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Major General Fred Haynes (USMC-Ret) and James Warren, *The Lions of Iwo Jima: The Story of Combat Team 28 and the Bloodiest Battle in Marine Corps History*. Henry Holt, 2008. 288 pp. Notes, bibliography, index.

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For most Americans, the battle of Iwo Jima is the gripping story of the victorious United States Marine Corps, notably a small group of leathernecks who hoisted the American flag atop of Mount Suribachi, and individual valor while standing in the cauldron of a raging firefight. Brigadier General Fred Haynes (USMC-Ret), and historian James A. Warren did not diminish this traditional narrative, but rather reinforce the heroic storyline by focusing on Combat Team 28 (CT28), and their pivotal role in securing the fortified Japanese island of Iwo Jima.

The horrifying challenges of combat on Iwo Jima is told from the perspective of the 4,500 member CT28 by blending Warren's skilled writing style with the personal recollections of CT28's operations officer General Fred Haynes, who managed to survive Iwo Jima without injury. While it is true that Iwo Jima and the Pacific Theater of War have received considerable attention from scholars and the popular press, the unit most responsible for securing Mount Suribachi has received very little attention. In this regard, the *Lions of Iwo Jima* fills a void in the literature.

This is old-fashioned military history at its finest. The authors have consulted the best secondary literature on the war, and they incorporated some original source material, including interviews, unpublished documents, letters, and personal memoirs from both American and Japanese sources. Upon reading *Lions of Iwo Jima*, one will marvel at the extraordinary courage demonstrated by men who saw uncommon valor as an individual duty. For example, when a Japanese grenade landed near Sergeant Hank Hanson, Pfc. Donald Ruhl smothered the blast by throwing himself on the grenade in order to protect his sergeant.

The most interesting chapters are "The Enemy" and "Bloody Gorge". The gorge is where "death was as common as dust, blood, and Japanese spider holes," and this final phase of the conflict came to illustrate the brutal nature of combat in the Pacific Theater and the extent of the Japanese commitment to hold the island. In the chapter entitled "The Enemy" the authors draw together scholarship on the Japanese mentality in order to explain why the Japanese fought so ferociously to the very end.

There is much to admire in *Lions of Iwo Jima*, notably the different personalities who formed CT 28. One of the central figures was Colonel Harry "the Horse" Liversedge, an Olympic

athlete, and a giant of a man, both in presence and character, who while in the midst of a ferocious fire-fight strolled casually up the beach encouraging his Marines to move forward. Other principle characters who receive coverage are Lt. Colonel Robert Hugh Williams, Colonel Chandler Johnson, John Bradley, and Greeley Wells. Some of these men have already firmly established their places in history; others wait in line for a reputable biographer to unearth their stories.

Readers may find some faults with this book. For example, serious military historians can point to a few factual errors, but the real problem is with the awkward transitions. *Lions of Iwo Jima* moves back and forth between a traditional narrative and the personal accounts of the men who fought on the island. This pattern occurs so frequently that it disrupts the overall flow of the work. Military historians will hang tough and plow through the book, but the average reader may abandon the field of battle prematurely.

Overall, *Lions of Iwo Jima* does not alter the traditional view of military operations on Iwo Jima. The value of the book is that it underscores the view that the United States Marine Corps is not just a military organization, but a brotherhood that propels men to extraordinary valor. Readers will come away from *Lions of Iwo Jima* with a significantly enhanced understanding of the high cost of freedom.



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