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Bruce Crandall—whose nickname was "Snake"—was part of the 9th Assault Helicopter Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). He had command of 20 UH-1 ("Huey") helicopters.

Snake was a pilot who would fly rescue missions even when enemy fire kept medical evacuation teams away. During his time in Vietnam, Crandall led more than 750 combat missions. And ... he was the one who flew the lead Huey during the Ia Drang battles.

So important was the work of Crandall and his helicopter crews that Hal Moore (then a Lt. Col. and now a retired Lt. General) wrote a personal letter thanking Crandall for his heroism during Ia Drang. "We on that field would have gone down" without the "extraordinarily heroic effort" of Crandall and his men.

Decades later, Crandall described what it was like during that battle.

Although he received the Helicopter Heroism Award, what was it like for this much-decorated veteran's *family* while Crandall repeatedly risked his life in Vietnam?

*My wife got hate calls when I was overseas. My sons were in grade school, and their teacher didn't want to teach them because they considered me a killer. Those kinds of memories mean that the veterans of Ia Drang look out for each other. The Ia Drang Association looks out for the needs of the children of the dead. We think of our dead being together, wherever they are, just like they were in battle.*

Even when Crandall came home, he did not wear his uniform. Those were different times:

*But when I came home, I never wore the uniform anywhere, and I got four Distinguished Flying Crosses and 24 Air Medals.*

More than two decades after the Ia Drang battle, Crandall returned to the Valley with some of his fighting colleagues: Basil Plumley, Hal Moore and Joe Galloway. One purpose of their trip? To meet with some of the NVA they had fought against.

Rick Rescorla, a hero of LZ Albany, took a different kind of trip during the late summer of 2001. He became a hero once again - on September 11.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/BRUCE-CRANDALL-We-Were-Soldiers>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/BRUCE-CRANDALL-We-Were-Soldiers>

## Media Stream



### Fighting at Ia Drang - B Company at Ia Drang

Image online, courtesy the LZ-Xray website.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Fighting-at-Ia-Drang-B-Company-at-Ia-Drang>