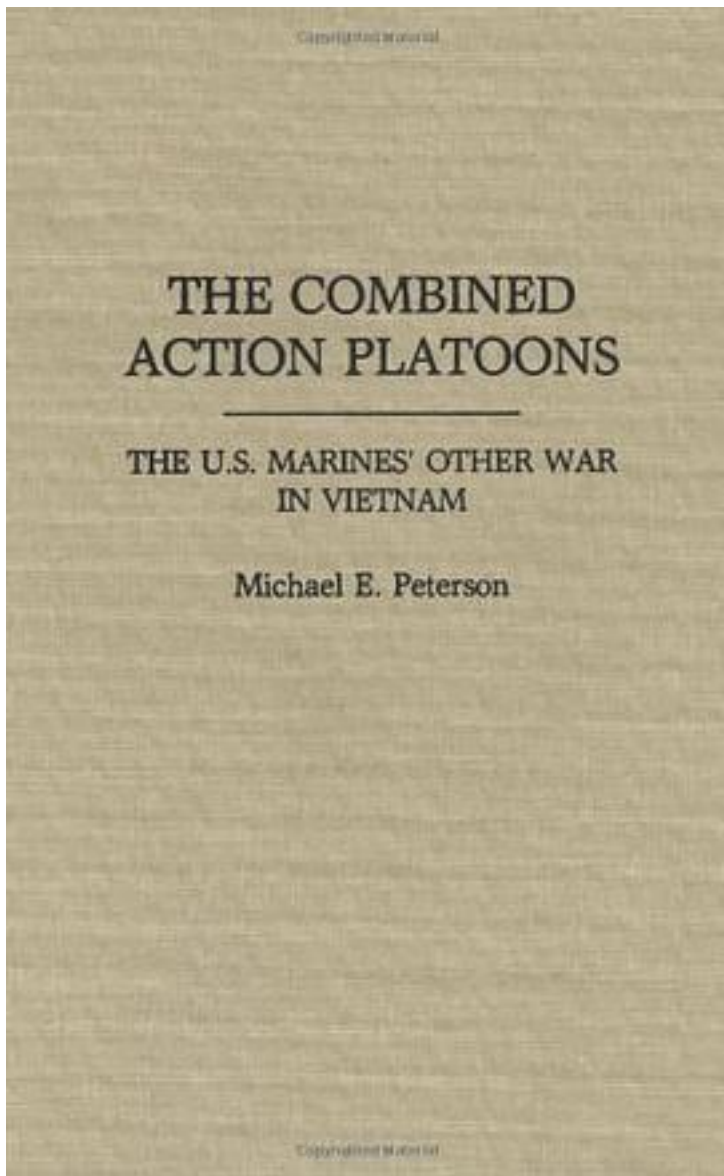


The Combined Action Platoons



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This is the first comprehensive history for the academic reader of the Combined Action Program (CAP) in Vietnam. Created as a response by the U.S. Marines to what was known as the other war in Vietnam, the CAP Program was comprised of platoons each combining a fourteen man marine rifle squad, a navy corpsman, and a platoon of South Vietnamese militia. These CAP units were unique to the war. Their function was to capture and hold rather than to search and destroy. While the main forces of the Army and Marines all too often waged war on the Vietnamese hamlets, the CAP marines waged war from the hamlets. Their intent was to keep the hamlet intact. The uniqueness of the CAP Program justifies this study not only from an historical and political perspective but also sociologically. The CAP Marines were among the few Americans who lived with the Vietnamese in their own setting for long periods of time, developing community projects and civic action programs. The 1980s has brought about a resurgence of valuable research, the declassification of official documentation, and most important, an emotional distance from the trauma of defeat. The author takes full advantage of these conditions to present a thorough and comprehensive history and civic program analysis. Many critics of the Vietnam War now agree that the tactics of the Combined Action Program were among the most promising of the war. The CAP Marines fought a deadly and personal war with the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army. In this volume, the author achieves his twofold objective. He not only provides a valuable historical account of the Program, but also analyzes the civic action and community development projects undertaken by the CAP Marines. His study is done with an eye to the future as U.S. counterinsurgency has again found expression in other Third World conflicts.

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