

I appreciate Robert B. Loring's positive Book Review in Leatherneck but I feel I should note that I finished my Vietnam tour with Echo Co., 2/1 after 2/26 rotated stateside in March 1970. I also "named" rather than "interviewed" 1,019 Marines, 42 Navy Corpsmen and six Navy doctors in the two books. The scope of the books dwells on 1970 when I was in Vietnam but also covers selected combat stories of a multitude of Marines and Docs 1965-71 in various ground units and primarily helicopter crews in the Marine Air Wing. To get a better idea of what all is in the 2-book series, go to www.michaeldankellum.com. Semper Fi, Dan Kellum, Longview, Texas

RECOMMENDED READING

Books Reviewed

Unless otherwise noted, these books may be ordered from The Marine Shop. Subscribers may use members' prices. Include \$5.99 for shipping. Virginia residents add 5 percent sales tax; North Carolina residents add 6.75 percent. Prices may change. Make check or money order payable to: MCA, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, call toll-free: (888) 237-7683, or shop online at www.marineshop.net.

Leatherneck Magazine, July 2012 issue, Book Review by 'Red Bob' Loring
Books I and II, American Heroes: Grunts, Pilots & "Docs"

AMERICAN HEROES: Grunts, Pilots & "Docs," Books I and II. By Michael Dan Kellum. Published by Navarro-Hill Publishing Group. Vol. I, 518 pages. Vol. II, 477 pages. Vol. I Stock #0984513205. \$24.26 MCA Members. \$26.95 Regular Price. Vol. II Stock #0984513221. \$23.36 MCA Members. \$25.95 Regular Price.

With great pleasure, I highly recommend to *Leatherneck* readers two new companion books, "American Heroes: Grunts, Pilots & Docs," Books I & II, written by former First Lieutenant Michael Dan Kellum, a Mustang officer, who served in the Marble Mountain region of the Republic of Vietnam throughout 1970.

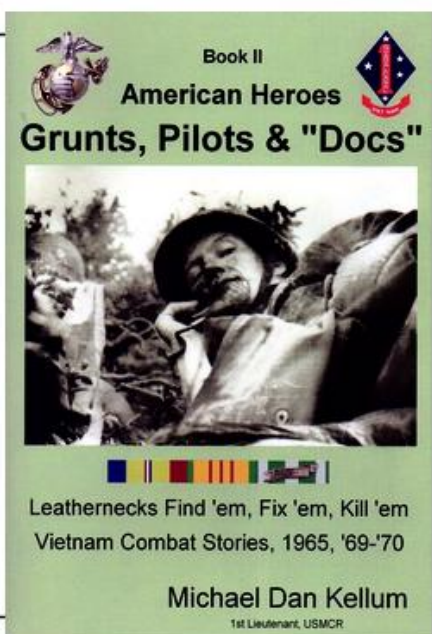
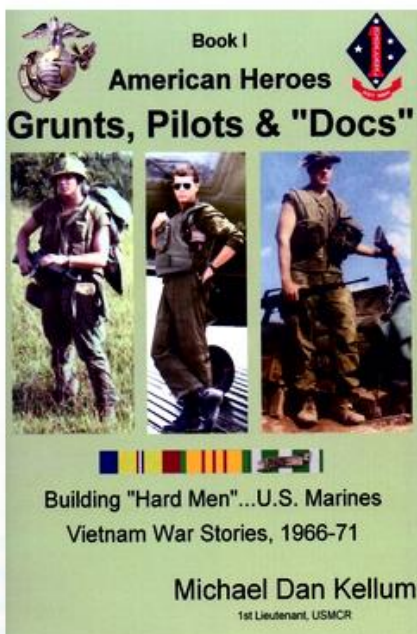
In these two volumes, Kellum skillfully weaves his exciting first-person narrative with assorted oral histories of the Marines and Navy corpsmen who served in "the Nam." Remarkably, in his more than 20 years of dogged research, he interviewed 1,019 Marines, 42 "Docs," and included are the testimonies of six Navy physicians.

Kellum declared that he had joined the Corps due to a teenage broken heart. As an enlisted man, he received his initial "boot" education on the West Coast at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego. But the Texan found a new home in the Corps.

In the mid-1960s and as the war in the Far East began to escalate, there was a crying need for newly minted Marine second lieutenants. Kellum was sent off to the new Enlisted Commissioning Program, earning his commission and shiny gold bars as a second lieutenant and then completing The Basic School (TBS) at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va.

Second Lt Kellum was sent to Eighth Marine Regiment at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., and then deployed to guard fences around the naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. By early January 1970, he was transferred to the 26th Marine Regiment in the Republic of Vietnam. Kellum finished his year's tour as a "grunt" officer with 2/26. Toward the end of his combat tour, 1stLt Kellum briefly commanded "Echo" Company.

In and around the 1970s, if you or your friends served in Vietnam, your name, or the names of Marine and Navy personnel with whom you served, may well be included in one or more of Kellum's well-crafted, salty reminiscences. These two



amazing volumes represent a splendid example and a guide for future oral historians.

With the personal testimonies of more than 1,000 combat veterans and the inclusion of many previously unpublished photos, these two books are a pleasure to read and carefully consider. Kellum pulls no punches in his assessment of the situation that he, his Marines and corpsmen encountered. By 1970, America slowly began to withdraw combat forces from the theater of operations. This period marked the escalation of a Vietnamization program and a marked reduction in aggressive Marine-led operations.

Besides Kellum's well-written personal story, he includes various sidebar accounts of the heroic Marines and corpsmen who served in country during the war. Of Kellum's TBS class, "Charlie" Co, 1969, we learn that nine were killed in action and 15 wounded.

These remarkable volumes provide the reader with immense insight into the mind of an infantry officer at war. The North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong notwithstanding, Marine officers and their men faced many other disquieting difficulties: The devious VC forced or paid children to set booby traps and mines; race relation problems existed between the white and the black Marines; and many maddening problems occurred while working with our South Vietnamese allies. All are aired by Kellum.

Returning home after the war, Kellum graduated from Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas, with a degree in communication and English and became a journalist for the local *Longview Morning Journal* in Longview, Texas. Of his career and his experience

researching the book, Kellum writes, "The time I spent in the Marine Corps evolved into an experience I will always cherish as I matured and was blessed to meet some truly amazing people in and out of Vietnam."

So, buckle your chinstrap and go to war with the finest! For more information about Michael Dan Kellum, check out: MichaelDanKellum.com.

Robert B. Loring

Editor's note: A prolific reader and Leatherneck contributor, "Red Bob" Loring is dedicated to supporting social programs that improve the lives of citizens in East Pasco County, Fla.

