



# **Year in Nam: A Native American Soldier's Story (North American Indian Prose Award)**

*Leroy TeCube*

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In 1968 Leroy TeCube left his home on the Jicarilla Apache reservation to serve as an infantryman in Vietnam. *Year in Nam* is his story of that long, terrifying, and numbing year of combat, one that profoundly affected the men in TeCube's platoon and tested the strength of his own Native American heritage.

Tecube was a respected point man and leader of his platoon. His memoir provides an intimate glimpse of the daily lives of infantrymen—the monotony of camp, the oppressive heat, the deceptively dull routine of patrols, the brief but furious eruptions of combat, the forging of platoon squads on the crucible of trust, a pervasive sadness and indifference, and a growing acceptance of the imminence of death. Particularly powerful are Tecube's observations and experiences from the perspective of a Native American soldier. Many aspects of TeCube's cultural heritage—his traditional religious beliefs, the farewell blessing from an Apache medicine man, the memory of special powwow dances held back home for soldiers—were a source of strength to him.

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