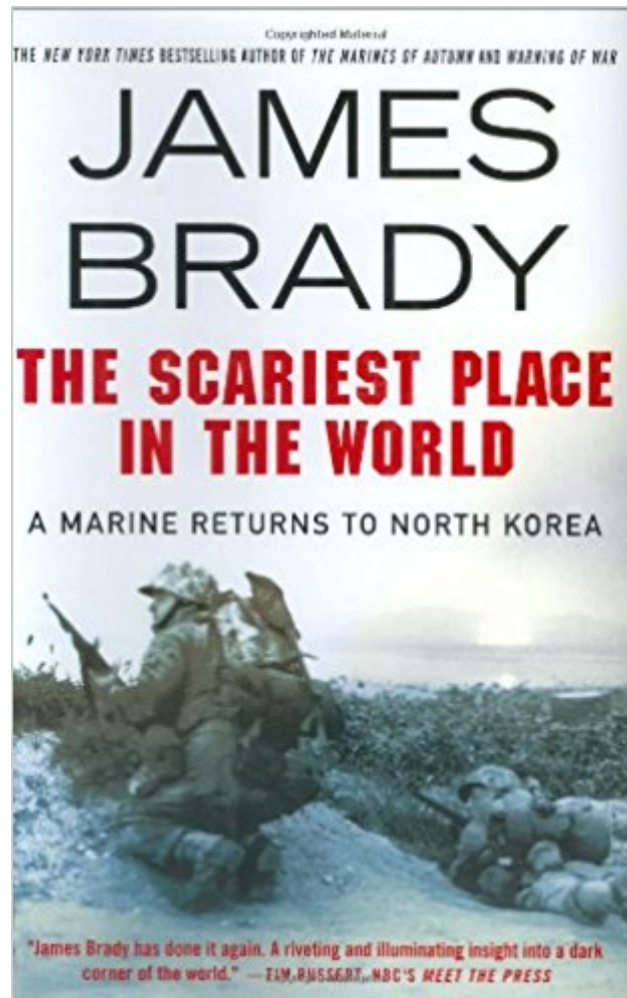




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The Scariest Place In The World: A Marine Returns To North Korea



Synopsis

Half a century after he fought there as a young lieutenant of Marines, James Brady returns to the brooding Korean ridgelines and mountains to sound Taps for a generation. It's been 15 years since Brady first wrote of Korea in *The Coldest War*, drawing raves from Walter Cronkite and *The New York Times*, which called it "a superb personal memoir of the way it was." In the spring of 2003 Brady and Pulitzer-winning combat photographer Eddie Adams, a couple of old Marines, "gentlemen rankers off on a spree," flew in Black Hawk choppers and trekked the Demilitarized Zone where it meanders into North Korea, interviewing four-star generals and bunking in with tough U.S. Recon troops, in Brady's words, "raw meat on the point of a sharpened stick." The two Marine veterans bond with this handful of youthful GIs confronting the loopy and nuclear saber-rattling North, in a contemporary Korea which just might become the war we have to fight next. Brady recalls that first time on bloody Hill 749, the men who died there, what happened to the Marines who lived to make it home, and experiences yet again the emotional pull of a lifelong love affair with the Corps in which they all served. With consummate skill James Brady summons up the past and illuminates the present, be it the Korea of "the forgotten war", the Yanks who fought there long ago or today's soldiers standing wary sentinel over "the scariest place in the world". The result is uplifting, inspiring, often heart-breaking, and this new Brady memoir proves as powerful as his first.

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Customer Reviews

This powerful narrative by the author of *The Marines of Autumn* is an endearing piece of warrior's nostalgia, written with his accustomed skill by a seasoned writer. Returning to Korea, Brady revisits

some of the places where he fought as a Marine platoon commander. In the opening, Brady finds his old battlefield of Hill 749 within sight of North Korean emplacements, although well-defended by a South Korean army vastly improved from what he remembers from 50-plus years ago. The rest of the narrative shifts back and forth, beginning with the author's nerve-wracking stroke to his going to Korea to write the Parade article on which this book is based. As Brady rides through Seoul with skyscrapers on every side, he remembers seeing it in 1951, when there wasn't a building taller than two stories left standing. Fellow Marines, from "the Skipper" (the company commander, the late Rhode Island governor and senator John Chaffee) on down, appear in their old age, and in their youth when they faced the Chinese with everything from artillery to bayonets. Brady, who expresses grave reservations about the Iraq War, sometimes moves from topic to topic fast enough to lose readers, but this book marks a highly admirable addition to his distinguished body of work. (Apr.)

Brady's latest on the Korean War takes its title from Bill Clinton's description of North Korea, which Brady looked into from the DMZ from Hill 749, which his company had assaulted in 1951, when he revisited South Korea. The place lived up to the description, although some things had changed. His escorts now included women officers, and Seoul was a mass of skyscrapers rather than of rubble. The book shifts back and forth from historical to contemporary scenes somewhat jerkily; on the whole, the historical passages are vividder, with their depictions of World War I-style trench warfare making a comeback and the Chinese proving themselves proficient, persistent opponents. The contemporary scenes become most eloquent when Brady pays tribute to old comrades, including the late Senator John Chaffee of Rhode Island, who commanded Brady's company. Marines tend to wax eloquent when saying farewell to fellow marines; Brady, a polished writer even under ordinary circumstances, is no exception. Roland GreenCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

Brady is a great writer. This is basically like a recorded personal conversation with him. He has a very relaxed, easy to stay with style - even when discussing the life-threatening parts. And - he obviously knows what he's talking about!

As a previous reviewer I thought that Brady's book would be more of a focus on the DMZ and perhaps show some insight into "the scariest place." I did enjoy his war time reminiscences but that wasn't why I purchased his book. I didn't particularly care for his 'how he belatedly was awarded the Bronze Star,' and chumming around with colonels and generals at galas and such as it sounded like

'how great I am after all.' Oh, and by the way, Senator Chafee was my CO. I got tired of Mr. Brady selling his earlier pub,"The Marines of Autumn" (which is a fine read) but in particular I did not like him pimping (perhaps a bit too strong) his "The Coldest War." There are sections of the book where he cites this book seemingly every other page. After awhile I started to feel a bit sorry for Mr. Brady which is too bad as I'm sure that he was a fine officer for his Marines of Dog Company. It's an ok book for what it is but it really isn't about "the scariest place."

Excellent read. Kept me going all the way through.

Well done. Just missed Korea myself and appreciated Brady's very personal remembrances.

I was with James Brady when he served in our company as a platoon officer so it was very interesting to read his thoughts years later..

This book was recommended to me because I come from a multi generational military family. The book was awesome, I recommend it.

The late author visited the sites of the battles of his youth. As the World War II and Korean War vets die off, he remembers their heroism in defending South Korea and against Communist domination. Brady talks about the individual battles he fought in and remembrances of those who were his combat brothers. I would probably feel the same way after a traumatic life in combat. Brady had had some good books (both fiction and historical) about the Marine Corp and the Korean War. This is an OK read, but read his personal remembrances of the Korean War and both books are paired well. A nice reminder of our forgotten war and those who fought it

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