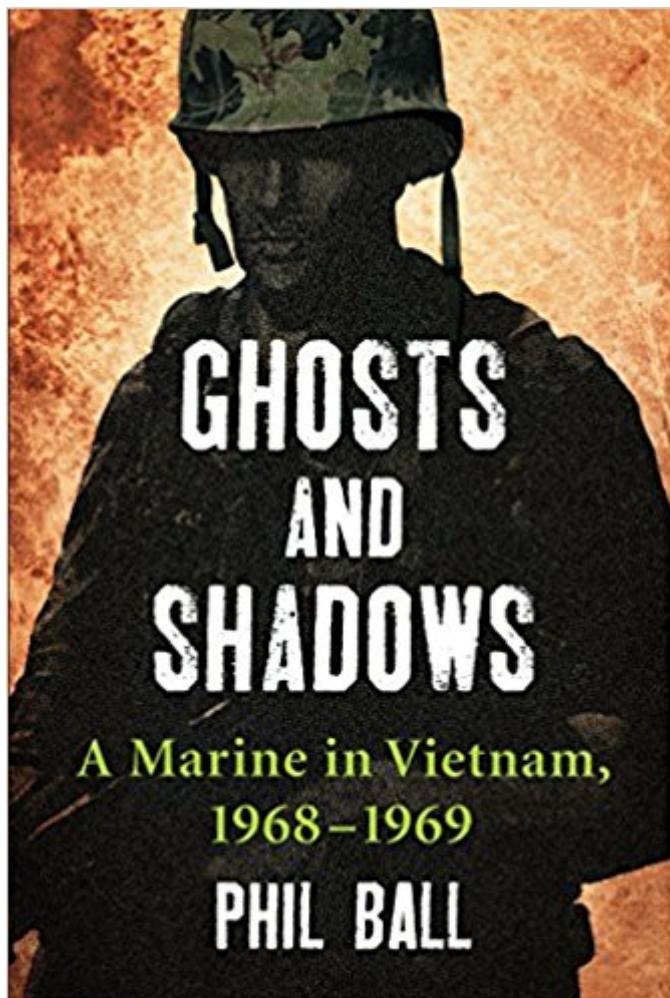


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# Ghosts And Shadows: A Marine In Vietnam, 1968-1969



## **Synopsis**

The author arrived at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego ill-prepared for the training and abuse that awaited him in boot camp. At the time, he would have done anything to escape; only upon reflection years later did he realize that the self-confidence instilled in him by his drill instructors had probably saved his life in Vietnam. A few months after boot camp, Private Ball was shipped out to Vietnam, joining F Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines, near Khe Sanh. As a grunt, in the vernacular of the Corps, Ball, like the other youths of F Company, did a difficult and deadly job in such places as the A Shau Valley, Leatherneck Square, the DMZ and other obscure but critical I Corps locales. His--their--fear of death mingled with homesickness. Little did they realize that the horrors of the Vietnam War--horrors that while in-country they often claimed did not even exist--would haunt them for the rest of their lives.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

As a Vietnam vet myself (1966-1967) I have read quite a few books and memoirs written by other Vietnam vets. Sadly, most are poorly written and poorly edited, if they are edited at all. And even when the underlying story may indeed be compelling reading, because of the poor writing/editing, it

is difficult to stick with most of these books. Mr. Ball's *Ghosts and Shadows* certainly is an exception to this general rule! His book is well written AND edited. The story he tells is compelling, engaging and testament to his ability to overcome incredible odds and challenges, both while in combat and a lifetime that was later negatively influenced by his combat experiences. I, too, was a Marine in Vietnam, but my role was as a door gunner in a CH-46, not as a grunt, like Mr. Ball. The squadron I was in supported grunts in the field many times, of course, but my combat experiences significantly pale in comparison to his. After interacting with grunts at various levels and in various situations while in Vietnam, rarely did I not thank God that I hadn't been called upon to shoulder their day-to-day burdens and ongoing horrors. I salute Mr. Ball for his service and applaud his ability to ultimately get his life back on track once he returned to "the world." If you really want to know and understand the tremendous sacrifices our Marines and soldiers made each and every day during a tour in Vietnam, then pick up *Ghosts and Shadows*. A GREAT, inspiring read!

This is one of the best Vietnam books I have read. It is so truthful. Written in a way that made you feel what they (the marines) and all our young men who served in that war must have gone through. Wonderfully written!! On July 5th, Phil Ball died, he was a wonderfully gifted man. He will be missed for all he was and all he could have been.

good story... This story is a good representation of a Marine in Vietnam. My husband related to the boot camp experiences, and the skirmishes in country. Well written, and has deep feelings. This straightforward tale is true to the day, and not full of excess information. A good accounting of daily life in the horrors of war. R.I.P. Phil. Semper Fi.

Over the past 13 years I have read well over 100 books on WW2 and Vietnam, the majority of which were memoirs written by those who were there. *Ghosts and Shadows* is, one of my favorites. Although a basic description of it would make it sound like one of many books written by Vietnam veterans, young man goes off to war then writes about his experiences, Phil's book manages to cut several layers deeper than your average in describing the emotional and physical effects combat has on a person. I rank it up there with my other favs like *Chickenhawk*, *Rumor of War*, *Suicide Charlie* and *Father, Soldier, Son*. A couple chapters are about Phil and his platoon defending a hilltop position against a VC night attack and in my opinion its one the best descriptions I've ever read about one of an author's single combat experiences. I highly recommend it and I really feel you will not be disappointed.

I have read many true stories about grunts in Vietnam both Army grunts and Marine grunts. They all fought hard and long. But I have yet to read a story like this one. The battle of Foxtrot Ridge was the epitome of hell. Overwhelming NVA forces. Suicidal wave attacks. Outnumbered and outgunned yet these Marines fought on. The way the author shares his story is a testament to his courage and dedication to getting the story told and honoring his brothers who fell not only on the Ridge but in other battles. It is a shame that it took the VA so long to recognize that PTSD is a serious condition. Despite all of the demons, the author was able to pull it together and fight on. I highly recommend this story to all of those who want the true story, not a Rambo style piece of fiction. Here you are in the midst of some great heroes. They will never call themselves heroes, they were just trying to stay alive so that they could catch the Freedom Bird home one day. They were our sons, our fathers, our brothers.

This non-fiction book about written by Phil Ball is a personal account of his experiences in Vietnam as an 18 year old Marine from May 1968 to June 1969, and the resulting toll on his life as he returned to the United States. Although the book is written in a straight forward narrative style, it is a riveting page-turner that provides gut wrenching descriptions of the horror of close quarters combat. He provides vivid descriptions of the "grunt's" perspective of combat from a fighting hole, where one can only see immediately what's directly ahead and right and left of him. His first combat experience is the May 28, 1968 battle known as "The Battle of Foxtrot Ridge." The intensity of this battle equals that of WW II or Korea and only the courage and fighting skill of the Marine defenders avoided a total massacre. Sadly, Mr. Ball's experiences are typical of so many Vietnam combat vets who have so easily been forgotten in an attempt to forget the tragic folly that was the Vietnam War. I highly recommend this book.

This is the best, most compelling and well written personal narrative I've read about the Vietnam War. The writers thoughts are clear and powerfully expressed. In short, you feel it all again, or for the first time as the case may be. Seriously, this one is a "got to read"!

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