



Just Dust: An Improbable Marine's Vietnam Story

Wes Choc

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Second Edition. From San Diego to Da Nang, from Hill 55 to Khe Sanh, followed by perplexing prospects in Washington, DC, this is a unique sojourn about a few bizarre events, introspections, and serendipitous choices encountered by a skeptical, eye-squinting Marine. *Just Dust: An Improbable Marine's Vietnam Story* is the first-person account of a reluctant serviceman. It is the story of how a young man, unprepared to make meaningful decisions, decides to join the US Marine Corps in 1965. Skinny, tall, and a self-proclaimed "wimp," Wes Choc sweats through boot camp, isolating himself and not making many friends. He is so different that only leftover boots from WWII fit his oddly-sized feet. Posted to two historically significant places -- Hill 55 and Khe Sanh -- the author details his time in Vietnam, including jobs examining personal effects of those killed in action to finally returning home to unimagined pursuits in Washington, DC. Despite being at the forefront of the Vietnam War, the author does not tell the typical war story. Evaluative and observational, *Just Dust* is more journal than history, more about trying to fit in than being admired. This pensive narrative from a contemplative skeptic poses questions that many will identify with from their own parallel journeys. What core values nurtured by the military process also offer important life lessons? Are unconventionalities in experience or attitude things that make one more worthy as a person or less worthy a Marine? What was gained from the Vietnam experience that mattered the most? In the end, the author's meditations lead him to understand what *Semper fi* means to him.

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