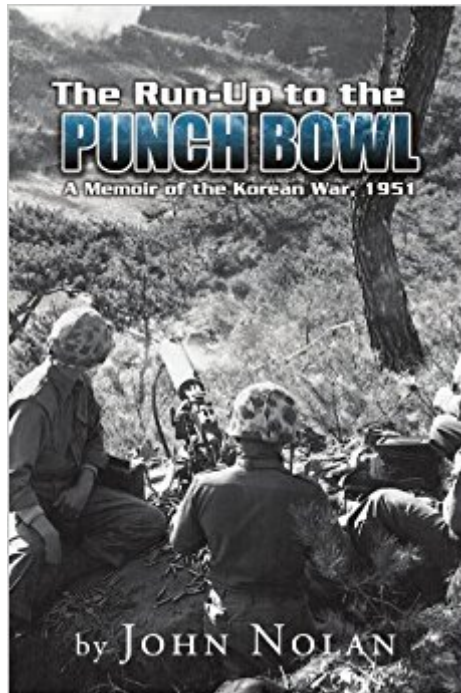




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The Run-Up To The Punch Bowl: A Memoir Of The Korean War, 1951



Synopsis

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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Customer Reviews

John Nolan is Washington lawyer who served in the Marine Corps during the Korean War. He led a rifle platoon on the 1st Marine Division and was awarded the Silver Star, the Bronze Star with Combat "V" and the Purple Heart for actions in Korea. He was a law clerk at the Supreme Court and later, with James Donovan in New York, he negotiated the release of the Cuban prisoners captured after the landing at the Bay of Pigs. Nolan was a Visiting Fellow at Cambridge University in England in 1987 and 1992. He and his wife Joan live in the outskirts of Washington, D.C.

I joined the U. S. Marine Corps right after the Korean War "ended." Almost all of the NCOs and field grade officers I served with had not only been in combat in Korea, but many of them had also been in combat in WWII. I served under some of the officers he mentions in the book and the book stirs memories those unassuming heros. Korea was very fresh in everyone's mind in those days. We

were certain that we were going to have to have another go-round with the Chicoms and the PRK folk in those days and all of our training was aimed in that direction. In those halcyon days we didn't realize that the training exercises we did in the Philippines was much closer to what the next assignment for the 3rdMarDiv would be than snowy North Korea.

Well written, professional edited and explicit details of the Korean War combat. I was in the Army during the Korean War from July 1951 to July 1953, but was assigned to NATO in France. Every day, we checked the dead and wounded for our friends. Every American should read this book and find out what our men went through to protect South Korea and the USA. And, the details of combat to take a hill that nobody remembers should rest in our memory forever. We should all thank John Nolan for his months of combat. And, we must never forget that about 54,000 American troops were killed in the three years of the war not counting the wounded. Thank you Mr. John Nolan for your service and writing letters home so you would have the basis for this superb book.

The Run-Up to the Punch Bowl is a fascinating memoir by John Nolan. His Naval Academy and Marine Corps Basic School training stood him in good stead as a platoon leader whose assignment took him to the "forgotten war" in Korea. When he signed up for the Marine Corps, an immediate combat assignment was pretty far from his mind, as the world was at peace following World War II. Less than a year after graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, John found himself a newly married, graduate of a foreshortened Marine Corps Basic School course at Quantico, Virginia, boots on the ground in Korea. He devotes most of his memoir to the doings of the people he was serving with and little of his own accomplishments, which earned him a Silver Star, the Bronze Star with Combat "V" and the Purple Heart..I've known John, and his wife Joan, for more years than I like to remember. He's a fascinating gentleman who has many remarkable accomplishments in his life-time. His Marine Corps service in Korea is only a small part of his life but the main emphasis of this book. By writing this memoir, for posterity's sake, I'm glad he did it. While he's not a Stephen Ambrose, he tells it like it was, down and dirty, hungry and cold, wet and scared shiftless. Being there, he's a true hero of the greatest generation. I really enjoyed reading his book, having known the man. I wholeheartedly recommend this book to anyone interested in first person accounts of what it was really like trying to inspire a platoon of combat Marines to greater efforts while cold, wet, hungry, and in the mud with a lot of unfriendly North Korean and Chinese infantrymen trying making you keep your head (and other parts) down. This is a story of heroism in the face of enemy fire without heroics. It is also a story of many of the other members of Nolan's Marine Corps Basic Class

and a tribute to their devotion to duty, and their accomplishments both in combat and in their subsequent careers. Our nation can be proud of these men, our United States Marines who valiantly served in Korea. We can thank John Nolan sharing their stories with us.

I served in Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines during this period in Korea. We fought shoulder to shoulder with John Nolan's outfit. I have read several books on the Korean War but none have ever described this period of the war as fought by the 1st Marines. The book brought back a flood of memories and also gave names and history to many of the places we were that I had no idea of while there. Anyone interested in the Korean War will enjoy this book. Thanks, Mr Nolan

I felt that it was a realistic description of a marines experience in battle but there were too many portraits of fellow officers. It was more from an officers perspective than from the enlisted mens experiences. The officers and enlisted men were both examples of quality lives lost in war.

GREAT READ. VERY ENTERTAINING.

well written and mirrors my experiences

..... but lacked the vivid detail others have had. I bought it for the description of the Punchbowl battles in which I had a relative to fight. He was in another Company but present on a neighboring hill for most of the period this book covered.

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