



Gunbird Driver: A Marine Huey Pilot's War in Vietnam

David A. Ballentine

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Gunbird Driver is a memoir of the Vietnam War as seen through the eyes of a young pilot flying an armed UH-1E's in Marine Observation Squadron 6. The book provides information about the missions, operations, and the living conditions at Ky Ha, and about the fellow Marines with whom he served. It also contains several chapters on shipboard operation from deployment aboard the USS *Princeton*. Parts of the book are deadly serious, even sad, as must be the case with any treatment of war; other parts are largely descriptive, and some circumstances and situations are even humorous. The time was 1966-67, relatively early in the war, the year before the Tet Offensive. The squadron's activities ranged widely in I Corps, the northern-most military subdivision of South Vietnam, the one assigned to the Marines. Although, the squadron and the air group to which it was attached (MAG -36) was assigned to the southern third of I Corps, it flew missions north along the DMZ, at Khe Sanh, west of Phu Bai and even into Laos, in addition to those in their local Tactical Area of Responsibility. Written to preserve a record of the impressions and experiences of one young 1st Lieutenant flying a Marine Huey in the war-torn skies of Vietnam, it is also reflective of all who crewed the UH-1E's - pilots, crew chiefs, and door gunners. It is a memoir that will resonate with all who crewed a "helo" in during the Vietnam war. No other book has been written on the Vietnam War from the perspective of a Marine Corps UH-1E pilot, flying armed escort missions for the Marines fighting the war on the ground.

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