



The First Casualty - A Vietnam Memoir

Karl Orndorff

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Beyond the media hype and far removed from the gung ho warriors searching for fame written in enemy blood, lie the realities of life for the average military individual during the Vietnam War. Just beyond that dwell the stories of a few persons whose bizarre war experiences reached far outside the norms of average military personnel. The life of any soldier during war time comprises the extremes of boredom punctuated by split second decisions that could make the difference between life and death. Heaven and Hell, love and hate, murder, illicit drugs, hunger, rescue, association with the enemy, falsification of official records and cultural gaps that dwarfed the depth and breadth of the Grand Canyon comprised the experiences documented herein. The unimaginable determination of a Communist enemy waging an ambiguous war without a front was the foundation of an interesting series of events that are accurately portrayed here, just as they played out during the war. By luck, fate, destiny or blessing, one incredibly unlikely end result was the author's survival. With brutal honesty (but a lack of the colorful language that was a normal part of military vocabulary,) this book tells the story of a United States Marine assigned to 7th Separate Bulk Fuel Company in Vietnam, from 1967-1969. Danang, Hoi An, An Hoa, Hill Ten, Liberty Bridge and remote villages, rice paddies and bamboo thickets in between, were the settings. The cast was huge. Vietcong, NVA, The Tiger Division of the Korean Marine Corps, a few Australians, various unnamed F4 Phantom pilots, PFC Darryl Jensen and the author are the primary characters. Forty years would pass before a pen was grasped to write these accounts that at one time were desperately wished forgotten. The events in this work are documented as the author experienced them. Each event is recalled as clearly as if the four decades were four days. Every unconventional account is verifiable.

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