiv. *The Run-Up to the Punch Bowl* is a clear-eyed, gritty, rich day-by-day account of what makes Marines go up the hill."

Roger Mudd, The Hi

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Jeff Wheeler:

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Jillian Harrington:

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