



A Better War: The Unexamined Victories and Final Tragedy of America's Last Years in Vietnam

Lewis Sorley

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Product Description

Neglected by scholars and journalists alike, the years of conflict in Vietnam from 1968 to 1975 offer surprises not only about how the war was fought, but about what was achieved. Drawing from thousands of hours of previously unavailable (and still classified) tape-recorded meetings between the highest levels of the American military command in Vietnam, *A Better War* is an insightful, factual, and superbly documented history of these final years. Through his exclusive access to authoritative materials, award-winning historian Lewis Sorley highlights the dramatic differences in conception, conduct, and--at least for a time--results between the early and later years of the war. Among his most important findings is that while the war was being lost at the peace table and in the U.S. Congress, the soldiers were winning on the ground. Meticulously researched and movingly told, *A Better War* sheds new light on the Vietnam War.

Amazon Exclusive Essay: "New Vietnam War History" by Lewis Sorley, Author of *A Better War*



For a long time most people thought the long years of American involvement in the Vietnam War were just more of the same--with a bad ending. Now we know that during the latter years, when General Creighton Abrams commanded U.S. forces, almost everything changed, and for the better. Abrams understood the nature of the war and devised a more availing approach to the conduct of it. Building up South Vietnam's own armed forces got high priority, whereas before they had been neglected and allowed to go into combat outgunned by the enemy. The covert infrastructure which through terror and coercion kept South Vietnam's rural population under domination was painstakingly rooted out, not ignored as earlier. And combat operations were greatly improved, concentrating on large numbers of patrols and ambushes designed to provide security for the people rather than cumbersome large-unit sweeps through the deep jungle. Some commentators have called the description of these changes "revisionist" history, but actually it is new history. Virtually all the better-known earlier books about the war concentrated heavily on the early years, leaving the later period grossly neglected. New insight came importantly from a collection of hundreds of

tape recordings of briefings and staff meetings in General Abrams's headquarters during the four years he commanded in Vietnam. They are filled with human drama, professional debate, successes and frustrations, and ultimately a hard-won triumph, told in the voices of Abrams and his senior associates; such visiting officials as the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and a succession of often brilliant briefing officers. Later, of course, what they had won was thrown away by the United States Congress, but the story of their better war is still a dramatic testament to courage, integrity, devotion, and professional competence.--*Lewis Sorley*

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