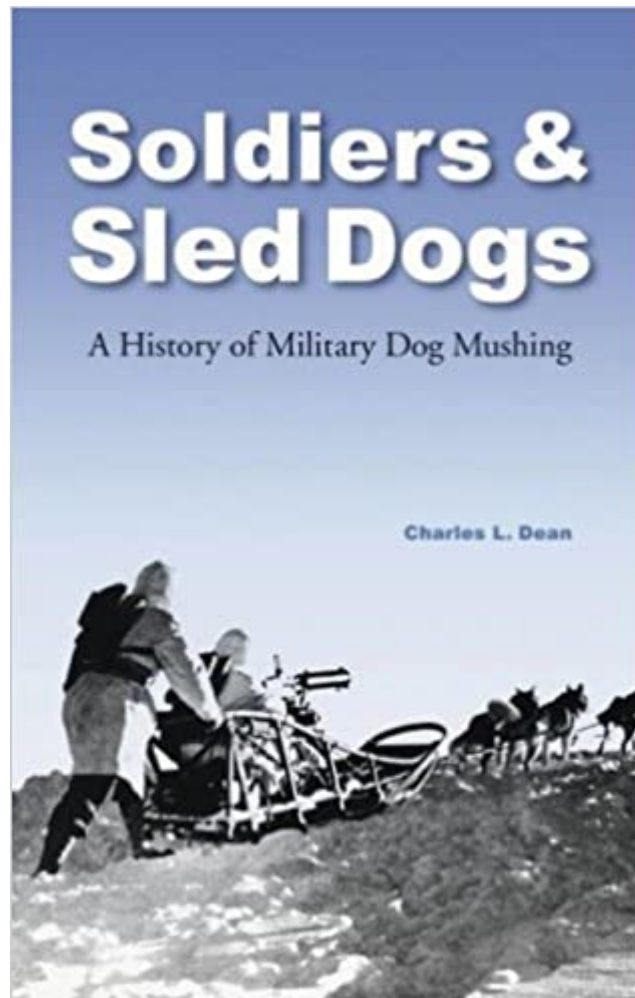




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Soldiers And Sled Dogs: A History Of Military Dog Mushing



Synopsis

Sled dogs have been serving humans since they were first tamed and broken to the trace thousands of years ago. Their history of supporting soldiers is much more recent and, for all its drama and heroism, remains little known. This hundred-year history of canine military service from the frozen reaches of Alaska to the snowy battlefields of World Wars I and II is told fully for the first time in this book by former army officer and longtime sled dog aficionado Charles L. Dean. By way of original army documents, interviews with the last living dog drivers, and never before published photographs, Dean's book tells a story that begins in Alaska, traverses two world wars and the Cold War era, and ends in the present-day Danish sledge patrol in Greenland. Here are the sled dogs drafted from Alaska and trained by French troops for use in the Vosges Mountains; improvised alpine sled dogs used by the Italians in the Great War; those deployed by the German SS in World War II; and others training in Montana's Camp Rimini, Colorado's Camp Hale, and Nebraska's Fort Robinson. From the nitty-gritty of the making of a canine division to the high drama of dogs conducting daring rescues and parachuting to their destinations, this book richly supplies a missing chapter in military history and in the story of man's best friend at war.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Dean's small, fascinating book provides handy reference on the military use of dogsleds. The first soldier to use them was Bill Mitchell, while laying a telegraph line across Alaska. The French used

them in the Vosges Mountains and the Italians in the Alps during World War I to supply outposts that couldn't be reached by mules. In World War II, the leading user was the U.S, which, despite many experiments with sleds and breeds of dog, ended up using them mostly for search and rescue in the Arctic. The Germans' SS mountain division used Finnish-trained dogs on the Russian front. After the war, the U.S. Air Force maintained search and rescue dog teams until helicopters replaced them in the mid-1950s. The book is full of fascinating tidbits, particularly for dog lovers, such as the report of a French Canadian musher whose dogs understood commands only in French. Even today, Dean reveals, Danish dog teams patrol Greenland's ice cap. Roland Green

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"Dean's small, fascinating book provides handy reference on the military use of dogsleds. The book is full of fascinating tidbits, particularly for dog lovers."

