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Autor: Lomperis, Timothy J.

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Timothy Lomperis knows the Vietnam War, both as a soldier and as a scholar. In the latter role he has published extensively, including *The War Everyone Lost--and Won*, hailed as one of the best books ever written on that conflict. Even though he served two tours "in country" during the war's most frustrating period--from the infamous Easter Invasion through the Paris Peace negotiations--this is the first time he has written about the war from such a personal perspective. An intelligence officer at the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), Lomperis and his comrades were tasked with translating Washington war policy into action. Lomperis provides a rare view of the war from the perspective of a rear echelon officer. He and other so-called REMFs were deeply involved in trying to devise and implement strategies that would the win the war. This largely neglected perspective takes center stage in Lomperis's memoir, presenting a seldom-seen midlevel perspective that provides the missing links between the Washington-Hanoi peace negotiations and the deadly battles between troops in the field.

In exposing the inner workings of a military headquarters during wartime, Lomperis recounts the tensions of a command caught between the political imperatives of Washington and the deteriorating military situation on the ground. Involved in the planning and execution of Nixon's 1972 Christmas Bombing Campaign, designed to push the North Vietnamese into peace negotiations, Lomperis sheds new light on Nixon's "secret plan to end the war" while offering rare glimpses of military operations and decision making on the ground in Saigon. Giving color to the REMF story, he also offers a portrait of life in wartime Saigon, writing with genuine respect for and curiosity about Vietnamese culture. And ultimately, he describes his own moral conundrum as the son of missionaries and an initial Cold Warrior who undergoes a gradual disillusionment that resolves into peaceful reconciliation.

This incisive memoir is essential for better comprehending what the Vietnam experience was like for the large contingent of Americans who served there. It suggests the need for some fundamental rethinking about Vietnam--not only for the war's veterans but also for those concerned with the lessons it carries for U.S. involvement in current insurgencies.

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This book is part of the Modern War Studies series.