



# Hal Moore: A Soldier Once . . . And Always

*Mike Guardia*

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Hal Moore, one of the most admired American combat leaders of the last fifty years, has until now been best known to the public for being portrayed by Mel Gibson in the movie *We Were Soldiers*. In this first-ever, fully illustrated biography, we finally learn the full story of one of America's true military heroes.

A 1945 graduate of West Point, Moore's first combats occurred during the Korean War, where he fought in the battles of Old Baldy, T-Bone, and Pork Chop Hill. At the beginning of the Vietnam War, Moore commanded the 1st Battalion of the 7th Cavalry in the first full-fledged battle between US and North Vietnamese regulars. Drastically outnumbered and nearly overrun, Moore led from the front, and though losing seventy-nine soldiers, accounted for 1,200 of the enemy before the Communists withdrew. This Battle of Ia Drang pioneered the use of "air mobile infantry"—delivering troops into battle via helicopter—which became the staple of US operations for the remainder of the war. He later wrote of his experiences in the bestselling book *We Were Soldiers Once . . . and Young*.

Following his tour in Vietnam, he assumed command of the 7th Infantry Division, forward-stationed in South Korea, and in 1971, he took command of the Army Training Center at Fort Ord, California. In this capacity, he oversaw the US Army's transition from a conscript-based to an all-volunteer force. He retired as a lieutenant general in 1977.

At this writing, Hal Moore is ninety years old and living quietly in Auburn, Alabama. He graciously allowed the author interviews and granted full access to his files and collection of letters, documents, and never-before-published photographs.

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