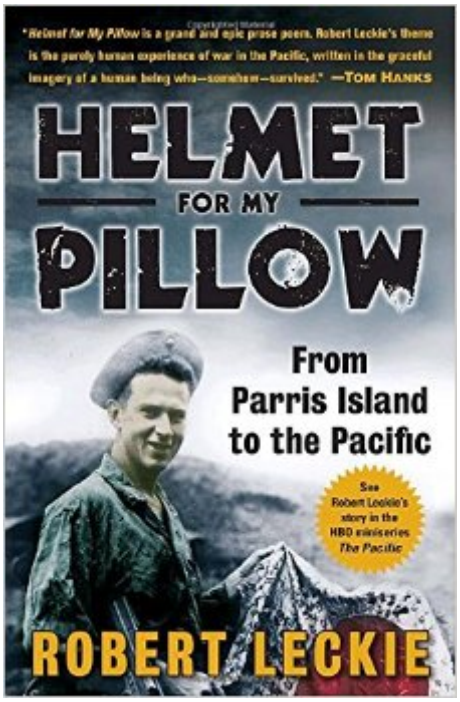
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Helmet For My Pillow: From Parris Island To The Pacific



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Synopsis

Here is one of the most riveting first-person accounts ever to come out of World War II. Robert Leckie enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in January 1942, shortly after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. In Helmet for My Pillow we follow his odyssey, from basic training on Parris Island, South Carolina, all the way to the raging battles in the Pacific, where some of the warÃ¢â ¬â„¢s fiercest fighting took place. Recounting his service with the 1st Marine Division and the brutal action on Guadalcanal, New Britain, and Peleliu, Leckie spares no detail of the horrors and sacrifices of war, painting an unvarnished portrait of how real warriors are made, fight, and often die in the defense of their country.Ã Â Ã Â Ã Â Ã Â Â From the live-for-today rowdiness of marines on leave to the terrors of jungle warfare against an enemy determined to fight to the last man, Leckie describes what war is really like when victory can only be measured inch by bloody inch. Woven throughout are LeckieÃ¢â ¬â„¢s hard-won, eloquent, and thoroughly unsentimental meditations on the meaning of war and why we fight. Unparalleled in its immediacy and accuracy, Helmet for My Pillow will leave no reader untouched. This is a book that brings you as close to the mud, the blood, and the experience of war as it is safe to come.Now producers Tom Hanks, Steven Spielberg, and Gary Goetzman, the men behind Band of Brothers, have adapted material from Helmet for My Pillow for HBOÃ¢â ¬â„¢s epic miniseries The Pacific, which will thrill and edify a whole new generation.

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Customer Reviews

Ã¢â ¬Å“Helmet for My Pillow is a grand and epic prose poem. Ã Â Robert LeckieÃ¢â ¬â„¢s theme

is the purely human experience of war in the Pacific, written in the graceful imagery of a human being whoÃ¢â ¬â •somehowÃ¢â ¬â •survived.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Tom HanksÃ¢â ¬Å“One hell of a book! The real stuff that proves the U.S. Marines are the greatest fighting men on earth!Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Leon Uris, author of Battle Cry

Robert Leckie was the author of more than thirty works of military history as well as Marines, a collection of short stories, and Lord, What a Family!, a memoir. Raised in Rutherford, New Jersey, he started writing professionally at age sixteen, covering sports for The Bergen Evening Record of Hackensack. He enlisted in the United States Marine Corps on the day following the attack on Pearl Harbor, going on to serve as a machine gunner and as an intelligence scout and participating in all 1st Marine Division campaigns except Ã Â Okinawa.Ã Â Leckie was awarded five battle stars, the Naval Commendation Medal with Combat V, and the Purple Heart. Ã Â Helmet for My Pillow (Random House, 1957) was his first book; it received the Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Association award upon publication.

I stumbled upon this book after watching the TV series the Pacific, part of it was based upon this book. The book chronicles one mans life changing journey from boot camp to battle hardened warrior and cynic. The story is told in such an open and honest manner as be shocking at times, and truly shows what depravity war can reduce men to. It also shows the highs that such an altering experience can bring as well. I highly related to the main character due to my own experiences of being in the service and being a bit of hothead myself which also got me into some hot water at times! Not as much as this young Marine did though! Also learned some history about what really happened in the South Pacific in the war against Japan. Though I have been to some of these places I barely knew what horrors had taken place not that long ago. Have a read and see for yourself this book is worth it’s price you won’t soon forget it!

I gave this book five stars, because it was extremely well written, informative, exciting, and humorously sarcastic. As I read the book, I was very impressed by Leckie’s intelligence as well as his written prose. I was kind of amazed that this enlisted man’s point of view could rival that of any officer’s in the descriptions of battles and their strategy; the morale of the men during training and in battle, etc. It does not surprise me that he was a successful writer and reporter.

