

Boots On The Ground; America's War in Vietnam

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“Boots on The Ground” is a nonfiction story describing the historical event of the Vietnam War. The book is laid out in a way that ensures it is continuously engaging and evolving as time goes on. It switches between points of view constantly, every few pages, going between many different stories all belonging to different people. An example of the range of viewpoints of the war include everything as simple as the soldiers involved, to the Presidents themselves, and even the South Vietnamese refugees caught in the crossfire of the war between the Communists of the North and the Democrats of the South with the United States.

The book is especially good at making you feel as if you're in the position of the person you are reading about, which is very impressive as these narratives are created from interviews, and are not historical fiction accounts of the war. This allows the reader to understand the true purpose for the conflict and why people felt the ways they did (like why Johnson was determined to win and the protesters determined to end it). However, an innate downside that comes with this style of narration is it can be difficult at times to pick up another person's story and become drawn into it quickly as the segments are not that long. By this I mean that you can be getting very interested in one story yet it quickly switches to another one.

Returning to the positives of the book, there are elements such as language and detail that allow the reader to understand to an even further extent the true feelings and emotions felt by those directly involved with the war and those indirectly involved with the war. Examples of this includes the derogatory names used for the Vietnamese and detail of things like injuries.

This book is definitely ideal for older readers (12 and up) due to the graphic detail of injuries and language I previously discussed, even though they are positives they make the book less friendly to immature readers. As a gift, this may not be a great book, as the engagement largely relies on the reader's interest in the Vietnam War to begin with.

Recommended Titles

“The Guns of August”- Barbara W. Tuchman

“The Art of War”- Sun Tzu

“Night”- Elie Wiesel