•Booklist (Booklist)

"This fine book on a little known military topic, superbly illustrated with numerous photographs and sketches, is surprisingly interesting and a pleasure to read."

•Military Heritage (Military Heritage)

"This little-known piece of history is well-worth preserving, and Dean has done a real service to history buffs, mushing enthusiasts and dog lovers by salvaging it."

•Shana Loshbaugh, Fairbanks Daily-News-Miner (Shana Loshbaugh Fairbanks Daily-News-Miner)

"By way of original army documents, interviews with the last living dog drivers, and never-before-published photographs, Charles Dean tells the hundred year history of canine military service from the frozen reaches of Alaska to the snowy battlefields of World Wars I and II. . . . The illustrations of several of the sleds used by various world armies coupled with Dean's engaging narrative makes Soldiers and Sled Dogs worth the price."

•Military Trader (Military Trader)

"The book provides an interesting look at an obscure corner of modern military history."

•The NYMAS Review, a publication of the New York Military Affairs Symposium (The NYMAS Review)

"This book is a hundred-year history of canine military service from the frozen reaches of Alaska to the snowy battlefields of World Wars I and II. Former army officer and longtime sled dog aficionado Charles L. Dean tells this story for the first time."

•Military History of the West (Military History of the West)

"Being an ex-scout-dog handler in the Vietnam War, I fall into two categories of someone who would be interested in this book. I found it well written and a welcome addition to my library. I hope others discover this book and pick it up to discover a forgotten chapter of our history."

•H-Net Book Reviews H-War (H-Net Book Reviews H-War)

This book is a study of the use of sled dogs, mostly in the United States Army. The use of sled dogs was first appreciated by the soldiers sent to Alaska, where normal means of transportation could come to a halt in the winter months. By observing the natives they learned that sleds could provide the means to keep communications open, resupply posts, even allow for the laying of telegraph lines in hostile weather conditions. Dean's study looks at the WWII efforts to improve this mode of transportation, codify the use of dogs and the initial plans to use the teams in Norway as part of the 10th Mountain Division's logistical setup. Dog teams would prove extremely valuable in search and rescue efforts under arctic conditions. I found this a very interesting book. It includes photos and line drawings throughout and is very well-written. The only downside is that it is redundant in places, almost as if the chapters were originally written as separate articles and then put together in one book.

Extremely informative book about my favorite topics ~ the military & northern breeds. The book gives very specific and detailed information documenting all the author's sources.

Very in depth information on arctic/mountain soldiering.

needs more detail. I bought this book hoping to find out what I wanted... it does give a decent description of the history..... more details for further research is always better. I would not pay more than 5 bucks for this book.....and i wouldn't want to pay more than 3 bucks shipping. so this book should be worth about 5 bucks....maybe 7 with shipping. I am going to get the army's fm next...hopefully that will have more info.

I must admit to being a bit biased as I am a friend of Chuck Dean, but this is only because I am also a researcher in the same subject. That being said, there is also a bit of rivalry as I was also hoping to publish the first book on this subject. Unfortunately for me, Chuck beat me to it.... fortunately for every one else he did. There can be no man more qualified to write this book, he has spent years conducting his research and this book contains about as much information as there is to be had on this subject. Believe me, the information is not readily available and this book is as good as it gets. It is superb, not only for it's technical details, but also for the personal stories of some of those involved. There is also a chapter on the use of sled dogs by the SS during WWII. This is a very difficult subject to broach and it is a credit to Chuck that he managed to track down and get a former SS dog driver to tell his story... not everyone was proud to serve in the SS. This is a must have book

and will be one that people will read time and time again. When you get bored of that, there are many excellent photos and diagrams to look at. I can't recommend this book highly enough

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