



## In the Last Years of a Lost War

*Al Steuter*

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## **In the Last Years of a Lost War** Al Steuter

“IN THE LAST YEARS OF A LOST WAR” is one marine’s story of war and lost idealism, love and redemption. Al Steuter recounts his Vietnam experience from memories reinforced with the declassified Command Chronologies of the units he served with, and the letters he sent back home to his girlfriend - Lois. The book describes how he came to enlist in the Marine Corps, and volunteer for Vietnam and combat duty, at a time when most young men were avoiding military service. However, this is not a book about combat. Though contact with the enemy was frequent and violent, the engagements were small-scale and brief. It is a book about Steuter’s involvement in the last years of a controversial hot war within the global Cold War. He served as an itinerant field radio operator on a succession of artillery forward observer teams attached to U.S. and Korean Marine infantry companies and artillery batteries. Steuter describes his service as an individual case of the physical, emotional and spiritual challenges that combatants face. During his time in Vietnam he gradually shed the complexities of his Catholic Faith and youthful patriotism, in favor of a very personal relationship with God and a self-reliant attempt to do his best in a war which he came to realize was lost. Steuter left Vietnam emotionally conflicted, angry with himself and his country, and addicted to the tension and danger of the bush. In the end, a difficult but ultimately enduring relationship with Lois, and a love for wild lands helped him deal with the lasting personal struggles of a combatant living with the death and killing of war.

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