

## Mekong First Light An Infantry Platoon Leader In Vietnam

Colonel Donald Gilbert Cook was the first U.S. Marine captured in Vietnam, the first and only Marine in history to earn the Medal of Honor while in captivity; and the first Marine POW to have a U.S. Navy ship named in his honor, the USS Donald Cook (DDG-75). On December 31, 1964, while serving as an observer with a South Vietnamese Marine Corps battalion on a combat operation against Viet Cong forces, he was captured near the village of Binh Gia in South Vietnam. Until his death in captivity in December 1967, Cook led ten POWs in a series of primitive jungle camps. This first book-length biography concentrates especially on Cook's three years in captivity, and is the first book exclusively about a Marine POW held in South Vietnam. Throughout, Cook's adherence to the Corps' traditional leadership principles and knowledge of the Code of Conduct are highlighted. His biography provides a unique case study of exemplary leadership under extremely difficult conditions. Includes 68 photographs.

Booklist Top of the List Reference Source The heir and successor to Eric Partridge's brilliant magnum opus, *The Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, this two-volume *New Partridge Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* is the definitive record of post WWII slang. Containing over 60,000 entries, this new edition of the authoritative work on slang details the slang and unconventional English of the English-speaking world since 1945, and through the first decade of the new millennium, with the same thorough, intense, and lively scholarship that characterized Partridge's own work. Unique, exciting and, at times, hilariously shocking, key features include: unprecedented coverage of World English, with equal prominence given to American and British English slang, and entries included from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, India, South Africa, Ireland, and the Caribbean emphasis on post-World War II slang and unconventional English published sources given for each entry, often including an early or significant example of the term's use in print. hundreds of thousands of citations from popular literature, newspapers, magazines, movies, and songs illustrating usage of the headwords dating information for each headword in the tradition of Partridge, commentary on the term's origins and meaning New to this edition: A new preface noting slang trends of the last five years Over 1,000 new entries from the US, UK and Australia New terms from the language of social networking Many entries now revised to include new dating, new citations from written sources and new glosses *The New Partridge Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* is a spectacular resource infused with humour and learning – it's rude, it's delightful, and it's a prize for anyone with a love of language.

The U.S. Army Center of Military History is pleased to present a new pamphlet in its U.S. Army Campaigns of the Vietnam War series. *Buying Time, 1965-1966*, by Frank L. Jones, begins with President Lyndon B. Johnson's decision to commit the U.S. military to an escalating role in the ground war against the Communist government of North Vietnam and its allies in South Vietnam known as the Viet Cong. Beginning in 1965, William C. Westmoreland, the commanding general of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), sent large numbers of soldiers on search-and-destroy missions against Viet Cong forces. His strategy in Vietnam depended on the superiority

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of U.S. firepower, including intensive aerial bombardments of regular enemy units. The goal was to inflict more losses than the Communist forces could sustain. During 1966, the United States gradually built up not just its forces, but also the logistical and administrative infrastructure needed to support them. Pacification, which took a lesser role during the military buildup, remained central to the allies approach to the war, with the White House taking additional measures to elevate its importance. As 1966 drew to a close, General Westmoreland was in position to launch the type of large, sustained military campaign that he hoped would both cripple the enemy and enable the South Vietnamese to make substantial progress toward pacification. The tide had been stemmed, yet no one was under the illusion that the task ahead would be either easy or quick. Indeed, the events of 1965 and 1966 had shown the enemy to be a dangerous and able foe, unshaken despite heavy losses in his own pursuit of victory. The true struggle had just begun."

The commanding officer of an infantry battalion in Vietnam in 1969 recounts how he took over a demoralized unit of ordinary draftees and turned it into an elite fighting force, and describes its accomplishments.

Includes words and phrases from United States history and from such current subcultures as technology and the Internet, the media, recent immigrants, and fashion. Based on official army records, these eyewitness accounts of seven hellacious battles serve as a brief history of the Vietnam conflict. From a fierce fight on the banks of the Ia Drang River in 1965 to a 1968 gunship mission, this illustrated report conveys the heroism and horror of warfare.

