



## Brotherhood of Heroes: The Marines at Peleliu, 1944--The Bloodiest Battle of the Pacific War

*Bill Sloan*

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## **Brotherhood of Heroes: The Marines at Peleliu, 1944--The Bloodiest Battle of the Pacific War Bill Sloan**

This *Band of Brothers* for the Pacific is the gut-wrenching and ultimately triumphant story of the Marines' most ferocious—yet largely forgotten—battle of World War II.

Between September 15 and October 15, 1944, the First Marine Division suffered more than 6,500 casualties fighting on a hellish little coral island in the Pacific. Peleliu was the setting for one of the most savage struggles of modern times, a true killing ground that has been all but forgotten—until now. Drawing on interviews with Peleliu veterans, Bill Sloan's gripping narrative seamlessly weaves together the experiences of the men who were there, producing a vivid and unflinching tableau of the twenty-four-hour-a-day nightmare of Peleliu.

Emotionally moving and gripping in its depictions of combat, *Brotherhood of Heroes* rescues the Corps's bloodiest battle from obscurity and does honor to the Marines who fought it.

## **Brotherhood of Heroes: The Marines at Peleliu, 1944--The Bloodiest Battle of the Pacific War Details**

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Author : Bill Sloan

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## **From Reader Review Brotherhood of Heroes: The Marines at Peleliu, 1944--The Bloodiest Battle of the Pacific War for online ebook**

### **Fritz Worley says**

this is by far one of the best books on the pacific war and the Marines who fought there. it focuses on the battle of Peleliu and the First Marine Division. there are some familiar Marines in the book for anybody who has seen the HBO mini-series The Pacific or read the book by Hugh Ambrose of the same name. Eugene Sledge, RV Burgin, Merrial "Snafu" Shelton, etc etc. Whats great is it isn't a rehashing of other books like some of the newer WW2 books can be at times. I literally got 10 pages in went to bed, got up the next day (Sunday) and read the rest of it straight through. I would recommend this book to anybody trying to get a taste or understand what it was like to fight in the Pacific in the later but bloodier battles of the island hopping campaign. Bill Sloan nailed it.

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### **Jasonwilkerson says**

About half of the book consists of conversations that took place on Peleliu in 1944. While the overall gist was--I am sure--accurate, such an abundance of conversations in which the actual words are forever lost to history to me seemed contrived. Clearly the author interviewed a great number of veterans and that is easy to appreciate in the book, but I think the story would have been better told to have been left as simply third person narrative.

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### **Jay says**

This is one of those World War II books that almost reaches the level of a "Time For Trumpets." It's an excellent history of a piece of the war, giving the reader a firm idea of what went on during the operation and its place in the broader course of the war. Sloan also lets you get to know a number of the Marines personally, with insights into their personalities and quirks, whether they survived the battle or not. In this way you get a much better feel for the eb and flow of the fighting, as well as the magnitude of the sacrifice America made by leaving some of these extraordinary men buried under the sand and coral of an insignificant atoll in the middle of the Pacific.

I have two complaints about the book, one large and one small. The small one is that it focuses on the operations of the Marines on Peleliu, which admittedly was probably necessary in order to keep the book at a manageable 350 pages. It would have been nice to know a little more about the role of the Navy, air assets, and especially the Army, but I say that because I had an uncle in the Army in the Pacific and I'm sensitive to the fact that too often his unit was called on to mop up after the main fighting was over.

My larger complaint--predictably, for those of you who know me--regards the scarcity of maps. In the edition I read, there is an opening map of the whole Pacific so that you can find Peleliu in relation to, say, the Philippines, whose invasion it was meant to support, and Pavuvu in the Solomons, which the 1st Marine Division called its home away from home. The only other map is one of the Umurbrogal Pocket, which was

the site of the main fighting in the later stages of the campaign. Amazingly, there was no map of Peleliu as a whole, showing the invasion beaches that are discussed at length in the text. The book would also benefit greatly from an organization chart showing the First, Fifth, and Seventh Marine Regiments, and where the men followed in the text fit into those organizations.

