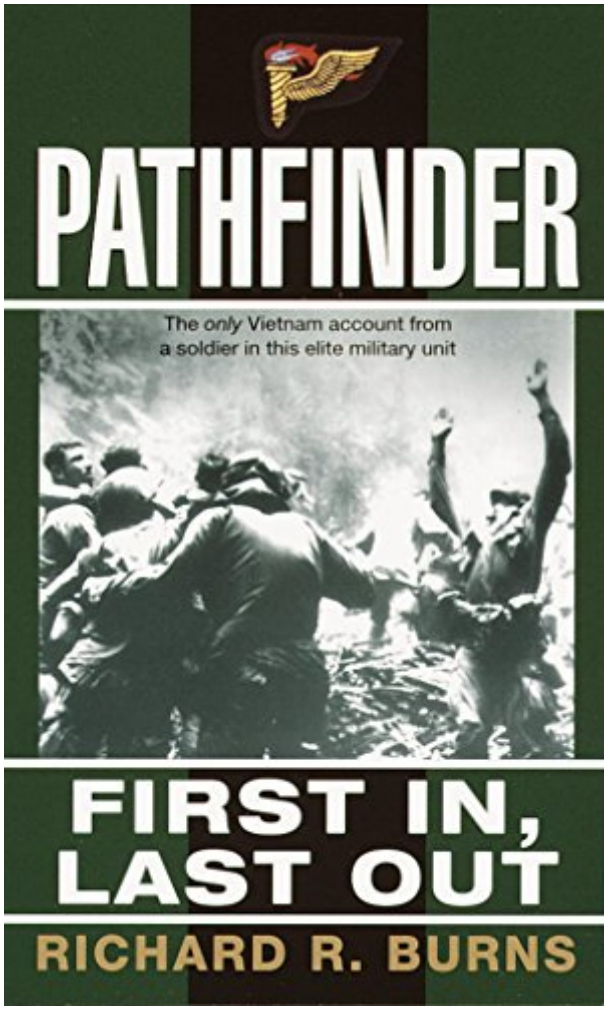
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Pathfinder: First In, Last Out: A Memoir Of Vietnam



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Synopsis

December 1967: Richard Burns had just arrived in Vietnam as part of the fourteen-man 101st Pathfinder Detachment. Within just one month, during a holiday called Tet, the Communists would launch the largest single attack of the war--and he would be right in the thick of it. . . .In Vietnam, Richard Burns operated in live-or-die situations, risking his life so that other men could keep theirs. As a Pathfinder--all too often alone in the middle of a hot LZ--he guided in helicopters disembarking troops, directed medevacs to retrieve the wounded, and organized extractions. As well as parachuting into areas and supervising the clearing of landing zones, Pathfinders acted as air-traffic controllers, keeping call signs, frequencies, and aircraft locations in their heads as they orchestrated takeoffs and landings, often under heavy enemy fire.From Bien Hoa to Song Be to the deadly A Shau Valley, Burns recounts the battles that won him the Silver Star, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and numerous other decorations. This is the first and only book by a Pathfinder in Vietnam . . . or anywhere else.From the Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

I have put off reading this for quite some time. I was in the 101st Airborne Pathfinders, I arrived at Camp Eagle, January 4, 1969 shortly after Richard Burns had left for home. One of the first Pathfinders I met "Pop Top" Tim Alicoate and Torch. It is a very good book and gives very good insight to what soldiers endured over there. I have attached a picture of Torch awaiting to go on a mission. Picture was sent to me from another Pathfinder Martin Clarke "Crash". I also attached a copy of his promotion to SGT E-5 as in the book he was a corporal. Another bit of info Torch came back to the USA and lived a full life chasing rabbits..

