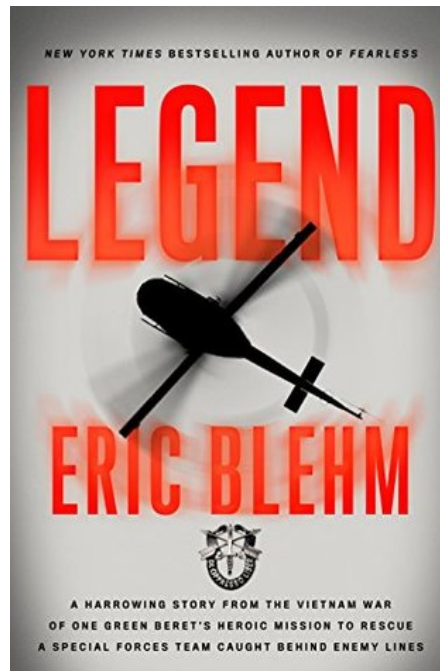




Legend: A Harrowing Story from the Vietnam War of One Green Beret's Heroic Mission to Rescue a Special Forces Team Caught Behind Enemy Lines

Eric Blehm

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The unforgettable account and courageous actions of the U.S. Army's 240th Assault Helicopter Company and Green Beret Staff Sergeant Roy Benavidez, who risked everything to rescue a Special Forces team trapped behind enemy lines.

In *Legend*, acclaimed bestselling author Eric Blehm takes as his canvas the Vietnam War, as seen through a single mission that occurred on May 2, 1968. A twelve-man Special Forces team had been covertly inserted into a small clearing in the jungles of neutral Cambodia—where U.S. forces were forbidden to operate. Their objective, just miles over the Vietnam border, was to collect evidence that proved the North Vietnamese Army was using the Cambodian sanctuary as a major conduit for supplying troops and materiel to the south via the Ho Chi Minh Trail. What the team didn't know was that they had infiltrated a section of jungle that concealed a major enemy base. Soon they found themselves surrounded by hundreds of NVA, under attack, low on ammunition, stacking the bodies of the dead as cover in a desperate attempt to survive the onslaught.

When Special Forces Staff Sergeant Roy Benavidez heard the distress call, he jumped aboard the next helicopter bound for the combat zone without hesitation. Orphaned at the age of seven, Benavidez had picked cotton alongside his family as a child and dropped out of school as a teen before joining the Army. Although he was grievously wounded during his first tour of duty in Vietnam and told he would never walk again, Benavidez fought his way back—ultimately earning his green beret.

What followed would become legend in the Special Operations community. Flown into the foray of battle by the courageous pilots and crew of the 240th Assault Helicopter Company, Benavidez jumped from the hovering aircraft, and ran nearly 100 yards through withering enemy fire. Despite being immediately and severely wounded, Benavidez reached the perimeter of the decimated team, provided medical care, and proceeded to organize an extraordinary defense and rescue. During the hours-long battle, he was bayoneted, shot, and hit by grenade shrapnel more than thirty times, yet he refused to abandon his efforts until every survivor was out of harm's way.

Written with extensive access to family members, surviving members of the 240th Assault Helicopter Company, on-the-ground eye-witness accounts never before published, as well as recently discovered archival, and declassified military records, Blehm has created a riveting narrative both of Roy Benavidez's life and career, and of the inspiring, almost unbelievable events that defined the brotherhood of the air and ground warriors in an unpopular war halfway around the world. *Legend* recounts the courage and commitment of those who fought in Vietnam in service of their country, and the story of one of the many unsung heroes of the war, whose actions would be scrutinized for more than a decade in a battle for a long overdue, and what many believe was an unjustly denied, Medal of Honor.

The case was reopened thirteen years later, in 1980, when a long lost—and believed dead—Green Beret eyewitness whom Benavidez had rescued that day, came forth and wrote a statement that revealed, once and for all, what happened on that fateful day in May of 1968.

