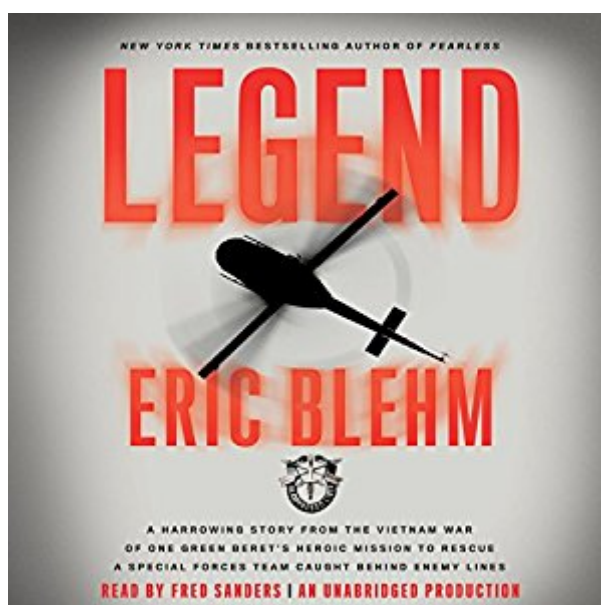


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# Legend: A Harrowing Story From The Vietnam War Of One Green Beret's Heroic Mission To Rescue A Special Forces Team Caught Behind Enemy Lines



## Synopsis

The unforgettable account and courageous actions of the US Army's 240th Assault Helicopter Company and Green Beret Staff Sergeant Roy Benavidez, who risked everything to rescue a Special Forces team trapped behind enemy lines. In *Legend*, acclaimed best-selling author Eric Blehm takes as his canvas the Vietnam War as seen through a single mission that occurred on May 2, 1968. A 12-man Special Forces team had been covertly inserted into a small clearing in the jungles of neutral Cambodia - where US forces were forbidden to operate. Their objective, just miles over the Vietnam border, was to collect evidence that proved the North Vietnamese Army was using the Cambodian sanctuary as a major conduit for supplying troops and materiel to the south via the Ho Chi Minh Trail. What the team didn't know was that they had infiltrated a section of jungle that concealed a major enemy base. Soon they found themselves surrounded by hundreds of NVA, under attack, low on ammunition, stacking the bodies of the dead as cover in a desperate attempt to survive the onslaught. When Special Forces Staff Sergeant Roy Benavidez heard the distress call, he jumped aboard the next helicopter bound for the combat zone without hesitation. Orphaned at the age of seven, Benavidez had picked cotton alongside his family as a child and dropped out of school as a teen before joining the army. Although he was grievously wounded during his first tour of duty in Vietnam and told he would never walk again, Benavidez fought his way back - ultimately earning his green beret. What followed would become legend in the Special Operations community. Flown into the fray of battle by the courageous pilots and crew of the 240th Assault Helicopter Company, Benavidez jumped from the hovering aircraft and ran nearly 100 yards through withering enemy fire. Despite being immediately and severely wounded, Benavidez reached the perimeter of the decimated team, provided medical care, and proceeded to organize an extraordinary defense and rescue. During the hours-long battle, he was bayoneted, shot, and hit by grenade shrapnel more than thirty times, yet he refused to abandon his efforts until every survivor was out of harm's way. Written with extensive access to family members, surviving members of the 240th Assault Helicopter Company, on-the-ground eyewitness accounts never before published, as well as recently discovered archival and declassified military records, Blehm has created a riveting narrative both of Roy Benavidez's life and career and of the inspiring, almost unbelievable events that defined the brotherhood of the air and ground warriors in an unpopular war halfway around the world. *Legend* recounts the courage and commitment of those who fought in Vietnam in service of their country and the story of one of the many unsung heroes of the war, whose actions would be scrutinized for more than a decade in a battle for a long overdue and what many believe was an unjustly denied Medal of Honor. The case was reopened 13 years later, in 1980, when a long-lost -

and believed dead - Green Beret eyewitness whom Benavidez had rescued that day came forth and wrote a statement that revealed, once and for all, what happened on that fateful day in May of 1968.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I enjoyed reading 'Legend:...' by Eric Blehm and was especially riveted during battle when Roy Benavidez was involved. Technically, I have to admit that this book is not entirely about Roy and his achievements, and is written in four parts. The first is about Roy's adolescent years and difficulties he encountered while growing up with his uncle and aunt in a small Texas town. There was a strong bond between Roy and his family as well as with his boss when he worked at the Firestone Tire Store. Part 2 tells about Roy's experience in the Army and the training he completed prior to earning his Green Beret and going to Vietnam early in the war for his 1st tour. Part 3 is pretty much dedicated to introducing all the other people that had a role in the actual battle (I was somewhat confused here and had trouble remembering all the other names of pilots and ground personnel). The story continues with the insertion of two SF teams - 9 miles inside of the border of Cambodia. Their mission was to observe the Ho Chi Minh trail and ideally hijack a Russian built truck and some prisoners. However, shortly after their insertion, they are compromised and requested immediate pick-up; usually, the chopper returns to withdraw the team but a major in the overhead C&C denied their request and ordered the team leader to continue with the mission. What they soon discovered is that they were inserted onto the fringes of a Regimental or Division sized headquarters with thousands of NVA soldiers. Under fire, the team splits into two groups and locates two probable