Based on classified documents and first-person interviews, a startling history of the American war on Vietnamese civilians Americans have long been taught that events such as the notorious My Lai massacre were isolated incidents in the Vietnam War, carried out by "a few bad apples." But as award-winning journalist and historian Nick Turse demonstrates in this groundbreaking investigation, violence against Vietnamese noncombatants was not at all exceptional during the conflict. Rather, it was pervasive and systematic, the predictable consequence of orders to "kill anything that moves." Drawing on more than a decade of research in secret Pentagon files and extensive interviews with American veterans and Vietnamese survivors, Turse reveals for the first time how official policies resulted in millions of innocent civilians killed and wounded. In shocking detail, he lays out the workings of a military machine that made crimes in almost every major American combat unit all but inevitable. *Kill Anything That Moves* takes us from archives filled with Washington's long-suppressed war crime investigations to the rural Vietnamese hamlets that bore the brunt of the war; from boot camps where young American soldiers learned to hate all Vietnamese to bloodthirsty campaigns like Operation Speedy Express, in which a general obsessed with body counts led soldiers to commit what one participant called "a My Lai a month." Thousands of Vietnam books later, *Kill Anything That Moves*, devastating and definitive, finally brings us face-to-face with the truth of a war that haunts Americans to this day.

Charles Gadd served in Vietnam in late 1967 and 1968 and had experiences very similar to what most enlisted men endured. He describes the mud, blood, leeches, loss of friends, and low morale due to constant harassment by guerrillas. The author, a squad leader with the 101st Airborne, was wounded twice and saw nearly constant action in the Central Highlands.

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This memoir is a vivid and accurate description of the Vietnam War. “I must explain that this story is written in the first person in order to depict more clearly the horror, fear, joy, and sorrow that practically every line doggie experienced during his tour in one of history’s most unpopular wars. Millions of other stories are even more dramatic than those in this book, and every trooper who carried a rifle and rucksack in Vietnam now carries around in his own mind a book full of stories similar to these. Written some sixteen years after it took place, this story tells how I envisioned the Vietnam War during the late 1960s. I was young and inexperienced and had no doubts that my country was doing the right thing by its involvement in this faraway land. I knew practically nothing about the political relationship between this small country and mine, and merely accepted the fact that “we were right” and “they were wrong” and that was that. Being a product of the post-World War II baby boom, I was brought up hating communism even though I knew very little about it. Serving a year in Vietnam instilled in me the knowledge that communism was truly a reign of horror, and though I still feel our cause was just, I now have doubts and questions that I fear may forever go unanswered.” —Charles Gadd, from the Author’s Note

In 2014, the US marks the 50th anniversary of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, the basis for the Johnson administration’s escalation of American military involvement in Southeast Asia and war against North Vietnam. Vietnam War Slang outlines the context behind the slang used by members of the United States Armed Forces during the Vietnam War. Troops facing and inflicting death display a high degree of linguistic creativity. Vietnam was the last American war fought by an army with conscripts, and their involuntary participation in the war added a dimension to the language. War has always been an incubator for slang; it is brutal, and brutality demands a vocabulary to describe what we don’t encounter in peacetime civilian life. Furthermore, such language serves to create an intense bond between comrades in the armed forces, helping them to support the heavy burdens of war. The troops in Vietnam faced the usual demands of war, as well as several that were unique to Vietnam – a murky political basis for the war, widespread corruption in the ruling government, untraditional guerilla warfare, an unpredictable civilian population in Vietnam, and a growing lack of popular support for the war back in the US. For all these reasons, the language of those who fought in Vietnam was a vivid reflection of life in wartime. Vietnam War Slang lays out the definitive record of the lexicon of Americans who fought in the Vietnam War. Assuming no prior knowledge, it presents around 2000 headwords, with each entry divided into sections giving parts of speech, definitions, glosses, the countries of origin, dates of earliest known citations, and citations. It will be an essential resource for Vietnam veterans and their families, students and readers of history, and anyone interested in the principles underpinning the development of slang.

A riveting memoir of one marine rifleman's journey from Parris Island through the hell of Vietnam and the Tet Offensive with the Second Battalion, Fourth Marines. In 1967, a young E. Michael Helms boarded a bus to the legendary grounds of Parris Island, where mere boys were forged into hardened Marines—and sent to the jungles of Vietnam. It was the first stop on a journey that would forever change him—and by its end, he would be awarded the Purple Heart Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, Presidential Unit Citation, Navy Unit Citation, and the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry. From the brutality and endurance-straining ordeals of boot camp to the endless horror of combat, Helms paints a vivid, unflinchingly realistic depiction of the lives of Marines in training and under fire. As powerful and compelling a battlefield memoir as any ever written, Helms's “grunt's-eye” view of the Vietnam War, the men who fought it, and the mindless chaos that surrounded it, is truly a modern military classic.

