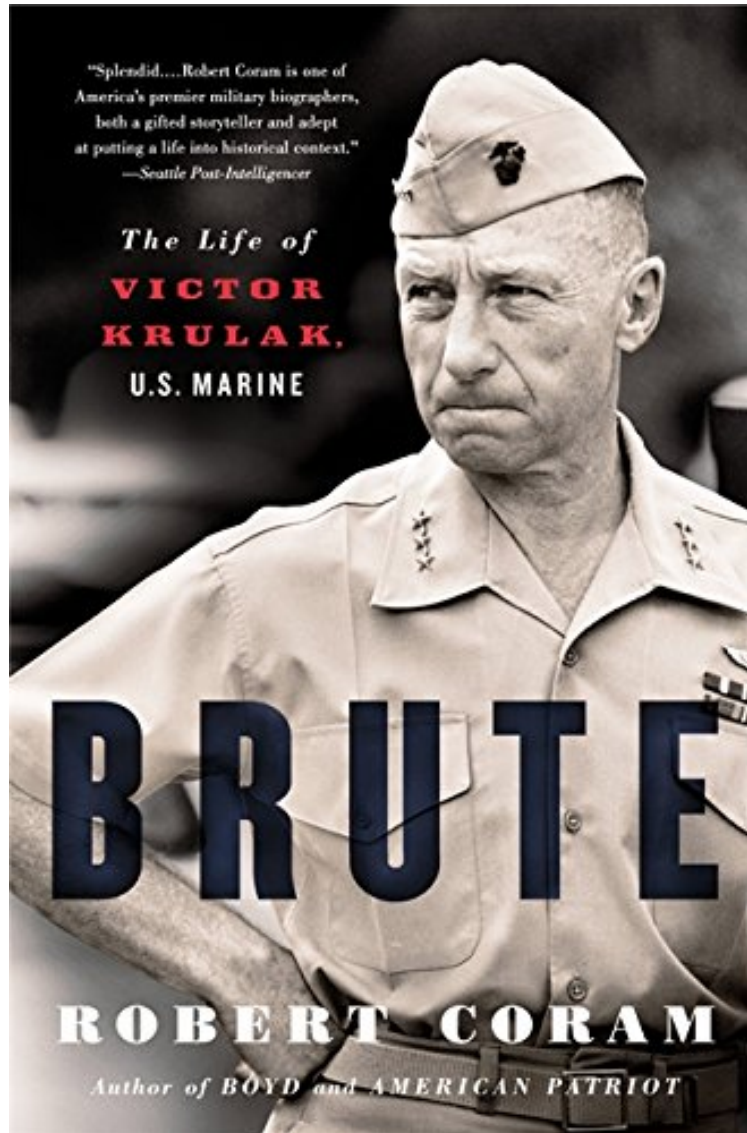


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Brute: The Life of Victor Krulak, U.S. Marine

Robert Coram

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Robert Coram : Brute: The Life of Victor Krulak, U.S. Marine before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Brute: The Life of Victor Krulak, U.S. Marine:

55 of 56 people found the following review helpful. EXCELLENT biography with perspective.By J. Scott ShipmanRobert Coram is a national treasure and the recent release of BRUTE confirms his position as one of America's premier military biographers. Mr. Coram took the straight and true method of portraying a genuine great man, but not in absence of his humanity. As Norman Maclean observes in his classic A River Runs Through It, man is

