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Silent Heroes: A Recon Marine's Vietnam War Experience



Synopsis

Rick Greenberg joined the Corps right out of high school because he always wanted to be a Marine. Little did he know what it would ultimately cost him to even approach earning such a title. After boot camp, "Greeny", as he was later known by his Recon team buddies, attended radio communication school in San Diego, California. As a radio operator, upon arrival in Vietnam, Greenberg was both surprised and troubled when he was arbitrarily assigned to the First Recon Battalion, generally considered to be an elite unit, and normally manned by volunteers. He soon learns he must adapt quickly, or risk going home in a body bag! The battle scenes Greenberg masterfully draws in Silent Heroes are both realistic and gripping. They can easily send cold chills down the spines of combat veterans, and dispel any false notions or glorified myths held by non-combatants.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This author gives a compelling firsthand account of what it's like to be a soldier in the Vietnam war. His raw emotional account had me on the edge of my seat at times and in tears at others. War is hell and if you didn't know it before, you really know it after reading this poignant account of this marine's experience. I highly recommend this book.

I Really enjoyed this book and the way the author tells the story. The author goes into great detail with battles he was in and the things that he witnessed during the Vietnam War, he does a great job of pulling you into the action with him and the rest of his team. He brings the reader right into the

canopied jungles and onto the booby trapped trails. You feel that you make connections with the men on his team and laugh as they have good times in the E-Men's club talking and drinking the night away. And you cringe when anything bad happens to a member. It also shows how war changes a man as he goes through his tour Greenberg tells of his emotions and certain things that changed them in his Tour of Duty. And of course he tells about the men he served with on the Radio Relay hills as well as LRRP's. Thanks for your service Mr. Greenberg.

Greenburg has written a winner about one of the USMC's most famous units. His descriptions depicting the danger of being a Recon Marine are spot on. Imagine if you will going for 5 days and never uttering a word. Silence was key to staying alive. Rick describes in detail the adrenaline rush and the fear of contact, a feeling that it is hard to understand for the uninitiated. I too fought with 1st Recon and Rick's book raised the hair on my arms as I was transported to back in the day. Semper Fi, Rick. A home run.

Husband not much of a reader and certainly not much of a "feeler", but this book helped on both of those points. He thoroughly enjoyed the writing style, the story told and how in a way it helped validate his own feelings of experiences from Nam. He has opened up a bit more since reading and I feel this has truly helped him unload a bit those memories he and many like him- carry further than need be.

A well-written and accurate account of a year as a recon radio operator. As an Army veteran, I am a bit surprised to learn that these Marine teams were often led by young enlisted men and often corporals. Equivalent Army teams usually included a Lieutenant or often a Captain. I admire the bravery and sacrifice of Corporal Geenberg and the members of those recon teams. I have a good friend who was in the 1st Recon Bn a few months after Greenberg left. He confirmed the accuracy of Greenberg's accounts.

Rick Greenberg takes the reader with him from his first days on the ground in Vietnam to his return to "the world". You see the camaraderie, the action, the mundane, and the heartbreak through the eyes of a real recon Marine. Many of us know friends or family members that served there on the ground. I served on an aircraft carrier in Tonkin Gulf, but never set one foot on the ground. If you want to understand - really understand - what our brave men did, this is the book for you.

I have read many books over the years about combat and how it changes the individual Marine or soldier. Starting with "The Naked and the Dead" and over 40 years of reading history books and other "war stories" came upon Corporal Greenberg's recounting of his time as a recon marine. I found it to be riveting and real concerning the reality of life while fighting a war that demanded ferocity in combat and still having to deal with the effort in trying to remain sane. My 3 years of active duty as a marine lieutenant between Korea and Vietnam were not anything like what Marines, whether recon or regular infantry units, had to endure. It is my firm belief that the book is a tribute to Corporal Greenberg and the Corps and its history and traditions.

As a Vietnam veteran myself, I am always interested in reading books and/or memoirs written by other Vietnam veterans. Sadly, many if not most are rather poorly written and the underlying tale either very predictable or apparently significantly embellished. In other words, many lack the quality of being unique and compelling reading. Such certainly is not the case with *Silent Heroes* by retired U. S. Marine Corps Gunnery Sergeant Rick Greenberg. Rick tells a very compelling story of his tour as a Recon Marine in Vietnam in the late 1960s. Initially, he develops the story by lulling the reader into believing that his tour consisted more of workaday, routine, uneventful patrols. Everybody is relatively happy and carefree, though certainly cautious, while getting to know each other and the expected "bonding" process among the Marines progresses apace. Then, BOOM! the action begins and the harsh reality of war, i. e., how very, very deadly it can and does suddenly become, carries the remainder of the story. I have come to believe, after talking to many, many other Vietnam vets over the past 50 years, that each of us have a rather unique picture and tale of our individual tour of duty in VN. Rick's story further convinces me of that fact. As a Marine who served in Vietnam just a couple of years before Rick, as a door-gunner in a CH46 helicopter squadron, I can certainly relate to many observations and situations he includes in his tale. Others? Not so much. That underscores the Promethean nature of the Vietnam War, as far as I'm concerned. To be honest about it, I can't strongly recommend too many books written by Vietnam veterans, and I have read numerous ones over the years. I believe that's a genre that is still developing, even after all of these years. I can, however, strongly recommend at least TWO books written by Vietnam vets: *Ghosts and Shadows* by Phil Ball (Excellent!) and *Silent Heroes* by Rick Greenberg (Also Excellent!). A GREAT tale told by a brave warrior!

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