

Last Men Out: The True Story of America's Heroic Final Hours in Vietnam

Bob Drury, Tom Clavin



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Last Men Out tells the remarkable story of the drama that unfolded over the next twenty-four hours: the final, heroic chapter of the Vietnam War as improvised by a small unit of Marines, a vast fleet of helicopter pilots flying nonstop missions beyond regulation, and a Marine general who vowed to arrest any officer who ordered his choppers grounded while his men were still on the ground. It would become the largest-scale evacuation ever carried out—what many would call an American Dunkirk.

In a gripping, moment-by-moment narrative based on a wealth of recently declassified documents and indepth interviews, Bob Drury and Tom Clavin focus on the story of the eleven young Marines who were the last men to leave, rescued from the Embassy roof just moments before capture, having voted to make an Alamo-like last stand. As politicians in Washington struggled to put the best face on disaster and the American ambassador refused to acknowledge that the end had come and to evacuate, these courageous men held their ground and helped save thousands of lives. They and their fellow troops on the ground and in the air had no room for error as frenzy broke out in the streets and lashing rains and enemy fire began to pelt the city. One Marine pilot, Captain Gerry Berry, flew for eighteen straight hours and had to physically force the American ambassador onto his helicopter.

Drury and Clavin gained unprecedented access to the survivors, to the declassified "After-Action reports" of the operation, and to the transmissions among helicopter pilots, their officers, and officials in Saigon secretly recorded by the National Security Agency. They deliver a taut and stirring account of a turning point in American history which unfolds with the heart-stopping urgency of the best thrillers—a riveting true story finally told, in full, by those who lived it.

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