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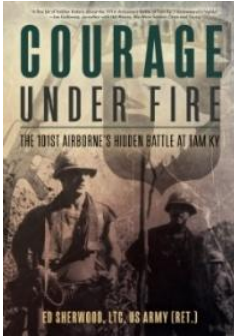


A BOOK FOR INFANTRYMEN



by LTC Ed Sherwood, US Army Infantry (Retired), 18 Feb 2026

“COURAGE UNDER FIRE: THE 101ST AIRBORNE’S HIDDEN BATTLE AT TAM KY is a book about Infantrymen, for Infantrymen, by an Infantryman.” COLONEL ROBERT CHOPPA, US ARMY (RETIRED)



Written by the President of the National Infantry Association, this 2021 review was the first after publication. Years later and after hundreds of other reviews, it is still one of my top favorites - - succinctly summing up my purpose in writing.

A DAUNTING EFFORT. In 2015 at age seventy, I decided to write a definitive account about the 1969 *Battle of Tam Ky* (officially OPERATION LAMAR PLAIN). Almost unknown, this major battle was fought by the 101st Airborne’s 1st Brigade. Begun 15 May, the most intense phase of the battle ended 10 June, though the operation continued until 13 August 1969.



□ The *Battle of Tam Ky* was fought right on the heels of the *Battle of Hamburger Hill* (OPERATION APACHE SNOW). The latter, fought by the 3rd Brigade, is the division’s most well-known Vietnam battle, fought 10 May to 20 May, 100 miles north of Tam Ky, on Hill 937 is aptly named, *Dong Ap Bia (The Crouching Lion)*. A rugged mountain, 937 meters high, adjacent to the A Shau Valley. Both battles were hard fought. Hamburger Hill became well-known, Tam Ky almost forgotten

- - except by those who fought it!

□ On 14 May, President Nixon, newly elected to end the long, indecisive Vietnam War, announced “.. the United States will no longer seek a purely military solution in Vietnam.” Days later, when Hamburger Hill’s heavy US casualties were known, they seemed counter to the president’s new policy. General Creighton Abrams, Commander-in-Chief of Military Assistance Command - Vietnam immediately decided to not release information on the fighting at Tam Ky. Within thirty days, the two battles had over a thousand U.S. casualties. The Tam Ky battle was kept SECRET the rest of the Vietnam War and for twenty years afterwards.

A BOOK ABOUT INFANTRYMEN – This is a true story of Infantrymen and those who supported them in the *Battle of Tam Ky*. • The spotlight is on junior enlisted Soldiers and junior officer leaders in tough, close combat - - valiant Soldiers who fight with a “never quit” spirit committed to one another in Infantry squads, platoons, and companies. • Like in World War II, they were the best of their generation!

FOR INFANTRYMEN – The heart of this story is the small unit leadership of young combat infantrymen, their tactics, and techniques still applicable today. • The narrative is written in the “historic present” putting readers on the battlefield. • Those without combat experience can ask themselves: “What would I do in that situation? Would I be right or wrong? What might be the result?” • For Vietnam combat veterans, their courage, will to fight, and too often unrecognized sacrifice is recorded for posterity. • For civilians and especially families of veterans, the service and sacrifice required in combat is described in detail, yet suitable for young readers.

BY AN INFANTRYMAN – My first day of active duty was 1 April 1968. • Nine months later, at age twenty-three, I was leading a 101st Airborne Division Infantry platoon in Vietnam. We faced a large, determined, disciplined, and well-trained infantry enemy force.

□ **My Initial Training.** Before Vietnam, I completed an initial, five-and-a-half week, Infantry Officer Basic Course (its old name); eleven-and-a-half-weeks of Ranger School; four months as an instructor with the Ranger Training Command's Patrolling Committee; and three weeks of jump school. • I had excellent training but knew on arrival in Vietnam, lacking actual combat experience, I would soon lead Infantry Soldiers in combat.

