



Goodnight Marines

David R. Dixon

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A brilliantly illustrated children's book about the culture and traditions of the United States Marine Corps.

A note from the author, David Dixon:

As a veteran I feel honored to represent the Marine Corps and act as an ambassador for the traditions that I hold so dear. I believe that Marines, both in and out of uniform, must learn to engage the younger generation and share our proud culture of leadership. In this spirit I authored Goodnight Marines. The inspiration for many of these verses and illustrations came during the difficult times away from my family during two combat deployments to Iraq.

Civilians who read Goodnight Marines will certainly appreciate the patriotism, heartfelt emotions, and captivating illustrations (by Phil Jones - Desert Storm veteran and former Disney artist). Marines sharing this book with their children will quickly realize the depths of symbolism. In this book a young child gazes proudly at a photograph of his father - currently deployed overseas to Afghanistan. The father stands watch over his combat outpost underneath the very same moon (with an Eagle, Globe, and Anchor) that is shining on his son. The child's room is adorned with toy tanks, planes, radios, and trucks that he plays with to feel connected to his father. Then, as the child says goodnight to his dad and all of his military memorabilia, the toys come alive in his vibrant imagination.

While canvassing the child's room, Goodnight Marines references many Marine Corps occupational specialties, including Infantry, Aviation, Communications, Supply, Logistics, the Band, and even Toys for Tots. Thus, the book offers a chance for all Marines to show their child "This is what mommy / daddy does at work." Also, this book intentionally incorporates a diversity of ranks - junior enlisted, NCO, SNCO, Sergeant Major, Warrant Officer, and Officer - so that all Marines may find personal examples to feel proud of when reading to their little loved ones. In fact, this poem leaves the specific rank and occupation of the father unmentioned, symbolizing that every Marine is a rifleman. Although this father is fighting a modern war in Afghanistan, Goodnight Marines also remembers heroes such as Dan Daly and famous battles like Iwo Jima and Saipan.

The kids, of course, love the quiet protagonist - the child's best friend and stuffed animal Teufel Hunden (Devil Dog). Unfortunately, this young boy cannot yet pronounce such a difficult German word, so he has named his friend "Tuffy Hound." Tuffy was given to the child by his dad before deploying to Afghanistan. Just like the father guards his combat outpost, Tuffy provides the child with warmth and security, watching over the room as the child sleeps. Tuffy is a Staff Sergeant and wears the Smokey Bear cover of a Marine Drill Instructor, symbolizing the mentorship, guidance, and (albeit sometimes tough) love that DI's show as they become parental figures to recruits during Boot Camp. The real spirit of Goodnight Marines culminates on the final page, where the moon shines on the father's picture next to his son - sleeping safely in his room with Tuffy Hound. I encourage the audience to conclude their nightly reading by singing the Marines' Hymn, located on the previous page next to Tuffy. I hope my fellow warriors will treasure reading Goodnight Marines to their children as much as my wife and I do.

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Jack Baldwin:

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Andrew Fox:

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Fred Green:

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