

[PDF] Tour Of Duty: John Kerry And The Vietnam War

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NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

TOUR of DUTY

JOHN KERRY

★★ and the ★★

VIETNAM WAR



DOUGLAS BRINKLEY

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Author: Douglas Brinkley

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Description:

Historian 's insightful *Tour of Duty* covers John Kerry's heroic Vietnam service (where he won the Silver and Bronze Stars and three Purple Hearts) and the fervent antiwar campaign it eventually spawned. Born to Boston Brahmin heritage, the son of an American diplomat, John Forbes Kerry was a child of good fortune--an eventual Yale whose personal hero (John Fitzgerald Kennedy) shared his initials. However, Kerry's privileged upbringing instilled in him not a sense of entitlement, but a burning sense of public service. Though equally obsessed and revulsed by the burgeoning Vietnam conflict, Kerry's sense of duty led him to enlist in the Navy (after graduating Yale), and then volunteer for training as captain of a Swift boat (small aluminum vessels that patrolled the coastal waters and narrow, dangerous tributaries of Vietnam's massive Mekong delta). Brinkley's meticulous research relies on Kerry's detailed wartime diaries, logs, and interviews, (published here for the first time) as well as a wealth of accounts of the Navy's first extensive "brown water" riverine campaign since the Civil War. Those harrowing months only deepened Kerry's antipathy to the war, and he

returned to become one of the most articulate leaders of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War. Brinkley's account gives crucial human dimensions to a man whose seeming aloofness has long plagued him. With Americans again dying in a controversial war halfway around the world, one cannot help but wonder if Kerry will yet again be able to pose the haunting question first put to a Congressional panel thirty years ago: "How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?" --*Jerry McCulley* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

From Publishers Weekly Popular historian Brinkley's account of John Kerry's Vietnam experience could easily serve as the first part of a multivolume biography, examining the senator and presidential candidate's early life in rigorous detail. Entering the U.S. Navy soon after graduating from Yale in 1966, Lieutenant (junior grade) Kerry commanded two Swift boat crews on river patrols in Vietnam, earning a Bronze Star, a Silver Star and three Purple Hearts. He kept "voluminous" notes during his service, maintained extensive correspondence with friends and family, and tape-recorded interviews with combat-seasoned comrades. With unrestricted access to this archival material and interviews with Kerry and surviving crewmates, Brinkley (coauthor with Stephen Ambrose of *The Mississippi and the Making of a Nation*) depicts war in riveting detail, down to what music the crew of PCF-94 listened to on patrol. Though clearly centering his attention on Kerry, Brinkley also stresses the navy's under-recognized role in Vietnam while emphasizing the "true battlefield heroism" of American forces. Kerry's combat experiences make for gripping reading, and later sections on his high-profile role in the antiwar movement are equally engrossing, including the Nixon White House's efforts (involving a young Armistead Maupin) to discredit veteran-turned-antiwar-activist Kerry as a "phony." Final chapters fully address Kerry's political failures in the early 1970s while quickly summarizing later successes and how these successes were shaped by his Vietnam experience and ongoing relationships with fellow veterans. Though never intended as a political biography, this book offers perhaps the most insightful examination available of the character of this or any other Democratic candidate. 16 pages of b&w photos not seen by PW.

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Tour of Duty: John Kerry and the Vietnam War. By Douglas Brinkley Morrow. 546 pp. \$25.95 Wednesday, March 10, 2004. Chapter One. Up from Denver. The sun was glaring through the windshield of Richard J. Kerry's single-engine light aircraft as he prepared for takeoff from a runway in northern Virginia on February 27, 1954. Mild, with temperatures in the mid fifties, no clouds in sight, it was a perfect day to fly. During World War II Kerry had served the United States government as a pilot in the Army Air Corps, flying DC-3s and B-29s. Now he was based in Washington, D.C. , serving as an at Kerry had two tours of duty. His first from January 1968 to June of '68. He was home port in Long Beach before that. ...Â And in John Kerry I had combat action sequences, and you had the anti-war movement with him. And the protest of the Dewey Canyon and the Fulbright testimony and giving back the ribbons. I thought that's the story to tell Vietnam. This focuses on John Kerry's time in Vietnam, and his relationship with the war as an anti-war activist and then as a potential and then a real representative. It portrays him as a truly courageous guy, gung ho about getting done the job at hand, but thoughtful about the bigger picture as well, not only politically but in a tactical military sense. There is much detail about his time in 'Nam, much of it a chilling look at the murky line between atrocity and justifiable action.Â Vietnam -Full Circle. Douglas Brinkley's long account of John Kerry's Vietnam tour of duty makes transparent the frustrations and cruelties of an unjustified conflict. Perhaps, only in hindsight can we learn from the mistakes of the past. America is fortunate to have John Kerry serving as Secretary of State!