From the Hardcover edition.

Legend: A Harrowing Story from the Vietnam War of One Green Beret's Heroic Mission to Rescue a Special Forces Team Caught Behind Enemy Lines Details

Date : Published April 28th 2015 by Crown (first published April 2015)

ISBN :

Author : Eric Blehm

Format : Kindle Edition 304 pages

Genre : History, Nonfiction, War, Military Fiction, Biography

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From Reader Review Legend: A Harrowing Story from the Vietnam War of One Green Beret's Heroic Mission to Rescue a Special Forces Team Caught Behind Enemy Lines for online ebook

Charlie - A Reading Machine says

This is the incredible and heroic story of Roy Benevidez and ultimately the service he and his fellow soldiers, gave to their country during the Vietnam War. During an engagement on the wrong side of the Cambodian border Roy volunteers, on instinct, to go into a no win situation and do what ever he can. "If someone needs help, you help them", was something his Uncle taught him and that he always followed, and in this case it results in some of the most courageous and selfless actions one could ever hope/fear to read about on the battlefield.

We learn about his harsh upbringing. Losing his father, then being abandoned by a step father after his mother also passed resulted in his Uncle taking him and his brother in. Working in the fields and contributing where he could he learnt what it was to be proud of his family name and have something to live up to. It is a really interesting discovery of Roy's character and at no time did I find myself thinking "Come on get to the action" as I sometimes do with military non fiction like this.

One thing that struck me when looking at the photos was how incredibly young they all are. These kids being given the awesome responsibility of flying helicopters in and out of war zones, killing people just like themselves, it just blows the mind what brave and promising young men these were and what a waste it was to lose them so cheaply.

It is very well written and I give kudos to Blehm for pacing and arranging things, and bring the characters to life in such a manner that they don't all blend into one band of brothers.

Legend will leave you breathless and thankful for the sacrifice of these incredible human beings.

This book was provided to me by Blogging for Books in exchange for an honest review

Dave says

Author Eric Blehm's specialty seems to be writing about extraordinary men thrust into harrowing battle situations and performing almost unbelievable feats of heroism. And he writes these gripping stories extraordinarily well and in exacting detail. If you enjoy reading about how men perform in the confusion, noise, and life or death of combat, I highly recommend this book. This is the second of Blehm's books I have read, having devoured 'Fearless' a couple of years ago and enjoying that one as well. I received an advance copy of 'Legend' through the Goodreads giveaway lottery, and am very grateful I did. Without spoiling the story, this is about Green Beret Staff Sergeant Roy Benavides's heroism deep in the jungles of SE Asia on May 2, 1968 during the height of the Viet Nam War. He earned a well deserved Medal of Honor for his crucial roll in rescuing eight special forces soldiers from almost certain death as they were surrounded by the enemy. The detail and vividness of the story are incredible and keep the reader on the edge of his seat. Blehm also manages to convey the sad facts of how politics, pride, and downright arrogance sometimes placed American troops in needless peril in an ill conceived war. As the author notes, the American soldier DID NOT loose the war in Viet Nam - he was not permitted to win it by politicians and others. Given that fact, its a dirty shame so many good young men were killed and injured in this conflict,

when they were doing their patriotic duty and soldiering the best they knew how.

Dennis says

Very Good story

Can't get much better than a true story of a Congressional Medal of Honor winner. It is a great piece of writing.

Cropredy says

OK -- if there was ever a person who deserved the Congressional Medal of Honor, it would be Roy Benavides. What makes this story so compelling is that it unfolds over several hours, involves dozens of soldiers on both the ground and in helicopters and as such, the reader is drawn into turning the page to see what happens and who survives and who does not. The maps are superb.

Once the action starts in Cambodia ca. 1968, the pace does not let up. I stayed up past my bed time. The author does a good job telling the story from the point of view of the soldiers on the ground who were under an intense NVA assault, long before Benavides arrives on the scene. Kudos to the author for getting all of the eyewitness accounts and digging through the after action reports.

