



Ambush Valley: I Corps Vietnam, 1967-The Story of a Marine Infantry Battalion's Battle for Survival

Eric Hammel

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AMBUSH VALLEY

I Corps, Vietnam, 1967—

the Story of a Marine Infantry Battalion's Battle for Survival

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In the summer of 1967, the Marines in I Corps, South Vietnam's northernmost military region, were doing everything they could to lighten the pressure on the besieged Con Thien Combat Base.

Still fresh after months of relatively light action around Khe Sanh, the 3d Battalion, 26th Marines, was sent to the Con Thien region to secure the combat bases's endangered main supply route. On September 7, 1967, its first full day in the new area of operations, separate elements of the battalion were attacked by at least two battalions of North Vietnamese infantry, and both were nearly overrun in night-long battles.

On September 10, while advancing to a new sector near Con Thien, the 3d Battalion, 26th Marines, was attacked by at least a full North Vietnamese regiment, the same NVA unit that had attacked it two days earlier. Isolated into two separate defensive perimeters, the Marines battled through the afternoon and evening against repeated assaults by waves of NVA regulars intent upon achieving a major victory. In a battle described as "Custer's Last Stand—With Air Support," the Americans prevailed by the narrowest of margins.

Ambush Valley is an unforgettable account of bravery and survival under impossible conditions. It is told entirely in the words of the men who faced the ordeal together—an unprecedented mosaic of action and emotion woven into an incredibly clear and vivid combat narrative by one of today's most effective military historians. Ambush Valley achieves a new standard for oral history. It a war story not to be missed.

PRAISE FOR AMBUSH VALLEY

"Ambush Valley recounts the heroic performance in the summer of 1967 of the 3d Battalion, 26th Marines . . . as it defended the U.S. combat base on a hill called Con Thien. . . . [It] is a fresh, highly personalized, and vivid narrative focusing on one "theater" of the Vietnam War from the perspective of those who fought there." —Sea Power

"Another of Hammel's harrowing eyewitness accounts of a Vietnam War campaign that remains a puzzling episode in a bitterly debated conflict. . . . [The] firsthand recollections afford a vivid, inspiring record of bloody set-piece battles . . ." —Kirkus Reviews

"This harrowing action is told almost entirely in the words of the survivors in a style that resembles the script for a documentary. By switching back and forth between voices Hammel is able to reinforce or expand on moments in the action; the device elevates this oral history of small unit action over most of its kind." —Library Journal

“The desperate defensive tactics as well as the raw emotions of the men are vividly conveyed in this memorable mosaic of concentrated warfare. Superb oral history.” —Publishers Weekly

“Hammel has expertly woven recollections of numerous participants into a concise yet vivid tale of survival. I marvelled at his ability to present a complete account without gaps or reliance on extended narration. . . . I became so involved I did not want to put it down. —Marine Corps Gazette

“The narrative is hard and gritty—from the gut.” —Friday Review of Defense Literature

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