

Foreword

Each generation of Americans since this country was founded has called on its young men to make sacrifices on the battlefield. Each generation has transformed young men from ordinary citizens into warriors who performed deeds not imaginable by the average person. These young warriors came home and were expected to blend back into society as if they had never left, their experiences locked up, only to be released on special occasions.

Each war has produced a few good books describing life in the trenches, but usually they focus on a few individuals or special units, ignoring the true heroes: the infantrymen, or “grunts.” *Vietnam Vignettes* is one of those rare works that show life as it was for those in conventional units, slugging it out with the enemy and living daily life between battles. Each deadly encounter in *Vietnam Vignettes* accurately depicts the excitement and danger of combat and the sacrifices the grunts made for their buddies. It describes the routine of the battlefield, and the awesome responsibility of command to keep the soldiers on their toes.

The author has a special talent for giving the reader the view from both the officer’s and the enlisted man’s side. While no individuals are singled out by name for doing great deeds or for being not-so-great officers, the author skillfully describes situations that affected the life of the grunt. To use names would take away from the true value of the book and from the credit due the common infantryman.

Vietnam Vignettes recognizes our true heroes, gives family members a better understanding of what their loved ones went through, and what may have been going on in their minds while they were away.

Those of us who had the great honor of leading our fine young soldiers in battle know how special this generation is. The Vietnam War was our nation's longest war, and I suggest that it rivals the American Civil War for dividing the nation. The draftees and enlistees went to Vietnam despite having many reasons to justify not going. Politicians, clergy, educators and even movie stars were protesting the war, and yet most soldiers went into danger because of a sense of duty or honor.

Most combat commanders know who the real heroes are and will applaud this book that honors them. Thank you, Lee Basnar, for your service to your country, and thank you for *Vietnam Vignettes!*

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