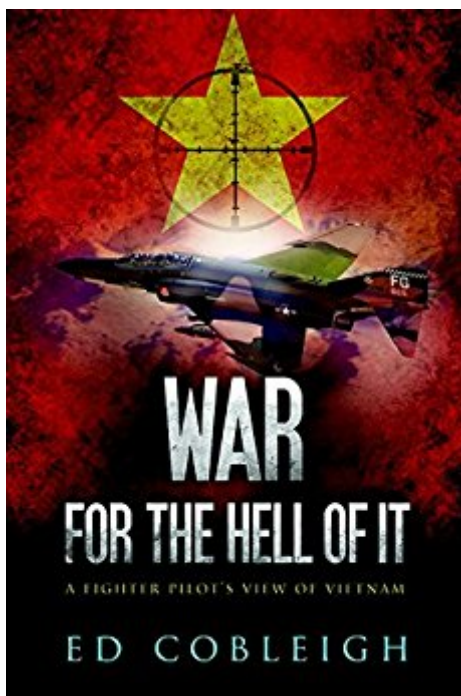


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War For The Hell Of It: A Fighter Pilot's View Of Vietnam



Synopsis

Ed, "Fast Eddie," Cobleigh served two tours of duty during the Vietnam air war, logging 375 combat sorties in the F-4 Phantom fighter/bomber. In *War for the Hell of It*, Cobleigh shares his perspectives in a deeply personal account of a fighter pilot's life, one filled with moral ambiguity and military absurdities offset by the undeniable thrill of flying a fighter aircraft. With well-crafted prose that puts you into the Phantom's cockpit, Cobleigh vividly recounts the unexplainable loss of his wingman, the useless missions he flew, the need to trust his reflexes, eyesight, and aggressiveness, and his survival instincts in the heat of combat. He discusses the deaths of his squadron mates and the contradictions of a dirty, semi-secret war fought from beautiful, exotic Thailand. This is an unprecedented look into the state of mind of a pilot as he experiences everything from the carnage of a crash to the joy of flying through a star-studded night sky, from the illogical political agendas of Washington to his own dangerous addiction to risk. Cobleigh gives a stirring and emotional description of one man's journey into airborne hell and back, recounting the pleasures and the pain, the wins and the losses, and ultimately, the return.

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Customer Reviews

Fully enjoyed Mr. Cobleigh's insight and stretching those thoughts out. He made it feel as though we just finished Vietnam. I was surprised that the copyright was just last year! Coming from a family with two Navy Pilot's... funny, quite funny at times! Loved the history of the laser-guided bombing. Never would have thought that started in the mid 60's. Thank you for your service... and, the good read the Older Rob

I don't like to write long reviews, but I have to say that Ed Cobleigh is a hell of a writer. The way he tells it, he was also a hell of a fighter pilot in his time. I was against the Viet Nam war and avoided the draft. To this day I have a big problem with people who easily accept war and killing, which apparently he was able to adjust to easily enough at the time. But, it's not that simple and I am certainly not the one to say that my values should prevail over others (although in this case I continue to believe that I was right). But, he was certainly a brave man, a Patriot in his own mind, and an excellent writer who will give you a good feeling both for what it was like to be in that war, and for what it's like to engage in combat from the cockpit of a fighter plane that is the epitome of lethality, both for "the enemy" and for the pilot caught within its confines. I'd buy it again and may even read it again someday.

This is one of the most fascinating and compelling works on the Vietnam War that I have ever read. It goes far beyond the standard prose of a fighter pilot's normal recollection of his physical conduct during the war by providing insights into his private thoughts and how this affected his flying and relationships. For me, it's provided reinforcement of the impact of the horrible consequences of the thoughtlessly written "Rules of Engagement". As a junior grade Air Force officer and pilot during the Vietnam era, I always felt at that time that our hands were tied by this document which made that war unwinnable. Of course back then active duty people could not really express this to the powers that be. This book verbalized many of my own thoughts and concerns and let me know that in spite of all the bureaucratic roadblocks and career ending challenges, one can still retain his personal dedication and commitment to a cause.

As a tactical controller, my job was to work with these guys when the situation required it...most of the time they didn't need much help...but I still monitored missions...imagining what it must have been like to be up there. This book takes me back to those days and the jumping back and forth between mission focus and the reality of what it was all about when things went south. As they did every day. Then I got to help on occasion. As a private pilot - although at 120 rather than 550 knots -

I can doubly appreciate what time in the sky for these guys must have been like. This book fills in the gaps. It is about people who didn't create the situation but who went out and did the heavy lifting on a regular basis...and who were in a position to appreciate one another's abilities and contributions while still shaking their heads at the weirdness of a job description that pretty much read: "Don't lose...and we may get back to you about the winning part some other time."

Mr. Cobleigh provides a riveting account of his tours as a F4 Phantom pilot in support of the Vietnam War. I spent time in Thailand during the same timeframe---his descriptions of the country, bases and people are spot on. His writing is very engaging--he is able to put his thought processes and memories into words such that you feel that you are there with him as he breaks out above 50,000' or strafing down for a low-level bomb run. He aptly describes the frustration of so many deployed airmen and soldiers that were put in harms way but were so limited in how they could fight, protect themselves and win the war. If you are interested in fighter aircraft and pilots, this is the book for you. The Phantom was one of the last fighter jets that was totally flown by the pilots, not computers--an amazing bird with amazing and courageous drivers!

I was really impressed by this autobiography. The author really takes you into his head as he experiences the Vietnam War from an F-4 cockpit. He flew out of Thailand with the Wolfpack and often flew into Laos and the Nam. There is plenty of flying details but it's not just a "there I was" tale. He really recaptures the times.

Cobleigh has done a superb job of capturing the war in Southeast Asia and the nonsensical manner in which it was fought. The book moves smoothly through each different tale he tells. Having flown out of a Thai base I can agree observations are 100% correct in my mind.

At the juncture of the love of flight and flight during Vietnam comes many soul searching questions. The author does a good job of answering most of those questions. Many aviators lived a similar story, and most would find a familiarity with the book that helps them understand their own story, all these years later.

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