How could the book have been better?

1. The author should have included a Notes section to back up the quotes and scene descriptions. There was no bibliography. The absence of both is surprising and can cause one to question certain bits.
2. No effort was made (or mentioned) to find any NVA participants and get their side of the story
3. There was no analysis done at all as to whether the specific mission was worth doing, whether the whole SOG program was worth the cost, or what lessons were learned and applied. We get a story - no more, no less about one day in Cambodia, just across the South Vietnamese border.

One thing I found surprising was how straight-up the book was about the US Army individuals and systems that day. Everyone knew their job, did their job, were extremely brave, and exhibited high levels of professionalism. Exactly how one would expect a well-trained military force to be. This book does not in any way present the well-known US Army dysfunction in Vietnam. There are no ticket punchers, no drug abuse, no fragging. The ARVN soldiers who were part of the mission are selfless and skilled.

I have no reason to doubt the story - and the soldiers were Green Berets, not draftees. Readers wanting a richer depiction of the war in Vietnam should consider "We Were Soldiers, Once and Young" (by Harold Moore; non-fiction about a day's battle in the Ia Drang Valley; "Matterhorn" by Karl Malantes (fiction) and "13th Valley" (fiction) by John Del Vecchio. And, for a truly depressing story of the US military high command - "The Generals" by Thomas Ricks.

Phil says

Insightful, accurate and should be convicting to some of the politicians and military leaders during that time. In this story Blehm puts his finger on why the Viet Nam Conflict was all wrong from the getgo.

Military leader's egos, political agendas, and failed reasoning all paid for by the blood of the common soldier in VN. The team of soldiers in the historical fact never had a chance, to begin with. By sheer love and devotion to one another and the mindset to never give up the fight, some returned to tell of the mission.

Roy Benavidez was a hero to himself, his family and most importantly to the people he saved. More people should read this story in order to understand why military occupation doesn't work - Not in Viet Nam, not Iraq, not in Afghanistan and not anywhere. We should not be the police of the world.

This is a well written and well-documented book.

Seth says

In 1945, Roy Benavidez witnessed the news reports that declared the Second World War had ended in an Allied victory. Roy was just a young boy at the time and this was where his story began. Legend by Eric Blehm is a military nonfiction genre. The storyline follows Roy Benavidez from his early life, to his military career, that lead him to earning the Medal of Honor.

Roy came from a well known Hispanic family in the Lindenau area of Texas. At a very young age he enjoyed going to see films of American paratroopers parachuting out of planes, leading to his later decision to serve his country. As time went on the conflict in Vietnam became increasingly heated and Roy wanted a shot at a combat role. He requested to undergo training for the Green Berets, the Army's special operations group, receiving the green beret from John F. Kennedy himself. He spent many years in Vietnam training the South Vietnamese and fighting the Vietcong insurgency. In 1968, a twelve man team was sent on a mission which led to them being surrounded by nearly a thousand North Vietnamese soldiers. Roy heard the call for help and jumped into the nearest helicopter heading to the location. While in mid air and on the way Roy realized he was only armed with a knife and medical supplies. Throughout the fight, Roy had taken on many wounds and engaged the enemy in hand to hand combat while rescuing fellow soldiers. With all the injuries he had sustained he was evacuated by helicopter and was presumed to have died. As the doctors examined him and were putting him into a bodybag there was a twist to the story.

I rate Legend by Eric Blehm five out of five stars because of the story and how well it was written. It described how Roy overcame racism in the South and worked hard in his life to better himself, his family, and his soldiers. I feel Blehm really conveyed how resilient and brave a soldier can be in a fight until the point they can't go on.

