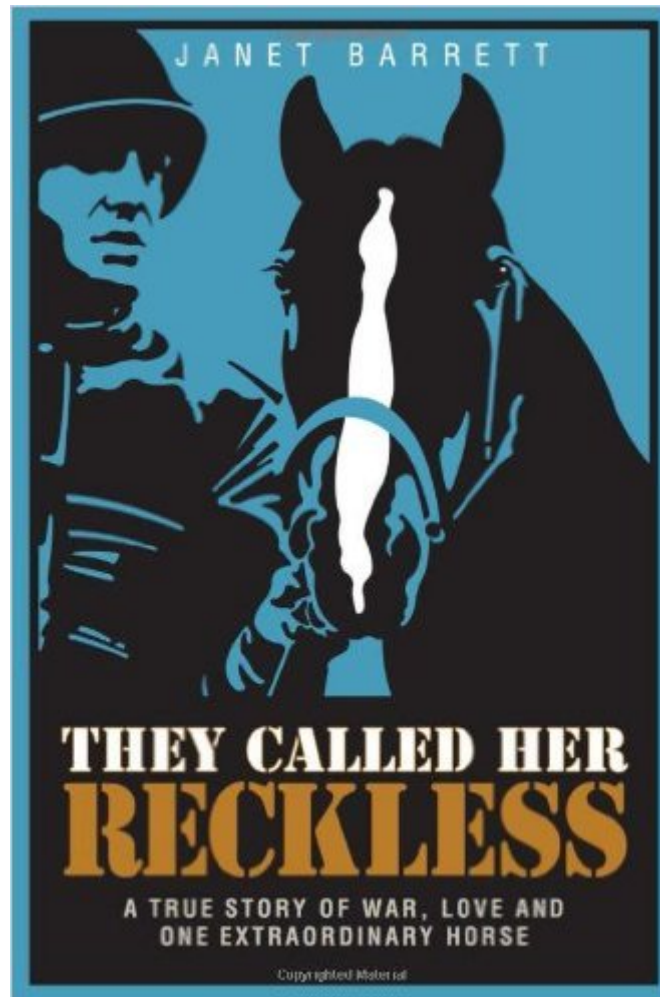


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They Called Her Reckless -- A True Story Of War, Love And One Extraordinary Horse



Synopsis

When the Marines of the Fifth Regiment's Recoilless Rifle Platoon acquired a small Korean pony to haul ammunition up the steep hills to the front lines, what they got was a real-life hero, Reckless, the courageous and indomitable warhorse who stood with her buddies for two years during the Korean War, saving many lives, raising spirits, and winning the love and respect of all who knew her. She came on base in October, 1952, disrupting a softball game and capturing the attention of everyone around. Immediately named for the reckless rifles she would supply, she began life with the Marines as private first class Reckless. In short order, she was an integral member of the platoon, learning quickly to run into her bunker when incoming fire hit the camp, navigate the trails and hills on her own, and calmly accept the roar of the recoilless rifles at close range. In skirmishes and firefights, and ultimately in the savage Battle for Outpost Vegas, Reckless showed her bravery and resilience. In that last bloody fight, surpassing all expectations, she hauled ammunition for three days and nights wherever it was needed. For wounds sustained, she was awarded two Purple Hearts. Ever the character, she also shared her buddies' C-rations and mess hall chow, beers and an occasional whiskey, and on cold nights, their warm tents. She was promoted to sergeant by the commander of the First Marine Division. Then, in late 1954, the men got their wish, and Sergeant Reckless sailed for San Francisco, a hero's welcome, and another new life. Enhancing Reckless' story is an extensive selection of photographs of her time in Korea and, later, during her years at Camp Pendleton in California. Many of them come from the private collections of the Marines who knew her, and have never before been published. The contributions of some 60 Marines in all, who came forward to share their memories of Reckless, made it possible to tell her story.

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Customer Reviews

This is a great down to earth story about a bunch of Marines in Korea and their becoming attached to a little horse who made their lives simpler in the performance of their duties and also gave them the opportunity to bond with an animal that became a personal part of their lives. Always, a story of man and animal provides a human interest angle, but in this case, the personality of the animal created an extremely strong bond with her humans.

