

## Foreword

Diane Cameron has enlarged my understanding of what it means to be a warrior. The stories she recounts of United States Marines stationed in China during the Japanese invasion and occupation at the beginning of WWII certainly illustrate one of the fundamental roles played by the profession of arms in our society — to protect life, property, commerce, and our national identity. The stories in this book also suggest ways in which war can inflict deep and lasting psychological wounds in warriors. But the greatest lesson in *Never Leave Your Dead* about the way of the warrior emerges not from the lives of the author's beloved China Marines, but from her own pilgrimage to imagine and understand the tragic life of one particular China Marine — the one who married her mother years later — and to bring home his memory, finally, with love and honor.

Whether engaged in warfare, peace-keeping, or humanitarian assistance, the greatest challenges warriors face are moral rather than physical. For deployed warriors, physical dangers come and go, but moral dangers are everywhere, all the time. In the high-stakes world of the warrior, there is usually one, or perhaps just a few, *right* things to do in each situation. And both the cost and consequences of those right actions can be enormous. For a Marine on guard duty, the right thing is to find every threat to those being guarded, and to let none pass. For a Navy corpsman tending the wounds of Marines on a battlefield, the right thing is save every life and limb. For a China Marine in Shanghai in 1937, the right thing was to do nothing — to merely watch as thousands were raped and killed. That's not a tough job; it's an impossible job. We now know that one of the consequences of failing to live up to one's own moral expectation can be *moral injury*, a deep and lasting wound to one's personal identity.

At a deeper level, perhaps the warrior's challenge is more than just choosing right actions over wrong. Perhaps the most fundamental role

warriors play in our society is to venture into the unclaimed territory between good and evil, to construct goodness right there on evil's doorstep, and then to defend it with their lives. To serve selflessly while others exploit, to show compassion while others are cruel, to forgive the unforgivable — these are all ways to create goodness in the face of evil. So also is making sense of a brutal double murder that happened decades ago in order to find and celebrate the humanity of a veteran China Marine.

This book is a creation of goodness on the doorstep of evil. And its author is as much a warrior as the Marines she writes about, even though she has never worn a uniform.

*Bill Nash*

*Never Leave Your Dead*  
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