

Fields of Fire: Fields of Fire *by* Simon Webb



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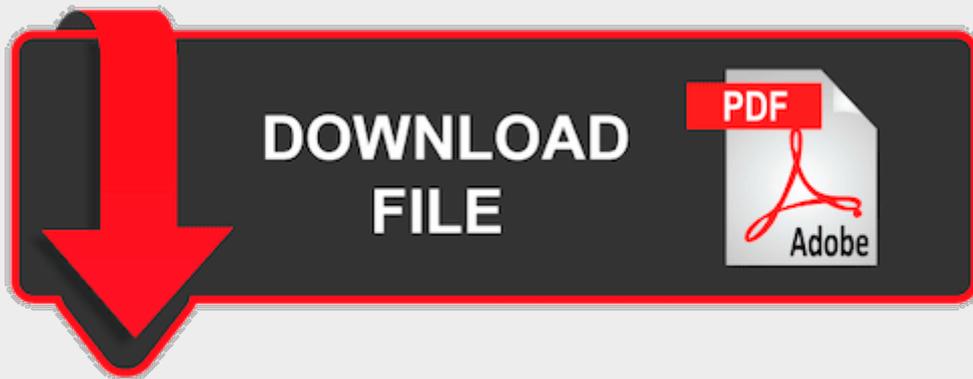
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The story of a platoon of Marines fighting in Vietnam evokes the ambiguous and gruesome character of the war and contrasts man's realization of war's dangers with his attraction to war as the ultimate test of survival



Reviews of the **Fields of Fire: Fields of Fire** *by* Simon Webb

1. Kulasius

I was once outside my office across the street from the Metropolitan Club in Washington DC having a cigarette - walking to the side of the building I noticed a nice late model expensive car with a Virginia License Plate. The

Plate had a Purple Heart on it and a message only Marines and those that served in Vietnam could understand. As I lit my cigarette around the corner (Gov't office buildings prohibit smoking directly in front of door ways) - out came (then) Senator Jim Webb. He walked up to this same car and fed quarters into the meter. As a Marine I wanted to shout something out - as a Veteran and Gov't employee I simply remained quiet. Senator Webb walked gracefully back into the Metropolitan Club. I hope one day to meet the former Senator of Virginia - he was the Navy Secretary for a time when I myself was in the Marine Corps.

The novel - I am not quite a reader of novels; but, this one was simply true to form. Some parts I found myself laughing; others rather saddened. Senator Webb simply captured the timeless meaning of being a "grunt". I have long held the belief that any service member who has served in the Grunts will know and realize that soldiers are timeless; that grunts of today are no different from those of Roman Empire times and/or earlier and/or later. He simply wrote of the craziness and fluid movement of battlefields well and to his credit the book ended not in the manner I would have wished; however, the Vietnam War didn't end in any way or manner that any service member I know of would have wanted it to end.

I wanted to give this book 5 stars; but something is holding me back and it is simply likely my own personal reflections and internalizations.

2. Orevisé

I was introduced to James Webb as a political figure through several social media posts from friends and acquaintances of mine. I immediately liked what I saw: a presidential candidate who had no time for partisan nonsense, a very middle-of-the-road, staunchly pro-American candidate. When asked who his political enemies were, his verbatim answer was, "I'd have to say the enemy soldier who threw the grenade that wounded me, but he's not around right now to talk to," and he punctuated it with the kind of devious grin that can only come from a seasoned infantryman.

Webb, a former officer of Marines who earned multiple Purple Hearts and the Navy Cross while serving with the infantry during the Vietnam War, is undoubtedly a badass who has walked the walk, and it shows in his critically acclaimed debut novel, *FIELDS OF FIRE*.

The novel mainly follows three characters: Snake, a crude man from a

working class background who finds his home in war as a Marine infantryman; Lieutenant Hodges, a man who comes from a long pedigree of Appalachian-based American fighting men who perished in war and is seeking the approval of his "ghosts"; and Goodrich, a yuppie who left Harvard, decided to enlist to see what he was made of, and finds that he doesn't like the view.

The depictions of infantry combat are technically accurate without reading like an FM, and the way Webb describes infantry banter gives outsiders an authentic glimpse and takes those who have walked that path back to those days of being barrel-chested freedom fighters.

The most impressive part is that Webb doesn't just focus on infantry life or try and glorify the Vietnam War. FIELDS OF FIRE is a time capsule, an accurate representation of the times and politics therein. The anti-war movement is covered with an even-keel, and the depictions of racial tensions are not only spot on, but once more relevant in our current time.

FIELDS OF FIRE is often acclaimed as the best Vietnam fictional novel of the era, and having read it, it is clear to see why. Highly recommended to fans of history and war fiction.

3. Deeroman

The accepted narrative of Vietnam that the US lost the war is rebuked nicely in this book. The war was a mistake of bureaucratic arrogance and inefficiency. In the end, the politicians gave up, but not the soldiers who fought it. This is a story of the blood and sacrifice and dedication of the soldiers who were thrust in this war. A great telling of the Vietnam War from the prospective of the average grunt.

4. Yllk

This novel was written by someone who's been there and survived the insane exercise in futility that the Vietnam war was. Once you start

reading it, it's hard to put down, in spite of the book's format (small, softcover and small print).

The story grabs you by the scruff of your neck, yanks you out of your comfortable chair and transports you to the front lines and forces you to experience for yourself the raw sights, sounds and smells of the killing fields up close and personal.

This novel gives you an insight into: a) The dirty "politics" of war, b) The raw and heartless manipulations by the ruling elites who sent our soldiers half way around the world to be maimed and to die for no justifiable reason, c) The stupidity of getting bogged down in an ill-conceived, ill-defined, murky mission, forcing our soldiers to fight it with one hand tied behind their backs and, d) The incredible price so many of our braves have paid for doing what their "country" has asked of them.

This is an important read because not much has changed since then. We stubbornly refuse to learn our lessons from it. Our ruling elites continue to have an insatiable appetite for stupid, ill-defined, senseless wars. They keep sending our men and women to killing fields in far away places with little to show for it while they sit in their posh, comfortable offices, wrapped in the American flag, claiming to be the defenders of "our" values and "our" freedoms.

A must read for every concerned citizen.

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