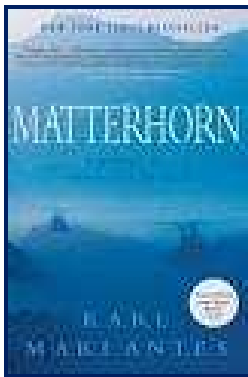


### **Pithy, pertinent, pushy, palatable, propitious, panegyric paper**

The title to this short and perspicuous paper means this book is a serious read. This paper is designed to encourage you to take the time and read it. Note: it is long, lugubrious, and mournful. You have to be dedicated to sit down and turn the 608 pages but I am telling you it is worth the effort. As we used to say in Korea “It is just another few hours off the tour.”

Let me help you get started and hopefully motivated to read this. Just some quick comments, directional help, and a little prayer because it has some spots in it that will make you bleed...or groan, or weep, or wish that you could have been a bush Marine in Vietnam around 1969...actually, three of us Brigade Riflemen, about this time frame, were in the war effort with Col Ken Moore stationed in Vietnam and Bob Irish and me in Korea.



Karl Marlantes (2010). *Matterhorn*. Berkley, CA: El León Literary Arts.

A few years ago my British Navy friend David Woolley in Santa Monica suggested I read this book. At the time I missed the connection that he knew Marlantes as they were in or near Oxford in England. I told him I would read it. Well, I glanced at it maybe two minutes and decided I didn't need right then to read any more about the mud Marines in Vietnam. This means it was just not time to appreciate the story he tells. Then, this last week, it jumped off the shelf at me - and then I could not put it down.

Examples of books leading up to this one and to set the case for how much deeper *Matterhorn* is:

“The Guerrilla – and How to Fight Him” by T. N. Breene;

“The Green Berets” by Robin Moore;

“Chickenhawk” by Robert Mason,

“Fields of Fire” by James Webb;

“We Were Soldiers Once – and Young” by Moore and Galloway;

“Rogue Warrior” by Richard Marcinko;

If I were to start another list of 100 books the first ‘war’ book would be “Matterhorn.”

Somewhere between being a bibliophile and a lectiophile (lexophile) there are those of us who like war books. When you pick this one up go to the first pages and bend the corner of the “Chain of Command” page – on the back is “Area of Operation” – you will be going back and forth between Bravo One and the rest of Bravo Company.

(If you read the first six pages you will be hooked...)

Following page 569 is a Glossary with “technical terms, slang, and jargon” – you will need to “dee-dee” here more than once to find out what a “gunjy” is, what “E-tool” is for, and who “Nagoolians” are.

Here are some quotes to show off his prolific and linguistical talent and then reflect the idea that one can’t write like this unless they themselves were also in country and ‘humping it’.

“All of them were too thin, too young, and too exhausted. They all talked the same, too, saying fuck, or some adjective, noun, or adverb with fuck in it, every four words” (p. 2). (See example on page 33.) However, being one to see just how true the word usage was, I ran a sample of the book and determined that the ‘f’ word is used 3.9 times on average on each page. I can provide the statistics for this random number - if requested.

After a while Williams said, “So, I mean, about growing up to someplace. Or someone. I don’t know. I mean, you got somebody in mind? Martin Luther King or Cassius Clay or somebody?” Cortell looked up at the darkening clouds. “Nope. I got Jesus. He’s my to.”  
“Yeah, but Jesus is white.”  
“Nope. He be a brown Jew. God got it just right” (p. 118).

Fitch looked at Mellas. They both knew that without Charlie Company’s ammunition, there would be about one minute of fire. Then it would be knives. Then it would be over. Fitch hung his head between his knees momentarily, then looked up. “We might not make it,” he said. “I know,” Mellas answered (p. 423).

The NVA were putting a rear guard on Matterhorn to keep the high ground as they pulled back, but otherwise the northern part of the operation was over. With their northern flank exposed, the two units moving down the Da Krong and Au Chau valleys to the south would also be called back. No need to push when time was on your side, Mulvaney mused. That was the problem. The NVA had forever. The Americans had until the next election (p. 457).

Lying on the floor was a grenade with the primer taken out. Wrapped around it was a sheet of paper. Simpson took the paper off and smoothed it out. It was a mimeographed company roster, with names, ranks, serial numbers, and tour rotation dates. It was Bravo Company. Names had been heavily crossed out with a ball point pen. Neatly typed next to them were the words like murdered, crippled, maimed, blinded...(p. 529).

***This book went to the top of my list on page 401.***

***One very clever short seven worded sentence three***

***lines from the bottom is a quote from Goodwin***

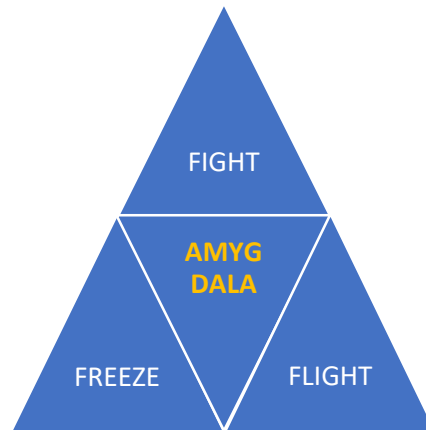
***about his M-16. When you read it you will know***

***why this one sentence holds the complete sentiment***

***for me being an “oh-three-eleven” (p. 442).***

***[Actually, I am not a real Marine – I just talk like one.]***

Make sure you (sometime) get the last few pages past the slang and jargons section to read the article



by Anthony Loyd.

