



Content With My Wages: A Sergeant's Story: Book I-Vietnam (Volume 1)

MSG Gregory H Murry

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This is both a history, a memoir, and a critique of certain combat actions of the 1st Infantry Division during the years 1966 and 1967 in Vietnam. Growing up in California with an intense interest in military history and surfing, the author joined the National Guard in 1963. In 1965 he joined the regular army and was assigned to the 4th Armored Division in West Germany. In 1966 he requested a transfer from the 2nd Battalion, 54th Infantry to the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry, 1st Infantry Division in Vietnam. Arriving shortly after the disastrous battle of August 25th, 1966, at Bong Trang, he joined a rifle company that was being rebuilt by a Special Forces captain who had replaced the former company commander, KIA in that battle. He describes the battle in detail by blending an official history with the recollections of two of his comrades who were there, and then returns to the battle and dissects it using personal accounts and official interviews of many of the participants to include MG William DePuy. Assigned as a machine gunner, the author began to learn the ways of a combat infantryman in a jungle war. Three months later he was given more responsibilities and began serving in leadership positions as an acting sergeant until he was promoted to sergeant. He recounts a number of road clearing operations, ambush patrols and search and destroy missions, which took place shortly before his battalion's participation in the largest operations of the Vietnam War: Operations Attleboro, Cedar Falls, and Junction City. During Junction City, he participated in the battles of Prek Klok I and Ap Gu, one of the most lopsided victories of the war. Between operations are descriptions of medical evacuation, hospitals, base camp amusements, rest and recuperation (R+R), and more. In June of 1967, the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry and the 2d Battalion, 28th Infantry fought the 271st VC Regiment in the battles of Xom Bo I-II during Operation Billings. During Xom Bo II, on June 17th, the author's platoon was at the center of the main enemy assault. Out of forty-three men, he was one of eight who walked away. Once again, blending his own narrative with those of his company commander, an RTO, and one of his machine gunners, he presents a grim picture of close quarters infantry combat against a determined enemy. He describes the battle of Onh Thanh in October, 1967, which took place shortly after he left. There, the 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry was almost completely destroyed by the 271st. Using published accounts, documentaries, and official histories, he shows how soldiers react to leadership that attempts to paint a rosy picture of a disaster. Returning to the chaos of American society in 1968 where he was assigned for a short time to the 1st Battalion, 3d Infantry (The Old Guard) in Washington, D.C., he finished his enlistment at in California at Fort MacArthur, near Los Angeles. Finally he relates his own struggles with the memories of the war after he returned home and how he found peace. A professional soldier, the author used official after action reports, histories, studies, and recently released information to paint a more accurate picture of the successes and failures of the leadership, tactics, techniques, and procedures of the U.S. Army and Generals William Westmoreland, William DePuy, and John Hay. He also describes the lessons learned at the squad, platoon, and company level. These are timeless and should be of great interest to anyone considering serving or serving in the armed forces. At the same time he warns us of the pitfalls that will be encountered when studying military history.

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