



As an Army combat cameraman with the Department of the Army Special Photographic Office (DASPO), I witnessed and recorded history during the Vietnam War in Southeast Asia.

I faced battle shoulder-to-shoulder with the grunts that fought the war. I filmed extraordinary battles, one during which a Medal of Honor was earned. I covered Khe San and the Ashau Valley among others, as well as the 1968 May Offensive, where I was wounded in combat, for which I received the Purple Heart.

The famous World War II Photographer, Robert Capra once said, "If you are not close enough, you are not getting good pictures." I found

out firsthand that Robert Capra was correct. When I roamed Vietnam with my 16mm cameras, I got close—close enough to "have seen the elephant. *The elephant* being those moments of real combat that demands that you overcome your most debilitating fears, whether you are carrying a rifle or a camera. Moments when your body begins to betray you, your hands shake, and your sense of time becomes distorted. Unlike Hollywood's depiction of combat, a soldier's view in combat is focused solely on their personal perimeter.

Upon my return from Vietnam in 1969, The National Press Club presented me with the award for Cinematographer of the Year for the Department of Defense. I then earned bachelor's and master's degrees in communications. Following graduation, I worked in the advertising production business in Detroit, primarily for automobile advertising agencies. In 1981, I formed Adam Productions to produce and direct advertisements for automotive clients. Over the next twenty-eight years, my business took me throughout the United States, as well as to Europe and Asia.

As an active leader in community service, I have served on the board of the Heart and Vascular Institute at Henry Ford Hospital, which I also chaired for three years. I was active in the Boy Scouts of America for ten years, served as President of the DASPO Combat Photographers Association, and am a member of the International Combat Cameramen Association. Upon retirement, my family and I moved from Michigan to Central Texas. Since then, I have served on the school board of St. Mary's Cathedral in Austin, and have been the keynote speaker at many US Army functions, including 101st Airborne reunions.

Within all of this postwar activity, I buried memories of my time in Vietnam—until now. My book *Combat Photographers: Persistence of Vision* is the culmination of my personal journey. Contained are my collected images and memories in concert with those contributed by other Vietnam-era military photographers. I am humbled and honored that Joe Galloway, co-author of *We Were Soldiers Once . . . And Young*—and the inspiration for a movie of the same name—has agreed to write the introduction for this firsthand pictorial and written recollection of my experiences during the Vietnam War.

Ted Acheson