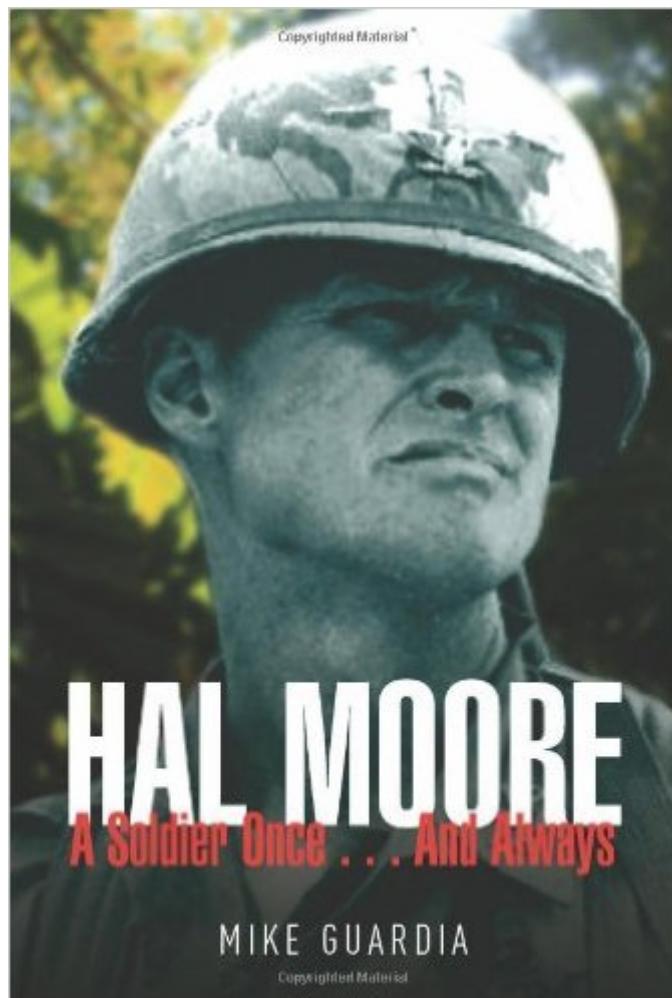


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# Hal Moore: A Soldier Once...and Always



## Synopsis

Finalist 2013 Army Historical Society Distinguished Writing Award. Hal Moore, one of the most admired American combat leaders of the last 50 years, has until now been best known to the public for being portrayed by Mel Gibson in the movie "We Were Soldiers." In this first-ever, fully illustrated biography, we finally learn the full story of one of America's true military heroes. A 1945 graduate of West Point, Moore's first combats occurred during the Korean War, where he fought in the battles of Old Baldy, T-Bone, and Pork Chop Hill. At the beginning of the Vietnam War, Moore commanded the 1st Battalion of the 7th Cavalry in the first full-fledged battle between U.S. and North Vietnamese regulars. Drastically outnumbered and nearly overrun, Moore led from the front, and though losing 79 soldiers, accounted for 1,200 of the enemy before the Communists withdrew. This Battle of Ia Drang pioneered the use of "air mobile infantry"--delivering troops into battle via helicopter--which became the staple of U.S. operations for the remainder of the war. He later wrote of his experiences in the best-selling book, *We Were Soldiers Once...and Young*. Following his tour in Vietnam, he assumed command of the 7th Infantry Division, forward-stationed in South Korea, and in 1971, he took command of the Army Training Center at Fort Ord, California. In this capacity, he oversaw the US Army's transition from a conscript-based to an all-volunteer force. He retired as a Lieutenant General in 1977. At this writing, Hal Moore is 90 years old and living quietly in Auburn, Alabama. He graciously allowed the author interviews and granted full access to his files and collection of letters, documents, and never-before-published photographs. Mike Guardia, currently an officer in the U.S. 1st Armored Division is also author of two highly acclaimed biographies, *American Guerrilla*, about the life of the true founder of Special Forces, Russell Volckmann, and *Shadow Commander*, about the career of Donald Blackburn.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 232 pages

Publisher: Casemate (November 11, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1612002072

ISBN-13: 978-1612002071

Product Dimensions: 9.1 x 6.1 x 1.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars Â See all reviews Â (219 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #655,503 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #61 in Â Books > History > Military >

## Customer Reviews

Since the publication of *We Were Soldiers*, the name of Hal Moore has become imbedded in the history of not only the Vietnam War but also into the time honored history of the US Army. Since this reawakening of what really transpired in Vietnam, we also learn the lessons of military leadership in the actions and words of Lieutenant General Hal Moore (retired.) Hal Moore along with the First Cav Division in the first major battle of the Vietnam War in the Ia Drang Valley has brought forward to students of history a frank and balanced sense of what the war was about. In this book Mike Guardia also goes much deeper into the life and times of what I consider to be the best ground commander of troops in the 20th century regardless of nationality. Guardia's book is direct and to the point. There is no extended analysis or needless hyperbole written within. We learn of Moore's early life and how he developed his religious convictions and sense of right and wrong. The author develops how Moore sought admission into West Point and right there we see a young man who is determined to make something of himself. His development into becoming an officer during his years at the Military Academy is told of his academic struggles and the development of his character so determined to overcome his main enemy at the point, which was the demon of mathematics. What Moore lacked in mathematical skills, he made up in his superior skills in the social sciences of human nature and psychological skills. In short Moore's seeds of superior leadership skills were first honed on the plains of West Point. Nevertheless as Moore said "I graduated at the top of the bottom fifteen percent of my class.

In real life, Hal Moore is every bit the hero that Hollywood made him out to be, and more. In the well-written biography "Hal Moore: A Soldier Once and Always," author Mike Guardia tells how Moore exemplifies the leadership qualities needed in all military leaders both in battle and in peacetime. It is a well-documented study of an exceptional soldier and innovative problem solver. After graduating from West Point as World War II ended, Moore served three years of occupation duty in Japan with the 11th Airborne Division. His baptism in combat came in Korea with battles that included T-Bone, Old Baldy and Pork Chop Hill. During that war, he served a rifle company commander and as a regimental and divisional staff officer, all with the 7th Infantry Division. Nearly twenty years later, he returned to the 7th Division in Korea as its commanding general. An early pioneer in the air mobile concept of warfare, Moore's proved the value of

helicopter-borne troops in Vietnam when he led the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry into the remote La Drang Valley and amid two regiments of North Vietnamese regulars. The bloody three day battle was immortalized in the book and movie *“We Were Soldiers Once and Young.”* • Actor Mel Gibson played the role of Moore, then a lieutenant colonel. With many episodes throughout Moore’s life, the book proves there was no embellishment of the man by the movie. A true warrior/leader, Moore received the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions at La Drang. As Viet Nam wound down, morale and discipline in the U.S. Army hit an all-time low. The author describes how General Moore played a major role in helping the army reinvent itself into an all volunteer organization.

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