□ **What I Learned.** What I did not know in advance, my young Soldiers would fight with such bravery, commitment, and skill. • Years later, I learned the *Battle of Tam Ky* we fought was never publicly disclosed for political reasons. Our Soldiers were never recognized for the grueling battle they fought and won. I decided to invest five, rigorous years to research, interview, write, edit, re-write, and re-edit the book that told their story - a story about the unselfish courage of young Infantry Soldiers in combat!

□ **And Never Forgot.** Our Infantrymen (and those teamed in their support) were fully committed to one another, their family's legacy, and our nation. • Together they had a "never quit" will to fight despite harsh combat conditions and high casualties on a distant battlefield in an increasingly unpopular war. • With much domestic, political, and social unrest on the home front, they were often not welcomed on their return. • Now, after many years, that "welcome home" is fully made! May you find their story, a compelling account of Infantrymen in combat! □

See www.courageunderfire-edsherwood.com for more information and reviews

■ **The US Army Infantry School** has recently included *Courage Under Fire* in their *Infantry Officer Basic Leader Course's* Reading List for all newly commissioned Infantry lieutenants.

■ **The Association of the United States Army's, Army Historical Foundation** selected *Courage Under Fire* as runner up for their 2021 *Distinguished Writing Award for Battles and Operations*. Matthew Seelinger, Chief Historian and Senior Editor wrote a feature article in the November 2021 issue of *Army Magazine*. He introduced the book as an account of one of the renowned 101st Airborne Division's last major battles of its seven service in the Vietnam War. The longest of any US combat division!

■ **Brian E. Winski, Major General, US Army, (Ret.), Former Commanding General, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)** - "*Courage Under Fire* chronicles the 101st fight at Tam Ky from the cutting edge of battle perspective. This battle illuminates the grit, tenacity, and courage of the Screaming Eagle Soldier like no other."

■ **Joe Galloway, Co-Author "We Were Soldiers Once and Young" with Hal Moore** - "A fine bit of hidden history about the 101st Airborne's Battle at Tam Ky. I recommend it highly!"

■ **The New York Times** - "...faithfully conveys the Tam Ky highlights the incredible grit, courage, and tenacity of the Screaming Eagle Soldier - - and the troopers serving in the Division today, draw strength from the sterling example and valor of those who fought there." day-to-day life of American soldiers in combat."

■ **ARMY Magazine** – "Provides readers a thorough examination of Operation Lamar Plain from the point of view of soldiers on the ground, [has] great detail on all aspects of the fighting, including the type of equipment and weapons used by American and NVA forces; American use of firepower, such as artillery and close air support from attack helicopters and fighter-bombers; and tactics employed by both sides."

■ **The Quarterly Journal of Military History** - "Sherwood has written one of the best, most comprehensive accounts of Vietnam War combat published to date."

■ **Vietnam Magazine, Senior Editor** - "... well-researched and vividly written, makes a valuable contribution to war history on a little-known subject and, most important to me personally, is a tribute to the achievements of the individual soldier, immortalizing men whose bravery was tested in the fierce crucible of combat and preserving the memory of those who sacrificed their lives in battle. Another merit of the book is that it contributes to military science, as Sherwood accompanies the highly detailed and engaging narrative with insightful analysis that will prove helpful to generations of future infantrymen.

■ **Military Heritage Magazine** - "[The author's] intent in writing this account is to honor those who served and educate their families as to what their loved ones experienced. In this effort he has succeeded for the book is full of the small details of military life, field service and combat which mark an infantryman's experience."

■ **Vietnam Veterans of America Magazine** - "A highly organized researcher and writer with the reader constantly in mind, Ed Sherwood writes for the moment, as well as for posterity. His book provides a clear picture of what infantry fighting in the Vietnam War was really like."

■ **American Legion, Former National Commander, LTC (R) Dale Barnett** - "*Courage Under Fire* tells the story of the courage and bravery of the Vietnam soldier in a compelling fashion fit for audiences of all generations. I highly recommend *Courage Under Fire*."

■ **US Army Center of Military History Historian, Dr. John O'Brien** - "Sherwood writes as one who knows the ethos of "the brotherhood of the close fight." He clearly captures the bravery and tenacity of the men who defeated a determined enemy. It is well time their story was told."