a "damned mess;" even the great and the hero has flaws, and General Krulak was no exception. Coram correctly observes in the Acknowledgements: "Some aspects of Brute Krulak's early years are disturbing. I elected to take an explanatory stance toward those years. Some will say I should have replaced the frail reed of sympathy with the righteous sword of judgement. But my sins as a young man were scarlet, and they were many. I do not consider those green actions the defining moments of my life and if I am to be measured, let it be by the deeds of my later years. Here I afforded Brute Krulak what I would ask for myself." Wow! It would be nice if more biographer's used such a perspective; as a great man once said to me, "It is not how you start, it is how you finish." General Krulak did his Corps proud and sometimes it was not pretty, but he held a passionate love for his country and his Corps. Mr. Coram presents a man of single minded purpose, who kept his Corps relevant because he knew that is what America wanted and continues to need. Mr. Coram traces the life story of a man driven to achieve and contribute. From General Krulak's contributions to the development in the years leading up to WWII of amphibious warfare as a core competency to his largely rejected ideas of counterinsurgency warfare in Vietnam, Mr. Coram paints the portrait of a man of substance, intellect, and passion. Our country needs more senior officers who have the courage of their convictions and tell the truth to their civilian leaders---especially when what needs to be said isn't pleasant. I read BRUTE in two sittings and enjoyed it thoroughly. If you enjoyed Mr. Coram's biographies of John Boyd and Bud Day, get this book and read it! Highest recommendation!! 12 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Solid read, little light on detailed analysis. By Reviewer Having read Coram's book on Boyd, I was excited to pick this up. Boyd had been an unexpected great read ... picked up on a whim and it became one of my top ten books for three reasons. First, it told a great story that exposed truths about the culture it focused on. Second, it was about a fascinating character. Third, it was based strongly in research and fact. Brute hits the first and second, but Coram's book seems less grounded in detailed analysis this time around. There are many leaps of logic Brute was near something so he must have been involved ... Brute liked something so he must have done it ... etc. That is not to say that these leaps didn't lead to truth, but whereas in Boyd, Coram seemed to detail the logic train, it wasn't done in Brute. There also seemed to be a lot of hyperbole ... Brute had a tremendous secret to hide about his background, family, etc ... which didn't seem to be necessary. It is almost that the author hit on this ying / yang theme about Brute's public and private persona that didn't quite hold up, but he didn't rework the initial premise. Those criticisms notwithstanding, I would still recommend this book. Not as strong as Boyd, but a good read for anyone interested in the Marine Corps, US Military History, or perhaps surprisingly, Business. Yes, Business. The way Krulak managed through the bureaucracy teaches much to those found working in today's corporate hierarchy. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A Marine Legend. By Gene Hays[...] This book is a brutally (no pun intended) honest biography of a Marine Corps legend, Victor Krulak. The only thing missing might be the General's sexual peccadilloes, if he had any. Before I continue, I must explain that I have some first hand knowledge of General Krulak's policies during the Vietnam War: from November of 1967 to December of 1968 I was a member of the Marine Aircraft Group 12 Civic Action Team, located in Chu Lai, RVN. If you haven't read this book, Chu Lai is Krulak's name in Chinese. I never had the honor of meeting the General but I served with his son when I was assigned to Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps for 3 years in Washington, D.C. As Mr. Coram pointed out in his book, "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree." Mr. Coram does an outstanding job of not only relating the facts of Krulak's early life but also explaining how these shaped his life and career. I learned some of his military history from Marine Corps history classes and then in later years, I read Krulak's book, "First to Fight," a must-read for any Marine. I have read many other books on Marine Corps history and I studied history at Pepperdine University while I was on active duty. This book ranks amongst the best of those. I have nothing else to say about Mr. Coram than to thank him for writing this definitive book that will be read and studied by future generations of United States Marines. On a personal note, I am a student, researcher and author of 2 books on the Vietnam War or more specifically the Marine Corps Civic Action Program of which I was a participant. "Brute" validated many thoughts and opinions I have about Vietnam. One fact that has not been reported or has been forgotten is that General Krulak had the prescience of mind to issue the order that 10 percent of all Marines sent to Vietnam would receive Vietnamese language training prior to departure regardless of MOS (job specialty). I was one of those selected and I received the training at Defense Language Institute at Monterey, CA. That fateful decision for me enabled me to join an off-shoot of General Krulak's Combined Action Platoon program, Civic Action. I have written a book about it. One note that neither Mr. Coram or General Krulak knew at the time: in the JFK secret recordings just recently published, the conversation between JFK, Krulak and Mendenhall related by General Krulak to Mr. Coram was "spot-on" proving that the General's memory was indeed excellent. In conclusion, much that I have learned over the years about WW II, Korea and Vietnam, the bitter rivalry between the Marine Corps and other services and the attempts to either downplay or even eliminate the Marine Corps were all validated in this book. More importantly to me, this book documents the biggest reason that Westmoreland lost this war for all of us that served: Westmoreland (and LBJ) would not accept Krulak's strategy of pacification and opted for the losing strategy of fighting a war of attrition. I firmly believe that it might have made some difference to the families of 15 of my classmates killed in action as well as the families of those represented on the Wall. I thought that it might make a difference in Iraq and Afghanistan, but once again history was ignored until near the end. We, the Marines, will continue the fight for the privilege to serve the

