



More Than a Soldier's War: Pacification in Vietnam (Williams-Ford Texas A&M University Military History Series)

Edward P. Metzner

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In the hamlets and villages of Vietnam, America waged a little-known war to serve and build in the midst of strife that destroyed and killed. The pacification program, "for the hearts and minds" of the Vietnamese people, represented an attempt to settle the conflict by bolstering support for the South Vietnam government and encouraging grass-roots opposition to the Viet Cong and the North. In that program, Col. Edward Metzner spent eight years as an advisor to district and provincial chiefs; his story is the story of the better side of Americans' involvement in Southeast Asia.

More Than a Soldier's War joins together, in one man's experiences, the beginning of the war, the ensuing agonizing course of events, and the ignominious end of one of modern history's most controversial and tormenting conflicts. It vividly describes Americans' efforts to save lives from the grinding daily carnage, shield the innocent, and provide hope for a future of peace and security, all while entangled in a relentless, grisly people's war. Individual Vietnamese emerge in dramatic relief in these pages: greedy, imperious army officers; intelligent, sympathetic village leaders; parents willing to risk their lives for their children's future welfare.

This eyewitness account, with its close-up look at an important side of the war, takes the war out of the strictly military arena and puts faces on those who worked hard to achieve a lasting victory. Arguing that more attention to the needs of the people and less to military tactics might have led to a different result, Metzner fairly lays blame for hindering the progress of the pacification effort at the feet of both South Vietnamese and American military leaders. Through his own experiences, he demonstrates that those involved at a grass-roots level accomplished a great deal that was never accurately reflected in reports on the war.

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