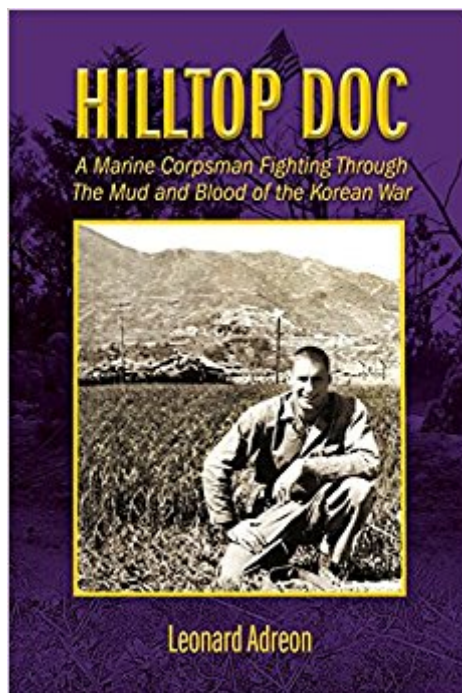




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# Hilltop Doc: A Marine Corpsman Fighting Through The Mud And Blood Of The Korean War



## Synopsis

As a Marine corpsman, Leonard Adreon saw some of the worst of the Korean War—its carnage and the best of its humanity. His gripping description brings to life the war between the Chinese army and the U.S. Marines as they battled to take the high ground. You will feel the anguish, the frustration and the terror endured by Marines on the hillsides of Korea, and how U.S. troops fought with valor and esprit de corps under adverse conditions and against massive Chinese forces. As a corpsman, Adreon tells the story from the unique perspective of a young man from St. Louis, with no medical background, thrown into the role of saving lives amid the war's violence. He leavens the grim, emotional, and sometimes ironic battlefield scenes with his background story; of how his own mistakes and the military's bumbling landed him at Korea's 38th Parallel.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

After returning from Korea, Leonard Adreon spent 36 years as the executive vice president of The Siteman Organization, a real estate management and development company, based in the St. Louis suburb of Clayton, Mo. In 1979, he was elected president of the Building Owners and Managers Association International in Washington D. C., which represents the office building industry in the United States and across the globe. He represented the industry before a number of Senate and House committees, and earned a citation from the General Services Administration for advice on leasing and managing facilities throughout the world. A highlight was meeting President Ronald Reagan and working with his chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors, Murray Weidenbaum.

St. Louis city and county leaders appointed Adreon to numerous committees and commissions serving his community. Adreon also took a leadership role in several major charities devoted to the welfare of children. Upon his retirement from The Siteman Organization, he worked for two decades as a consultant, real estate broker, arbitrator and mediator. Today, Adreon volunteers as a facilitator of writing classes at the Lifelong Learning Institute of Washington University in St. Louis. It is that work that encouraged him to tell his own story. Adreon met his wife, Audrey, a year after his return from Korea. They have three daughters and six grandchildren.

Hilltop Doc is an honest, vulnerable, and noble account of what it's really like to be in a war. Adreon's stories are deeply personal, sharing stories of the friends he made and the ones he lost, all while keeping deep empathy for others and hope for the future. It was an engaging, easy read -- and I don't typically read much non-fiction. While it's been many decades since the Korean War, Hilltop Doc is timeless in its relevance and I highly recommend it.

I bought this book because my hero growing up was my cousin, Jack Faitz, was also a Navy Hospital Corpsman who served with the Marines in Korea. Jack didn't talk much about his experiences there. Adrian's experiences filled in some blanks for me. It is an interesting and well written book

Very easy read but a very powerful story.

Great book. His writing was really great.

You rarely hear a veteran talk about actual combat. My theory: the experience is so intense, so extreme that any attempt to convey the reality is inevitably inadequate. Unless you've been there, you cannot apprehend the situation. Leonard Adreon, who was a Marine corpsman during the Korean war, has now, sixty years after the experience, made the worthy attempt to tell those of us who weren't there what it was like. Hilltop Doc: A Marine Corpsman Fighting Through the Mud and Blood of the Korean War is an interesting blend of reminiscences and photographs. Adreon was drafted into the Navy in 1944, trained as a corpsman and stationed at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. Mustered out at the end of the war, he joined the active reserves assuming he'd never be called back to active duty. He went to college and in June 1950 the Korean War broke out. Navy corpsmen serve as the medics for the Marines and in 1951 Adreon was assigned to an

infantry company in the 1st Marine Division. Almost as soon as he arrived in Korea he was in the middle of combat: "About halfway to the top of the hill I heard my first yell of 'Corpsman!'. . . The wounded man screamed in pain as he rolled side to side, gripping his midsection. I took out my scissors, cut away his jacket and shirt, and pulled up his undershirt so I could see the wound . . . To calm him, I injected morphine into his arm and grabbed some bandages, pressing them firmly against the wound . . . I took the Marine's M1 rifle and jabbed the bayonet into the ground, placing his helmet atop the rifle. That signaled stretcher teams that a wounded man needed transport. I filled out an EMP (emergency medical tag) that spelled out the treatment I'd given, hoping that would help those at the forward aid station know what was needed . . ."

