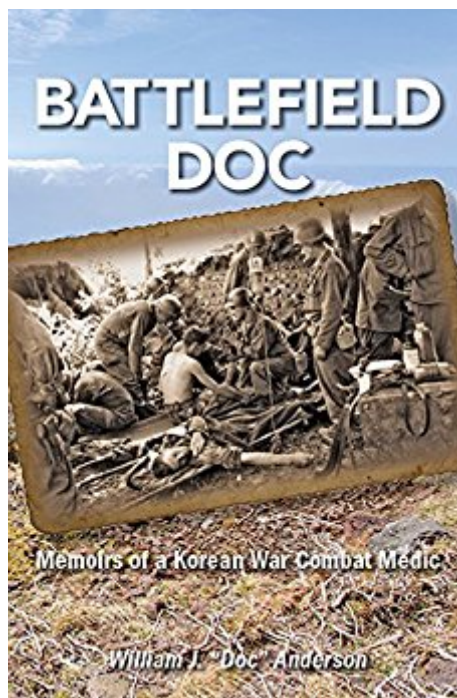


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Battlefield Doc: Memoirs Of A Korean War Combat Medic



Synopsis

When soldiers are wounded in battle their first cries are for “Doc,” the Army medics or Navy corpsmen first responders trained to handle almost anything but surgery. William Anderson was a medic on the front lines during the Korean War. What was it like saving and losing lives, and how was it for the soldier on the ground battling not only a relentless enemy but blazing hot summers, below-zero winters, and monsoon rain and mud. Follow Doc, too, on commando missions behind enemy lines. Doc writes not about the history or politics or strategy, but about real experiences, what combat veterans wish they could forget and what everyone else should know and remember. North Korea’s continuing threats remind us that “The Forgotten War” has never really ended.

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Customer Reviews

William Anderson’s memoir of his years as a Korean War medic place the reader alongside him in dozens of intense, achingly horrible battles and special missions. I had to keep reminding myself

that he was only 21 (!) when he went there, and 24 when he went home. The troopers he patched up -- and those who died in his arms, begging him to give messages to loved ones back home -- were a mere 17 or 18 years old. He immediately had to learn not to get too close to the others, or he'd be unable to keep a clear, calm head while they were bleeding and in agony. This book was drawn up from many pages of notes Anderson kept while in Korea. The pace is very fast, but it is very readable and clear. Short chapters allow the exhausted reader a reprieve from incessant mortar poundings, BAR, 'burp', and machine gun fire, grenades, smoke, napalm and sheer misery. This volume isn't for the faint of heart: the reader is embedded in the front lines with wildly brave men who sometimes fought nonstop for 48 hours to gain a few hundred yards of "hill". (Every mountain they bled for, the Army called a "hill".) The North Koreans and Chinese Communists paid no heed to Geneva conference -- their snipers regularly killed medics whose uniforms bore the Red Cross. After reading this, I have a far better understanding (as much as a civilian could have, that is) of the horrors of war, and of this war in particular. PTSD would be a lifelong burden for these troopers. It a humbling, moving, sobering book. I'm so glad I read it.

To many Americans today, the awfulness of true war is insulated from their psyche by the media. What they believe of war is bred by the powerful entertainment industry as well. For instance, when an actor is hit by a bullet, he/she is propelled back five feet by the impact. That's Hollywood. In real life, you just crumple. This book is written from a diary kept by a combat medic. He wrote his notes with bloodstained fingers in -50F winters with 55 mph bone-chilling wind gusts or 100F summer days - while tending to young Americans dying in a godforsaken place. He describes the horrific carnage and scenes clearly... down to being unable to stick a needle into a wounded soldier's flesh as it was frozen. He painfully regurgitates those moments when a boyish looking soldier dies in his arms, feeling great remorse he was unable to save him. He properly describes his comrades as heroes. You are made keenly aware that true war is being enveloped by death all around you. He expresses well that a soldier's own death looms closer the longer he remains on the front lines... and that a combat medic is the true hero.

As an Anaesthetist I could not put the book down. As a historian I could not stop reading since the words translated figures into seconds, minutes and hours of unimaginable trauma and madness. As a man I am humbled to read this matter-of-fact blow-by-blow account of madness and horror and no one that has not been there could ever imagine what the author truly has gone through!

Doc Anderson's memoirs of his combat medic experience in Korea is absolutely riveting. I couldn't put the book down. His detailed descriptions of wartime in the trenches, facing frigid cold temperatures, dodging bullets to save and minister to the wounded and dying, and ensuring that each serviceman KIA was identified and remembered as a hero, affirms what my father, a World War II vet always shared, "War is a terrible thing; man's inhumanity toward man." Memoirs like this should be mandatory reading for any national leader who never experienced military service during wartime. They might give pause and think twice before sending troops to battle.

Doc is a great story teller. These are very readable stories, nothing gory, and suitable for YA readers. If the 70's television comedy show is all you know about the Korean War, read the tales of someone who was really there, minus the canned laughter and showbiz hijacks. Even if battlefield stories aren't for the faint of heart, these stories are told cleanly and truthfully and from the heart.

Every medic, LE and firefighter should read. Should be taught in school . Thank all for fighting for my, our freedom

This book was an excellent read for those that may be interested in the history of wars, as well as medical care. Def 5 stars.

I am a Korean War veteran and knew the author

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