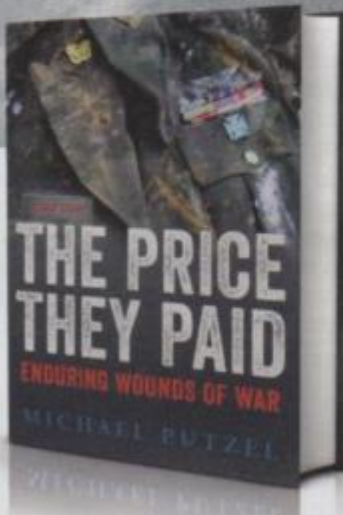




Air support
Choppers of the 17th Air Cavalry Regiment return to Khe Sanh after dropping off a South Vietnamese unit at a site in Laos during February 1971.



The Helicopter War and Its Effect on Crews Who Fought It

The Price They Paid: Enduring Wounds of War
by Michael Putzel, Trysail Publishing, 2015

"I love the smell of napalm in the morning," Lt. Col. Bill Kilgore (Robert Duvall) commander of the fictional 1st Battalion, 9th Air Cavalry Regiment, famously remarks in Francis Ford Coppola's 1979 film *Apocalypse Now*, and that visually stunning scene has become for most Americans the iconic image of Vietnam War helicopter combat. Those of us who were there, however, know that the movie version doesn't even begin to tell the real story of the dominant role helicopters played in Vietnam. The truth, inevitably, is more compelling, more complicated—and extremely more dangerous—than any movie image can evoke.

For U.S. ground combat infantry and artillery units in Vietnam, helicopters were overwhelmingly our only means of transport, resupply, close aerial fire support and medevac—our lifelines to any sustenance, support and succor. Helicopter crews were our beloved brothers in arms, even if we only knew them from fleeting glimpses of the pilots and crews, their faces covered by helmets and visors, and through short, crisp, businesslike radio transmissions as they risked their lives for us. As a ground combat vet, I thank Michael Putzel for bringing these heroes and their stories to life in his riveting new book, *The Price They Paid*.

Veteran journalist Putzel has written one of the best books yet published on soldiers' total "Vietnam experience"—intense combat in-country and then dealing with its aftermath once they returned home. Putzel's book focuses on Army helicopter pilot Major James T. Newman, commanding officer of C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, operating in northern South Vietnam in 1970-71. Known