Of all the military assignments in Vietnam, perhaps none was more challenging than the defense of the Mekong River Delta region. Operating deep within the Viet Cong--controlled Delta, the 9th Infantry Division of the U.S. Army was charged with protecting the area and its population against Communist insurgents and ensuring the success of the South Vietnamese

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government's pacification program. Faced with unrelenting physical hardships, a tenacious enemy, and the region's rugged terrain, the 9th Division established strategies and quantifiable goals for completing their mission, effectively writing a blueprint for combating guerilla warfare that influenced army tacticians for decades to come. In *The 9th Infantry Division in Vietnam: Unparalleled and Unequaled*, Ira A. Hunt Jr. details the innovative strategies of the 9th Division in their fight to overcome the Viet Cong. Based on Hunt's experience as colonel and division chief of staff, the volume documents how the 9th Division's combat effectiveness peaked in 1969. A wealth of illustrative material, including photos, maps, charts, and tables, deepens understanding of the region's hazardous environment and clarifies the circumstances of the division's failures and successes. A welcome addition to scholarship on the Vietnam War, *The 9th Infantry Division in Vietnam* will find an audience with enthusiasts and scholars of military history.

The men who served with in the 1st Infantry Division with F company, 52nd Infantry, (LRP) later redesignated as Company I, 75th Infantry (Ranger) --engaged in some of the fiercest, bloodiest fighting during the Vietnam War, suffering a greater relative aggregate of casualties than any other LRRP/LRP/ Ranger company. Their base was Lai Khe, within hailing distance of the Vietcong central headquarters, a mile inside Cambodia, with its vast stockpiles of weapons and thousands of transient VC and NVA soldiers. Recondo-qualified Bill Goshen was there, and has written the first account of these battle-hardened soldiers. As the eyes and ears of the Big Red One, the 1st Infantry, these hunter/killer teams of only six men instered deep inside enemy territory had to survive by their wits, or suffer the deadly consequences. Goshen himself barely escaped with his life in a virtual suicide mission that destroyed half his team. His gripping narrative recaptures the raw courage and sacrifice of American soldiers fighting a savage war of survival: men of all colors, from all walks of life, warriors bonded by triumph and tragedy, by life and death. They served proudly in Vietnam, and their stories need to be told. In January 1968, John Corbett and his fellow leathernecks of the 26th Marine Regiment fortified a remote outpost at a place in South Vietnam called Khe Sanh. Within days of their arrival, twenty thousand North Vietnamese soldiers surrounded the base. What followed over the next seventy-seven days became one of the deadliest fights of the Vietnam War—and one of the greatest battles in military history. Private First Class Corbett made do with little or no sleep for days on end. The enemy bombarded the base incessantly. Extremes of heat, cold, and fog added to the misery, as did all manner of wounds and injuries too minor to justify evacuation from frontline positions. The emotional toll was tremendous as the Marines saw their friends suffer and die every day of the siege. Corbett relates these experiences through the eyes of a twenty-year-old but with the mind and maturity of a man now in his fifties. His story of life, death, and growing up on the front lines at Khe Sanh speaks for all of the Marines caught up in the epic siege of the Vietnam War.

A gripping account of ordinary men with extraordinary courage and heroism who had one last chance to make good—and one helluva war zone to do it in. The new commander of the Company E, 52d Infantry LRRPs, Capt. George Paccereilli, was tough, but the men's new AO was brutal. It was bad enough that the provinces of Binh Long, Phuoc Long, and Tay Ninh bordered enemy-friendly Cambodia, but their vast stretches of double- and triple-canopy jungle were also home to four crack enemy divisions, including the Viet Cong's notorious 95C Regiment. Only the long-range patrols could deliver the critical strategic intelligence that the 1st Cav so desperately needed. Outmanned, outgunned, far from safety, these LRRPs stalked the enemy to his lair, staging bold prisoner snatches and tracking down hidden jungle bases. Hiding in ambush, surrounded by NVA, these teams either pulled off spectacular escape-and-evasion maneuvers in running firefights—or died trying.

