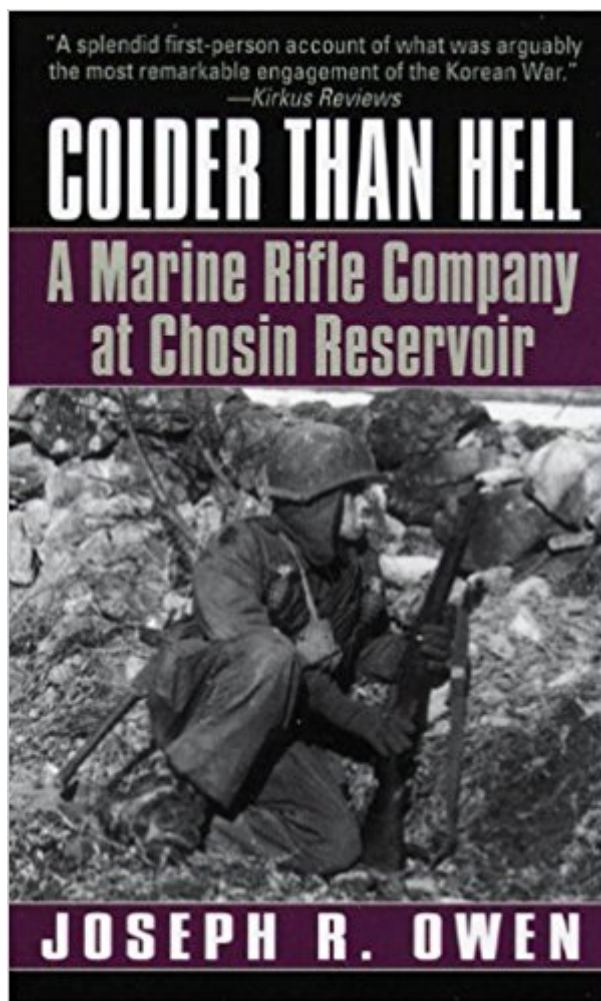




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Colder Than Hell: A Marine Rifle Company At Chosin Reservoir



Synopsis

"A MUST READ . . . This book [is] one of the best on that war in Korea. . . . A wonderful account of common, decent men in desperate action."--Leatherneck
During the early, uncertain days of the Korean War, World War II veteran and company lieutenant Joe Owen saw firsthand how the hastily assembled mix of some two hundred regulars and raw reservists hardened into a superb Marine rifle company known as Baker-One-Seven. As comrades fell wounded and dead around them on the frozen slopes above Korea's infamous Chosin Reservoir, Baker-One-Seven's Marines triumphed against the relentless human-wave assaults of Chinese regulars and took part in the breakout that destroyed six to eight divisions of Chinese regulars. COLDER THAN HELL paints a vivid, frightening portrait of one of the most horrific infantry battles ever waged. "Thoroughly gripping . . . The Chosin action is justly called epic; Lieutenant Owen tells the tale of the men who made it so."--Booklist

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The morning of December 8, 1950, found Marine lieutenant Owen, along with the rifle company he led, fighting his way through "blood-splotted snow" with the temperature at 25 degrees below zero—the beginning of another day in North Korea. Owen's dramatic account of that morning begins this close-focus combat memoir. Rifle company Baker-One-Seven, Owen tells us, "functioned at a primal level: they ate, slept, and fought, and they tried to get warm." What Owen presents here is an extraordinarily detailed and realistic account of combat at the level of individual soldiers and small units, covering the role of infantrymen in war, the dangers they are exposed to, the relations that

form among them, what keeps them going, their ingenuity and their daring. Only occasionally and in passing does the author put the action of his rifle company into broader perspective, or refer to nonmartial matters such as his wife and two young daughters back in the States. Owen's journal-like account can be repetitive, but it's never monotonous. By offering an extended look at deadly combat taking place on snow-covered mountainous terrain in bone-jarring cold, Owen highlights the hardships and tactics characteristic of the war in Korea. Photos; maps. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

An enlisted marine who was eventually commissioned, Owen survived three years of World War II in the Pacific and six months in Korea in 1950 as a mortar officer. His Korean sojourn and his marine career ended with the First Marine Division's legendary march out from the Chosin Reservoir, during which he was severely wounded. His is a thoroughly gripping account of how a mixture of reservists and regulars were flung in the general direction of Korea, molded into an infantry rifle company, and compelled to fight their way to the sea. They faced not only the Chinese, but savage weather, short supplies, army units "bugging out," the problems of a newly integrated Marine Corps (whose African American members performed at a very high level, by the way), and gruesome terrain. The Chosin action is justly called epic; Lieutenant Owen tells the tale of the men who made it so. Roland Green --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

This book is about some exceptionally hard men, in an exceptionally hard environment. Great read, great lessons in leadership and resolve.

Very well written and informative.

Traces the path of Baker 1/7 from an undisciplined and untrained newly constituted unit, to men of extraordinary heroism and endurance as they are ravaged by -30 weather and the horses of Chinese. Outnumbered and equipped but never outfought, these men have left the onus for us all to live up to their legacy.

"Colder Than Hell," is a wonderful book. It's a combination memoir and history of one rifle company during one of the most horrendous periods of fighting during the Korean War. Mr. Owen is a good writer and he tells the story of "Baker 1/7," with a strong, narrative flow. While much of his book relates his experience commanding the Weapons Platoon, he manages to tell the rest of the

company's story. The result is a unit story worthy to stand alongside the best narratives of a small unit. The reader will finish this book with a sense of awe of the men of the 1st Marine Division (not to mention the Army troops and other UN forces who marched alongside them) and horror of the frozen hell that the Chosin campaign was. That anyone survived it was amazing. That the 1st Marine Division not only maintained its cohesiveness, but managed to destroy many CCF divisions and make it back to friendly lines with all its equipment, not to mention its wounded and lastly its KIAs, is a miracle. Mr. Owen is the perfect narrator for this story. He is modest, generous in giving credit and his admiration for all his fellow Marines knows no bounds. This book should be required reading for students of the Korean War and those who have an interest in the Chosin Reservoir in particular. "Colder Than Hell," is a true classic of Korean War literature.

Words cannot express how well this book was written by a true Marine who was there. Numerous books have been written covering the Marines during the Korean War, but few were told by actual Marines who were there, especially a "boot" lieutenant who is not afraid to let the reader know how "green" he was in the beginning. Like all good, no, "great" leaders in the field, the author knows that a "seasoned" E-4 can be very valuable during combat. The author really shows how much his men mean to him and how much he relies on them in combat. I got out as an E-4 during my time in the Corps (mid-80's) and I would have been honored to have served under such a leader as Joseph Owen. You won't want the book to end. In fact, I forced myself to put it down several times after only a few chapters at a time, just to make it last!

Learn your history while the people who were there are still living, for someday soon we will end up back there to finish what was started back in the 50's, this time around the cost will be much higher. It is true, those who defend this country desire peace the most, and are willing to keep the peace at the cost of their lives. The men who served in the Marines, who followed orders, suffered a high cost due to stupid leadership in DC, but kept their honor as they fought their way out of hell. Read and learn what honor is all about and beware of stupid leadership in DC now.

nice book

I liked the way the writer was up front and honest about his fear, lack of experience and how he learned to really respect the enlisted Marines. The book mostly covers the company and below level, therefore not boring the reader with military politics and generals pillow talk.

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