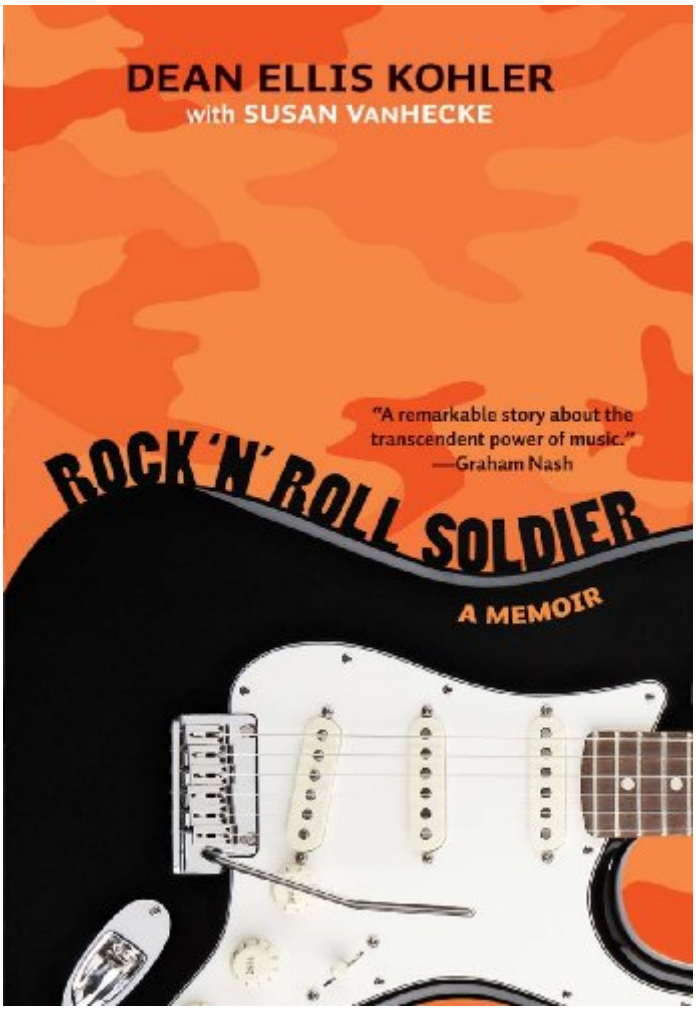
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Rock 'n' Roll Soldier: A Memoir



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Synopsis

"During a time when none of us knew for sure if we would live or die, I came to know the true power of music."Dean Kohler is about to make it bigÃ¢â ¬â •he's finally scored a national record deal! But his dreams are abruptly put on hold by the arrival of his draft notice. Now he's in Qui Nhon, Vietnam, serving as a military policeman. He keeps telling himself he's a musician, not a killer, and that he's lucky he's not fighting on the front lines. When Captain orders him to form a rock band, it's up to Dean to find instruments and players, pronto. Ingenuity and perseverance pay off and soon the band is traveling through treacherous jungle terrain to perform for troops in desperate need of an escapeÃ¢â ¬â •even if it's only for three sets. And for DeanÃ¢â ¬â •who lives with death, violence, and the fear that anyone could be a potential spy (even his Vietnamese girlfriend)Ã¢â ¬â •the band becomes the one thing that gets him through the day. During one of the most controversial wars in recent American history, this incredible true story is about music and camaraderie in the midst of chaos.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Having lived during that time and knowing guys who had been "over there", this account of the author’s experience was uplifting in the sense that music was a healing source for so many as well as for himself. The harrowing experiences were brought home as I read and although these happened a long while ago, (and we thought we were finished with war) they’re still going on. Thank you for a small glimpse into a terrible war with a small bright light for so many. Glad he got home safely.

A very very good one. I recommend this highly!

When one hears the phrase, "Vietnam War", a wide variety of images, phrases and emotions are conjured up. I was too young to fight in that war but not too young to remember the impact the war had on friends as well as society.`Nam impacted our politics, news and entertainment. It became the subject of protests, songs and movies. The pros, cons and impact of that lengthy war is still being felt and discussed today.Rock `N’ Roll Soldier is an engaging tale of a young man, Dean Kohler, who made the quantum leap from Portsmouth, Virginia, to Qui Nohn, Vietnam. His long sought after, and worked for, dream materialized literally on the same day that he received his draft notice, dashing that particular dream.Kohler and Vanhecke weave a captivating story of how circumstances in boot camp led Kohler to an opportunity to purse a different version of his dream in a nightmarish environment. After a cathartic encounter with PFC Goodridge, with some fellow soldiers, Dean formed a band called The Electrical Banana. This band provided a welcome, uplifting distraction for both the band and its uniformed audience, bringing to them live covers of their favorite songs of the day.The book isn’t all about music. It also details young men who bury their natural fears with incredible amounts of bravery. Some icons from the 60’s are mentioned in the book (Nancy Sinatra and Graham Nash, to name two) as are tales of friendships, chain of command, homesickness and girls left behind in two countries. Also told is the process of Kohler’s adjustment to civilian life and fitting back into society. The story provides insight into how our minds can be so conditioned to routine that, when that routine is altered, time is needed to adjust back into the new norm.The book’s forward by Graham Nash is worth the price of the book by itself. Nash closes his remarks by saying, "Through the transcendent power of music, Dean created his own bit of order out of the chaos of the Vietnam War . . . to survive another day."The books final words honors Kohler’s Electrical Banana band mates. In them he poignantly states, " . . . with their help, during a time when none of us knew for sure if we would live or die, I came to know the true power of music - to communicate, heal, connect. Unite."I couldn’t say any better, gentlemen.Mr. Kohler and the

thousands of men and women who served your country in an unpopular war: We can never repay you enough for your sacrifice nor will we ever forget. Thank you so much!PFC Goodridge, thank you and may you continue to rest in peace.Review By Randy PattersonBoomerocity.com

Co-authors Dean Ellis Kohler and Susan VanHecke bring us a memoir of Dean Ellis Kohler's experience in Vietnam, serving as a military policeman. The authors do an excellent job of transporting us immediately to the Vietnam War. We feel instantly connected to this young man, and we identify with his innocence, his integrity and his very real emotions. Dean Ellis Kohler had to leave a record deal behind when he was drafted and sent to Qui Nhon. But music is in Dean's soul. And so even there, in the middle of a war, Dean finds a way back to rock n' roll. We follow along on his journey to create a band, perform and even record an album while serving his country. The power of music allows the soldiers to escape, if just for the length of a song, from the horrors of war. The authors have written an exciting and fast-paced memoir that is layered and dynamic. I found the book inspiring and informative. You can almost hear the guitar playing between the pages. A must-read for students, history buffs and music lovers.

I enjoyed the book by Dean Kohler. I was a peacetime soldier in the 1980's, and a part-time working musician. for the last 30 years. Rock 'n'Roll and the military go hand 'n' hand. His book took me back to when times were easy and music was loud. (maybe it still is)

Very good book, well worth reading even if you're too young to remember much of the Viet Nam war. I only wish it had been longer...maybe a sequel?

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