The U.S. Army Center of Military History recently published a new pamphlet in its U.S. Army Campaigns of the Vietnam War series, *Transition*, November

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1968-December 1969, by Adrian G. Traas. The author discusses the gradual reduction of the U.S. Army's involvement in Vietnam that began after Richard M. Nixon was elected president in November 1968. Even as U.S. and South Vietnamese forces battled an increasingly-elusive enemy, Army officials stepped up efforts to create a South Vietnamese military strong enough to defend their nation with only minimal support from American troops. In the spring of 1969, President Nixon announced his plan for the phased withdrawal of U.S. forces from South Vietnam, a policy quickly dubbed "Vietnamization." As the American public's support for the war continued to erode, U.S. military leaders spent the remainder of 1969 preparing for further troop reductions and the inevitable turnover of bases and equipment to South Vietnamese forces.

A firsthand account of the sixty-day siege of An Loc presents a detailed overview of the 1972 North Vietnamese Easter Offensive, focusing on the fighting in Binh Long Province, Saigon, and the siege of An Loc.

"The 2nd Battalion of the 7th Cavalry had the dubious distinction of being the unit that had fought the biggest battle of the war to date, and had suffered the worst casualties. We and the 1st Battalion." A Yale graduate who volunteered to serve his country, Larry Gwin was only twenty-three years old when he arrived in Vietnam in 1965. After a brief stint in the Delta, Gwin was reassigned to the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) in An Khe. There, in the hotly contested Central Highlands, he served almost nine months as executive officer for Alpha Company, 2/7, fighting against crack NVA troops in some of the war's most horrific battles. The bloodiest conflict of all began November 12, 1965, after 2nd Battalion was flown into the Ia Drang Valley west of Pleiku. Acting as point, Alpha Company spearheaded the battalion's march to landing zone Albany for pickup, not knowing they were walking into the killing zone of an NVA ambush that would cost them 10 percent casualties. Gwin spares no one, including himself, in his gut-wrenching account of the agony of war. Through the stench of death and the acrid smell of napalm, he chronicles the Vietnam War in all its nightmarish horror. During a tour with The Historical Unit, U.S. Army Medical Dept., from 1974-1977, Peter Dorland, then a captain and a former Dust Off pilot in Vietnam, completed the basic research for this book and drafted a lengthy manuscript. In 1971, James Nanney, an editor at the U.S. Army Center of Military History conducted further research on Dust Off, reorganized and redrafted portions of the original manuscript, and added Chapter 4 and the Epilogue. Chapters include: the early years of medical evacuation, and the Korean War; birth of a tradition; the system matures; the pilot at work; from Tet 1968 to stand-down; statistics; doctrine and lessons learned; a historical perspective; and bibliography.

Shawn McHale explores why the communist-led resistance in Vietnam won the anticolonial war against France (1945-54), except in the south. He shows how broad swaths of Vietnamese people were uneasily united in 1945 under the Viet Minh Resistance banner, all opposing the French attempt to reclaim control of the country. By 1947, resistance unity had shattered and Khmer-Vietnamese ethnic

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violence had divided the Mekong delta. From this point on, the war in the south turned into an overt civil war wrapped up in a war against France. Based on extensive archival research in four countries and in three languages, this is the first substantive English-language book focused on southern Vietnam's transition from colonialism to independence.

"You have to react instinctively. In this game there's no second place, only the quick and the dead." In Vietnam, Mobile Guerrilla Force conducted unconventional operations against the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army. Armed with silencer-equipped MK-II British Sten guns, M-16s, M-79s, and M-60 machine guns, the men of the Mobile Guerrilla Force operated in the steamy, triple-canopy jungle owned by the NVA and VC, destroying base camps, ambushing patrols, and gathering the intelligence that General Westmoreland desperately needed. In 1967, James Donahue was a Special Forces medic and assistant platoon leader assigned to the Mobile Guerrilla Force and their fiercely anti-Communist Cambodian freedom fighters. Their mission: to locate the 271st Main Force Viet Cong Regiment so they could be engaged and destroyed by the 1st Infantry Division. Now, with the brutal, unflinching honesty only an eye witness could possess, Donahue relives the adrenaline rush of firefights, air strikes, human wave attacks, ambushes, and attacks on enemy base camps. Following the operation the surviving Special Forces members of the Mobile Guerrilla Force were decorated by Major General John Hay, Commanding General, 1st Infantry Division.

