



Chasing Understanding in the Jungles of Vietnam: My Year as a Black Scarf

Douglas Beed

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Author Doug Beed relates his memories of the men and missions during his year (1968-69) as a combat soldier with the First Infantry Division in Vietnam. After two years of college he couldn't afford to continue so he was forced to relinquish his student deferment and enter the draft. He tried various strategies to get a non-combat job; nevertheless he ended up in the infantry and was assigned to Vietnam.

The stories in this book depict the year Doug spent in Alpha Company where he spent days on patrols finding and killing North Vietnamese soldiers along the hundreds of miles of trails heading for the Saigon. These stories range from funny to tragic, from uplifting to extremely frustrating and from touching to horrifying. This book gives the reader a sense of life in the infantry in 1968 and 1969.

Chasing Understanding in the Jungles of Vietnam: My Year as a Black Scarf Details

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From Reader Review Chasing Understanding in the Jungles of Vietnam: My Year as a Black Scarf for online ebook

jim bowen says

Draftee Infantry Defined

Rarely mentioned is the fact that by 1967 onward Vietnam Grunt Infantry units were made up of 50% to 70% of Draftees! This book relentlessly describes these conscripts attitude and fears of The Lifers who had total control of their fates in combat. Lifers who would brag “ there’s an endless supply of warm bodies in the green machine,” and we will use them to further our careers as necessary. They did too, butchering young draftees in needless, stupid Combat Assaults That were planned with medals in mind, for the lifers, and dead bodies be damned! If these soldiers had of been , say, sailor seals, they all would have been awarded more medals than a South American Dictator on parade...Sad to say.

Lee says

An interesting read, another memoir of a life damaged by America's involvement in this misguided effort. Beed is not a great writer, but his chapters come short and quick as a he, decades after leaving the jungle, struggles to understand what his time in Vietnam meant. His harshest critique is for the 'lifers,' who he claims largely treated grunts like him as career-levitating cannon fodder.

P.e. lolo says

This was a different take on some of the books about Vietnam that I have read. The author is describing his journey after two years of college and not having the money to go back gets drafted. He then spends time through basic and then takes the reader through ways that he tried to get out of being deployed to an actual unit that would be fighting. All of this and he still ended up in the jungles fighting to survive and actually making friends and really wanting them to make it as well. You get a real sense that this book is almost therapeutic for the author. What you really get is an honest look at young men sent to a foreign country fighting to survive in the jungles and besides the enemy they have other creatures that they have never seen before. Only to go out once again because some higher up has a plan but is not going out with them. This is there story, the grunts. The fun, boredom, sad times and then dealing with coming home and having to put it all together. Overall not a bad book at all. I received this book from Netgalley.com I gave it 4 stars. Follow us at www.1rad-readerreviews.com

Nick Ueber says

A pretty good, basic book of what life in Viet Nam was like for a draftee serving in the infantry. Beed does not go to deeply into the actual combat stories that many similar books do so you don't get the feel of the real horrors of war. His self examinations are insightful and worth reading. Overall, a good read.p

Sgt Maj says

And The Point is ?

Don't do Nam, as a matter of fact, anything after as well. This book is an example of why don't read Nam and most everything that's Enduring Freedom n beyond always have to throw in Nam Zingers where we sucked and there's the right way and then there's Nam. Nowadays we're fighting pros, not rag tag rice farmers, blah - blah - blah.

Very frustrating on both ends. Lifer this, Lifer that and then 10% were ok. Make up your mind. I hated lifers throughout my time, understand a lot of the beefs but hate to clue the author in but it's as bad if not worse now. You want to stay in, lot of politics whether E or O.

Sounds like author got a lot of training n stuff, being tired n all. You think they had a point ?.....and the rest was on you. It was your life or death. Always told my troops to not worry about the Attitudes, non-hackers. Just as long as they came along, more targets -- NVA n anybody else whose shooting doesn't know who's good or not.

I'm all for conscription and people who make noise ought to look at facts of units that were well led and did very well despite conscripts in the ranks.

My problem is folk who think they're too good to waste time serving their country. And thinking dying is for us west side low life's, not them who got better things to do. They deserve the right to live til 100, not paying the piper a dime. The 'all volunteer ' is really messing this country up.

Bottom line w book -- could relate to 'stuff' but author didn't build up any characters I really liked or cared for. Neat, logical breakdown of chapters but then just rambled a lot. Don't know what a Mike plt is and I guess no such thing as fire teams. Lil Mo, yeah but...

Didn't get any sense of camaraderie, pride, self respect. We went up hills w rifles that didn't work and 3 times as many NVA waiting for us. But whether fresh meat or good friends, up we went. Probably for all the wrong reasons.

Author did great job of Monday morning QB strategy, tactics. Should been an officer n show us how to do it.

Keith W. Steward says

Draftees Are Expendable

Shows what being drafted in the Army during Vietnam War was really like. Absolutely no consequences for Lifers who needlessly sacrificed young soldiers lives to further their careers. It's a national shame it was allowed to happen!

Randal White says

Beed has written a memoir of experiences that ten of thousands of young men in the late 60's lived through. Being drafted to fight in Vietnam, going there and doing his job, and returning to the U.S. a changed and damaged man. Experiencing hell, dealing with it, and pushing on. He tells his story through the eyes of an infantryman. And he tells it excellently, honestly, and openly. The training, the waiting, the boredom, the excitement, and the outright terror of the deployment. The incompetence of the "lifers". The return home, the anger, the drinking, the confusion, and ultimately, the conquering of the experiences. While Beed experiences an amazing amount of combat, he never once "blows his own horn", instead he relates the experiences in a plain-spoken, yet vivid manner. The result is that the reader feels they are there with Beed. The same when he returns home, never boasting of his experiences, instead keeping them to himself. Yet the way he opens up in the end of the book, you have to marvel at the man, his strength, and of the other men with similar experiences. Excellent book!

reburns says

Real memories of Vietnam

Written in such a way that you actually feel a sense of being apart of the tour the author is remembering. G.I.s remember always. 71_72 Tour.

Chris Bohl says

Trying to analyze

The book is dry without either humor or rage . It is full of a general malaise and lack of passion.

The author should stick to his PTSD treatment at the VA and when he discovers he is not the victim he portrays himself as, he will be better off.

NOT WORTH READING !!!!

Joe Fair says

Great read.
