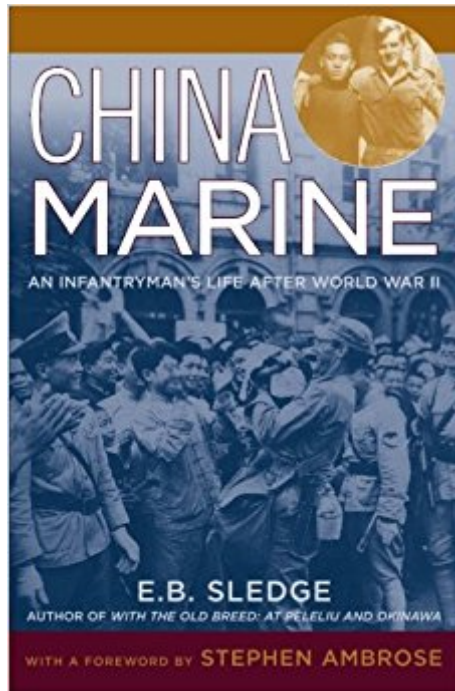




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# China Marine: An Infantryman's Life After World War II



## Synopsis

See E.B. Sledge's story in the HBO miniseries *The Pacific*! *China Marine* is the extraordinary sequel to E.B. Sledge's memoir, *With the Old Breed*, which remains the most powerful and moving account of the U.S. Marines in World War II. Sledge continues his story where *With the Old Breed* left off and recounts the compelling conclusion of his Marine career. After Japan's surrender in 1945, Sledge and his company were sent to China to maintain order and to calm the seething cauldron of political and ideological unrest created by opposing factions. His regiment was the first Marine unit to return to the ancient city of Peiping (now Beijing) where they witnessed the last of old China and the rise of the Communist state. Sledge also recounts the difficulty of returning to his hometown of Mobile, Alabama, and resuming civilian life while haunted by shadows of close combat. Through the discipline of writing and the study of biology, he shows how he came to terms with the terrifying memories that had plagued him for years. Poignant and compelling, *China Marine* provides a frank depiction of the real costs of war, emotional and psychological as well as physical, and reveals the enduring bond that develops between men who face the horrors of war.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Vivid, lively, personally touching.... The book will last. Like *With the Old Breed*, it will be read, appreciated, and taught, now and for decades to come."--Stephen E. Ambrose, from the Foreword

E. B. Sledge was a World War II veteran, author of *With the Old Breed*, and a professor of biology at the University of Montevallo, Alabama. He died in March 2001. Stephen E. Ambrose was an

American historian and professor of history at the University of New Orleans.

I was interested in this book not just because it was written by E.B.Sledge but because after my father was wounded on Okinawa he was redeployed to China with the 1st Marine Division. As I read the book, many of the photos my father took in China showed that there was a story behind every photograph. Additionally, I was able to sense the anxiety of waiting for each Marine as they waited for their turn to return to the US. I didn't rate the book higher because the book was a bit slow at times. But yet I could imagine that the waiting Marine probably thought that time was moving too slow as they waited their turn in China. Thank you Mr. Sledge for helping bring to life your story, a story my father rarely would talk about, even after I did a tour in Vietnam. Your story of life back home brought back memories for me of my return home and the feelings that I had. I can only imagine that my father felt the same.

This is a follow up to the author's previous "With The Old Breed" covering his experiences immediately after the end of the World War 2. His account of garrison duty in Beijing immediately after the outbreak of peace, and before China was lost to the nightmare of Mao's communist regime, gives a picture of a country desperately poor after more than 8 years of devastating war but beginning to pick itself up, and pathetically pleased to see US Marines as peacekeepers and as a foretaste of better things to come; and his account of returning home to a world with no conception of what he has experienced will resonate with any soldier who has ever come home from a war.

The book is excellent in that it captures the nature of post war china. As a member of the CBs (32nd special batallion) we were attached to the First Marine Division. We were sent up from Leyte when half of our unit was sent to Tsingtao, and my half to Tangku. We were honored to be a part of such a historic and honored group of Marines. There was a special rapore between the CBs and the Marines. We spent 6 months on this memorable assignment. His description of the hurricane, floating mines, the clogged Hai Ho River, Japanese repatriation, the unbelievable horrible poverty the biting North China cold, and the fragile relations between the Chinese and the US Military brought back so many memories. Our primary duties were to bring in supplies for the Marines which were unloaded from ships off shore into barges that were towed up the river to Tangku. These included food, ammunition, aircraft fuel, and general supplies. On a recent visit to the area, the river was dredged to allow large ships to come upstream. The previous decrepit cities of Tangku and Taku were now modern busling ports. Tangku has been renamed Xiangxiang (sec?) aptly meaning

New City. The people were clean well fed and thriving. Adversity has created a new tough confident Chinese populace. While I was able to visit Tiensin many times we were cautioned to avoid Peking (Beijing). This had to await my return as a tourist.

Another great book by E. B. Sledge as he relates his life after the end of WW II. I have read very little about our military in China after Japan officially ended WW II but Sledge informs his readers about life in the Peiping area. Of the 240 men of Sledge's rifle company who landed at D Day on Peleliu and then Okinawa, only Sledge and 9 others were not killed or wounded, but "None came out unscathed," he would write. This book describes his closure in China meeting several very close friends and ends with his degrees and college professor position after the war. I can visualize him as he says, "The war left him with a deep appreciation for the simple things in life." He also gives a very vivid picture of the end of his hunting days. Sledge ends his book by indicating that "Those who survived unhurt will never forget-and cannot forget- the many friends lost in their prime and the many articles of civilization ruthlessly destroyed."

This is a good book but to me it's not as good as Mr. Sledge's other book "With the Old Breed".

I read this as the follow up to Sledge's "With the Old Breed". "Old Breed" ended a bit abruptly (which apparently was due to editors and not Sledge) and "China Marine" finishes off Sledge's emotional journey. I'd recommend reading it if you've read "Old Breed" and want to "listen" to Sledge some more. He continued the same conversational writing style which I enjoyed reading. This memoir does not have the impact of "Old Breed" but is a worthwhile follow up to "Old Breed". I'd recommend it as such.

This book was the real ending for E.B. Sledge's book "With the old Breed". It described his units involvement in China after the war and his return home, obtaining his education, marriage, children and career. It was interesting, but not as captivating as his first book. But it did bring everything to a conclusion for the reader. I do recommend it for all fans of his first book "With the old Breed".

After reading With Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa I had to read China Marine. I will never be able to comprehend how these veterans endured all that they did. If you want a serious dose of reality about what war is like and all that goes with it, read both of these books! I am so humbled now that I've read Mr. Sledge's books. It really put things into perspective. The hardest thing for me will be

not to lose that perspective for the rest of my life. I've lived such an easy life and am so lucky to not have to have experienced anything like this.

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