Kate August says

"LEGEND," the story of Green Beret Staff Sergeant Roy Benavidez, is a story that needed to be told. Roy

Benavidez is an American Hero, who we should honor for his selfless service, and sacrifice to this country. None of my review reflects on this inspiring, and courageous man, who I was honored to read about. "LEGEND," never gets it feet underneath it. The book is bogged down in minutiae instead of story, and it lays flat on the page, never making a connection to the reader. Whereas "FEARLESS," I could not put down, "LEGEND," was a struggle to get through. I was a teenager during Vietnam, so I was familiar with a lot of the material. The story itself was sterile, and I could not connect or get a sense of these people; I never found its heart. I thought the book felt very textbook. It felt like someone who spent a lot of time on researching details wrote it. I have read 'FEARLESS,' so many times, and given away so many copies of the book, I have lost count. "FEARLESS," had a heart besides Adam's story, and you felt it the whole way through. Eric Blehm is a terrific writer and storyteller, but unfortunately for "LEGEND," all the pieces did not fall into place for this one.

Cindy says

"If someone needs help, you help them." This life motto motivated an unarmed Sgt. Roy Benavidez to hop into a refueled and rearmed helicopter and jump into a seemingly hopeless firefight. With only his knife and a medic's bag, he literally did jump from the helicopter to assist and encourage the surviving members of a 12-man insertion team working covertly on the wrong side of the Vietnam-Cambodia border. The rest of the story must be read in Eric Blehm's well-researched and respectfully written book. Though his fabulous work about Adam Brown, "Fearless", will always remain my favorite of his writings, "Legend" did not disappoint, and I am once again greatly buoyed by the courage, loyalty, and honor of such humble soldiers.

Vern says

Outstanding. Although a Vietnam veteran and an avid reader of military history, I have shied away from books about Vietnam until somewhat recently. But it is reading about the personal battles, many of which took place after the return home, I feel I can finally admit publicly that I am proud of my military service and proud of my service in Vietnam. For many years that was not possible.

This is true story about one battle of one courageous Green Baret sergeant that ran to the guns when he didn't have to, and his actions that day are truly the thing of legends. The most important thing you will get out of this book, if you are not a veteran yourself, is that these guys, and now days to a greater degree women, don't do these things to bring glory to themselves or to their county. They do it for because of their love and respect for their fellow troopies. As veteran reading this it will also bring home how often the troopies were ordered to do something really stupid by a dumb-as-dirt officer. Something most of us already knew.

P.e. lolo says

This story is about Staff Sgt. Roy Benavidez a Green Beret who risked his own life to rescue another team that was pinned down in Cambodia. This was time during the Vietnam War that our leaders wanted to stop the supplies that were coming in from Cambodia, during the Johnson administration. Lack of communication was just one of the problems that day. This book begins with his early life losing both parents and being taken in by and Aunt and Uncle, along with their grandfather. The grandfather would pass along stories and

it is because of these stories and that you help your fellow man that you are lead up to the day and the battle that is taking place. Roy is on his way to breakfast when one of the helicopters is coming in for fuel and ammo. He over hears the crew talking and knowing that a team went out earlier he asks about one of his friends and is told about what is taking place, he immediately grabs his medic kit and hops into the helicopter. When he gets to the area he can barely see two of the men but he can see all of the rounds being fired, he asks the crew to drop him off which was about 75 yards from where this giant ant hill was and where a few were held up. He ran across zig sagging but still took a round to the leg. He made to the hill with medical supplies and more ammo which they were running out of. As the battle grew more the spotter called in for an all-out code signaling that a troop was about to be overrun. Though they were in Cambodia within 5- 10 minutes he had multiple jets dropping bombs, napalm, firing there cannons and yet the enemy still were coming in mass amounts. Roy had got the other men together plus a member of a down helicopter crew, and they were putting up a last stand or so they thought. One of the helicopters only took half the fuel and added extra ammo and rockets and by losing their two door gunners two Warrant officers step up and they took off with a crew of entirely officers, unheard of. When they arrived they knew they had one last attempt at a rescue because of darkness, when they went in Roy and another man got all of the men in plus Roy went back to get more and to double check, he was wounded multiple times and collapse on the floor of the helicopter. Because when they went in they were dressed liked the enemy they had actually put Roy in a body bag thinking he was the enemy and dead, until the Sgt. Major told them to get him out and they felt a faint pulse, he was rushed to a hospital. The survivors were all sent to different hospitals and had thought that no one made it out. It was not until a story made it to the newspaper and one of the survivors wrote the Army that people were realizing what other people already knew that Roy was a Hero and should be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. It would be thirteen years later but it did happen. I of course am leaving out a lot from this book but this is a great read for everyone and I do want to mention the 240th Assault helicopter Company who provided support and lost three helicopters and crew members that day in rescue attempts and providing support for them. Once again this goes to show you the brave men from all of the wars and these men from Vietnam are finally getting their stories told. What a legacy for the Green Berets as well, and his family. A great book. I got this book from net galley.

