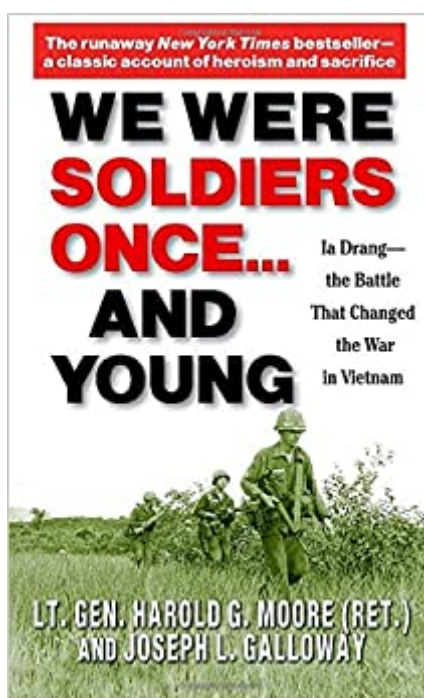


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# We Were Soldiers Once...and Young: Ia Drang - The Battle That Changed The War In Vietnam



## Synopsis

Each year, the Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps selects one book that he believes is both relevant and timeless for reading by all Marines. The Commandant's choice for 1993 was *We Were Soldiers Once . . . and Young*. In November 1965, some 450 men of the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry, under the command of Lt. Col. Hal Moore, were dropped by helicopter into a small clearing in the Ia Drang Valley. They were immediately surrounded by 2,000 North Vietnamese soldiers. Three days later, only two and a half miles away, a sister battalion was chopped to pieces. Together, these actions at the landing zones X-Ray and Albany constituted one of the most savage and significant battles of the Vietnam War. How these men persevered--sacrificed themselves for their comrades and never gave up--makes a vivid portrait of war at its most inspiring and devastating. General Moore and Joseph Galloway, the only journalist on the ground throughout the fighting, have interviewed hundreds of men who fought there, including the North Vietnamese commanders. This devastating account rises above the specific ordeal it chronicles to present a picture of men facing the ultimate challenge, dealing with it in ways they would have found unimaginable only a few hours earlier. It reveals to us, as rarely before, man's most heroic and horrendous endeavor. From the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In the first significant engagement between American troops and the Viet Cong, 450 U.S. soldiers found themselves surrounded and outnumbered by their enemy. This book tells the story of how

they battled between October 23 and November 26, 1965. Its prose is gritty, not artful, delivering a powerful punch of here-and-now descriptions that could only have been written by people actually on the scene. In fact, they were: Harold Moore commanded the men of the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry, who did most of the fighting, and Joseph Galloway was the only reporter present throughout the battle's 34 harrowing days. *We Were Soldiers Once...* combines their memories with more than 100 in-depth interviews with survivors on both sides. The Battle of Ia Drang also highlights a technological advance that would play an enormous role in the rest of the war: this was perhaps the first place where helicopter-based, air-mobile operations demonstrated their combat potential. At bottom, however, this is a tale of heroes and heroism, some acts writ large, others probably forgotten but for this telling. It was a bestseller when first published, and remains one of the better books available on combat during the Vietnam War. --John J. Miller --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

On Nov. 14, 1965, the 1st Battalion of the 7th Cavalry, commanded by Lt. Col. Moore and accompanied by UPI reporter Galloway, helicoptered into Vietnam's remote Ia Drang Valley and found itself surrounded by a numerically superior force of North Vietnamese regulars. Moore and Galloway here offer a detailed account, based on interviews with participants and on their own recollections, of what happened during the four-day battle. Much more than a conventional battle study, the book is a frank record of the emotional reactions of the GIs to the terror and horror of this violent and bloody encounter. Both sides claimed victory, the U.S. calling it a validation of the newly developed doctrine of airmobile warfare. Supplemented with maps, the memoir is a vivid re-creation of the first major ground battle of the Vietnam War. Photos. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Wow! I am so impressed by the honesty of this book! I can't believe that I waited this long to read it! I was a member of the 7th Infantry Division stationed at Camp Casey and due to being a short-timer, I missed this deployment by 30 days. If you have any interest in the Vietnam war, please read this book! Thanks to Hal Moore! May he R.I.P.

I know there are a million reviews. This book is so much better than the film (which itself was good). In this book, the ending is far from "happy" with a US battalion getting "ambushed" and slaughtered. This, after the first battle in the Dra Nang with Hal Moore, where the US forces on balance came out on top. In the second engagement, in which Hal Moore was not in, the US suffered a relatively

substantial defeat. This doesn't make for a good movie, with the "good guys" losing... but war is not always a movie. In fact, it never is.

Very detail oriented in the first one third of the book which made it somewhat cumbersome. Unless someone is military knowledgeable, terminology does not necessarily get absorbed easily as the story progresses. In the center portion of the story, the action is very intense and one can almost "see" what is happening on the battlefield. Having previously viewed the movie helps as well. The intensity of the fighting, and the injuries and deaths that occur are staggering, and one cannot but help feeling extremely saddened by the carnage. The flip side of course, is that as the author relates the story, there is an overwhelming sense of pride and awe generated by the bravery of these young men. This book is good for any person who wants to know the real facts of the Vietnam War, and is similar to the story told (fiction based on fact) in the book "MATTERHORN".

As others have suggested, this ain't Shakespeare (though it does quote Shakespeare). There are a lot of names, places, events, and it jumps from person to person and through time at will. The book, like Lt. Gen. Moore, gets down to business and doesn't let up. It's not always pretty but it's effective. It's a compelling, deeply emotional read which gave me a greater appreciation for the extreme courage and sacrifice of soldiers and their families.

I found this book riveting and extremely thought provoking. The ONLY issue I had with it is I had a really hard time keeping track of all the names and since I've zero military experience (and generally don't read military books) I also had difficulty with some of the logistics and maneuvers (battalions, platoons, squads, ect.) That is the only reason I gave it a 4 instead of a 5 and wholly accept it as my knowledge deficit. However, the authors might have served some of their readers (like me) with some appendix/description of what all the military stuff meant. Having said that, I've been told the movie is quite compelling so I'm eager to see it to compare the two.

Having seen the movie with Mel Gibson when I saw this book I had to read the "real" story of that first battle between American and the North Vietnamese Army. The movie only covers the "heroic" conflict at LZ X-Ray and in true Hollywood style omits the "real", little known, ambush of the column going to LZ Albany and the unnecessary slaughter of hundreds of US troops. This book is simply but brilliantly written and goes into extensive details which are quite profound and a sad reflection of the political arrogance of the powers that be at the time ( viz President Johnson and his

staff ) and the folly of the military system.\* The reports from the troops who survived the engagement are profound and are testimony not only of the brutality of the combat in November 1965 but to that which was to follow over the next ten years. The later interviews with the North Vietnamese officers involved makes fascinating reading of what their strategy was at the time. Hal Moore (and McNamara ?) from these first engagements realised that despite the NVA body count ( 12 NVA for each American ) there was no way that the American voting public was going to stand the stream of body bags and mutilated troops who would flood America in the years to come. In summary, an essential read for anyone who has more than a passing interest in the Vietnamese conflict in the 60's and 70's as it covers so many aspects of the battle; the battle itself, the men who lived and died, Lt Col Hal Moore himself, and the aftermath of the two encounters ( the battle ) with the NVA.\* A companion to this is "Dereliction of Duty: Johnson, Mc Namara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff" by H R Mc Master which delves in detail into the political background of the entrance of America into the war. Not an easy read and so full of facts and details that one has to grind through it. But important reading I think to have insight of the politics and the thinking of LBJ.

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