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Chip On My Shoulder

Genevieve O'Reilly Allen



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Chip On My Shoulder is a story of the "army years" of Mickey O'Reilly. It begins when Mickey graduates nursing school and enlists in the Army Nurses Corps. To her amazement, she is one of the first in her class to be assigned overseas. Mickey heads off to war with her head in the stars, sustained by her faith in God and ready to use her abilities to heal both wounded bodies and souls in Italy and Africa during World War II. Her memoir is both humorous and dead serious as she touches on every day life in an evacuation hospital where sometimes the army brass and red tape combine to set her Irish temper flaring. Now an 84 year old grandmother, Mickey recounts her life and the lives of those who shared her tent, latrine and mess - with her heart wide open and sometimes her foot in her mouth. The chapters focus on Christmas Eve, the powdered food, some obnoxious generals, a young man going AWOL, picnics, advice from her chaplain, falling in love and finally her realization that war is an evil to be avoided at all costs. At 84 years young, she still puts her money where her mouth is and not only has been in jail for protesting her beliefs, but she admits that she would live her life over exactly the same if given the chance again. Mickey has come full circle from being a "kid" right out of nursing school to a courageous army nurse and finally a mother of nine and Pacifist who is known for her gentle heart, loving home and strong opinions. The book is a fast read. You will laugh and you may cry but you will not forget it.

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