Lenny Grosso says

Big fan of Eric Blehm. Great book!

Patrick Belair says

I received this book as a Goodreads First reads give away,I was intrigued by the story of Sergeant Roy Benavidez.Roy cane from humble beginnings and wanted to be a soldier,After reaching his goal he was quick tempered as he was as a adolescent,Got in to some trouble and survived it,He took as his personal motto the U.S.M.A.Motto Duty,Honor,Country!

He survived Airborne training and gained the coveted Green Beret.After being severely wounded on his first tour in Vietnam he eventually returned to Vietnam and passed into legend.Roy's true bravery and selfless courage are the standards Special forces known for,weather Ranger, Seal,Marine,SaS and countless others around the globe.I won't tell more of the story read it your self you won't regret it !!

Faith says

History we need to know, told in an utterly riveting way.
That's how I'd describe "Legend."

If you read James Bradley's "Flags of our Fathers" and "Flyboys" for World War II, then you should read "Legend" for the Vietnam War... and Karl Marlantes novel "Matterhorn" also.

This book focuses on Special Forces staff sergeant Roy Benavidez, who willingly placed himself in grave danger on behalf of his fellow soldiers, and who saved multiple lives while sustaining terrible injuries. Ultimately, he was recognized with the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Eric Blehm mined never-before-released documents and made use of extensive personal testimonies to create as full a picture as possible of the May 2, 1968 Special Forces mission and all what led up to it. As an author, he puts the facts together coherently, but he also tells compelling personal stories.

We get to read excerpts of letters and transcripts of audio tapes sent home by these these soldiers to their families. We see their character, their fortitude, their fidelity. We see young men (ordinary young men- who never expected to be called heroes) who knew what it was like to stare death in the face daily, to eat and drink war, and who did what was necessary to protect their brothers in arms. They made the hard choices. They spent themselves in the name of serving their country. We see "greater love has no man than this- to lay down his life for his friends" in all its original rawness.

I'd put this book on a required-reading for high school students.
Now I'm off to wrap and mail my copy down to a college age cousin who's minoring in Military History.

I thank Crown Publishers for providing me with a review copy through Blogging for Books.

Shawn says

This was a great nonfiction book; why'd I only give it three stars?

Well, you have to be in the mood to read nonfiction. And even though this is a true story, as told by one person, a combination of their research, that is talking to other people combined with government documents to make sure there really was such a person, etc. It is the same story you have read before, about any person who is an insanely brave soldier. But after reading Wikipedia, I just upgraded it to 4 stars.

I pray to holy Jesus that Donald Trump reads this book! In President Reagan's speech giving Benavidez the Congressional Medal of Honor, Reagan said (and he WOULD know): if you read this in a movie script, you would not believe it.

