In Ride the Thunder, Richard Botkin breaks new ground in telling the heroic story of a few American and Vietnamese Marines who fought brilliantly and turned the tide of the Vietnam War, only to have policymakers surrender the battlefield. Botkin recounts the exploits of the American Marines and their Vietnamese allies who were largely responsible for thwarting the North Vietnamese invasion of the northern portions of South Vietnam—known as the Easter Offensive of 1972 in the West3that was intended to bring the nation to its knees. These are the men who rode the thunder and almost saved a nation. Botkin tells the story of Captain John Ripleys daring raid to destroy the Dong Ha Bridge; Major Le Ba Binh and his seven hundred Marines bravely holding off more than 20 thousand North Vietnamese troops; Lieutenant Colonel Gerry Turleys
leadership and bravery that helped thwart the Easter Offensive—and much more.

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**Personal Review: Ride the Thunder: A Vietnam War Story of Honor and Triumph by Richard Botkin**

For full disclosure, I am retired Marine officer who served with one of the Marines featured in this book during an earlier tour (1968) in Viet Nam. Like most of the reviewers, I absolutely loved this book. I am sure the author did not set out to write the definitive story of the war. What he does do, and does very well is tell the story of an epic battle, a battle that has not received the recognition (except in Marine Corps circles) it warrants. In telling the story of this battle he does provide additional information to set the stage and introduce a number of remarkable warriors. The war ended badly for the South Vietnamese government and the government of the United States played a critical role in that tragic end. There is no question, the government of South Viet Nam was not competent to defend itself without our help, and they did not have our help at the end. But that is not the story Mr. Botkin is relating. He has told the story of what we call the "Easter Offensive" and what the courage of individual warriors can accomplish. He does not sugar coat the performance of the South Vietnamese Army. He does use it to compare and contrast it with the South Vietnamese Marine Corps's valiant stand at Dong Ha. This is their and their U.S. Marine Co Van's story.

To those who wring their hands over the South Vietnamese government's alleged corruption, compare and contrast that with the absolute brutality of the North Vietnamese after the end of the war. A basically untold story is that of the Vietnamese who, like Lt.Col. Binh's family, have come to the United States and become wonderful success stories.