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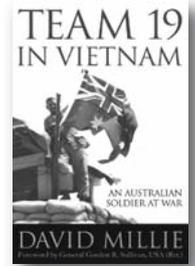
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## **BOOK REVIEWS**

# ***Team 19 in Vietnam: an Australian soldier at war***

by Lieutenant Colonel David Millie, MBE (Retired)

*University Press of Kentucky: Lexington, KY; 2013; 432 pp.; ISBN 9780813143262;  
RRP US\$40.00 (hardcover)*



*Team 19 in Vietnam* is a first-hand account of the then Major David Millie's experiences as a member of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam in South Vietnam in 1968-1969. Millie served as a senior advisor and operations officer with Military Assistance Command Vietnam Team 19 in Quang Tri Province, a crucial tactical site adjacent to the demilitarized zone that was North Vietnam's gateway to the south.

In the foreword, United States General Gordon R. Sullivan (Retired), a former Vietnam War adviser and former United States Army Chief of Staff, notes that: "Australian officers and warrant officers were welcome in advisory teams at every level. Many had experience in Malaya or New Guinea, and all were outstanding professionals with excellent tactical acumen."

*Team 19 in Vietnam* provides a fascinating insight into Millie's experiences and perspectives during his tour of duty which occurred at a difficult time following the 1968 Tet Offensive and when United States Presidents Johnson and Nixon both made it clear that the United States would be withdrawing its troops from South Vietnam.

*Team 19 in Vietnam* is rich in personal experiences and fresh insights and draws on published and unpublished military documents, his personal diary, and the letters he wrote while deployed. Millie introduces readers to the daily routines and describes his interactions with the senior United States advisor, the Territorial Forces and the people of Quang Tri Province.

Millie describes the many personal and professional challenges he faced. The Vietnamese people were being terrorized by the actions of the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army. The provision of security to the people, and counter-insurgency operations and outcomes are well described. The doctrine of 'nation-building' was a primary driver of efforts and Millie presents numerous leadership case studies relating to the members and units of the United States Army, the United States Marines and the

Army of the Republic of Vietnam. For his service in South Vietnam, Millie was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire by Australia; and was awarded a Bronze Star by the United States, and a Cross of Gallantry with Bronze Star by South Vietnam.

Working at the intersection of Vietnamese and Western interests and cultures, Millie also explores the morality, practicality and consequences of nations intervening with force in the affairs of another nation. Looking back, Millie believes that responsibility for the catastrophe inflicted on Vietnamese civilians must be shared by an international community that failed to act effectively in the face of a crisis.

*Team 19 in Vietnam* includes a number of black and white photographs and four clear and useful maps. Appendices provide a list of the many characters mentioned in the book, the abbreviations and terms used, and a chronology of events during his tour. While not an academic work, Millie has included some notes on sources, a detailed bibliography and a comprehensive index.

General Sullivan closes his foreword with this apt sentence: "This memoir resonates with me because it reinforces my strongly held view that soldiers in a democracy find the payoff of their hard – often dangerous – service in knowing that what they do has been done to the best of their ability. They can find fulfilment in that knowledge, no matter what may occur at levels far above their arena of action."

*Team 19 in Vietnam* will appeal to military historians as well as those researching foreign military operations in support of indigenous forces. The fact that Millie's remarkable story has taken over 40 years to be captured and relayed to the public does not diminish its significance. He should be congratulated for his service as well as for adding this book to the body of military history.

**Marcus Fielding**