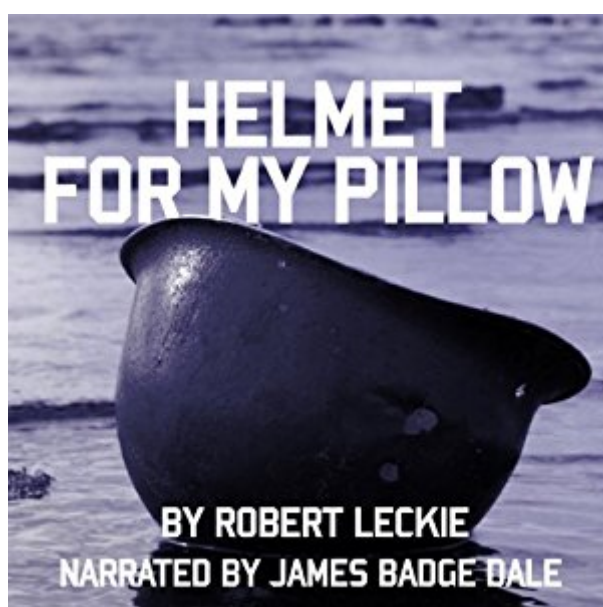


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# Helmet For My Pillow: From Parris Island To The Pacific: A Young Marine's Stirring Account Of Combat In World War II



## Synopsis

The celebrated 2010 HBO miniseries *The Pacific*, winner of eight Emmy Awards, was based on two classic books about the War in the Pacific, *Helmet for My Pillow* and *With The Old Breed*. Audible Studios, in partnership with Playtone, the production company co-owned by Tom Hanks and Gary Goetzman, and creator of the award-winning HBO series *Band of Brothers*, *John Adams*, and *The Pacific*, as well as the HBO movie *Game Change*, has created new recordings of these memoirs, narrated by the stars of the miniseries. James Badge Dale (who portrayed Robert Leckie) and Joseph Mazello (who played Eugene Sledge) bring all the passion and emotion of their riveting television performances to these new audio productions. In *Helmet for My Pillow*, Robert Leckie enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in January 1942, shortly after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. This riveting first-person account follows his odyssey from basic training on Parris Island, South Carolina, all the way to the raging battles in the Pacific, where some of the war's fiercest fighting took place. Recounting his service with the 1st Marine Division and the brutal action on Guadalcanal, New Britain, and Peleliu, Leckie spares no detail of the horrors and sacrifices of war, painting an unvarnished portrait of how real warriors are made, fight, and often die in the defense of their country. From the live-for-today rowdiness of marines on leave to the terrors of jungle warfare against an enemy determined to fight to the last man, Leckie describes what war is really like when victory can only be measured inch by bloody inch. Woven throughout are Leckie's hard-won, eloquent, and thoroughly unsentimental meditations on the meaning of war and why we fight. **BONUS AUDIO:** Tom Hanks, one of the executive producers, has written and narrated an original introduction to *Helmet for My Pillow*, where he describes his appreciation for the book's author, the narrators, and the soldiers who had fought in the cauldron of the Pacific Theater during World War II.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 10 hours and 27 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Audible Studios

Audible.com Release Date: October 15, 2013

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B00FOWJ4P6

Best Sellers Rank: #19 in Books > History > Military > United States > Veterans #56 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Leaders & Notable People > Military > World War II #70 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > History > Military

## Customer Reviews

First, I must admit a particular regard for this book as the granddaughter of Bill Smith (whom Leckie refers to as 'Hoosier'), who served with Leckie in How Company. Leckie offers nuanced insight into the ways in which he and his friends understood national military service, the 'enemy', and the war more generally, and how these perspectives or ideas evolved among the men from North Carolina to Guadalcanal, Australia, and New Britain. Leckie steers clear from prototypes or clichés; there is no emblematic enlisted man or officer. Rather, these men are treated as real people coping (or not) with the profound uncertainty of their situation. Perhaps this appreciation says more about my own lack of experience with combat/warfare. Thinking of Guadalcanal from a macro or military history perspective, it is easy to take for granted that marines' objectives - and the most efficacious means to pursue them - were always apparent to those involved. In this context, Leckie's account of warfare as a learning process was deep, reflexive, and fascinating. For example, he describes: 1) the marines' first reactions to air battle and subsequent adjustment to air battle as a simple process of attrition; and 2) the uncertainty confronted by officers at various stages, against the backdrop of the US' limited military experience in the Pacific or in jungles more generally. In this way, Leckie also makes apparent the need - and efficacy - of severe hierarchy. For this reason, I think that reviewers' arguments positing a lack of regard for officers deserve qualification.\*\*\*UPDATE/REFLECTIONS\*\*\*Hoosier was wounded and evacuated early in the Battle of Peleliu; I believe that Chuckler and Runner were wounded later and evacuated with Leckie.

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