This book provides a fresh approach to understanding the American combat soldier's experience in Vietnam. It integrates such topics as the political culture, the experiences of training, the actual Vietnam experience, and the 'homecoming', and offers a remarkable overview of the 870,000 'grunts' who bore the brunt of the fighting in the jungles and highlands of South Vietnam, and eventually Cambodia and Laos. The book addresses many of the stereotypes of the Vietnam combat veteran that have been perpetrated in popular culture, and also considers how Vietnam veterans have been commemorated through memorials and other means, and how the veterans remember each other. The coverage also includes women who served in or near the front lines as well as on the home front. The author draws on memoirs and oral histories including his personal interviews with veterans, but the book conveys a picture of the Vietnam combat soldier's experience far more powerful than what individual memoirs can provide.

A remarkable memoir of small-unit leadership and the coming of age of a young soldier in combat in Vietnam.' "Using a lean style and a sense of pacing drawn from the tautest of novels, McDonough has produced a gripping account of his first command, a U.S. platoon taking part in the 'strategic hamlet' program. . . . Rather than present a potpourri of combat yarns. . . McDonough has focused a seasoned storyteller's eye on the details, people, and incidents that best communicate a visceral feel of command under fire. . . . For the author's honesty and literary craftsmanship, Platoon Leader seems

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destined to be read for a long time by second lieutenants trying to prepare for the future, veterans trying to remember the past, and civilians trying to understand what the profession of arms is all about.”—Army Times

In three straight years he was a paratrooper, and army seaman, and a LRRP—and he lived to tell about it. As an FNG paratrooper in the 173d Airborne, John Leppelman made that unit's only combat jump in Vietnam. Then he spent months in fruitless search of the enemy, watching as his buddies died because of poor leadership and lousy weapons. Often it seemed the only way out of the carnage in the Central highlands was in a body bag. But Leppelman did get out, transferring first to the army's riverboats and then the all-volunteer Rangers, one of the ballsiest units in the war. In three tours of duty, that ended only when malaria forced him back to the States, Leppelman saw the war as few others did, a Vietnam that many American boys didn't live to tell about, but whose valor and sacrifice survive on these pages.

This provocative in-depth book focuses on the experiences of the infantry soldier in Vietnam. More than 60 Army and Marine Corps infantrymen speak of their experiences during their year-long tours of duty.

In the spring of 1966, while the war in Vietnam was still popular, the US military decided to reactivate the 9th Infantry Division as part of the military build-up. Across the nation, farm boys from the Midwest, surfers from California and city-slickers from Cleveland opened their mail to find greetings from Uncle Sam. Most American soldiers of the Vietnam era trickled into the war zone as individual replacements for men who had become casualties or had rotated home. Charlie Company was different as part of the only division raised, drafted and trained for service. From draft to the battlefields of South Vietnam, this is the unvarnished truth from the fear of death to the chaos of battle, told almost entirely through the recollections of the men themselves. This is their story, the story of young draftees who had done everything that their nation had asked of them and had received so little in return – lost faces of a distant war.

Michael Lee Lanning's journal of his tour of duty in Vietnam, where he served in the 199th Light Infantry Brigade, provides an unvarnished daily account of life in the field - the blood, fear, camaraderie, and tedium of combat and maneuver. Fleshed out with narrative and detail years later, after he had returned home, Lanning's story offers an insight into a war that called for the best from a generation of Americans.

For the LRRPs, courage was a way of life Vietnam, 1968. All of Sergeant John Burford's missions with F Company, 58th Infantry were deep in hostile territory. As leader of a six-man LRRP team, he found the enemy, staged ambushes, called in precision strikes, and rescued downed pilots. The lives of the entire team depended on his leadership and their combined skill and guts. A single mistake—a moment of panic—could mean death for everyone. Whether describing ambushes in the dreaded A Shau Valley or popping smoke to call in artillery only yards away from his position, Burford demonstrates the stuff the LRRPs are made of—the bravery, daring, and sheer guts that make the LRRPs true heroes. . . .

“Before we got to Vietnam, the troops all thought you would be the first lieutenant killed, and in the end, you were the only one left. We were all wrong. You were the best.”  
—Sgt. Lonnie “Tallman” Caldwell December, 1966: Platoon leader Lt. Joseph Callaway had just turned twenty-three when he arrived in Vietnam to lead forty-two untested men into battle against some of the toughest, most experienced, and best-trained guerrilla

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soldiers in the world. Callaway soon learned that most events in this savage jungle war were beyond his control. But there was one thing he could do well: take the best damn care of his troops he knew how. In the Viet Cong–infested provinces around the Mekong Delta where the platoon was assigned, the enemy was always ready to attack at the first sign of weakness. And when the jungle suddenly erupted in the chaos of battle, the platoon leader was the Cong’s first target. *Mekong First Light* is at times horrific, heartrending, and heroic, but is always brutally honest. Callaway’s account chronicles a soldier’s painful realization of the true nature of America’s war in Vietnam: It was a war that could not be won.