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### **Janet C. says**

I appreciated being able to understand more of WWII history. Very descriptive, graphic, and quite detailed. The descriptions of the soldiers were sometimes heartbreakingly because of their outcomes, especially after feeling like I knew them.

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### **Kevin says**

What I find interesting in this book (one of several by Bill Sloan reviewed) is the common thread with this and of Pacific memoirs. Heroes like Eugene Sledge, "SNAFU" Shelton (With the Old Breed), Andy "Ack Ack" Haldane and R.V. Burgin. All of these men appear in several histories of the Marines in the Pacific. Together their stories lay the foundation for endurance, courage and love for their "buddies" that to this day, just seems impossible to put into a modern context.

The battle for Peleliu was strategically unnecessary. We know that only from hindsight. At the time, it was the correct decision. Would the war have changed or been lengthened if Nimitz had bypassed Peleliu? I do not believe so. Still, the narrative of what was projected to be a four day cake walk transforming into a month plus battle is harrowing on its most benign days.

I like Bill Sloan, like this book and feel like I know Sledgehammer, SNAFU, Ack Ack and Hillbilly Jones. Through their own books (with the exception of Haldane and Jones, who did not survive the Peleliu campaign) and HBO's Pacific mini-series, these men are elevated beyond citizen soldiers to icons around which the story World War II in the Pacific is handed down to future generations. To me, that seems right.

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### **Cullen says**

Wow, I knew the battle of Peleliu was terrible, but this book really shows just how terrible it was. Those guys endured extreme heat, no water, Japanese ambushes from all directions, and egotistical senior leadership that kept them in the fight longer than they needed to be.

Brotherhood of Heroes is a fantastic book about the battle. You will come away with a greater appreciation for anyone who served in the Pacific War.

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### **Sam Neil says**

Well it's summary doesn't exaggerate the contents of the book. Its relatively straight forward it was cool to see how Americans troops advanced toward the Japanese in WWII. With the mostly fast overtaking of

islands within Japans control, casualties were less than expected. Until D-day came around where in quote of the book "was an unnecessary bloodbath." Although in reading this book the capture of the island "Peleliu" deemed to be a strategic standpoint for the victory of the War.

The detail in the book is extraordinary, Bill must of had to sit down and interview with each of his platoon members to get all these different P.O.V's. I also like how he explains the strategies and objectives to complete for each island being advanced on. The distinguishing of how you earned the respect of your division was not only for the rest of the war but the rest of your life was a very wise point that i'll take away from this book.

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### **Chapronrin says**

This was a remarkable book that provided details of a vicious battle for a needless island strategically for the USMC in 1944. Filled with all the horror of Iwo Jima, fought savagely for this rocky island and it took much longer than originally anticipated to defeat the Japanese forces there. Sloan gave some impressive details that on many factors that affected forces in this long battle. One of the most interesting was the cleaning of the oil drums Pavuvu that was done improperly and were later filled with "drinking" water for Marines at Peleliu and ultimately made them very sick. It was a good book to read and supplements a lot of what I saw on the HBO The Pacific series that dealt with Peleliu. A solid 4 star.

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### **Thatcher Freund says**

A decent enough job of reporting the stories of participants in the battle of Peleliu, but completely bereft of original ideas. What analysis there is comes second-hand, without any critical review of his sources.

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### **Matthew says**

This book was read in conjunction with EB Sledge's memoir, *With the Old Breed*. Sloan's book focused exclusively on the battle of Peleliu. Peleliu, a battle now deemed unnecessary, was part of MacArthur's plan to win back the Philippines. Individuals interviewed in Sloan's book and cited in Sledge's memoir state that Peleliu was worse than anything in the First World War or Iwo Jima in the Second World War. The coral island was honeycombed with caves and bunkers filled with Japanese unwilling to cede an inch of ground (and who stayed sheltered and harder to kill than they were at Guadalcanal where they charged in waves of banzai attacks). The book gives many firsthand, on-the-ground accounts; mostly from the eyes of Company K, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment (of which Sledge was a part (Reading the two books at the same time was interesting to see how Sloan used Sledge's statements in his memoirs.). While nowhere near the quality of writing found in Ambrose's *Band of Brothers*, this was a good book.

