



## Steel My Soldiers' Hearts: The Hopeless to Hardcore Transformation of U.S. Army, 4th Battalion, 39th Infantry, Vietnam

By Col. David H. Hackworth

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In January 1969, one of the most promising young lieutenant colonels the US Army had ever seen touched down in Vietnam for his second tour of duty, which would turn out to be his most daring and legendary.

David H. Hackworth had just completed the writing of a tactical handbook for the Pentagon, and now he had been ordered to put his counterguerilla-fighting theories into action. He was given the morale-drained 4/39th—a battalion of poorly led draftees suffering the Army's highest casualty rate and considered its worst fighting battalion. Hackworth's hard-nosed, inventive and inspired leadership quickly turned the 4/39th into Vietnam's valiant and ferocious Hardcore Recondos.

Drawing on interviews with soldiers from the Hardcore Battalion conducted over the past decade by his partner and coauthor, Eillys England, Hackworth takes readers along on their sniper missions, ambush actions, helicopter strikes and inside the quagmire of command politics. With *Steel My Soldiers' Hearts*, Hackworth places the brotherhood of the 4/39th into the pantheon of our nation's most heroic warriors.

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## Steel My Soldiers' Hearts: The Hopeless to Hardcore Transformation of U.S. Army, 4th Battalion, 39th Infantry, Vietnam By Col. David H. Hackworth Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #210960 in Books
- Published on: 2003-05-06
- Released on: 2003-05-06
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.44" h x 1.30" w x 5.50" l, .99 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 464 pages

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## **Editorial Review**

### Amazon.com Review

*Steel My Soldiers' Hearts* is retired Colonel David Hackworth's account of his tour of duty in Vietnam commanding the 4/39th, an infantry battalion operating south of Saigon in the Mekong River delta. Poorly led (the previous commander had based the battalion in the middle of a mine field), with frightfully high casualties (40 percent during the six months prior to Hackworth's arrival), and fighting in the most dangerous of terrain, the 4/39th was a dispirited and demoralized group when Hackworth assumed command in January, 1969. Upon arrival, Hackworth fired many of the senior officers and then put the 4/39th through "Combat 101," which made him so unpopular that at one point Hackworth was warned of a bounty some of his men had put out on him. Over the next five months, however, Hackworth would transform the 4/39 from "hopeless to hardcore," dramatically reverse the casualty rate, score some spectacular victories over the Viet Cong, and earn the undying respect of his troops. Here's a gung ho and earthy firsthand account of the Vietnam War that fans of *We Were Soldiers Once...* will appreciate. --Harry C. Edwards

### From Publishers Weekly

Soldier-Author-Columnist, as his Web site notes, Hackworth (About Face, Hazardous Duty) weighs in with a long, blow-by-blow account of his second tour in Vietnam, as a 9th Infantry Division battalion commander. (Hackworth denounced the war in 1971, went into self-imposed exile in Australia and later became a high-profile Newsweek military analyst.) He's definitely the star of this production, which is co-written with England but told in his voice, as he describes how he turned a group of decidedly unready infantrymen into an effective fighting force mainly through the strength of his tough personality. My idea of looking after the troops was not to spoon-feed them, Hackworth says, but to make them as hard as forged steel, deadly in their kill-or-be-killed trade. And he's not bashful about naming names: he gives credit to the officers and enlisted men who helped him and pillories ticket-punching and cowardly officers who stood in his way. The result is a readable, gritty, in-the-trenches tale, dotted with clever epigrammatic prose and filled to overflowing with reconstructed dialogue. The main source is Hackworth's memory bank, but he and England also combed through primary and secondary sources and made good use of interviews they conducted with many of his former troops. The portrait that emerges is of a battalion commander with integrity, guts, leadership ability and an abiding concern for the welfare of his men as well as, it must be acknowledged, a modest desire to self-promote.

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### Review

Harold G. Moore Lieutenant General (U.S. Army, Ret.), coauthor of *We Were Soldiers Once...and Young* A riveting, candid and hard-hitting combat narrative by one of the top few brilliant battlefield leaders in the history of the U.S. Army. Outstanding!

*The Washington Post Book World* An exceptional warrior...a soldier's soldier.

*The Philadelphia Inquirer* [Hackworth is] perhaps the best military leader this country has had since Patton.

Frederick W. Smith chairman, president and chief executive officer, FedEx Corporation Col. David Hackworth is a national treasure....If you are interested in leadership, character, values and commitment to mission, you need to read this book.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Gary Gonzales:**

Reading a book tends to be new life style in this particular era globalization. With reading you can get a lot of information that could give you benefit in your life. Along with book everyone in this world could share their idea. Ebooks can also inspire a lot of people. A lot of author can inspire their own reader with their story as well as their experience. Not only the storyline that share in the textbooks. But also they write about the information about something that you need case in point. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach your children, there are many kinds of book which exist now. The authors on earth always try to improve their skill in writing, they also doing some investigation before they write on their book. One of them is this Steel My Soldiers' Hearts: The Hopeless to Hardcore Transformation of U.S. Army, 4th Battalion, 39th Infantry, Vietnam.

#### **Stephen Hill:**

Are you kind of busy person, only have 10 or 15 minute in your morning to upgrading your mind talent or thinking skill even analytical thinking? Then you are having problem with the book compared to can satisfy your short space of time to read it because all this time you only find guide that need more time to be read. Steel My Soldiers' Hearts: The Hopeless to Hardcore Transformation of U.S. Army, 4th Battalion, 39th Infantry, Vietnam can be your answer since it can be read by a person who have those short spare time problems.

#### **Oren Nelson:**

Reading a book being new life style in this season; every people loves to go through a book. When you go through a book you can get a lots of benefit. When you read guides, you can improve your knowledge, due to the fact book has a lot of information into it. The information that you will get depend on what kinds of book that you have read. If you need to get information about your study, you can read education books, but if you want to entertain yourself you are able to a fiction books, this kind of us novel, comics, and also soon. The Steel My Soldiers' Hearts: The Hopeless to Hardcore Transformation of U.S. Army, 4th Battalion, 39th Infantry, Vietnam offer you a new experience in studying a book.

#### **Patricia Coulter:**

In this particular era which is the greater man or who has ability to do something more are more important than other. Do you want to become among it? It is just simple strategy to have that. What you are related is just spending your time little but quite enough to enjoy a look at some books. One of several books in the top list in your reading list is definitely Steel My Soldiers' Hearts: The Hopeless to Hardcore Transformation of U.S. Army, 4th Battalion, 39th Infantry, Vietnam. This book which is qualified as The Hungry Mountains can get you closer in turning out to be precious person. By looking way up and review this reserve you can get many advantages.

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