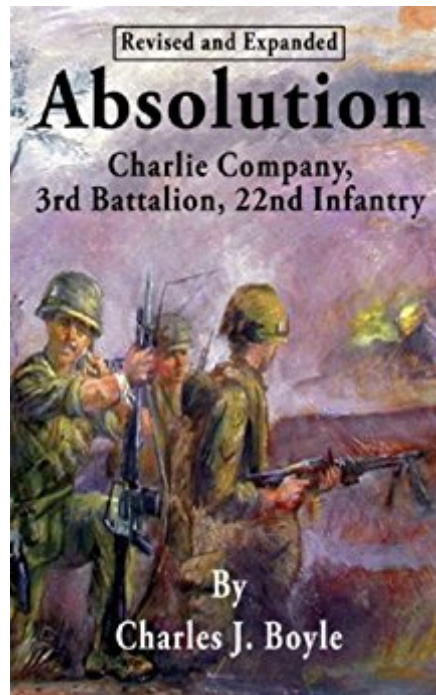




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Absolution: Charlie Company, 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry



Synopsis

Fresh out of Infantry OCS, 2nd Lieutenant Dennis Riley gets a reality check when he joins his platoon in the Hobo Woods, south of Cui Chi, home of the 25th Infantry Division in Vietnam. It was a blistering hot August in 1967 when he met the men of the Third Platoon, Alpha Company, 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry. By nightfall they are in contact with elements of the 272nd NVA and the blood letting seldom takes a break for the next twelve months. Dennis and his men are frequently ambushed, mortared and booby trapped, but by New Year's 1967/68 they are ready for the fight of their life at Fire Support Base Burt, north of Tay Ninh, astride the Cambodian border. The 2nd Battalion (Mech) and the 3rd Battalion hold off the combined assaults of four North Vietnamese regiments killing over 600 of the enemy by daybreak. Absolution vividly describes the carnage and American heroism of that battlefield using the eyewitness accounts of helicopter gunship and medivac pilots, platoon leaders, sergeants and the fighting men. Now a First Lieutenant, Dennis Riley is selected to command Charlie Company, badly demoralized after losing twelve killed and dozens wounded at Burt. At the onset of the Tet Offensive, ten more gallant Americans die as Riley and his company slug it out during sixteen days of frontal assaults against an entrenched enemy at the village of Ap Cho, south of Cui Chi. The description of this battle is as close to combat as you can get without having been there. And if you were there... anywhere in Vietnam, thank you and God Bless you! April 12, 1968 was Good Friday, but the 3rd Battalion saw nothing good about a regiment of NVA screaming across their positions in the middle of the night. They paid dearly for it, losing hundreds of their Communists attackers to the 22nd Infantry. It fell to hand to hand combat, bayonet for bayonet... all night long. One hundred, fifty three NVA died within the perimeter. In the aftermath of that carnage and the loss of so many lives, Dennis Riley grows disenchanted with the war. He is quietly reassigned to administrative duties, eventually returning to America in late 1968. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder steals his mind and his soul as he wanders the country aimlessly, grieving the loss of so many of his men. We find Dennis astride a Texas railroad track as a fast moving Western Pacific freight train bears down on his car. Few books can get you as close to combat and the men who sacrificed so much in Vietnam as *Absolution* does. It is action packed and factual. You'll shed a tear or two as you travel those deadly battlefields with Dennis Riley, Charlie Company, and the 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry. If you want to know what PTSD is all about, how it effects all fighting men, and how to resolve it; this book may be a very big help to you.

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Customer Reviews

An engaging Vietnam War novel and one that should be read by all potential infantry officers. Through his protagonist, Lt. Dennis Riley, the author shows us how a new OCS graduate grows from an unsure platoon leader to a confident company commander. Lt. Riley learned how to lead his troops while being coached by the most senior sergeant in the company while battling the enemy near Dau Tieng in early 1968. He truly cared for his men and took it personal when they were injured or killed. This guilt stayed with him for more than 30 yrs after the war and almost ruined his life. As a company commander, he led Charlie Company during major battles, their successes outperforming the other companies in the Battalion. I also found how difficult it was for a commander to follow the sometimes insane orders from his bosses that resulted in loss of lives, and then convincing his subordinates that it was the right thing to do. They trusted him and would follow him anywhere! I knew that this period of time was also the onset of the 68 Tet offensive and Charlie Company was continuously forced to fight without artillery or air support because the assets were needed elsewhere - although it was never explained why. It was easy for the troops to lose faith in their leaders when promises are broken, but Lt. Riley kept his people motivated and together. The

