



## We Were Soldiers Once...And Young: Ia Drang The Battle That Changed the War in Vietnam

By Harold G. Moore, Joseph L. Galloway

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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.

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**We Were Soldiers Once...And Young: Ia Drang The Battle That Changed the War in Vietnam** By Harold G. Moore, Joseph L. Galloway **Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

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*

#### From Publishers Weekly

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.

#### From Library Journal

Ia Drang, in November 1965, was the first major battle fought by U.S. troops in Vietnam. It was also one of the fiercest. As a lieutenant colonel, Moore commanded the battalion that initiated the fighting. War correspondent Galloway accompanied Moore's troopers from start to finish. *We Were Soldiers Once* movingly depicts Ia Drang through the eyes of junior officers and enlisted men of the 1st Cavalry Division and their North Vietnamese opponents. The authors convincingly present Ia Drang as an archetype of a self-defeating U.S. strategy that emphasized wearing down a determined and skillful enemy on the battlefield. The result was an unacceptably high level of American losses for the results achieved. One of this book's most telling episodes is its depiction of an army so unprepared to deal with casualties that some telegrams notifying families of a son or husband killed at Ia Drang were delivered by Yellow Cab! Recommended for all collections.

- *D.E. Showalter, U.S. Air Force Acad., Colorado Springs*

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