Dear Mr. Trump:

Read this book, about a family of poor, stinking Mexicans you want to build a wall to keep out, who work harder than ANY American is able to do, from birth until death! (Sorry, I am very scared that that dimwit, racist, lying, power-hungry, 1% richest American Billionaire pr*ck Trump is going to be president, and my family will have to leave America, ruined, forever.

Just read the Wiki article instead of the book, if you want to save time. I DO like the book gives time to how difficult it is to work 12 hour days picking crops, for Mexican families, in America. And I like the illustration of what keeps every human being strong: in this case, when your parents die and you are young, and your relatives, strangers, take you in, and they teach you: we help EACH OTHER to live. You work, and I work, all of us work, even our children, and then we can have enough money to eat! Maybe someday your little brothers or sisters can go to school! And they won't have to work from before dawn until dusk, so work hard, gavachos! And when he was in school before dropping out at 15, when someone called Benavidez a stinking spic, like all us good Americans do, he found that his long hours of physical labor allowed him to

beat the holy FUCK out of them, every time. Yes, I like that. Haters call him a name, and bleed for it, bitches.

So when he went to his team, overrun in the jungle in 1968 in Cambodia where they weren't allowed to be, after he was shot, and grenade shrapnel left him a bloody mess and another soldier attacked him with a bayonet, he fought hand to hand combat and killed the soldier while carrying another man on his back. You stab Benavidez with a bayonet, I guarantee you, he'll shove it up your ass, and kill every other person he meets on that battlefield. He did it; that's documented. Dude was shot like 37 times and zipped into a bodybag and spit on the guy zipping up the bag, because he couldn't move any other part of his bullet riddled body. That's what immigrants to America do, after you treat them like dogs for generations and then give them the great honor of joining the U.S. military to fight for the country that treats them however we choose to treat them.

Please, make a vow, dear readers! Please do not vote for Donald Trump if he does not give the American people a book report of Legend, before the election. Is that asking too much?

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roy_Benavidez

Anna says

<http://thebookatlas.blogspot.nl/2015/...>

Legend, an incredible story about war and the courage of Roy Benavidez. [4.5/5 stars]

'The antidote for fifty enemies is one friend - Aristotle'

When Benavidez thinks he has nowhere to go, his parents both gone, he goes to live with the Benavidez-family. His uncle teaches him (and the reader) some very valuable life-lessons, such as: 'If someone needs help, you help them.' or 'No matter what you do, always try to be the very best.' Roy Benavidez quits school and decides to join the army, like he always wanted. Every time he had to work in the cotton fields, he pretends to be a soldier. We read about the first adventures and struggles as he tries to achieve his dream; being a paratrooper. Although he has some major setbacks, he eventually becomes a Green Beret-

Fighting soldiers from the sky Fearless men who jump and die Men who mean just what they say The brave men of the Green Beret

Next, we are reading about May 2, 1968. This is probably the most important part of the story as Benavidez voluntarily joins a bloodbath in Cambodia. He intends to save the team who was already there for a couple hours, because the previous extraction failed and helicopters had crashed. Can he save the remaining men of the team? Or will he die on the battlefield too?

The story switches between the story about Benavidez and information about the war in Vietnam. I was hooked from the first chapter and really enjoyed learning more about the Vietnam war. As a Dutch girl, I know almost everything there is to know about World War II, but the other wars aren't covered as much in our History lessons, so I was very curious to learn more about this. Although it sometimes felt like I was reading either a newspaper article or a History book we use at school, it was perfectly fine and it was in balance: not too much of the one and not too much of the other. This book is nothing like I read before. I found myself absorbed in the story and read it in two sittings. I was glad to find out that war wasn't romanticized as much as I expected it to be, as some other war-themed books do. I think it's good to read a book like this from time to time, because it makes you think about all the soldiers out there, all the wars that are being fought this very moment. I would for sure recommend it to anyone and I'm rating it 4.5 stars.

This book was provided to me by Blogging for Books in exchange for an honest review.