I believe that this book is the best book ever written as well as the most comprehensive/complete and warm coverage of a fantastic warhorse that we Marines were honored to have served with in Korea and later to have enjoyed life with in Camp Pendleton. As a former horse owner (I had five) and rider and more importantly a Marine (both enlisted and officer) who served 25 years and proudly claim the title USMC-Rte for 37 years, I was moved to tears many times while reading about the life and service of Sergeant Reckless. This small Korean horse, pony size (only 14.2hands) did a giant's work in serving the Marines of the 5th Marine Regiment in Korea, where she was awarded two Purple Heart medals for wounds suffered in battle and also many other awards for service . I have read many stories about Reckless and have had the privilege of visiting her and also serving in Korea with the First Marine Division for part of the time she served there. But this book goes beyond a story of the accomplishments of Reckless , it provides a complete picture of everything from where she came from, how the Marines acquired her and how she became a warhorse, how she interacted with her buddies/Marines, her intelligence and humor and funny things that happened along the way from active service through retirement. I very highly recommend this book and salute the writer who did a very commendable job honoring Reckless and the Marine Corps who loved her. The writer provided a great gift to us Marines and anyone who loves horses. I am so happy she was allowed to come home and have a very much well-earned good life after service, unlike the many war dogs we left behind in Vietnam.

I would not have expected to refer to a story set in the Korean War as "delightful," but this book is. "They Called Her Reckless" is a wonderful true story about a small horse of a breed I had not heard of, the Jeju or Cheju pony, which is native to South Korea. There were some knowledgeable horsemen among the soldiers of the Recoilless Rifle Company, and one of them went searching for a horse that could help out the soldiers when they needed to move the rifles and giant shells. Trucks

couldn't handle the tough terrain, and the soldiers had to make multiple trips on foot to transport the equipment. The horse found might have once been named Flame of the Morning, but the soldiers named her Reckless, after their company's nickname. Janet Barrett introduces us to Reckless and her many foibles, and to the men she adopted. I laughed out loud in parts, and fell in love with the mare and her soldiers. There are some great photos (black-and-white), and the story is followed to its conclusion. My only prior knowledge of South Korea came from watching "M*A*S*H" on TV, and after reading this story I felt I knew a great deal more about the reality of the war there. This book isn't political, nor does it gloss over the harshness of the war, but the focus is on life. We see the men and Reckless making the best of their situation, and it's inspiring. The writing is very good (this from a very picky reader), and the photos were a nice surprise. There are even some photos [spoiler!] of her foals (born in the U.S., after the war). The book would be readable on a young-adult level, but it's not aimed at children.

I happen to love a True Story, so when I saw this book, I thought I'll give it a shot. I thoroughly enjoyed it! I learned facts about the Korean war that I wasn't even aware of, but mostly fell in love with this little horse the way the marines had. I would recommend this book to anyone who loves animals. Even if you are not fond of war stories, this was written in a way that keeps your interest all the way through. I look forward to another book from this author.

I believe I first heard about Reckless when Breyer came out with a model of her. Being a Breyer collector and married to a Viet Nam era Marine, I knew I had to add her to my collection. I was then naturally more curious about the story. I bought Andrew Geer's book which I had not yet read when a friend at my husband's platoon reunion in Oceanside bought this book for me. The pictures in Geer's book are illegible so I was happy to see the clear pictures in this one. The friend also took us to see Sgt. Reckless memorial' and the area of her grave at Camp Pendleton. This book was a pretty easy read, but I wasn't riveted to it. It's a great story, and as a horse owner, I can understand what a truly amazing horse she was to be able to accomplish what she did. Her camaraderies with the other Marines was quite remarkable. However, her life back in the states made me sad. Horses are herd animals, and she needed to be with other horses. That is the simplest thing you can do to make a horse happy. The fact that no one seems clear on what happened to her foals is also upsetting. But the worst part was the fact that there was barbed wire for her to become tangled in. She died far too young.

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