



## Hard Core

*Bud Yost, Major U.S. Army (Retired)*

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## **Hard Core** Bud Yost, Major U.S. Army (Retired)

Death always stalked close to the "Hard Core" squad in the jungles of Vietnam, but now they faced another threat. These paratroopers of C Company of the 502nd Airborne Infantry had already endured relentless, fierce close combat with Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army, oftentimes facing overwhelming odds. Besides fighting a formidable enemy, they also had to battle the harsh elements of the jungle: excessive heat; insects; snakes and leeches; jungle foliage and thorns ripping into their skin, causing festering infections; jungle rot; constant dysentery; malaria; and other maladies; months of being soaked from monsoon rains and filth and bone-wearying fatigue. On March 5, 1967, near Song Mau, the squad was on a reconnaissance patrol when they encountered a new and unexpected enemy, a large Bengal tiger. The tiger was stalking and about to pounce on the point man, PFC Wendell Rose, when SSG Bud Yost and SP4 Jim Buppert killed it. This encounter was just another saga added to the exploits of the "Hard Core" squad.

From the jump towers at Fort Benning, Georgia, and rigorous training at stateside Army posts to combat in Vietnam, this is the poignant story of a group of tough, battle-hardened soldiers and their twenty-two-year-old squad leader as told by one who experienced the hardships and witnessed their extraordinary feats of bravery and survival. Unlike so many other chronicles about the early years of the Vietnam conflict, this story contains many little-known facts. Much of the equipment, training, tactics, leadership, and even the rations during the initial years of the conflict were from World War II. Living off the land; eating snakes, water buffalo, and captured Vietnamese rice; and remaining in the jungle for months without relief was the norm.

This is must-read book for military history buffs or anyone interested in an authentic account of the travails of paratroopers during the early years of the Vietnam War.

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