

Book Review

DISTANT WAR: Recollections of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia

Distant War by Marc Yablonka

Navigator Books • Available on Amazon

Marc Yablonka's *Distant War* is a rare find. If you're reading this book review, you've probably read a few "history books" about the Vietnam War, and also have read more than a few "first-person" war-story books about the war. But it's unlikely that you've read a book quite like this one. Yablonka, a military journalist who has worked for wire services such as Reuters, and Agence France Presse, and also for several newspapers, decided to cover the Vietnam War in a unique way. Although not a Vietnam veteran, Yablonka developed an interest in some of the smaller details of the war, and the personalities who played parts (large and small) in the war.

Starting in 1990, Yablonka made several trips to Vietnam – and the less-traveled countries of Laos and Cambodia – to learn firsthand the effects of the "American War" that stretched out over, and ravaged, those three countries. With his camera and his notebook, Yablonka visited old battlefields, talked with aging Viet Cong soldiers, visited the tunnels of Cu Chi (along with all the tourists), discussed the war with American helicopter pilots, and visited the infamous "Killing Fields" of Cambodia, where he talked with survivors of that long, deadly nightmare.

Yablonka is an excellent observer of things most of us don't notice, and is a skilled writer when it comes to showing us what he's found. As another reviewer said, "[Yablonka] explores those days from odd and untouched angles. He creates an unforgettable portrait of something you thought you knew well, and find you did not know at all."

