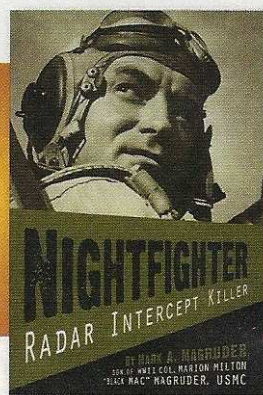
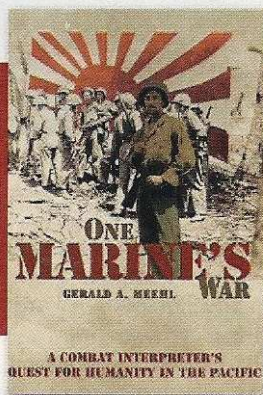


# Books Reviewed

Unless otherwise noted, these books may be ordered from The Marine Shop. Subscribers may use members' prices. Include \$5.99 for shipping. Virginia residents add 5 percent sales tax; North Carolina residents add 6.75 percent. Prices may change. Make check or money order payable to: MCA, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, call toll-free: (888) 237-7683, or shop online at [www.marineshop.net](http://www.marineshop.net).



**ONE MARINE'S WAR: A Combat Interpreter's Quest for Humanity in the Pacific.** By Gerald A. Meehl. Published by Naval Institute Press. 288 pages. Stock #1612510922. \$31.46 MCA Members. \$34.95 Regular Price.

How often does a combat Marine officer get to save the lives of his sworn enemy? First Lieutenant Robert Sheeks, a World War II language officer serving in the Pacific, was a most unlikely candidate to be a friend and a savior for a few soldiers and scores of Japanese civilians. His early years were spent in prewar China where he witnessed a multitude of unspeakable atrocities committed by the Japanese military in the early part of the 1930s. His father, then working in Shanghai, was a realist and insisted upon allowing Bob and his brother to witness the roots of man's inhumanity to man.

Sheeks' experience in China was not all unpleasant; he became favorably impressed by observing the Fourth Marine Regiment leathernecks in action. These Marines provided a steadying influence on the many foreigners working in the area known as the Shanghai International Concession. Sheeks' China experience left him with two all-consuming ideas: first, he believed that the Japanese were evil; and second, he wished to become a Marine officer.

After China and before Pearl Harbor, Sheeks joined the Marine Corps Reserve. He attended Harvard University, studying Chinese culture and history. Obtaining

his commission as a Marine was tied into his successful completion at the Naval Japanese language "immersion" program.

First Lt Bob Sheeks made his first hot landing on the tiny Pacific atoll called Tarawa. At "Bloody Tarawa," he managed to collect and analyze a limited number of Japanese maps, letters and other assorted documents. On the voyage back to Hawaii, however, he interrogated an enemy submariner. There, Sheeks made a small, but valuable, intelligence breakthrough. From the sailor, he learned that the Japanese had developed and deployed a submarine that had the capacity to launch airplanes while at sea.

In June 1944, on Saipan, Sheeks' feelings toward the Japanese were "complicated." On one hand, he knew that if he got the enemy to surrender, fewer Marines would die. It seemed nearly impossible, however, to prevent the hard-charging Marines from carrying out their mission, namely to kill Japanese soldiers.

In one bizarre incident, Sheeks persuaded a soldier to surrender and then return to the cave he had just vacated. The soldier hurled a satchel charge into the cave opening, killing some of his former comrades. Asked why he agreed to do such a thing, the prisoner of war simply stated that he had been savagely abused by his comrades after he had timidly suggested that they consider surrendering.

"One Marine's War" documents the emerging importance of having culturally

adept Marines readily available to help ensure victory. The author's style keeps the reader intrigued with this action-packed tale about our country's "greatest Marine generation," locked in mortal combat. The brutality of war, especially in the Pacific, may be difficult for a contemporary reader to grasp. When racial hatred becomes one of the governing factors, it clouds the ability to follow man's most humane instincts. Marines follow orders, and it was because of the risky exertions of Marines like Bob Sheeks, and other daring language and cultural specialists, that many lives were saved.

With the extended wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the temptations to brand all Muslims as extremists, Meehl's book is particularly timely in publication. Read this one to help shape your understanding of today's wars.

Robert B. Loring

*Editor's note: A prolific reader and Leatherneck contributor, "Red Bob" Loring is dedicated to supporting social programs that improve the lives of citizens in East Pasco County, Fla.*

**NIGHTFIGHTER: Radar Intercept Killer.** By Mark A. Magruder. Published by Pelican Publishing Company. 288 pages. Stock #1455615315. \$22.46 MCA Members. \$24.95 Regular Price.

Consider the incalculable courage Marine pilots in Pacific night fighter squadrons during World War II must have had as they climbed into their Hellcat cockpits to fly and fight in pitch-black, unfathomable skies. Night after night, and with few beacons to guide them, they raced to the darkest of challenges: triumphant where there was no light. Countless lives depended on their mission, each man understanding with no tears or sentiment that the ultimate in human resolution is to die so that others may live.

Rarely acknowledged today, their collective valor is unquestionably worthy of the nation's highest honor, let alone our