**"The Mad Monkey"<sup>1</sup>**

Was researching the Web to find out who Marlantes was. Was wondering why he fought in Vietnam in about 1969 and waited around till 2010 to write the book. Found him on this short video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wTJsiXOeMIE> I had a feeling there was something missing in his being able to verbalize his words. He just seemed kinda slow, or maybe apprehensive and held back - for some reason. He certainly did not act like a Marine...Now I know. Loyd tells us. This will yank at you while you read him or will jerk you around for not knowing after you have read it.

I sent it to Mr. David. This is his response:

"When he returned to Oxford to finish his Rhodes Scholarship (with missing fingers and a silver star and more,) he was worried that he'd failed and would be turned down. Instead the Warden of Rhodes House (who'd been Montgomery's personal intelligence officer and knew more than a little about bravery) said he'd been keeping his billet open and that he'd find his scholarship fully restored to him with all payments made and up-to-date. He may've said something like "we'd missed you and hoped you'd come back." Sometimes one is proud of the English.

Karl had worked the ferries in his spare time before Yale, and taught me how to tie a one-handed bowline with a hawser, a skill of which I remain proud. But he worried and that segment shows it. I last saw him about five years ago, and Vietnam had left him with worry, guilt and anger ... and I think that's the difference between the British way of war and the American. The silly officers' games we played on weekends, no matter where, and the dressing up was a form of hysterical relief ... and you Americans don't even have liquor to assist -- or if you do, it comes with a dose of guilt too. War is so serious that occasionally we need to kick it in the teeth.

But regardless of it all, I'm proud that Karl was my friend when young."

So, thanking David for his putting us onto *Matterhorn* and Marlantes, I shall suggest a toast to them both...and then another for the Rhodes Scholar and bush Marine who won The Navy Cross – and has lived to tell us about it!

**Cheers!**

Now see page 4

GH 31 August 2022

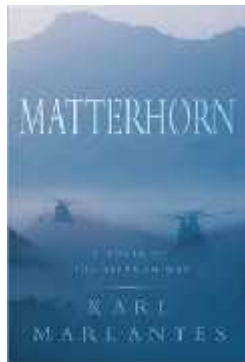
---

<sup>1</sup> Anthony Loyd (2010). *Hero fights his hardest battle*. London: The Times. See pp. 603-608 of *Matterhorn*.

COMMENTS ON *MATTERHORN*: Follow on notes about Karl Marlantes

There are four of us reading *Matterhorn* and we all will have some comments when complete...discussion is good.

Three of us were in the far east at or near the time Karl was fighting up near the DMZ – just a fact.



This book takes place 99 days from 3 Jan '69 to Easter.

You should be able to dink around on the Internet and find stuff – like his “War Comes Home: Karl Marlantes” (6:55). After reading the book and then seeing him in this clip revealed to me that he has some problems. Of course, then the PTSD showed up. Wondered why, like I said earlier, why he waited till 2010 to publish a book about the war he fought in 41 years before. Course, he couldn’t find a publisher and it did take some time for him to get his shit together to write something that would sell.

Don’t forget the last few pages of the book where Anthony Loyd puts it all together better than anything I have seen so far. See page 607 for his “amygdala” and fight, flight, freeze example called “The Mad Monkey.” Loyd gives us the 15 years of therapy Karl has been through and is still taking meds to fight it.

His interviews got better. He had more confidence than this first short video.

Then he writes “What it is like to go to war” and we begin to see his characters in *Matterhorn* and begin to see what his PTSD was doing to him. “Understanding that combat will be a dark and terrible initiation before one goes into combat will help provide some structure and meaning to this soul-battering experience...If, however, you’re prepared ahead of time for it, you’ll suffer less because this knowledge and structure will add a thin layer of armor. Why put on this armor after the war? This is what I did” (pp. 17-18).

To me this is his story, his fight, his struggle, his whole she-bang and explains most of what he holds true and dear to himself and to the reality of the rest of the book. The stories of killing is the better part of his argument. Course, one can’t write like he did without having been there and seen, smelled, delivered, and lived killing. A book that would have helped is “On Killing” by Dave Crossman.

He makes a big deal of being in combat one day and hours later you could be on leave or back home. He has suggested more time to sort things out first and then working back into society. He suggests to do this with other Marines and then go home.

As an aside I have thought how much better Col Moore’s soldiers were in combat having trained together, fought together, and came home the same way, whereas most of the war had guys going over there on an airliner and dumped into the fray as a number or replacement.

Lastly, am waiting for someone to respond to my selected sentence on page 401 – see page 2 of my first paper. Golf Hotel 14 September 2022