



# “ADDICTIVE”

**“A remarkable first-hand testimony of men of honor fighting a war in the absence of a clear political framework and strategic end goals,”**

Dear Tom,

Hope that everything is fine with you. I took advantage of these last few days here in Morocco to finish reading “Doorsteps of Hell”. Let me say that I really enjoyed the book for many reasons. It is well written, well-structured. It is easy reading and addictive in many ways. I was very much interested to see how you were able to construct your own personality through various experiences, including the hard times of your early childhood, mixing the tough life of a Georgia country boy with the glorious dreams of an adventurous Huckleberry Finn. Your account of how you transitioned from childhood to young adult, and later on to full-grown US Marine Officer through your time at NGC and later at OCS, is inspirational. The way you took advantage of being exposed to different horizons and cultures -most importantly understanding and accepting such differences- is indeed a fascinating reflection on how you gradually shaped your character, your spirit of pride and self-discipline. However, as you may imagine I was particularly interested by your relation of your time as a young US Marine officer leading an infantry platoon in combat in the grueling conditions of the rice paddies and the jungles of Vietnam. I must say that I admire the fact that in the middle of such a bloody mess you were able to keep track of your activities, feelings and emotions on almost a daily basis. This certainly gives a sense of reality to your book that would not exist if your relation were based on more distant memories. In my opinion, this gives a quite unique flavor to “Doorsteps of Hell”.

**It is a remarkable first-hand testimony and personal account of a young officer taking up his first command in combat, assuming the responsibility for each one of his Marines, while also assuming full accountability for each of his actions and decisions, actions and decisions that not even the best and most thorough training could prepare for.**

I like the factual and detailed description of the harsh environment, the tricks and tips used to avoid being surprised by an ever-present enemy, the growing camaraderie and brotherhood in arms to help counter an always imminent and faceless danger. Your account of your transfer to recon and your operations there opens up on other tactics and Modus Operandi in guerilla warfare. All the details regarding the small teams inserted in hostile territory, and the way they may have interacted with one another in certain operations are aspects of the Vietnam war that have not been much covered.

Overall “Doorsteps of Hell” stands as a very human personal account and a remarkable first-hand testimony of men of honor fighting a war in the absence of a clear political framework and strategic end goals, something that we, French, have been accustomed to.

Again, warmest congratulations for putting together so much of yourself in this first book and doing it so brilliantly!!!

- Gen Francois Dureau, (RET)  
French Foreign Legion