A former platoon leader describes how he led forty-two untested soldiers in the December 1966 battle against the tough guerrilla soldiers of the Viet Cong in the provinces around Vietnam's Mekong Delta. Original.

In just ten months in Vietnam, he was overrun, shot up, but not underworked—he survived fifty-four missions as point man. He has one hell of a story to tell. You didn't get into the Rangers without volunteering, and you didn't stay on point unless you liked it. But after watching most of his buddies die in a firefight when his LRRP team was overrun by the NVA, Kregg Jorgenson volunteered to serve on a Blue Team in the Air Cavalry, racing to the aid of soldiers who faced the same dangers he had barely survived. Whether enduring NVA sapper attacks, surviving “friendly” fire, or landing in hot LZs, Jorgenson discovered that in Vietnam you never knew whether you were paranoid or just painfully aware of the possibilities.

The 199th Light Infantry Brigade (Redcatchers) served with distinction, honor and valor in the Republic of Vietnam from November 28th, 1966 to October 15th, 1970. During the American involvement in Vietnam, the 199th LIB proved time and time again that it was one of the finest and most professional infantry units to have ever served in the United States Army. Organized specifically for Vietnam service, the 199th became the first major American unit to undergo the process of Vietnamization with ARVN forces in 1967, the first American brigade in U.S. military history to have an African-American as its commanding officer, the first unit in Vietnam to have a Chaplain awarded the Medal of Honor and the sole unit in Vietnam to earn the dubious distinction as having lost the only general officer killed in action during ground combat. Often overshadowed by the larger, more “glamorous” units and divisions that fought in Southeast Asia, less than 25,000 men ever served in the ranks of the 199th LIB. 755 young heroes from the Brigade were killed in action during the Vietnam War. Their memory and sacrifice will never be forgotten...

While the seventy-seven-day siege of Khe Sanh in early 1968 remains one of the most highly publicized clashes of the Vietnam War, scant attention has been paid to the first battle of Khe Sanh, also known as “the Hill Fights.” Although this harrowing combat in the spring of 1967 provided a grisly preview of the carnage to come at Khe Sanh, few are aware of the significance of the battles, or even their existence. For more than thirty years, virtually the only people who knew

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about the Hill Fights were the Marines who fought them. Now, for the first time, the full story has been pieced together by acclaimed Vietnam War historian Edward F. Murphy, whose definitive analysis admirably fills this significant gap in Vietnam War literature. Based on first-hand interviews and documentary research, Murphy's deeply informed narrative history is the only complete account of the battles, their origins, and their aftermath. The Marines at the isolated Khe Sanh Combat Base were tasked with monitoring the strategically vital Ho Chi Minh trail as it wound through the jungles in nearby Laos. Dominated by high hills on all sides, the combat base had to be screened on foot by the Marine infantrymen while crack, battle-hardened NVA units roamed at will through the high grass and set up elaborate defenses on steep, sun-baked overlooks. Murphy traces the bitter account of the U.S. Marines at Khe Sanh from the outset in 1966, revealing misguided decisions and strategies from above, and capturing the chain of hill battles in stark detail. But the Marines themselves supply the real grist of the story; it is their recollections that vividly re-create the atmosphere of desperation, bravery, and relentless horror that characterized their combat. Often outnumbered and outgunned by a hidden enemy—and with buddies lying dead or wounded beside them—these brave young Americans fought on. The story of the Marines at Khe Sanh in early 1967 is a microcosm of the Corps's entire Vietnam War and goes a long way toward explaining why their casualties in Vietnam exceeded, on a Marine-in-combat basis, even the tremendous losses the Leathernecks sustained during their ferocious Pacific island battles of World War II. *The Hill Fights* is a damning indictment of those responsible for the lives of these heroic Marines. Ultimately, the high command failed them, their tactics failed them, and their rifles failed them. Only the Marines themselves did not fail. Under fire, trapped in a hell of sudden death meted out by unseen enemies, they fought impossible odds with awesome courage and uncommon valor.

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