



## MWSA REVIEW

**Be prepared for a wild ride as you descend into “the hole” with an elite Special Forces Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol deep behind enemy lines, in Raymond Morris’ *The Ether Zone*.**

Raymond Morris’ “*The Ether Zone: US Army Special Forces Detachment B-52, Project Delta*” brings to light the extraordinary story of this elite and highly-classified Special Forces unit operating from 1964 to 1970 during the Vietnam War. The unit, a precursor to today’s famed Delta Force, remained classified and little-known until its existence was declassified in 1996. Even then, the former members of this unit did not fully support allowing their highly-decorated unit (the second most decorated of its size during the entire Vietnam conflict) to come out into the open. These men had nothing to hide—quite the contrary—they had much of which they were justifiably proud. Instead, these “Quiet Professionals” preferred to keep their small unit’s exploits out of the public eye... to remain “below the radar” where they were most comfortable operating.

Overcoming this initial reluctance of Delta members to tell their story, Morris does a masterful job of combining his research of the organizational history and structure of Delta with the vivid reminiscences of its soldiers. Drawing primarily from interviews, Morris weaves together a compelling story. Broken down into short and highly-readable chapters, he provides a gripping series of stories from a close-knit group of warriors not inclined to highlight their personal exploits. Instead, they relate the details of others’ bravery and skill. It is their fellow soldiers who are the heroes, not those being interviewed. Morris deftly aggregates various harrowing stores of combat involving small recon teams dropped off deep in enemy territory and far removed from friendly support. The reader will feel like he or she has been transported along with these brave men, trying to stay one step ahead of crack North Vietnamese and Vietcong units in hot pursuit. The result: unlike some books that hit you, Morris’ crashes into you.

This book exudes authenticity. Not only are combat scenes described in heart-pounding detail, the reader will also appreciate the special sense of humor of Delta’s soldiers. In addition to coping with extraordinarily demanding combat operations; they must also handle inclement weather, leeches and venomous snakes. To deal with the incredible stress, Delta members rely on practical jokes, pranks and “serious partying” at the Delta Club during their short breaks between their assignments “in the hole.”

*Ether Zone* will also appeal to the serious student of the military and particularly of the Spec Ops community. Morris provides detailed lists of personnel, units and important dates in the Delta Detachment’s history. Hence, *Ether Zone* is a veritable unit history and a valuable resource.

Morris, mirroring the veterans of Delta, also reserves special respect for the various units (US and Vietnamese) who were a part of, or who regularly participated in, Delta’s combat operations. The Nungs, Montagnard’s, and especially the 81st Vietnam Ranger Battalion are given a prominent place in the narrative. Morris also points out the exceedingly close relationship between Delta Detachment’s members and the aviation units upon whom they had to rely (even in the hottest of LZs) for insertion and extraction.

*The Ether Zone* is well-written and thoroughly enjoyable. I highly recommend this book.  
*Review by John Cathcart, MWSA Reviewer (August 2009)*