

0. RICK RESCORLA - Story Preface

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He was an Englishman from Cornwall, this fearless 1st Platoon Leader of Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry. [Cyril R. \("Rick"\) Rescorla](#) didn't become an American citizen until after the battle of Ia Drang.

He was one of those rare people who inspire others to be brave even when all reasons to hope have vanished. Sent in to help the trapped soldiers at LZ Albany, [Rescorla](#) (whose nickname was "Hard Core") recalled what he saw as the Huey tried to land:

*First pass over Albany I stared down into the smoke and dust. Between the trees [were] the scattered khaki bodies of at least a dozen NVA. They lay face up on the brown gravel of a dry streambed. Firing snapped around us. We circled out to safety...On the second pass I saw the blackened track of the napalm.*

*American bodies and equipment dotted between the anthills and scrub brush. Getting ground fire, the pilot was clearly upset, hunched low...I stood on the skids hovering at least twelve feet over the LZ. Too high. (We Were Soldiers, page 301.)*

Dropping two more feet, the Huey could get no closer. Rescorla and four others had to jump ten feet out of the chopper. Arriving at the battalion command group perimeter, Rescorla rallied the troops. Lieutenant Larry Gwin recalled:

*I saw Rick Rescorla come swaggering into our lines with a smile on his face, an M-79 on his shoulder, his M-16 in one hand saying, "Good, good, good! I hope they hit us with everything they got tonight - we'll wipe them up."*

*His spirit was catching. The troops were cheering as each load came in, and we really raised a racket. The enemy must have thought that an entire battalion was coming to help us because of all our screaming and yelling. (We Were Soldiers, page 302.)*

When things got really bad, "Hard Core" would start to sing. Sometimes he sang the Cornish songs of his youth. He is the [man on the cover](#) of *We Were Soldiers Once...and Young*. He is also the man who saved more than 2,000 lives on 9/11.

After he left the Army, Rescorla graduated from law school. He used his education and experience to head up security at Morgan Stanley's operations at 2 World Trade Center (the South Tower).

When the first plane flew into 1 World Trade Center (the North Tower), officials on loudspeakers told the

building's occupants to stay put. Rescorla disagreed. He'd been there when the South Tower was bombed by terrorists in 1993. He'd always believed the next attack would be by air - albeit by cargo plane.

Since that first attack, he'd made his charges go through periodic evacuation drills. They hated it. Now his worst fear was realized.

During Vietnam, his men called him "Hard Core" because he was totally unflappable in the face of death. And so it was on [September 11](#).

Because of his calm reassurance, all but six of Morgan Stanley's 2,700 South Tower employees made it out of the building before it collapsed. Rick would have made it out, too - had he not [gone back](#) up the stairs to make sure no stragglers still needed his help. That's where he was - trying to help others - when the building [fell on him](#).

Hal Moore has tried very hard to have Rick posthumously receive a Medal of Freedom. Folks who knew him well say that, had he lived, Rescorla would have observed he was merely doing his job. It's just that his job was harder than most.

But that point could equally be made of all the other heroes who [fought](#) at Ia Drang, the first major battle of the Vietnam War. As Joe Galloway summarized:

*I think often of all that you did for us...All that you meant to us: You came for our wounded. You came to get our dead brothers. You came when the fight was over...To give us a ride home from hell. There isn't a former grunt alive who doesn't freeze for a moment and feel the hair rise on the back of his neck when he hears the "whup whup whup" of those helicopter blades.*

And there isn't a person who learns the story of the Ia Drang battles who will not be amazed by the courage of the men who *Were Soldiers Once...and Young*.

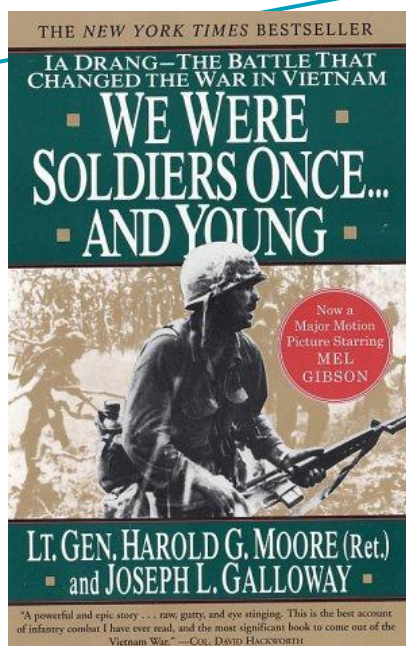
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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/RICK-RESCORLA-We-Were-Soldiers>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/RICK-RESCORLA-We-Were-Soldiers>

## Media Stream



### [Rick Rescorla - Hero of Ia Drang](#)

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