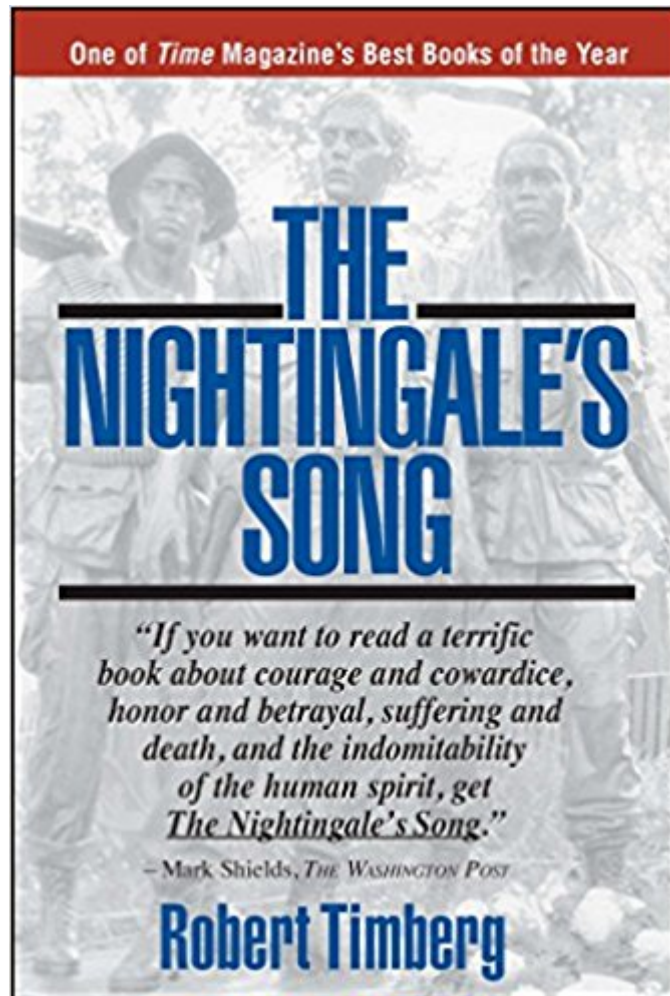




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The Nightingale's Song



Synopsis

Robert Timberg weaves together the lives of Annapolis graduates John McCain, James Webb, Oliver North, Robert McFarlane, and John Poindexter to reveal how the Vietnam War continues to haunt America. Casting all five men as metaphors for a legion of well-meaning if ill-starred warriors, Timberg probes the fault line between those who fought the war and those who used money, wit, and connections to avoid battle. A riveting tale that illuminates the flip side of the fabled Vietnam generation -- those who went.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Looking at the lives and careers of five Naval Academy graduates?among them John Poindexter and Oliver North?fellow alumnus Timberg probes the connections between the legacy of the Vietnam war and the Iran-Contra scandal. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Overtly the life stories of five graduates of the U.S. Naval Academy--John McCain, John Poindexter, Bud McFarlane, Jim Webb, and Oliver North--this probing tale implicitly examines the academy's institutional soul. A survivor of Annapolis, abbreviated by cognoscenti as IHTFP (I Hate This F . . . ing Place), Timberg knowingly examines how the academy indoctrinated undergraduates in the '50s and '60s. All five men saluted and went to Vietnam--three were wounded--and in Timberg's telling of their specific combat experiences, insightful angles on their subsequent careers emerge, such as North's penchant for exaggeration. When the Iran-Contra affair broke, its Watergate motif gradually became displaced by the old passions surrounding Vietnam, which, as Timberg writes, cropped up

in the actions and justifications of Reagan's national security advisers McFarlane and Poindexter and their aide North. In the meantime ex-POW McCain had gotten himself elected to Congress, and Webb became a novelist, secretary of the navy (ironically staging his induction at the academy he used to hate), and promoter of adding a statue to the stark Vietnam Memorial. A well-researched and well-written account of five interesting lives. Gilbert Taylor --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

As I mentioned in my recent review of Timberg's memoir "Blue-Eyed Boy", it was fascination with his life and perspective expressed therein that prompted me to read his previous rather phenomenal discussion of the Iran-Contra Affair in the light of circumstances surrounding the Vietnam War. I selected the newly-released Kindle edition because I am trying to avoid adding "paper" to my already over-crowded shelves. Since "The Nightingale's Song" was originally published nearly 20 years ago at the height of the events of Iran-Contra (and well before subsequent events in terms of 9/11 and the ensuing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq), it now classifies as "history", not current events. I have to admit that I was in a way disappointed that in Timberg's memoir he did NOT reflect on the ongoing impact of the "ripples" from Vietnam as they might conceivably relate to these more recent events, and indeed, given that the Kindle edition of "The Nightingale's Song" is indeed a post-Iraq/Afghanistan update, I admit I'd rather hoped Timberg might add an afterword of some sort. That said, I believe that this new release of what is indeed a classic reflection on some of the pivotal events of the last quarter of the 20th Century is timely and relevant. I am glad I had the opportunity to read it, and I believe that anyone who, like me, had NOT read it at the time of first publication should definitely consider doing so. I also strongly recommend reading it, as I did, in light of the memoir which gives the author's perspective. This former book is pure investigative journalism of high caliber but contains nothing personal about Timberg himself. Finally, a comment on the Kindle format. That is somewhat disappointing in many ways. The electronic rendering is rather annoying in that many words are run together or separated without hyphenation. There are significant typos, and - perhaps most annoying of all for the serious student, this mode does not allow easy access to notes or cross-referencing of names, dates and so on. I believe that such a serious student (which admittedly I am not) might be better served by going back to the original 1995 edition.

Great book! All five principals were and still are American heroes. This great country could use more men like these running the show

I like John McCain even more. Super fine book.

Didn't read this book but my husband read it and keeps buying it for friends so he must have liked it.

This was an excellent book my brother recommended it. It was a wonderful insight into the Vietnam War and the 5 men covered in this history of this war. McCain, North, Webb, McFarlin, and Poindexter. All great Americans who served our country well. The one down side of the book was his unbalanced opinion of President Reagan. He quoted mostly from Don Regan who he fired. I am a big fan of c span and there are many people who have lectured on panels that were in this book that recount a completely different version including Micheal Gorbachev. Great book well worth the read. Thanks

All O.K. What we don't know about John S. McCain III

"The Nightingale's Song" is a fascinating study of five Annapolis graduates and Vietnam Era servicemen. The author, also an Academy grad, analyzes how each of their experiences at the Academy and Vietnam affected their involvement and reaction to Iran-Contra. A must read for anyone interested in the events of that period.

Great book about a difficult time (Vietnam) and the connection of five Naval Academy graduates.

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