



The Deadly Brotherhood: The American Combat Soldier in World War II

John Mcmanus

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In his book *Men Against Fire*, [historian S. L. A.] Marshall asserted that only 15 to 25 percent of American soldiers ever fired their weapons in combat in World War II. . . .

Shooting at the enemy made a man part of the “team,” or “brotherhood.” There were, of course, many times when soldiers did not want to shoot, such

as at night when they did not want to give away a position or on reconnaissance patrols. But, in the main, no combat soldier in his right mind would have deliberately sought to go through the entire war without ever firing his weapon, because he would have been excluded from the brotherhood but also because it would have been detrimental to his own survival. One of [rifle company commander Harold] Leinbaugh’s NCOs summed it up best when discussing Marshall: “Did the SOB think we *clubbed* the Germans to death?”

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