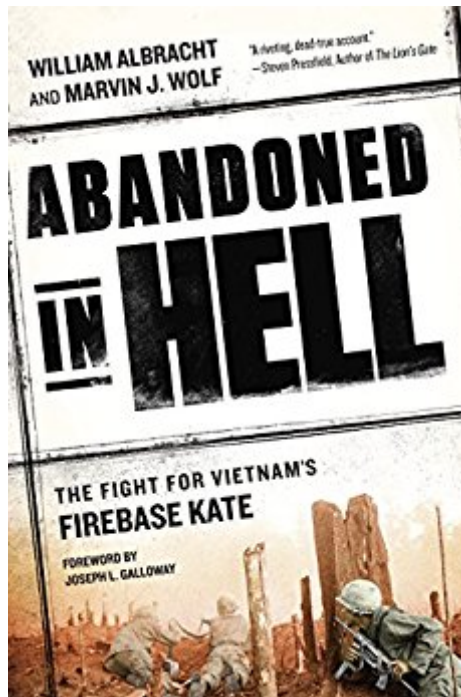




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Abandoned In Hell: The Fight For Vietnam's Firebase Kate



Synopsis

In October 1969, William Albracht, the youngest Green Beret captain in Vietnam, took command of a remote hilltop outpost called Fire Base Kate, held by only 27 American soldiers and 150 Montagnard militiamen. He found their defenses woefully unprepared. At dawn the next morning, three North Vietnamese Army regiments—some 6,000 men—crossed the Cambodian border and attacked. Outnumbered three dozen to one, Albracht's men held off repeated ground assaults by communist forces with fierce hand-to-hand fighting, air support and a dangerously close B-52 strike. For days, the NVA blanketed Kate in a rain of rockets, mortars, artillery, machineguns, and small arms, blocking efforts to resupply, reinforce, or evacuate the outpost. Albracht continually exposed himself to enemy fire to direct air strikes, to guide re-supply helicopters, to distribute ammunition and water to his men, to retrieve the dead and to rescue the wounded, often shielding men with his own body. Wounded by rocket shrapnel, he refused medical attention or evacuation. Exhausted from days without sleep, he continued to rally his men to beat off each new enemy attack. After five days, Kate's defenders were out of ammo and water. Aerial resupply was suicidal, and reinforcements were denied by military commanders who had written off Kate. Albracht refused to surrender or die in place. Refusing to allow his men to surrender, Albracht led his troops, including many wounded, off the hill and on a daring night march through enemy lines. Abandoned in Hell is an astonishing memoir of leadership, sacrifice, and brutal violence, a riveting journey into Vietnam's heart of darkness, and a compelling reminder of the transformational power of individual heroism. Not since Lone Survivor and We Were Soldiers Once, And Young has there been such a gripping and authentic account of battlefield courage. INCLUDES PHOTOS

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Customer Reviews

I thoroughly enjoyed "Abandoned in Hell" by co-authors William Albracht and Marvin J. Wolf. The story begins with William joining the Army after high school and following him through the many training schools he opted for - eventually completing Officer Candidate School and Special Forces training prior to going to Vietnam. His goal was to become a member of a "Green Beret Mike Force", instead, he is sent to command a Special Forces firebase in the Central Highland only a couple of miles from the Cambodian Border. Firebase Kate comprised of a handful of American soldiers and a few hundred Montagnards to provide perimeter security. The firebase was in a disarray; defenses were almost non-existent, American Special Forces members and artillery crews played volleyball, the Montagnards randomly left the firebase to hunt food and leaving their portion of the perimeter unguarded. The overall atmosphere was laid back and peaceful. Little did they know that 6,000 NVA soldiers were encircling the camp and planning to attack and over-run Kate. The first shot fired later that first day! The battle for Kate began in earnest, NVA soldiers used mortars, rockets, recoilless rifles and artillery to soften up the camp - successfully knocking out most of the camp's artillery guns before mounting their first infantry assault. This battle continued over the next five days, no sleep, constant shelling, friends wounded and killed, battle stress causing breakdowns - yet the camp defenders successfully repelled several human wave attacks.

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