



A Pink Mist

John Bercaw

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John Bercaw's journey to Vietnam started at the beginning of the Korean War when, as a young boy, he thrilled to see his first helicopter as it defied gravity and common sense by flying. A circuitous route through troubled teenage years and four years in the Marines led him to Fort Wolters, Texas, and the US Army's Warrant Officer Rotary Wing Aviation Course. For the first time in his life, he felt a deep sense of belonging. John's successful struggle to master the beast called helicopter earned him an all-expense-paid trip to South Vietnam and the opportunity to prove himself as a combat pilot. His year of war was not as expected. Awed by the lush landscapes of Vietnam and the unexpected moments of war's savage beauty, Bercaw changed his mind about war and its effect on the men who fought in it. He found himself able to overcome fear and doubt in combat and do his job to the best of his ability. Based on the books he had read and the movies he had seen, he had not anticipated the addiction to the highs and lows brought on by the intensity of war. The difficult part came at the end. Leaving Vietnam before the war was over, the sudden end to the daily adrenalin rushes and the sense of being part of something important—aggravated by the shameful reception experienced by all returning veterans—initiated a period of depression that haunted him for years.

A Pink Mist Details

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From Reader Review A Pink Mist for online ebook

William B. says

Authentic c Story

This is well written a account of the Vietnam War a s I remember it. However, unlike the author, I believe it was a complete waste of lives wealth.

Mick Whelpley says

A real story about real people

I would recommend this book to every Vietnam veteran who ever saw a chopper fly by you doing his job under extreme conditions

Thomas R. Winscher says

Good review of the Vietnam War

this is a non political view of helicopter pilots in Vietnam. The author tells it as it was without the mumbo jumbo of political correctness.

our country turned its objection to the war against the men who fought the war and forgot about the self righteous politicians who created it. I wish I could say that our military is treated better today, but it is not. This book is a good reminder of what really happens in the war.

Staci Suhy says

I enjoyed reading about this author's personal experiences.

** I received this book for free as part of a First-Reads promotion

John Podlaski says

As a Vietnam Infantry veteran, I have always held the chopper crews in the highest regard for always being there when needed. Without them, we would not have survived. I had jumped from choppers into hot LZ's, finding the deepest depression or fattest tree for protection before returning fire - a real pucker moment! These pilots were relentless and continued to ferry and land reinforcements with not much protection for themselves. They flew their machines through steady streams of gunfire, and yet, they continued as if they

were invincible. Dust off's, ash and trash runs, troop deployments and evacuations and over-head support were all part of their everyday job.

Mr Bercaw does a wonderful job with this well-told story which offers the reader a glimpse of the everyday life of these flying warriors, which by the way, wasn't a nine to five job. The book is easy to read with short chapters, each highlighting a special event in his Vietnam Tour. I did, however, find somewhat of a disconnect between his career in the Marines and his ending up at Fort Wolters as an Army Helicopter pilot in training wondering how this change took place. The author has a fantastic sense of humor that sometimes caught me off-guard and made me laugh out loud. I particularly enjoyed the way John wrote about his first few days in Marine Basic Training...he was spot on with the way DI's confuse and break down the new recruits. Funny now...not then!

There are a couple of times in the story when Mr. Bercaw and crew were asked to go out of their way to rescue wounded soldiers on the ground. The landing zones were totally socked in and these pilots took extreme risks to both themselves and the crews by attempting to retrieve these men and get them to hospitals for treatment. Then have these dying soldiers get up and walk off the chopper on their own – leaving me with my mouth agape.

After reading "Pink Mist", I have bumped up these crews a couple of notches on my high esteem list. I also have a much better understanding of what these sky warriors had to endure in order to survive...sadly, many did not!

Great job Mr. Bercaw! Thank you for your service and Welcome Home sir!

John Podlaski, author
Cherries - A Vietnam War Novel

Greg Kerr says

Quite a different approach to his story

Over the years I have read numerous biographies and memoirs written by Vietnam vet (male and female), war correspondents and/or photojournalist who experienced the war first hand. Some of these accounts became quite popular and were even made into movies (i.e., Born on the Fourth of July; We Were Soldiers; etc). Others were simply survivors sharing their story, maybe for no other reason than maybe their children and grandchildren might better understand what dad or mom, uncle or aunt, grandpa or grandma experienced when they were young.

Bercaw takes a totally different approach in presenting vignettes that show us what helicopter pilots faced doing their job, the surrealistic and insanity of war, the human aspects of constantly being among the dead and wounded, and those poignant moments of serendipity and beauty and humor interwoven with the stark realities of combat. Well worth the time to hear what he has given us.

Gary says

Told with a dry, self-deprecating humor, this is a well written account of the author's experiences as a young helicopter pilot in the Viet Nam war. His tour of duty ran from 1967 - 68 and included the Tet offensive. His service took him from one of South Viet Nam to the other. Even though told in the first person, the vignettes he recounts are often edge-of-your seat exciting. The writing is very well done. For example, describing an experience that occurred while he was sitting in bar one hot, humid afternoon, he says the solitary fan "only angered the humidity."

I listened to A Pink Mist on audiobook. The narrator did a very nice job. I highly recommend this book or audiobook to any reader. (The book largely avoids the politics of the war. It focuses on the experience of being a young pilot in a war zone.)

kenneth o boyer says

No summery.

I found this book to be interesting and a very good read. I have spent some time in a huey 212. offshore gom and know this is truthful.

good read.

informative

Shelly Mateer says

A fantastic read - I couldn't put this book down!! As a former student of political science/international relations, I can't help thinking that this would make great college course reading. Had this been a book in my university curriculum I would have undoubtedly gotten better grades! This book really puts life into perspective. Any time I feel like whining about petty problems, all I have to do is read parts of this book to see how hard life can really be, as it was for soldiers in the Vietnam War. It reminds me of an expression the father of one of my former friends and co-workers at the CIA used to use when she complained about something trifling or had a fear of something. He would say, "How bad could it be? What are they gonna do - shave your head and send you to Vietnam?" Great book.
