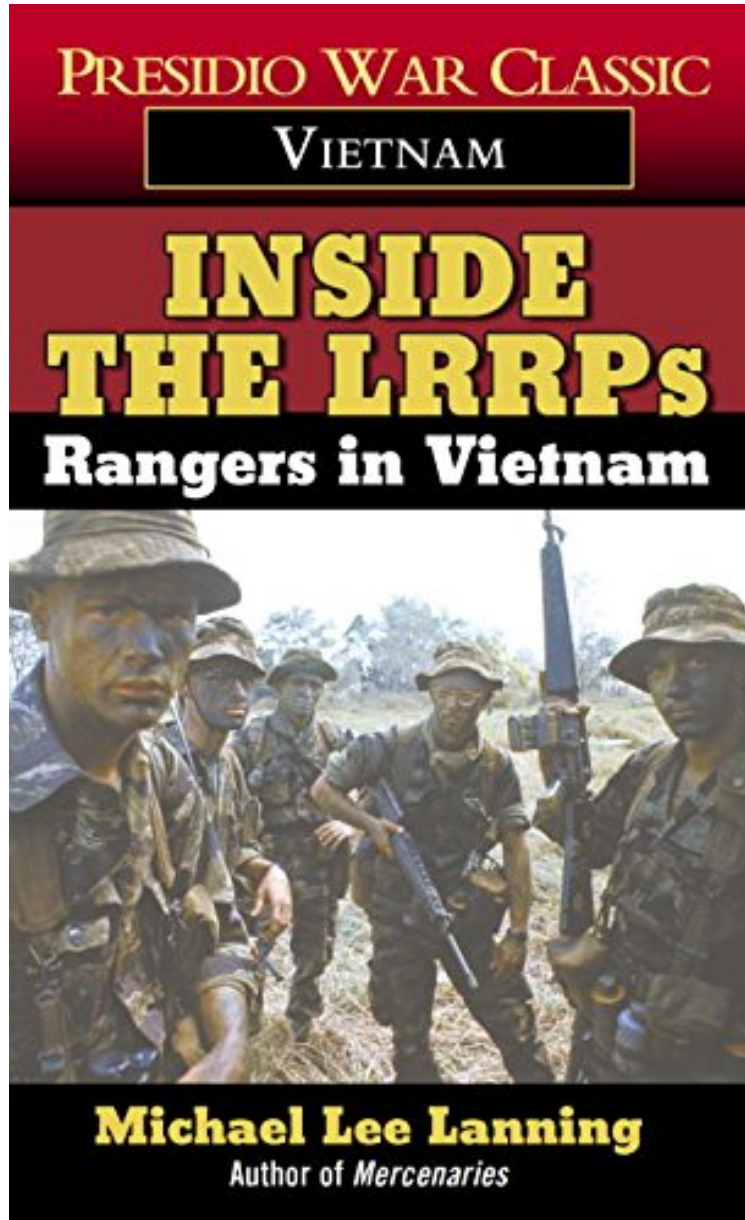


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Inside the LRRPs: Rangers in Vietnam

Col. Michael Lee Lanning

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Col. Michael Lee Lanning : Inside the LRRPs: Rangers in Vietnam before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Inside the LRRPs: Rangers in Vietnam:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. What Long Range Patrol Companies actually did in VietnamBy

Philip C. Bryant I was a US Army Ranger, tabbed in August 1967. An Infantry Platoon Leader in the 3rd Brigade of the 25th Division in January to April 1968. About April 1st my Company Commander told me that the "25th Division Rangers" wanted for me to consider transferring to their command as the Company S-3 (Operations and Training Officer). I was also told by my CO that he wanted me to be his replacement as Company Commander of Bravo Company 3/22 when he was rotated home. I had three days to decide. On April 2nd, on patrol I was wounded by a grenade and sent back to the States for surgery and recovery. I always regretted that I did not ask to visit the 25th Div Rangers to see everything that they were doing and find out why they needed a S-3. This book answers both questions very well. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Inside the LRRP's: Rangers in Viet Nam By Garry Shumann This book is a historical documentation of LRRP's from 1759 through Viet Nam. From Robert's Rangers to every conflict that they served it details their roles in recon including internal issues, training, and personnel involvement. Well written and above all interesting, it is a must read. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. History Before LRRP's By Joe D. White Way, way too much history before they became LRRP's. I realize that the Rangers were to some degree the daddy, but I was expecting additional LRRP's' information as in the other seven books about LRRP's I have read. Still, it needed to be read. j.

Vietnam was a different kind of war, calling for a different kind of soldier. The LRRP's--Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols--were that new breed of fighting man. They operated in six-man teams deep within enemy territory, and were the eyes and ears of the units they served. This is their story--of perseverance under extreme hardship and uncommon bravery--and how they carried out the war's most hazardous missions.