battle for Ap Co was similar to many other hill fights in Vietnam like Dak To and Hamburger Hill - the relentless uphill assaults that killed many and lasted for days. Then were eventually vacated after counting the bodies and searching for information. There is no mention in the book, but the battle at the firebase on Easter Friday was depicted in the movie "Platoon" as Oliver Stone was in that same battalion. Lt. Dennis Riley's speech near the end of the book where he addresses the audience during one of the first veteran reunions he attended in Washington DC is a piece of work. His heartfelt words hit home and sent chills up my spine as he tried to make amends for all the injustice suffered by Vietnam Vets over the past decades. After reading it the second time, I had the same results. Absolution is highly recommended and offers readers a first hand look at the insanity of war and the brotherhood shared by those who fought to protect one another. Great job Mr. Boyle! Thank you for your service and Welcome Home, sir!

John Podlaski, author
Cherries - A Vietnam War Novel

Read many books about the Vietnam experience. This was the best one. While it offered all the ugly sides of that war and the horrors these guys experienced, it also took you into his life post Vietnam. As a former wife of a Vietnam Vet, I can attest to the fact that the young man that went over at 19 was much changed when he returned. This book brought to light the terrible pain they carried home with them, and total lack of resources or knowledge to treat these guys with the terrors they had to find a way to live with. While PTSD is well known now, it was not then. A young wife praying each day that her new husband would come back from his tour, was ill prepared to deal with a totally changed man. The pain was enormous. This wonderfully written book shed light on that often forgotten part of the Vietnam experience. It's a wonder that so many of them were able to adjust to any sense of normalcy when they returned. Thank you Charles Boyle for the book I have wanted to read since 1969! Highly recommend this book to anyone who had a loved one leave to go fight in Vietnam. If I could have given it 6 stars, I would have.

I found the story a bit hard to follow until I finished. I was able to follow the story but I couldn't help but think why is the writing style changing. It does because the story is written by several of the men who served during this time period. I was not familiar with this battle. I hadn't seen the name Ap Cho and Cui Chi but never paid them much attention. I had no idea how intense of a battle occurred in the corridor until today. Charlie's Company of the 3rd battalion, 22nd Army endured some of the most intense infantry combat operation I've read to date. I would compare it to the German attempts to take Stalingrad without the heavy air and artillery support the Germans could call upon. Obviously, this battle didn't last two and-a-half

months, but the combat was just as fierce. Command knew the VC and NVA were there. What they didn't know is how well dug-in and fortified their positions were prepared. Charlie was going to find out and pay a high price. The story opens with Lt. Riley trying to figure out how to inform Jimmy Holt's parents how he died. In his mind, he'd love to tell them exactly what happened and how gruesome and senseless his death was. Poor planning and failed intelligence led his platoon and the 3rd battalion into another head-on assault against Ap Cho. The result was the same-more men died and the objective was still not captured, nor would it in the near future if they didn't get adequate, air, artillery and armor support. In the end, with the help of First Sergeant Krznarich, he was able to come up with form letter that allowed him to bypass the gore and hopefully let the Holts know their son died fighting for his country and buddies. In the end, it's only a letter. I don't know why, but that sentence is one of the most disturbing and brilliant I've come across in describing the futility and mismanagement of the entire Vietnam War. I can see Johnson and McNamara making similar comments. From this point on, the story only intensifies. As I stated before, it's not best flowing book about this war, but once you're finished, you will have time to reflect and fully appreciate all the men who fought and died in this deadly struggle. A few grammatical errors, but nothing to interrupt the flow. Four and-a-half stars

Although the author of this book states it is fiction, using dialogue, he was there and knows whereof he speaks! One of the boys killed in the last attack on Ap Cho, Jackie Smith, grew up in this little town of Samburg, Tennessee, originally called Shaw's Park for my great-grandfather. If anyone is interested in the real story of Vietnam, read this book; it will break your heart.

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