



Assault from the Sky: U.S Marine Corps Helicopter Operations in Vietnam

Dick Camp

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This work describes U.S. Marine Corps helicopter operations, including their actions and evolution, throughout the Vietnam War. The book is divided into parts spanning the three stages of the Corps' combat deployment: "Buildup (1962–1966)," "Heavy Combat (1967–1969)," and "The Bitter End (1975)." Each part includes chapters devoted to "telling the story" of Marine helicopters from the individual to the strategic level. Vietnam has often been called our "first helicopter war," and indeed the U.S. Marine Corps, as well as Army, had to feel its way forward during the initial combats. But by 1967 the combat was raging across South Vietnam, with confrontational battles against the NVA, on a scale comparable to the great campaigns of WWII. In 1968, when the Communists launched their mammoth counteroffensive, the Marines were forced to fight on all sides, with the helicopter giving them the additional dimension that proved decisive in repelling the enemy. The author, a Vietnam veteran, uses his experiences as a company commander to bring the story to life by weaving personal accounts, after-action reports and official documents into a remarkably readable narrative of service and sacrifice by Marine pilots and crewmen. The entire story of the war is here depicted through the prism of Marine helicopter operations, from the first deployments to support the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) against the Viet Cong through the rapid United States buildup to stop the North Vietnamese Army, until the final withdrawal from our Embassy. Colonel Dick Camp, a Purple Heart recipient, served 26 years in the U.S. Marine Corps before retiring in 1988. Upon retirement he served as the Deputy Director, U.S. Marine Corps History Division and as the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation, Vice President for Museum Operations at the National Museum of the Marine Corps, Quantico, Virginia. Currently residing in Fredericksburg, Virginia, he is the author of ten books and over 100 magazine articles on various military related subjects.

REVIEWS

The author, a Vietnam veteran, uses his experiences as a company commander to bring the story to life by weaving personal accounts, after-action reports and official documents into a remarkably readable narrative of service and sacrifice by Marine pilots and crewmen. Books Monthly UK "few authors could sum up such a wide spectrum of experiences and raw data in such a facile manner... guaranteed to enlighten and entertain, educate and confound- and, all in all, well worth the effort." Veteran's Law Journal Camp has done a great job of combing not only the after action-reports and official records but also the personal accounts of the Marines who were "there" in what was often very intense combat. It is these accounts from commanders, pilots, crewmen, and "grunts" that make this an engaging reading experience. This is not just some dry military history. VHPA Aviator Assault from the Sky is a well-researched, detailed history of Marine helicopters from the time the first ones arrived in Vietnam in 1962 all the way through to the helicopter-heavy evacuation of Saigon in 1975. VVA Veteran "... validates Dick's extraordinary story telling ability and writing skills. It is a must read for military historians, aviation enthusiasts, and especially those who were and are affiliated with a military service helicopter unit. " Marine Corps Aviation Association There are two reasons why "Assault From the Sky: U.S. Marine Corps Helicopter Operations in Vietnam" is so distinctive that it deserves an appellation all its own: first, combining qualities of superlative research and scholarship for the first book to document the sacrifice and heroism of helicopter crews in Vietnam between 1962 and 1975; and, second, the author, Dick Camp, himself...a cogent, yet stunning, strategic history that the reader will find difficult to put down... "Leatherneck "...a fitting tribute to our Marines of the Vietnam era...The

inspirational and at times tragic events vividly described by Camp make this work an easy yet important read. Every Marine is indeed a rifleman first and foremost. Assault from the Sky is a timely and valuable reminder of this ethos." Proceedings

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