



Reluctant Soldier...Proud Veteran: How a cynical Vietnam vet learned to take pride in his service to the USA

Terry L. Nau

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“Reluctant Soldier ... Proud Veteran” traces the path followed by many teenagers fresh out of high school in the mid-1960s. Terry Nau loses the battle to get on a college campus before Uncle Sam drafts him into the Army. Within 10 months, he is in Vietnam, working as a Fire Direction Specialist in a heavy artillery battery. The author offers insights on the Tet Offensive, and other obstacles his unit endures in his one-year tour of duty. His already cynical attitude towards the war grows more pronounced in Vietnam and he comes home hoping to forget about the Army and resume his life in college. But the war isn't over for him until all of his buddies come home safely. The book then details Nau's journey through college, where he encounters fellow veterans and anti-war protestors and tries to walk the line between the two opposing points of view. By the 1980s, he finds himself drawn to military battlefields while traveling through the United States. He visits The Wall in D.C. in the early 1980s and finds that a moving experience. Finally, in 2002 he connects with a few of the guys he served with in Vietnam and they hold a reunion in 2003, opening the door to dormant emotions and revelations about the war and how it impacted the lives of all soldiers who fought in Vietnam. A newspaperman by profession, Nau initiates a Military Page in 2011 and interviews veterans of every war back to and including World War II. A chapter in “Reluctant Soldier” is devoted to these men and their stories of life in a war zone. Another chapter deals with the Navy career of Pawtucket Red Sox owner Ben Mondor, a French-Canadian immigrant who had to choose between deportation and joining the Navy back in 1942. These stories of veterans from five different American wars are fashioned into a book that should resonate with former soldiers, Baby Boomers, anti-war protestors and even people who never served in our Armed Forces. Nau's book exposes the unfairness of the draft, the absurdity of war, and the toll that it takes on soldiers as they try to fit back into society. As long as the United States keeps finding wars to fight in, this book will have relevance to citizens, especially the ones who do the fighting.

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