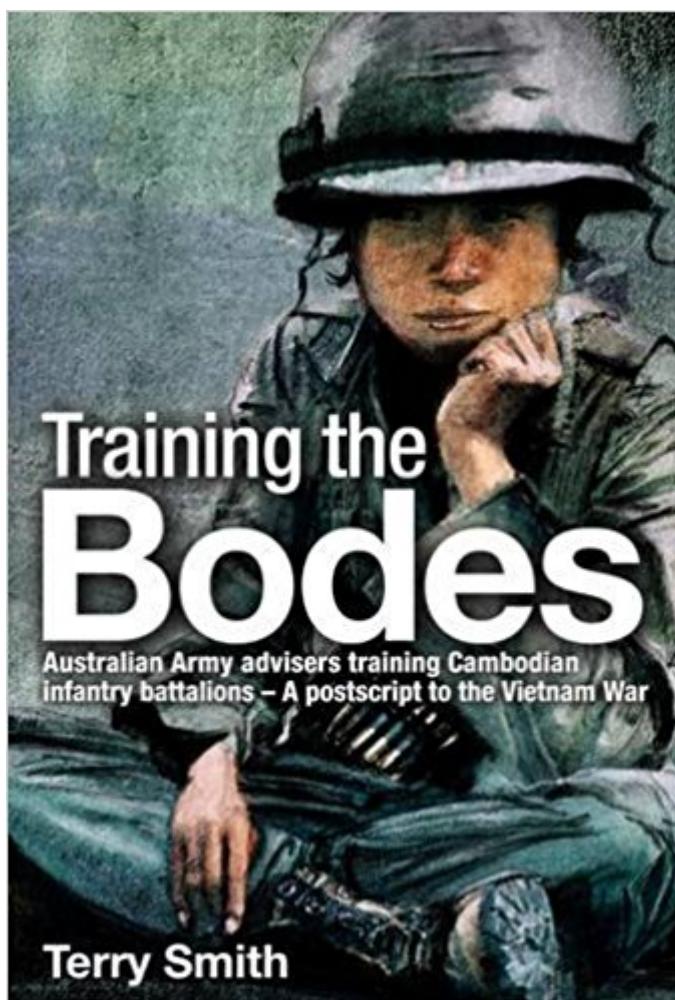


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Training The Bodes: Australian Army Advisers Training Cambodian Infantry Battalions- A Postscript To The Vietnam War



Synopsis

By the end of 1971, the hastily raised, poorly trained, and woefully led Cambodian army had suffered a string of defeats and heavy casualties inflicted by North Vietnamese army and Viet Cong units. With many of its best infantry battalions and much of its armor, transport and equipment destroyed, only three of its 15 brigade groups were militarily effective. In South Vietnam, America and its allies were in the process of withdrawing and handing back to the Vietnamese full responsibility for the conduct of the war. A small group of Australians, which never numbered more than 30 officers, warrant officers and non-commissioned officers of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam, helped train 27 light infantry battalions of the Cambodian army in South Vietnam during 1972. This project was, according to one historical study, 'a classic example of using special forces as a force multiplier', and had been 'recognized as one of the most successful foreign internal defense missions of the Vietnam War'. The story of these few men is told against the background of the war in South Vietnam, and in particular Phuoc Tuy province, as both sides fought to secure villages and hamlets during 1972, before the Peace Accords being negotiated in Paris to end the war were signed. Training the Bodes is an interesting and valuable book that tells a moving story. The excerpts from letters and reports, and the photographs, are fascinating. It fills a small gap in Australia's military history.

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Customer Reviews

Terry Smith served as an infantryman for 30 years in the Army Reserve. This included three and a

half years on full time duty in the Regular Army, from 1970 to 1973, after volunteering for service in South Vietnam. Following training as a tropical warfare adviser, he arrived in South Vietnam on 1 July 1972 where he joined the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam. In Vietnam, he served with the Phuoc Tuy Training Battalion of the United States Army Vietnam Forces Armee Nationale Khmer (FANK) Training Command, until the completion of that programme in November 1972 and thereafter, with the Jungle Warfare Training Centre at Van Kiep. Following the withdrawal of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam from South Vietnam on 18 December 1972, he completed his full time military service with the 5th Battalion the Royal Australian Regiment, before returning to civilian life in December 1973. He was appointed a Member of the Military Division of the Order of the British Empire in 1977 and a Member in the General Division of the Order of Australia in 2010.

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