The 30 chapters are relatively short and Adreon breaks up the war stories with anecdotes about his military background such as it was before Korea and after. The chapters are not arranged in strict chronology, but that's fine. Every chapter subhead identifies the place and year, and each brief chapter is complete in itself. By the time Adreon arrived in Korea in the spring of 1951, the conflict had settled down into a war of attrition. The Chinese were on one side of the Main Line of Resistance; the Marines, US Army, and Republic of Korea Army were on the other. The Chinese would attack, we would resist, try to kill as many Chinese as possible, withdraw if necessary, then counterattack days later and take back the ground we'd lost. I was interested to learn that after the medics treated the American wounded, they treated the Chinese left behind and sent them back south where they eventually became POWs. We buried the dead Chinese and left no Americans behind unless we were entirely overwhelmed. I was also interested to read that Hospital Corpsman Third Class Adreon, in addition to his med kit, carried a loaded carbine with extra ammunition, a .45 pistol with a bandolier of ammunition, and grenades. He was not only armed, but used the weapons when his platoon was attacking a hill. His sergeant told him to aim at an enemy's face with the carbine because you couldn't be sure the bullets would penetrate the white padded parkas the Chinese wore. Adreon includes two helpful addenda to Hilltop Doc: the costs of war and a very brief history. Something like 1.8 million US servicemen and women served in Korea. Of those 103,284 were wounded; 33,739 died on the battlefield while another 2,835 died from other causes. The war never ended. The UN forces signed an armistice, but there has never been a peace treaty with North Korea.

Getting Oriented: A Novel about Japan

My grandfather, Virgil, fought in the Korean War and one of my biggest regrets is that I didn't ask him more about it while he was here to tell his stories. Granted, he was

never one to talk about his time in the war but I wish I could have asked questions and encouraged stories. I feel like a huge part of our family history is missing because I never encouraged him to talk about his time overseas. When I visited Washington D.C. a few years ago it felt like all of the tourists were mesmerized by the Vietnam Memorial Wall and the WWI and WWII monuments. I was awestruck by the Korean War Memorial. I could barely tear my eyes away from it as I thought about my grandfather and how little I truly know about his time in the war.

I am sure that it's why I have such an interest in reading war-time books like Hilltop Doc by Leonard Adreon. I received a PR email asking me if I could like a complimentary copy of the book for review and of course I said yes. I felt like it was an opportunity to piece together a bit of what my grandpa experienced when he was in Korea. I know the details are different but the insight into the experiences and how they affected the soldier are very similar, I am sure. When it arrived in the mail I brewed a cup of my favorite Yogi tea and curled up with my blanket and the book. It felt like I was finally able to have part of the conversation I regret never having with grandpa. Hilltop Doc pushed me to tears so many times as I tried to imagine being there myself. It was so descriptive in some places I felt like I could literally feel my heart breaking. The pictures brought their own tears as well. As a doctor during the war, Adreon often focuses on the injuries and the loss that they faced. It was both horrific and sad. At one point he said, Two hundred and ten started up the hill, 87 reached the top. We owned the hill. We paid too much. I had to stop and let that process. For at least a few minutes I needed to process what Adreon was sharing and how terrible it must have been to stand there that day and bear witness to so much loss. In my own mind I found myself wondering if my grandpa was among the 87 to make it or where he was and what he was doing that day. Adreon describes his time at war so vividly, you can't help but feel connected to him and his experiences. Adreon had been drafted during WWII and somehow, years later, found himself in the middle of the Korean War fighting to save the lives of the men that were fighting another cause. Taking this journey with Adreon is an emotional one for sure. Above all else, Hilltop Doc has inspired me to seek out other books about the Korean War and try to piece together those missing years of my grandpa's life. It's often referred to as America's "forgotten war" but as Adreon proves in his book, those men fought, died, and suffered as much as any of our soldiers in any other war. This was an incredible read and one I am very fortunate to have had the opportunity to share with you all. If memoirs or military history are of any interest to you, I highly recommend giving this one a read.

Hilltop Doc is the story of a young man drafted during World War II and called back five years later to be a Marine corpsman in the Korean War. I cannot imagine a more important job than being responsible for your brothers-in-arms once they became casualties on the battlefield. Adreon has given us an honest picture of the front lines and the stories of the Marines who accompanied him there. Leonard Adreon's account of his war experiences sometimes had me close to tears. However, the overall feeling was a sense of awe for all who fought. Korea has been called "America's Forgotten War." Leonard Adreon hasn't forgotten it. After reading Hilltop Doc I won't forget it either.

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