American people, as General Krulak observed in his own writings: we will continue to exist as long as the American people want us. Semper Fidelis, Gene Hays MSgt, USMC Retired Not as lean, not as mean, but still 100% Marine

Victor "Brute" Krulak is arguably the most important officer in the history of the U.S. Marine Corps. In China, he went on daring spy missions. In World War II, he was instrumental in developing amphibious vehicles, and masterminded the invasion of Okinawa. In Korea, he was a combat hero and pioneered the use of helicopters in warfare. In Vietnam, he devised a holistic strategy to fighting the Viet Cong, but when he stood up to LBJ, Krulak was forced to retire. Yet perhaps all of his accomplishments pale in comparison to what he did after World War II and again after Korea: Krulak almost single-handedly stopped the U.S. government from abolishing the Marine Corps. And all the while, he kept secret the truth that he feared would destroy him. Published to rave reviews in hardcover, BRUTE is Robert Coram's masterpiece.

From Publishers Weekly Coram (Boyd: The Fighter Pilot Who Changed the Art of War) clearly admires Krulak (1913–2008), a contentious Marine leader, and most readers will agree. Son of Jewish immigrants (a fact he suppressed), he attended Annapolis to obtain a free education. After observing Japanese naval operations as a young officer in 1937, he worked tirelessly to promote his design for what later became the Higgins boat, which proved essential for WWII amphibious operations. A decade later, he fought for acceptance of the helicopter. Krulak won numerous decorations for courage and rose to high command, where, Coram claims, his Marines enjoyed greater success than the army in Vietnam, although bitter quarrels with superiors and President Johnson over the war's conduct denied him his dream of becoming Marine Corps commandant. Despite Coram's high regard for Krulak and worshipful view of the Marines, he reveals innumerable details that Krulak suppressed, distorted, or invented in oral histories. Coram portrays a driven, fiercely outspoken, but creative warrior who probably deserves his legendary status. 8 pages of bw photos. (Nov.) (c) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Coram's third fine biography of one of the American armed force's stormy petrels tells the life of Lieutenant General Victor Krulak, U.S. Marine Corps. Krulak began his public career by concealing his Jewish background at Annapolis, then went on to see combat in WWI. Between the wars, he carried out covert intelligence missions and development work on the equipment for amphibious operations. After combat in WWII, he was invaluable in the Pentagon infighting that saved the marine corps both then and after Korea. He commanded the marines in the Pacific during part of the Vietnam War, and his disagreements with Kennedy, Johnson, and McNamara probably cost him his chance to be commandant of the corps. Something of a diamond in the rough, he lived to see two of his sons as prominent Episcopal clergymen and his other son retire as commandant of the corps. Probably the best epitaph for Krulak is the one he might well have preferred: a good Marine. --Roland Green Praise for BRUTE: "Coram captures General Krulak's striding march across the Marine Corps, and across the American century...[and] is a meticulous investigator of the things that drove Brute Krulak, not all of them pretty... Brute is plainspoken and absorbing...and captures its subject in strokes that are sharp, simple and often funny."?Dwight Garner, New York Times "A well-written tale about a complicated yet admirable man."?James Srodes, The Washington Times "Robert Coram has written a long-needed biography of Lieutenant General "Brute" Krulak that captures the critical role he played in some of the seminal events in the history of the Marine Corps...Coram's masterful portrayal of Krulak's complex personality accurately depicts a leader who drove both himself and his Marines to excel, no matter what the cost."?Colonel Jon T. Hoffman, USMCR(Ret), author of Chesty: The Story of Lieutenant General Lewis B. Puller, USM "A great book, a compelling and insightful look at one of America's greatest heroes. Like the man himself it tells the truth, blemishes and all, about this pivotal figure in American history. Brute Krulak's intelligence, courage and tenacity saved countless lives in three wars and perhaps saved the Marine Corps itself."?Jim Proser, author of I'm Staying with My Boys "A revealing-and troubling-portrait of a much-revered figure."?Kirkus s