Hans Halberstadt. The U.S. Army Special Forces, more familiarly known as the Green Berets, are the elite fighting force of the United States military. Their harrowing stories are told here, providing rare insight into the world of the Green Beret.

Features:
* Notes:

My Personal Review:
War Stories of the Green Berets is a compendium of war stories-- some hilarious, some heroic, and others sad, as told to Halberstadt by 26 men who served in Vietnam with US Army Special Forces. Hans Halberstadt served in Vietnam as a doorgunner and got to know some of the men in this book during their post-war service in the 12th Special Forces Group (Reserve). The men doing the storytelling in this book are the real thing and represent the whole range of the Special Forces experience in Vietnam.

It's all here-- from the A-camps, to the Mike Forces, to MACV-SOG and the Phoenix Program. Some of the names on the contributor's list sound like a who's who of Special Forces including Jon Caviani, Clyde Sincere, "Ben" Baker, Jim Morris, Walt Schumate, and Clayton Scott. There are three POWs, one Medal of Honor recipient, enlisted men, officers, and even a civilian "adopted" by Special Forces.

My good friend Jim Morris, the author of War Story, The Devil's Secret Name, and Fighting Men, War Story: The Classic True Story of the First Generation of Green Berets has probably used up all his own war stories, but he contributes an anonymous story, "Hood, Riding, Red, Little," which will elicit several giggles from any veteran familiar with the peculiarities of military nomenclature. "Ben" Baker recounts some requests for supplies that were intended to be funny and still are over twenty years later. Many
of the enlisted men in this book retired as field grade officers and hearing some of their true reasons for attending OCS are interesting. The pervasive humor in this book makes it an entertaining as well as informative read. The light-hearted storytelling of these "Green Beret" veterans will produce an occasional chuckle and most times a real belly laugh.

But it wasn't all fun and games; there are several stories full of pathos, heroic acts, and sometimes, personal sacrifices to be found in War Stories of the Green Berets. Clyde Sincere tells some great war stories including "Oops, Wrong Uniform!" in which he jumps out onto an LZ full of NVA and is so badly wounded that they strip him of his boots and uniform and leave him for dead. Dan Pitzer recalls an almost religiously redeeming story as a POW as does both Stephen Leopold ("Life in the Hanoi Hilton") and Jon Caviani (who recounts the action which earned him the Medal of Honor and led to his capture in "Medal of Honor at Hickory"). I know John Padgett and spent time on a medical mission in Cambodia with him, but he never told me, "My Wife, the Assistant Machine Gunner."

There's a lot of history here. Different voices tell stories of the Phoenix Program, the Mike Forces, CORDS, and the Montagnards. This book leaves the reader with a good appreciation for the undying love and deep admiration that Special Forces soldiers felt for the Montagnards. The SF veterans in Halberstadt's book discuss operations, programs, and weapons with an insight gained only through hard earned experience.

Halberstadt's contributors also tell stories about some of the great characters of Special Forces including Martha "Maggie" Ray and Walt Schumate. The Walt Schumate story "This Was Done By Ho Chi Minh," had me cracking up with laughter. Again, the humor alone in this book is worth the cover price.

Anyone who wore a Green Beret and certainly anyone who served with Special Forces in Vietnam will want to read this book. Even if you didn't, but like good combat storytelling and a good laugh, read War Stories of the Green Berets.


SAVE THE LAST BULLET FOR YOURSELF: A Soldier of Fortune in the Balkans and Somalia

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