

The Last Stand of Fox Company: A True Story of U.S. Marines in Combat

By Tom Clavin, Bob Drury



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November 1950, the Korean Peninsula. After General MacArthur ignores Mao's warnings and pushes his UN forces deep into North Korea, his 10,000 First Division Marines find themselves surrounded and hopelessly outnumbered by 100,000 Chinese soldiers near the Chosin Reservoir. Their only chance for survival is to fight their way south through the Toktong Pass, a narrow gorge in the Nangnim Mountains. It will need to be held open at all costs. The mission is handed to Captain William Barber and the 246 Marines of Fox Company, a courageous but undermanned unit of the First Marines. Barber and his men are ordered to climb seven miles of frozen terrain to a rocky promontory overlooking the pass. The Marines have no way of knowing that the ground they occupy-it is soon dubbed "Fox Hill"-is surrounded by 10,000 Chinese soldiers. As the sun sets on the hill, and the temperature plunges to thirty degrees below zero, Barber's men dig in for the night. At two in the morning they are awakened by the sound-bugles, whistles, cymbals, and drumbeats-of a massive assault by thousands of enemy infantry. The attack is just the first wave of four days and five nights of nearly continuous Chinese attempts to take Fox Hill, during which Barber's beleaguered company clings to the high ground and allows the First Marine Division to battle south. Amid the relentless violence, three-quarters of Fox Company's Marines are killed, wounded, or captured. Just when it looks like the outfit will be overrun, Lieutenant Colonel Raymond Davis, a fearless Marine officer who is fighting south from Chosin, volunteers to lead a force of 500 men on a daring mission that cuts a hole in the Chinese lines and relieves the men of Fox Company. The Last Stand of Fox Company is a fast-paced and gripping account of heroism and self-sacrifice in the face of impossible odds. The authors have conducted dozens of firsthand interviews with the battle's survivors, and they narrate the story with the immediacy of such classic accounts of single battles as Guadalcanal Diary, Pork Chop Hill, and Black Hawk Down.



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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The authors of the bestselling *Halsey's Typhoon* do a fine job recounting one brutal, small-unit action during the Korean War's darkest moment. In November 1950, as General MacArthur's troops were advancing deep into North Korea, China warned that it would intervene if armies approached its border. U.S. troops were scattered through mountainous terrain at the onset of a freezing winter. Using extensive interviews with survivors, the authors tell the story of one 234-man company ordered to secure a rocky promontory overlooking the legendary Chosin Reservoir. Abundant and detailed maps enable readers to track the vicious week-long battle almost minute by minute as the men fought off repeated assaults by overwhelming Chinese forces until another marine unit arrived to rescue the few survivors. The authors draw no great lessons from Fox Company's ordeal, but deliver a precise, technically accurate account of the fighting. Although aimed at military buffs, the closeup views of individual marines tested to their limits will engage any reader curious to learn how brave men fought a conventional 20th-century war. *100,000 announced first printing; 12-city author tour.(Jan.)*

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From **Booklist**

The authors of Halsey's Typhoon (2007) are back with an equally fine book on an episode in the Chosin Reservoir campaign of the Korean War. Sent to hold a hill on the marines' line of retreat, Fox Company of the Seventh Regiment's Second Battalion wound up besieged by an entire Chinese division. Three-quarters of the company became casualties before a rescue column fought its way through to them, and three Congressional Medals of Honor were awarded for the action. Drury and Clavin have researched thoroughly, especially the memories of Fox Company survivors, and have written with their customary vividness. They remind us that the predicament of handfuls of Americans fending off foreign hordes isn't just a Hollywood spectacle. It has been a grisly reality, in this case with both sides enduring bone-chilling cold, untreated wounds, and starvation. A must for the Korean War shelves, invaluable beyond all historical period value for its coverage of infantry combat at its worst. --Roland Green

Review

"Bob Drury and Tom Clavin have set the standard for wartime accounts on the Korean conflict.... This is a story that is almost too incredible to be true." ---Dr. Charles P. Neimeyer, director of the U.S. Marine Corps History Division

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