From the Inside Flap Vietnam was a different kind of war, calling for a different kind of soldier. The LRRP's--Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols--were that new breed of fighting man. They operated in six-man teams deep within enemy territory, and were the eyes and ears of the units they served. This is their story--of perseverance under extreme hardship and uncommon bravery--and how they carried out the war's most hazardous missions. About the Author Col. Michael Lee Lanning retired from the U.S. Army as a lieutenant colonel after more than twenty years' service. During his assignment to Vietnam, he served as both an infantry platoon leader and a company commander in the 199th Infantry Brigade (Light). He is the author of many books, including Inside the LRRP's, Inside Force Recon, and Inside the Crosshairs. Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. All in a Day's Work Vietnam was a different kind of war from America's previous conflicts, one that required different tactics and a different kind of soldier. One of the most successful innovations of the war was the formation of Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols--LRRP's, pronounced {Lurps," which were redesignated Rangers in 1969. Operating for a week at a time in six-man teams deep within enemy territory, often beyond the range of friendly artillery fire or other support, they were the eyes and ears of the units they served. While best known for the timely intelligence provided by their reconnaissance, their enemy body count often rivaled or exceeded combat units of far greater numbers. When a live prisoner was needed for interrogation, it was the LRRP's who were assigned this most difficult, hazardous mission. To state it quite simply, the LRRP's may very well have been the most effective use of manpower in the war. Although their designation changed several times, only thirteen LRRP units saw action in Southeast Asia. Each of the recon units was similarly manned and equipped, and each followed the same basic tactical procedures. However, there was no centralized command or control of the total LRRP force. Each LRRP unit operated independently of the others, answering only to the command to which it was assigned. This command relationship, combined with the vastly different areas of operation--which varied from river deltas and lowland rice paddies to mountain jungles--made each LRRP unit unique. The only constant was the men who volunteered for this exceptional duty--the valorous thread of humanity that bound all LRRP units together as brothers of the same cloth. LRRP missions were characterized by extreme hardship, extraordinary attention to detail, absolute professionalism, and uncommon bravery. The following three stories are typical of the accomplishments of the recon men in Vietnam. Thomas P. Dineen, Jr., from Annapolis, Maryland, was a Specialist 4 in E Company, 50th Infantry (LRP) of the 9th Infantry Division, working out of Tan An in the Delta in 1968. Dineen recalls, "Early one morning at the company base camp in September, the team leader called us together to issue his warning order for the next mission. He included a detailed schedule of what we would do in preparation and told each of us exactly what weapons and equipment we should pack. He concluded that the assistant team leader would conduct an inspection as soon as we were ready to ensure we had followed his orders." Returning to the team hooch, I gathered my pistol belt, web-carrying harness, first-aid pouch, knife, strobe light, six frag grenades, three smoke grenades, two white phosphorous grenades, two Claymore mines, compass, canteens, map, thirty loaded magazines, and my M-16 rifle. I then carefully assembled the gear and taped all parts that might reflect light, or rattle, with flat, black tape. Disassembling my rifle, I cleaned and lubricated each part as I put it back together. After again oiling the bolt, I placed a magazine of rounds into the weapon and manually pumped the cartridges through the breech. It worked properly, so I reloaded the magazine and taped it end-to-end with another magazine so I could reload quickly if things got hot." When I was satisfied that everything was in order, I emptied my pockets of all mission nonessential items, put on all the gear, and with weapon in hand jumped up and down to be sure I didn't make any noise. After adding a little

more tape to items that rubbed together, I took a camouflage stick and covered all exposed skin with the black and green greasepaint. "The assistant team leader soon arrived to inspect me and the other three LRRPs. Afterwards we met the team leader at the operations bunker where a sergeant from the division intelligence section briefed us on the upcoming mission. He explained that an infantry battalion had been sweeping an area about twelve kilometers to our west for several days with scattered resistance--the enemy was in the area, but the large infantry unit could not get them to stand and fight. Our mission was to go in with the helicopters that pulled them out and conduct a 'stay behind' ambush. We were all aware that the VC and NVA frequently checked LZs after Americans were extracted to recover any lost or discarded food or supplies they might find useful. The intel briefers also gave us a complete run-down on the number and identification of enemy units in the area. They even had pictures of several of the local VC leaders that we might encounter." We spent the remainder of the afternoon under control of our team leader rehearsing our insertion and extraction plans, procedures during movement, and the various ambush formations we might use. The team leader and his assistant repeatedly asked the rest of us questions about our duties and radio call signs and frequencies. A final inspection of our equipment was followed by a test firing of our weapons, after which we headed to the helipad for pickup. "We were soon airborne and joined up with the seven other choppers that were going in to pick up the infantry unit. The LZ was a large, open area of rice paddies surrounded by tree lines. We offloaded while those on the ground climbed aboard. There were several more lifts in-bound to pick up the remaining grunts, so we had ample time to mingle with them and disappear into the tree line. By the time the last birds lifted off, we had our Claymores out and were well camouflaged in the edge of a canal overlooking a trail that snaked from the woods to the LZ. All there was left to do was wait. "Less than an hour later, as the sun began to set, we heard a single rifle shot about a half-kilometer away. It was quickly followed by another shot from about the same location. By the sounds of the rifles, I knew they were AK-47s. The enemy frequently used such shots as a means of communications so elements could link up." A short time later we could hear the dinks noisily moving down the trail toward us. They must have thought all Americans had pulled out on the choppers as they were making little effort to keep quiet. We had picked our position well, as twelve VC and NVA were soon in our kill zone. "The nearest man was only three feet away from our hidden positions when the team leader sprung the ambush by blowing the Claymores. We poured M-16 rounds and hand grenades into the screaming mass of dying men. In less than a minute the fight was over--twelve dead bodies lay before us. They had not been able to fire a single shot in return." As several of us gathered up the weapons and searched for documents, the radio operator called for an extraction chopper. We moved back onto the LZ and within minutes were airborne on our way back to the base. It had been a textbook mission--a perfect ambush--one where all the shots had been one-sided. "I spent a total of two years with the LRRPs, but the events, impressions, and emotions of that stay-behind ambush on the LZ are as vivid today as they were then. You see, that was my first mission as a LRRP. There would be many more, but that first one is the most memorable."