locations to the side of the original LZ in which to defend themselves. By the time higher up approve the evacuation, both teams are in dire straits - some team members were already severely wounded or dead. The firing is so intense, choppers are unable to land and sustain severe damage. The O-2 Bird dog FA announced a special code over the radio that signals an emergency with a high probability of units on the ground being overrun. It didn't take long before jets and gunships responded and immediately targeted the never ending supply of NVA regulars. Part 4 then continues with the battle and Roy Benavidez's involvement. Choppers are crashing and crews dying in the many attempt to reach the beleaguered troops. The action Roy takes is beyond belief and readers will be awed by his calmness and determination to get everybody back to safety. The story continues to describe the rest of the battle and their eventual evacuation from the LZ. Only a few survived. Benavidez was tagged in triage and left with the other dead bodies stacked outside of the hospital because of so much damage to his body. Miraculously, he garnered enough strength and fortitude to spit at the orderly who almost finished zippering him up in a black body bag. When discovering that Roy was alive, they rushed to save his life. He spent over a year convalescing from his injuries, and remained in San Antonio to be close to his family. Afterward, he continued in active service in the Army until his eventual retirement. Roy deserved the Medal of Honor for his actions that day, however, his involvement in Cambodia was top secret, and instead, the Dept. of the Army awarded him the Distinguished Service Cross - a step below the MOH. SF soldiers were sworn to secrecy and agreed not to expose anything about their missions or locations for thirty years. The penalty for doing so is a dishonorable discharge, large fine and imprisonment. Ten years later, those who survived the battle wrote reports that detailed Roy's actions during that fateful day in hopes of reversing the decision regarding Roy's MOH, yet the Army refused to upgrade it. Others continued the effort and when an eye witness came forward - one who Roy thought perished and vice-versa, and his testimony tipped the scales. The MOH was awarded for his actions in a battle west of a town in South Vietnam and Cambodia was not inferred. This is a great read with a lot of detail of the actual events. Roy was quoted in the book, "that day was filled with heroes, all trying very hard to save this team, unfortunately, many of them did not survive the battle." The last third of the book will keep you reading until the end! RIP Roy Benavidez! Thank you Eric Blehm for a great story! John Podlaski, author 'Cherries - A Vietnam War Novel' and 'When Can I Stop Running?'.

The unbelievable story of an incredible man, a genuine patriot and American hero. I loved the way his grandfather taught him how to be proud of his Mexican heritage and family name while at the same time inculcating pride in his country, which his Texas ancestors fought for. His grandfather

and uncle also taught him what it means to be a real man, which included helping anyone who needs help. He had a rough start in life after his father died of TB, then his mother died of TB and his stepfather wanted nothing to do with him and his brother. Thanks to his mother who contacted his uncle before she died, his uncle took him in, adding to the eight children already in the family. I can't believe I may have been undergoing training during the same time he was at Ft Bragg, N.C., and was in VN when he was, but I only recently learned about him. The fact that he did what he did, saving the lives of eight men, USSF, chopper pilots, door gunners, and VN, without getting killed is a miracle in itself. When they unloaded the choppers, they found three dead NVA he accidentally saved. (The USSF and CIDG were wearing NVA uniforms.) The sad part is how long it took to give him the Medal of Honor because the Army didn't want to admit the action took place in Cambodia when the president and politicians kept claiming no US personnel were there. A well-written book that is hard to put down when the action gets hot!

Author Eric Blehm has done it, again, delivering up a book depicting the incredible story of Green Beret Sergeant Roy Benavidez's heroics during one battle of the U.S.'s war in Vietnam. Against numerically-superior enemy forces, Sergeant Benavidez is helicoptered into a battle that is all but lost, rallying the handful of survivors (many of whom are severely wounded) into continuing to defend the small piece of ground they find themselves on, all the while bringing death to those who are intending to overrun and kill them. Sergeant Benavidez's actions, coupled with, both, the heroic efforts of those who sought to extract the Special Forces team by helicopter, and the incredible air support that was given, would save the lives of several soldiers. Too, as in no way are the actions of the Special Forces team meant to be overlooked or minimized, the heroics of those under siege, themselves, contributed, greatly, to Sergeant Benavidez's successful rescue attempt. Sergeant Benavidez's actions during this rescue attempt are the stuff that legends are made of, and show the indomitable spirit that select warriors bring to battle. A must-read for anyone who is interested in military history, especially, the heroics that came out of the Vietnam War, and/or for anyone who just wants to see what the mettle of one determined man can accomplish.

if you have read "Fearless" and "The only thing worth dying for" by Eric Blehm, you will know this author's work is excellent, and I had been biting at the bit to read "Legend". If I could I would give 4.99 stars. I didn't give 5 for one reason, the beginning of the book you start to understand Roy B, his up-bringing, the hardwork and true warrior in the making, it was a steady buildup. A few chapters in I got off track in the introduction of the Huey pilots, gunners and crew, I just got lost for a little bit

and for me it lost the continuity even though these heroes introduction is important I found myself checking the book to see when Roy was going to make an appearance again. The last third of the book, is amazing, just fascinating. You cannot stop reading it and you finish having the greatest admiration for these men....Hereos..No, Legends.

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