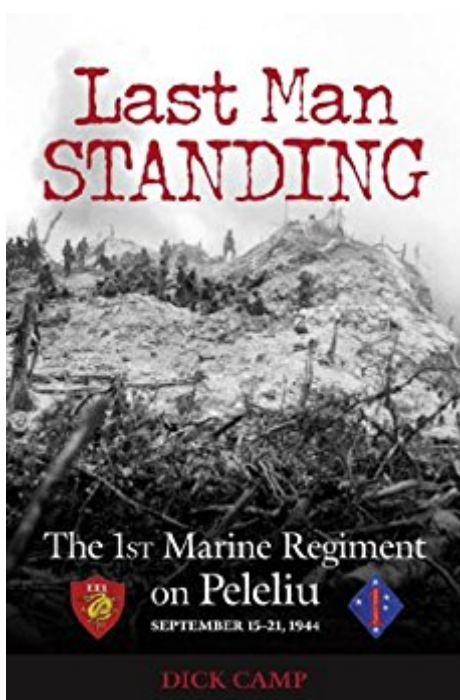


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Last Man Standing: The 1st Marine Regiment On Peleliu, September 15-21, 1944



Synopsis

One of the bloodiest battles in Marine Corps history, Operation Stalemate, as Peleliu was called, was overshadowed by the Normandy landings. It was also, in time, judged by most historians to have been unnecessary; though it had been conceived to protect MacArthur's flank in the Philippines, the U.S. fleet's carrier raids had eliminated Japanese airpower, rendering Peleliu irrelevant. Nevertheless, the horrifying number of casualties sustained there (71% in one battalion) foreshadowed for the rest of the war: rather than fight to the death on the beach, the Japanese would now defend in depth and bleed the Americans white. Drawing extensively on personal interviews, the Marine Corps History Division's vast oral history and photographic collection, and many never-before-published sources, this book gives us a new and harrowing vision of what really happened at Peleliu--and what it meant. Working closely with two of the 1st Regiment's battalion commanders--Ray Davis and Russ Honsowetz--Marine Corps veteran and military historian Dick Camp recreates the battle as it was experienced by the men and their officers. Soldiers who survived the terrible slaughter recall the brutality of combat against an implacable foe; they describe the legendary "Chesty" Puller, leading his decimated regiment against enemy fortifications; they tell of Davis, wounded but refusing evacuation while his men were under fire; and of a division commander who rejects Army reinforcements. Most of all, their richly detailed, deeply moving story is one of desperate combat in the face of almost certain failure, of valor among comrades joined against impossible odds.

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Customer Reviews

This is by far the most raw and realistic account of Peleliu I've read, and all were bone-chilling. These guys deserved so much praise for their ability to still move forward and obey when even their top officers had lost it. Most Pacific battles were horrible, but that word is somehow too weak for Peleliu. The one thing this book does, is provide the brutally honest view of the management of the operation. It leaves me scratching my head concerning the conclusions I'd held for so many years. Really worth reading no matter how many accounts of Peleliu you've read. It's not to be read quickly. It took me far longer to read than for a normal book of this size, which seems odd given that it is a blow by blow account. But for each "blow" it gives the background of the intense, almost irrationally frenetic, need to "get it over with" that the levels of command had going on.

Every American school kid should be read parts of this book, so that they know of the courage, bravery, and devotion to duty of the American Marines, The savagery of the fighting between the fanatical Japanese and the Marines surpassed anything in the European battles with the exception of the fighting between the Germans and the Russians. I remember as a young man, living in Melbourne in 1941, meeting young American Marines on leave from the battles of Gluadacanal, and being impressed with those fine young "Yanks". Americans should be very proud of their Marine Corps soldiers, and the thousands who died for their country.

Accurate picture of horrible combat in WWII. Hot, dirty, and digging foxholes was impossible in the Coral covered island. Conditions were deplorable but the Marines and Soldiers triumphed. Strong insight into all levels of personnel. Excellent well written book.

One of the best books I have ever read. I knew how horrendous this battle was but had no idea until reading the book just how horrendous it was. I have been on the U.S.S. Peleliu and the ship carries this name with great pride and deservedly so.

I served with 1st Bn 1st Marines in Vietnam in 1969-70. Chesty Puller has always been a mythical

figure to me and other Marines I've served with and know. This account of the Battle of Peleliu does not paint a flattering picture of the way Puller commanded his regiment. Unfortunately we are not given much new information about the battle that we haven't already received from Sledge, Hallas and others. All we really get is that Puller had a disconnect between what was going on in his head and what was really happening. No reason for this. He had excellent battalion commanders one of whom went on to receive the MOH in Korea (Ray Davis) but apparently dismissed their concerns. Let's not forget Rupertus whose obstinate refusal in the face of mounting casualties to call in reserves was almost criminal. All in all, a good book that deserves a place next to Sledge's "With the Old Breed" (most of whom were killed on Peleliu) and James Hallas' "Devil's Anvil" on your bookshelf.

Great!

In Last Man Standing, retired Marine Colonel Dick Camp has melded his own personal interviews, with material from the Marine Corps archives to tell the story of the First Marine Regiment on Peleliu, one of WWII's bloodiest battles. One of the Regiment's main objectives was a series of ridges dominated by Japanese machine-gun emplacements, known as Bloody-Nose Ridge. The Regiment's commander, the legendary Col. Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller repeatedly ordered them to take the heights in what basically amounted to a suicide mission, and wouldn't relent, even when told by his subordinates that it was impossible, as a result the unit was decimated. Camp's visceral writing style really makes the reader feel the helplessness these men must have felt. This book is lavishly illustrated with photographs which will give you a rifleman's eye-view of the fighting, when you combine this with Camp's harrowing combat narrative, there's no doubt that Last Man Standing will take its place alongside A Special Piece of Hell as the best books on the battle.

My father, being a survivor of the 1st Marine Division and 1st platoon, made this book a special event reading it. It was awesome and even showed my father twice in the pictorials.

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