



Rattler One-Seven: A Vietnam Helicopter Pilot's War Story (North Texas Military Biography and Memoir Series)

By Chuck Gross

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Rattler One-Seven puts you in the helicopter seat, to see the war in Vietnam through the eyes of an inexperienced pilot as he transforms himself into a seasoned combat veteran.

When Chuck Gross left for Vietnam in 1970, he was a nineteen-year-old Army helicopter pilot fresh out of flight school. He spent his entire Vietnam tour with the 71st Assault Helicopter Company flying UH-1 Huey helicopters. Soon after the war he wrote down his adventures, while his memory was still fresh with the events. *Rattler One-Seven* (his call sign) is written as Gross experienced it, using these notes along with letters written home to accurately preserve the mindset he had while in Vietnam.

During his tour Gross flew Special Operations for the MACV-SOG, inserting secret teams into Laos. He notes that Americans were left behind alive in Laos, when official policy at home stated that U.S. forces were never there.

He also participated in Lam Son 719, a misbegotten attempt by the ARVN to assault and cut the Ho Chi Minh Trail with U.S. Army helicopter support. It was the largest airmobile campaign of the war and marked the first time that the helicopter was used in mid-intensity combat, with disastrous results. Pilots in their early twenties, with young gunners and a Huey full of ARVN soldiers, took on experienced North Vietnamese antiaircraft artillery gunners, with no meaningful intelligence briefings or a rational plan on how to cut the Trail. More than one hundred helicopters were lost and more than six hundred aircraft sustained combat damage. Gross himself was shot down and left in the field during one assault. *Rattler One-Seven* will appeal to those interested in the Vietnam War and to all armed forces, especially aviators, who have served for their country.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Gross joined the army in November 1968 at age 18 to fly helicopters, believing the Vietnam War would be over by the time he completed his flight training. It wasn't. He put in a year in the war zone, from May 1970 to May 1971, as a young Huey helicopter pilot, flying hundreds of dangerous missions under the Rattler 17 call sign with the 71st Assault Helicopter Company near Chu Lai and later in Quang Tri. Gross took part in the massive Operation Lam Son 719 in February 1971, when American forces provided air and artillery support for Army of South Vietnam troops who crossed into Laos to raid the Ho Chi Minh Trail. His war memoir is heavy on detail; Gross dutifully, and sometimes dully, describes his day-to-day activities in the air and on the ground. Reflections on the latter include passages on his interactions with his fellow pilots and superior officers and with the Vietnamese "hootch maids" who did the GIs' laundry and polished their boots, as well as details of his R&R and leave time in Australia. He offers some commentary ("What bothers me most is that we could have won the war!"), but wealth of detail, rather than of insight, is the draw.

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Review

"Exciting reading! Chuck Gross vividly tells the dramatic account of being a combat helicopter pilot in such a way that you feel you are there. Gross sets the story of combat aviation with a graphic backdrop of chaos and carnage. *Rattler One-Seven* is a compelling memoir of what it was like to fly combat helicopters in Vietnam. It is a must-read for all military and aviation enthusiasts."--Chuck Carlock, author of *Firebirds*

"Chuck Gross's book tells exactly what it was like to fly a Huey slick in combat in the Vietnam War. The only things missing are the smells of gunpowder and the incredible noise as he takes the reader on combat assaults into hot landing zones." --James Joyce, author of *Pucker Factor 10*

"As a helicopter pilot with combat experience in Vietnam, I could readily relate to Gross's experiences—several of them had the hair on the back of my neck standing up! *Rattler One-Seven* will make an important contribution to the Vietnam War literature. There's nothing else like it out there." --John F. Guilmartin Jr., Lt. Col. USAF (Ret), and professor of history, Ohio State University

"Gross's memoir is worth reading . . . because of his description of the chaos and incompetence that accompanied Vietnamization. . . . His stories should find an audience among serious collectors of books about Vietnam." --*Military History of the West*

"The writing is vivid and painfully accurate at times. *Rattler One-Seven* is truly the best helicopter story by a pilot coming out of the Vietnam War."—*Military Writers Society of America*

"One idea that comes out well is how some missions went smoothly, while others were complete disasters. Gross describes, for example, how the orders of incompetent commanders contributed to the shooting down

of several of his company's helicopters and the subsequent waste of American lives. . . . This is an excellent book and well worth reading."—*Air Power History*

"*Rattler One-Seven* portrays the world of a helicopter company in Vietnam with immediacy and intimate detail."—*Military Trader*

About the Author

Chuck Gross was an Army helicopter pilot in the Vietnam War from May 1970 through May 1971. He logged more than 1,200 hours of combat flying and achieved Senior Aircraft Commander status. After the war he became a commercial pilot and recently retired from American Airlines as a 767/757 Captain. Gross is also an instructor in the martial arts and has published a self-defense video course. He lives in Gallatin, Tennessee.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Edward Torres:

Have you spare time to get a day? What do you do when you have more or little spare time? That's why, you can choose the suitable activity for spend your time. Any person spent all their spare time to take a go walking, shopping, or went to often the Mall. How about open as well as read a book eligible Rattler One-Seven: A Vietnam Helicopter Pilot's War Story (North Texas Military Biography and Memoir Series)? Maybe it is to become best activity for you. You already know beside you can spend your time with the favorite's book, you can cleverer than before. Do you agree with it has the opinion or you have different opinion?

Mike Greene:

The book Rattler One-Seven: A Vietnam Helicopter Pilot's War Story (North Texas Military Biography and Memoir Series) make you feel enjoy for your spare time. You can utilize to make your capable a lot more increase. Book can to become your best friend when you getting strain or having big problem together with your subject. If you can make reading a book Rattler One-Seven: A Vietnam Helicopter Pilot's War Story (North Texas Military Biography and Memoir Series) to be your habit, you can get far more advantages, like add your current capable, increase your knowledge about many or all subjects. You could know everything if you like open and read a publication Rattler One-Seven: A Vietnam Helicopter Pilot's War Story (North Texas Military Biography and Memoir Series). Kinds of book are a lot of. It means that, science reserve or encyclopedia or some others. So , how do you think about this guide?

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Lynn Lambert:

Is it an individual who having spare time subsequently spend it whole day through watching television programs or just laying on the bed? Do you need something new? This Rattler One-Seven: A Vietnam Helicopter Pilot's War Story (North Texas Military Biography and Memoir Series) can be the response, oh how comes? A book you know. You are consequently out of date, spending your extra time by reading in this fresh era is common not a geek activity. So what these guides have than the others?

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