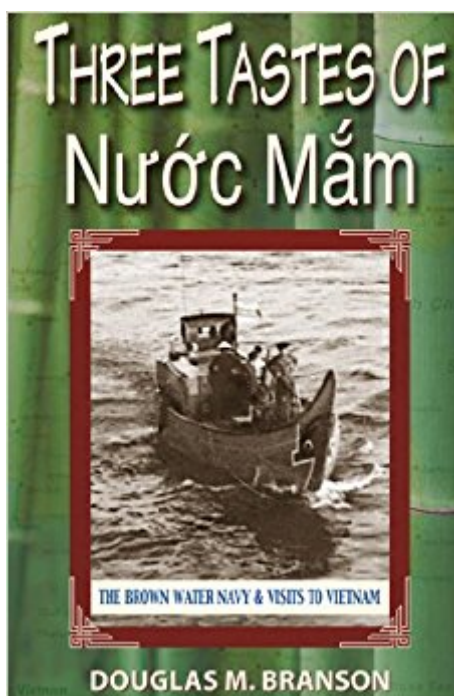


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Three Tastes Of Nuoc Mam: The Brown Water Navy And Visits To Vietnam



Synopsis

During the War, Vietnam's coast had to be protected against Viet Cong ambushes and smuggling. The U.S. forces had destroyers, cruisers and gargantuan aircraft carriers, none suited for inshore patrol. This is the story of the Brown Water Navy, the garage-band flotilla assembled to do the job. Douglas Branson has been to Vietnam several times, including trips in 1966, 1995 and 2011. The first time, he was a 22-year-old, Brown Water Navy's lieutenant JG. Subsequent visits were as a consultant/tourist. Here, Branson recounts three of his Vietnam adventures with humor, detail and insight into the economic, political and gastronomic forces at work.

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Customer Reviews

Brilliant book that covers the authors three visits to Vietnam during three very distinct periods of Vietnam's history and economic development. The book is a cross between a travel narrative, a GI's account of his time in Vietnam (note the author was not on the front lines so this isn't in anyway a gory war book which I think is a good thing) with a good deal of easy to read history, economic and

cultural information put in. The author was in Vietnam for almost a year very early in the war (1966-67), went back shortly after Vietnam opened to the world again (1995) and then a final short trip in 2011. The author is obviously an academic and a true traveler (as I am I have a doctorate in International Business and my specific interest is Emerging Market and Developing Countries). In many ways he describes Vietnam in the same ways that I do but the author gave me a lot of insight into the history of Vietnam that I really enjoyed. I also got a lot out of the book since his years in Vietnam differ from the years my father and I were in Vietnam and Vietnam has changed so much in so few years. My father is a career military photographer and was in Vietnam all of 1969. I was able to read this book in the living room with my father and read a lot of the book out loud to him which prompted some wonderful conversations and comparisons none of which were especially painful for him (i.e. no Hamburger Hills etc). I was in Vietnam in 2003, a magical time after Doi Moi was implemented and the country had so much energy and hope for the future. During this time the country had installed some of its tourist infrastructure so it was easy to travel in but few tourists were there so the country was still uncorrupted by tourism. During my time in Vietnam I was able to explore the Hill Tribe areas north of Hanoi all the way south past Saigon into the Mekong Delta. The only part of the book I didn't like or agree with was the author's views of Nixon and Kissinger. I felt that assessment was erroneous and shortsighted but since the rant was only 5 pages or so I kept the book's 5 star rating.

Branson's unelaborated accounts of his service in Viet Nam off the coast in the Navy's junk patrols was vivid and honest, yielding only slightly to subsequent political influences. His views of modern Viet Nam are clear and vivid, of great use to the student of Modern Asia. I found myself smiling when, after 'Swift-boating' the service of the Swift Boat patrols, he complained about being 'Swift-Boated' himself, but such are the conflicts of human nature with human desire. The book is very clear-eyed in most areas, less so on U.S. politicians and policy, but a very superior memoir-cum-travelogue.

This is an interesting, anecdotal look back on one soldier's experience during the Vietnam war and also recent Vietnam history from the perspective of an American who saw combat duty there. It is not a war story but paints with a broader brush. I enjoyed his forthright opinions on the mythology of the war that continues to be perpetrated by the Vietnam Communist regime, travel writers, etc. I was stationed at Cu Chi in 1969 and I would never go back there to see all that hateful anti-American propaganda. This is a "from the ground" American perspective of the legacy of the Vietnam war and

Vietnamese society. An easy read on a difficult subject for those of us who spent a year of our young lives there.

Having served with the Coast Guard in coastal Vietnam in 1970, this book brought back a number of memories from that time. This book is an enjoyable read, and I recommend it, especially to those who served in the "Brown Water Navy" or Coast Guard in Vietnam and to members of their families who want a taste of that world.

I felt this is a the real story. As a Viet Nam Vet, I was assigned at the same time frame and saw similar things. I like the overviews of the return trips, which helped me understand Viet Nam today. This makes me want to return.

A interesting read for anyone who has been in VietnamSomewhat padded with general history of the country, however.

I enjoyed his stories but kept getting bogged down in his political commentary on the war. His views were certainly legitimate and at times interesting there was just too much of it and not what I bought the book for.

Not only is it a good read on the war, the author takes return trips years later and tells what it is really like in the country today. Hard to put this jewel down long enough to eat! You can't miss on this book.

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