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Real Cav



Synopsis

A story of the C Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th U.S. Cavalry Regiment, of the 1st Cavalry Division in Vietnam and the recollections of an Air Cavalry man in Vietnam. The 1st Squadron was a unique fighting organization, called the "Real Cav." They served as the eyes and ears of the 1st Air Cavalry Division as their reconnaissance squadron.

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Customer Reviews

While I agree that the book needed a good edit, it is a fascinating first-person account of chopper warfare in Vietnam. Not an academic tome, but an "I was there and this is what it was like" personal view of the war. If you were there too, this book may be a chilling reminder of something you may wish to forget, but for the rest of us, it is a reminder that the war also was fought in the skies at very close quarters, not just on the ground as we non-combatants witnessed on our nightly TV news. This is a view of the war that we rarely saw. An excellent reminder too of how much we owe those who did serve there. Highly recommended.

This is a firsthand account by a highly decorated warrior. I was in the same unit in Vietnam and drew two conclusions. Again I am amazed at the bravery of Charlie Troop's scout, gunship, and lift pilots. And I realized, as I relived those missions from an infantryman's perspective, how very much we forget when the landings are repetitious and never-ending. We were honored to have such men leading us. This book will have a treasured place in my library.

This is a "must read" for anyone interested in, or involved in, the Vietnam War. Col. Shrader writes from his own experience, and his is a remarkable record of service to the nation in a time when the nation almost tore itself apart over the war. His book recounts his combat experience as a decorated helicopter pilot and leader, and is written in a calm and understated way with a complete absence of personal pretension. For example, in the midst of his narrative on a particular series of engagements, he inserts the sentence ". . .for [this action] I found that I had been awarded the Silver Star," and then calmly resumes his analysis of the situation. When Col. Shrader is in-country flying missions, the narrative is tight, well organized, suspenseful, and gripping. When he writes of family interests, a sense of humor is readily obvious. When he is discussing the various organizational elements and their interactions within the command structure, the writing (at least for me) lags a bit. For the general reader, the nuances of these latter issues may become of academic interest only with the passage of time. My family is blessed to know Lynn Shrader and his family personally, and one would never guess that this quiet and unassuming man is such a distinguished and honored combat veteran. The list of his decorations and awards at the end of the book is staggering, as is his story of giving his devotion, commitment, and his bodily health to the service of the United States.

Review of the REAL CAV by Lynn Shrader; Katy Crossing Press. Most of the books that have been written about the Vietnam War - and there have been many - have been about the Infantry, the dogfaces, the grunts. This one is different! It is written from the perspective of the man in the helicopter, the 'chopper'. Have you ever wondered how it would feel to skim the treetops in a Bell H13, an old fashioned 'bubble' helicopter that was unarmed? (They later installed two .30 cal machine guns, one on each landing skid, operated by a length of string!) Did you ever wonder what it would be like to conduct your 'own' war with impunity (almost)? Well that's what the 'REAL CAV' is about (almost)! It was written by a West Point Grad, recounting his experiences during the Vietnam war, in the 1st Squadron of the 9th Regiment of the 1st Cavalry Division, describing some of the missions he participated in, including flying cover for planes spraying Agent Orange. The book spans the years from the middle of 1966 until March 1969, and it will have the most interest for those who served in

Vietnam during that time frame. However it is so well written that it will appeal to anyone who has worn the uniform. What makes the book so interesting, so readable, is the author's attention to detail; he even includes a map and some photos! The book is unusual in that it is written in the first person, singular, which lends more credibility to it, but because the author does not wish to continually pat himself on the back, it may occasionally seem a bit dry, but it is in reality the autobiography of a portion of the author's life; he treats the wounds that took him out of action in the same manner - just the facts. The reviewer mentioned flying at treetop level. What he did not mention was that you were getting shot at as you flew. Few folks who have been in the Military have not flown in a 'chopper' of some sort, but you don't realize how low - and how accurate - they can be as a weapons platform until you read this book, or fly in a ground attack helicopter yourself. The book is replete with vignettes which detail, in the process, the organization and the tactics of an air cavalry squadron, We Can, We Will. It is eminently readable, highly recommended. The reviewer, Thomas W, Leo. CPP, is a graduate of the US Military Academy at West Point..

To be clear, Lynn is a good friend so it is with some trepidation that I suggest he needs an editor. The book, while informing as no other book ever has, the heroism of the Army helicopter pilots in Viet Nam, especially Lynn's own heroism, is repetitive and contains errors. I wish he had gotten a good editor to clean it up, but it is well worth reading anyway. You will be amazed. Read it.

GOOD

I was a scout pilot in 1967 (in C-Troop) when Captain Shrader was flying in C-Troop gunships. He went home 'early', I didn't. The 'life span' of a gunship pilot was longer than the 'life span' of a scout pilot (three months 'average' for a scout pilot). I flew as a scout pilot for nine months. Flying for the 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry was very dangerous, often like an air to ground 'Wild West' gunfight.! The second time Major Shrader returned to the 1/9th he 'didn't last long' (he got wounded). I was also there, flying CH-47 'Chinook's.

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