



Reluctant Lieutenant: From Basic to OCS in the Sixties (Williams-Ford Texas A&M University Military History Series)

Jerome Morton

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With intimidating tales of bellowing drill instructors and their seemingly incongruous tasks, *Reluctant Lieutenant* captures the essence of what it meant to survive the training regimen of the Old Army.

Author Jerry Morton is a gifted storyteller equally at home describing blind navigation through the woods on a dark night as recounting the perils of smuggling a skin flick into his barracks at OCS. In this engaging memoir, Morton reconstructs his reluctant journey through basic training, advanced infantry training, and infantry Officer Candidate School during the Vietnam era. His is a unique record of what it was like to be a conscript in the U.S. Army in the late 1960s.

Morton's accounts also provide a roadmap to the sociology and culture of the military, especially the class system that divided college graduates from those with less education or economic stature yet sustained a solidarity that overrode class differences in the field. He describes his disappointment and discomfort at being "killed" during training ambushes. But he also shows how someone with a master's degree in psychology could adapt to an environment in which the army did the thinking and the soldier the doing. However unintentional, by the end of his journey Morton is no longer a civilian but an officer, adept at army gamesmanship and ready for command.

This book offers an entertaining and informative foray into the training system used by the army during the Vietnam era and valuable insight into military culture. Veterans of the Old Army will find their memories kindled by this vivid account of one man's experience.

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