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### **Lady of the Lake says**

So moving! So emotional! Oh so real! Books like this break my heart for everyone that was there are true heros and should be honored much more than they are!!! All stories of war hit me deep and eats a bit of me

that I can't get back! As it should be!

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### **J B says**

I found a number of errors in the book, but they weren't so bad as to distract from the story. And the author refers to MOH recipients as 'winners', and calls the medal, incorrectly, the 'Congressional Medal of Honor'. Both of these errors are surprising from an author that spent as much time as he did with Marines.

One of the other unusual aspects of this book was the overt criticism of Chesty Puller. While battlefield decisions can certainly be looked back upon as incorrect at times, this author seems to put selfish motives into the mind of Puller and his commanding officer. I've read a lot on Puller and have never found any who were close to him that thought that way about him. I think this author stepped beyond reality, likely based on the feelings of one or a few Marines who had something against Puller and found this author a way to voice that animosity.

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### **Danny says**

This book, like "With The Old Breed," paints as real a life a reader can imagine of the hell US Marines found themselves in the Pacific Campaign of WWII. It seeks to paint a picture of the fear, the brotherhood, and the selfless existence to save other's lives that the young marines experienced.

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### **Simon Kissam says**

This was awesome. Because the battle of Peleliu was so small it's told mainly from soldiers on the ground but also manages to give you an overall picture of the battle. Getting to know people and then having them die and their friends reactions is really sad. Made me tear up and realize how terrible war truly is. Bill Sloan's prose was also terrific.

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### **Brom Kim says**

In the early 1990s, I met an old US Marine who came in every day for coffee, and to flirt with the waitresses at the restaurant where I worked. He didn't talk about his service, but he had lots of faded Corps tattoos on his wrinkled, weathered arms, and he always wore an old fatigue cap.

When I asked about his service one afternoon, he said in a low, gravelly voice, "yeah, I was on Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Okinawa..." or something like that, naming several tough, major combat operations in the island hopping Pacific campaign. He then looked far away for a moment, and said quietly, "That was a bad war", trailing off.

Those five words spoke volumes, and I knew better than to ask anything else, but for those interested, Sloan's book digs deep into the reasons the war in the Pacific was such "a bad war", and why we have much to be thankful for, as regards the service and sacrifices of our vets.

This book is fascinating military history, and good storytelling, with a useful side commentary on leadership. The writing is good, and the book is well researched. If you ever think you're having a 'bad day' this gives perspective.

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### **Adrian says**

This book was a pleasure to read from start to finish.

Bill Sloan does an excellent job of combining first-hand-accounts with his own narrative of this battle, a battle that cost the lives of countless men on both sides.

If you're looking for a well-written book on the battle of Peleliu then this book is a must.

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### **Shannon says**

Bill Sloan's book has the perfect tone which allows both casual readers and serious academics to engage in the stories and history of the Marines at Peleliu. Anyone who's watched HBO's *The Pacific* will know many of the subjects by name, but Sloan's book provides greater background in history not present in the memoirs of E. B. Sledge and R.V. Burgin.

The book tells the story of the battle well from both an academic and human interest perspective. This book is one of the first I suggest to anyone more interested in learning about K/3/5.

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### **Mr. says**

Just glad I wasn't there.

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### **Randall Decker says**

Well written and well researched. Although I am a WWII buff I really didn't know much about Peleliu. Probably because it was next to unnecessary to win the overall war, but that didn't make it any less real for those who fought there. I am always amazed at the difference in attitude with the Marines during WWII and what I read of the modern wars. There was so much honor in WWII, though they hated the Japanese for their atrocities yet they respected them as warriors and understood that the common foot soldier was under command just as they were.

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### **Rich Humes says**

Great book.

Subject is a little known campaign in the Pacific that was as brutal, if not more, as anything else American

troops did in the second World War.

Insightful, touching, heartbreaking, sad. Every emotion is covered in this important book.

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