Noted author Robert Leckie’s first book, "Helmet For My Pillow", is rightly lauded as a stand out in

war experience narratives. What sets Leckie’s work apart from many others is the literary style in which the story of survival by front line troops in the atrocious battles of Guadalcanal, Cape Gloucester, and Peleliu are drawn.Leckie volunteered for the Marine Corps the day after Pearl Harbor was attacked. He was part of a large group of enlistees who swelled the rolls of an unprepared military. Training was hard and dreary with the enlarged ranks living in tents upon marshy fields at New River and Paris Island. But battle and life in the South Pacific was an ordeal through which both Leckie’s Marines as well as their Japanese foes lived, suffered and died in the most trying circumstances.Leckie’s regiment, part of the 1st Marine Division, was early into Guadalcanal and would be on the front for four for five months straight. This was during the period in which the Japanese controlled the sea around the landing area forcing Americans on half rations and captured Japanese rice. Fighting was brutal and Marines faced a long period in which they were on the defensive before being able to advance and eventually be withdrawn as Army reinforcements were introduced. Leckie also experienced the Battle of Cape Gloucester before his final fight at Peleliu. Peleliu is described as hell on earth with the Japanese emplaced into a series of tunnel connected bunkers which they had had years to establish. And from which they had to be driven or killed by direct assault. Marine casualties were high, including Leckie who was withdrawn to a hospital after a close hit by an artillery shell. He would miss his division’s fight on Okinawa, which may be the reason we are all able to read this very fine work.The 1st Marine Division also recuperated between battles, the most memorable being in Melbourne, Australia after Guadalcanal. With Australians believing the Marines had saved their continent from invasion (which they probably had along with the forces successfully holding New Guinea), Melbourne joyously welcomed their deliverers to their city and into their homes. With no Australian young men to be had, they quickly became the boyfriends, sons and spouses that were otherwise occupied in North Africa or New Guinea fighting with the Commmonwealth. His stories of drinking (constant), womanizing (frequent) and high-jinx are entertaining and add terrific color to this war story.Leckie is a gifted writer and his highly descriptive style breathes a literary quality into his story without ever seeming overdone. This is not a book that tells unit lines of advance and casualty rates in clipped recaps of battle history but rather the war and waiting between battles through the eyes of a front-line fighter in possession of a sharp wit, and great powers of observation and description. No character is addressed by anything other than his nickname in the story. Thus we read of The Chuckler, Souvenir, Hoosier, Runner and Captain High-Hips and Lt. Ivy-league. Leckie himself is the not-as-imaginative "Lucky." He also is brutally honest and the book does not spare Leckie, who almost broke in one battle and spent time in the brig as well as off-island in a mental ward (though the book does leave it up in the air as to

whether or not this was a "not-enough-space in the medical ward" issue or Leckie was truly in need of psychiatric help). Souvenir has his nickname because of the scores of gold fillings he keeps in a bag tied around his neck, courtesy of dead enemy (except in one case where a wounded son of Nippon contributed), a pair of pliers and his dental flashlight. Leckie and some of his patrol come across a dead Marine who had the part of his arm tattooed with the Marine Corps shield ripped from his flesh and stuffed in his mouth. The repetitive brutality of war and misery are not spared.While winter in Bastogne was hard and the fighting dangerous everywhere American troops fought in World War II, Leckie's book describes service in the Pacific that seemed more miserable on a daily basis than that had in other theaters of the war. Because of the nature of the Japanese soldier, fighting was frequently to the end with no quarter given and none expected. Field torture of our captured soldiers was more than an occasional occurrence as was the same treatment meted the other way. Leckie's brutal, honest and descriptive book provides an excellent picture of the war through one Marine's eyes.

I decided to read this after watching the mini-series, "The Pacific". I generally read fiction, but I couldn't put this book down.I've heard this style of writing described as narrative non-fiction, memoir, and creative non-fiction. Whatever you call it, it's a remarkable, beautifully crafted story of the war in the Pacific. I believe books such as this should be required reading in our high schools and colleges.I highly recommend this book to any reader who has a passion for history, and wants to feel as if they are in the midst of the action.

Robert Leckie writes with the soul of a poet as he brings to life the experiences of a Marine in the South Pacific during World War II. His writing is smooth and easy to read, despite the subject matter, which involves horrendous, wartime experiences. One of the central characters of the Pacific miniseries, it's interesting to read the experiences from his own viewpoint. I couldn't put it down. For fans of the miniseries, WWII history buffs, and anyone looking to understand the experience of our Marines at that time. I recommend it highly.

If you're a military buff or just curious about real war, you need to read "Helmet For My Pillow". A great telling of the life of a "grunt" during one of the most violent periods of our history. I've read and re-read this account of Robert Leckie's experiences in the Pacific during WWII and it just gets better every time. Mr. Leckie's story is most assuredly an eye-opening tale of the hardships of war on the ground. His telling will allow you to feel what it's like without the fear and malaise he lived through. I

highly recommend his account of our Marines in combat!

The book details the Mr. Leckie's experiences while a Marine in the pacific theater in WW2. It is engrossing and graphic. It is a good look at a past generation of young men who were required to be far braver and more mature than their years. If you have seen the movie series "Pacific," many of his stories will be familiar. My only criticism is that he sometimes goes off on short lyrical tangents that seem to interrupt the nature style of his writing. After what he went through however, I appreciate that he wrote it down in a way that was satisfying for him.

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