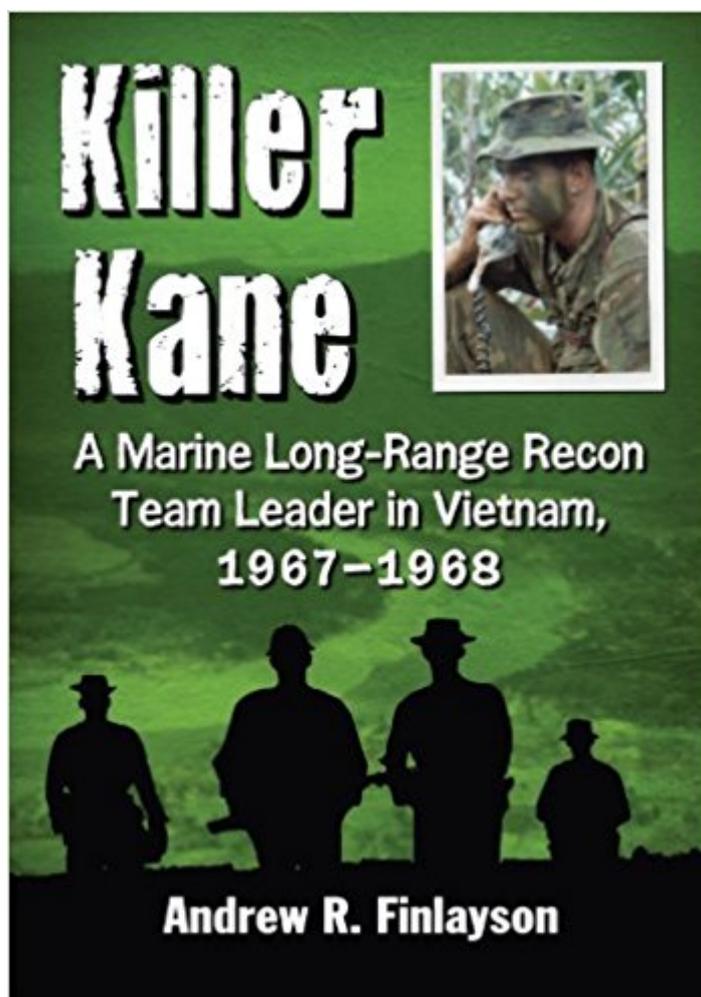


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Killer Kane: A Marine Long-Range Recon Team Leader In Vietnam, 1967-1968



Synopsis

The leader of one of the most successful U. S. Marine long range reconnaissance teams during the Vietnam War, Andrew Finlayson recounts his team's experiences in the year leading up to the Tet Offensive of 1968. Using primary sources, such as Marine Corps unit histories and his own weekly letters home, he presents a highly personal account of the dangerous missions conducted by this team of young Marines as they searched for North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong units in such dangerous locales as Elephant Valley, the Enchanted Forest, Charlie Ridge, Happy Valley and the Que Son Mountains. In numerous close contacts with the enemy, the team (code-name Killer Kane) fights for its survival against desperate odds, narrowly escaping death time and again. The book gives vivid descriptions of the life of recon Marines when they are not on patrol, the beauty of the landscape they traverse, and several of the author's Vietnamese friends. It also explains in detail the preparations for, and the conduct of, a successful long range reconnaissance patrol.

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Customer Reviews

"Killer Kane" is essential reading for the entire range of people interested in learning the truth about the history of the Vietnam War. While it reads like an action thriller--it is--Andy Finlayson's combat

memoir is so much more than a recounting of personal war stories. Having known the author for nearly 40 years, he is the single best example, a near unique blend, of warrior/scholar in my own experience. A world-class intellect, he is likewise a legend in the Marine Corps reconnaissance community, and by his peers considered as a real 'gunfighter.' Finlayson's recapping of the numerous patrols conducted by the intrepid group of young Marines he led was so compelling; it actually made me nervous as I read. While the story and narrative flows exceptionally well, he has likewise woven in many of the critical combat leadership issues and challenges he and others routinely faced. "Killer Kane" is a work that will be of benefit to leaders at every level, but is especially valuable as a primer for company grade officers, SNCOs and NCOs with direct authority over troops in combat-related specialties. For these warriors "Killer Kane" is a work that should be referred to again and again, and widely shared. Perhaps the most important takeaway for why Finlayson's team was so successful in their reconnaissance efforts was the incredible focus they placed on training and preparation. It is amazing for most regular people without military experience to consider the life and death authority given over to young leaders during time of war. Reading this book as an old man I marvel at the maturity exhibited in the author's decision-making processes. I was repeatedly asking myself... "Would I have had the physical or mental courage to do that?"

Buy this book because once you start reading it, you will find it difficult to put down. Andy Finlayson (Colonel, USMC, Ret.) has written an engrossing account of the many long-range reconnaissance patrols he led as a second lieutenant in I-Corps during 1967. Any Marine who served in the Da Nang area nearly 50 years ago will recognize the places where Finlayson's Killer Kane patrols operated deep inside enemy-controlled territory: Antenna Valley, Arizona Territory, Charlie Ridge, Elephant Valley, Happy Valley, and the Yellow Brick Road. This is the story of an exceptionally effective small unit of highly trained Marines who knew their business thoroughly. Unlike a lot of Vietnam War accounts, these Marines knew more than most American servicemen about their North Vietnamese Army (NVA) and Viet Cong (VC) adversaries because they often observed them up close, often had to engage them at close quarters, and learned from every patrol. Their mission, after insertion by CH-46 helicopters miles from friendly bases, was to screen the flanks of larger Marine battalion-sized units operating in Quang Nam province, call in artillery and air strikes on concentrations of NVA and VC formations, and capture intelligence about the enemy. If you want to understand why these Marines succeeded in mission after mission, Killer Kane is a compelling story. It is also an essay about leadership, character, honor, intelligence, endurance, and survival. It belongs on every war college bibliography about Vietnam.

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