I went to Vietnam in 1969 and served as pointman with the 82nd. ABN and the 199th. Infantry Div., and I highly recommend this book. I have read about 75 books on the Vietnam war as I am always interested to read how others served and done their jobs. Richard Burns tells it like it was without a bunch of bs. He’s done a fantastic job telling his story with a writing style that is easy to read and follow. I’m sure his family is very proud of him and I am sorry I never had a chance to meet the man personally. RIP Richard Burns. You have certainly earned it.

Just a well written book, with LOTÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s of insight of the war. Many things surprised me, especially the damage done to US troops during theChristmas cease-fire. What a f...ing waste of live. Westmoreland, Johnson and others should have been tried for war crimes, how they mishandled the war.Burns gives an incredible account of his ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“First in, Last out.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• DidnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t really know much about Pathfiinders until this book. Read a lot of books on Nam, and this one was right up there. Excellent writing and photos. Enjoy!

I usually read a book of this size in 2 to 3 months but, Richie put me right there with him throughout the book in describing his experiences as a Pathfinder in Vietnam with the 101st Airborne. I couldn’t put it down and ended up reading it within one week, which is record time for me.I was with the 82nd Airborne Pathfinder Platoon during 77’ to 78’ and his book really tells what it’s like to be a Pathfinder, during times of war. During peace time we practice for continually for war time operation and I now have an understanding of what it’s like to be a Pathfinder during a war time situation. I personally am very thankful that Richie wrote this book for all us to get a glimpse of the Pathfinder experience in war time.If you ever want to know what a Pathfinder does then this book it a must read for everyone. Also all Pathfinders should get there hands on this book, especially the ones that are in a Pathfinder Unit.I will also be picking up the Kindle addition, as well, so I that can enjoy this book in an electronic format.Who could not have enjoyed Copal (Sargent ?) Torch inclusion.Thanks

Richie we'll miss your writing talent.

Richard R. Burns hit a big home run with "Pathfinder", for me. I found this to be one of the most interesting & enjoyable books I have read, to date, on the personal experience of the Vietnam war. Thanks Mr Burns for a great book.

I'm a huge fan of Vietnam memoirs. Usually very guttural and honest, I lap them up one after the other. Some stand out, others get lost in the mix. This one by Richie Burns falls into the former.Burns recounts his Airborne training for us and his first encounter with a Pathfinder who was jumpmaster during jump-week of Burns' training. Burns was in the door ready to jump but the plane had to go around. As they flew beyond the drop-zone, the jumpmaster points at the trees below and tells Burns "That's where we jump into". So are the Pathfinders.Burns did his Pathfinder training and headed off to Vietnam. Multiple engagements, missions and years later he created this gem of a book. There's no fluff, no "up and at 'em" just honest, straightforward writing that I found very engaging.Life in Vietnam for grunts in general was tough but, as soon as you put yourself in any unit considered elite your life just got tougher. Pathfinders, by nature, are first in, last out. Their job is to supervise the air operation which involves prepping the LZ, guiding in the ships, medevacs, monitoring multiple radio nets and, overall ensuring safety of the ground troops either coming in or going out through the LZ.Summary: This book is golden and contains some of the best narrative I've read about the war. There's no overt cleverness, no BS anywhere to be found, just good, old-fashioned storytelling. Loved it.

Another aspect of the war in Vietnam nam that was quietly aside from the regular army story. Excellent read, a different dimension of being a soldier in VN.

A very excellent account of the pathfinder units. I really knew nothing about these guys; I had heard their name mentioned but didn't know anything about them. Their main job was to clear landing zones and direct helicopters safely into and out of the LZs. A good read about a little known part of the Vietnam War. Mr. Burns relates a tragic story of his rush to leave a fire base with a young lieutenant to aid a downed helicopter that crashed moments after take off from the fire base. Both Burns and the lieutenant forgot to take their weapons into hot enemy territory. Their experience well describes the horror and terror of war. I will never forget that scene as described by Mr. Burns.Richard Burns has passed on as a result of cancer. His service as a soldier and wartime

author are much appreciated. RIP Mr. Burns.

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