



# **A Different Face of War: Memories of a Medical Service Corps Officer in Vietnam (North Texas Military Biography and Memoir Series)**

*James G Van Straten*

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*A Different Face of War* is a riveting account of one American officer in the Medical Service Corps during the early years of the Vietnam War.

Assigned as the senior medical advisor to the Army of the Republic of Vietnam in I Corps, an area close to the DMZ, James G. Van Straten traveled extensively and interacted with military officers and non-commissioned officers, peasant-class farmers, Buddhist *bonzes*, shopkeepers, scribes, physicians, nurses, the mentally ill, and even political operatives. He sent his wife daily letters from July 1966 through June 1967, describing in impressive detail his experiences, and those letters became the primary source for his memoir.

The author describes with great clarity and poignancy the anguish among the survivors when an American cargo plane in bad weather lands short of the Da Nang Air Base runway on Christmas Eve and crashes into a Vietnamese coastal village, killing more than 100 people and destroying their village; the heart-wrenching pleadings of a teenage girl that her shrapnel-ravaged leg not be amputated; and the anger of an American helicopter pilot who made repeated trips into a hot landing zone to evacuate the wounded, only to have the Vietnamese insist that the dead be given a higher priority.

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