

## Donut Dolly: An American Red Cross Girl's War in Vietnam (North Texas Military Biography and Memoir Series)

Joann Puffer Kotcher

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*Donut Dolly* puts you in the Vietnam War face down in the dirt under a sniper attack, inside a helicopter being struck by lightning, at dinner next to a commanding general, and slogging through the mud along a line of foxholes. You see the war through the eyes of one of the first women officially allowed in the combat zone.

When Joann Puffer Kotcher left for Vietnam in 1966, she was fresh out of the University of Michigan with a year of teaching, and a year as an American Red Cross Donut Dolly in Korea. All she wanted was to go someplace exciting. In Vietnam, she visited troops from the Central Highlands to the Mekong Delta, from the South China Sea to the Cambodian border. At four duty stations, she set up recreation centers and made mobile visits wherever commanders requested. That included Special Forces Teams in remote combat zone jungles. She brought reminders of home, thoughts of a sister or the girl next door. Officers asked her to take risks because they believed her visits to the front lines were important to the men. Every Vietnam veteran who meets her thinks of her as a brother-at-arms.

Donut Dolly is Kotcher's personal view of the war, recorded in a journal kept during her tour, day by day as she experienced it. It is a faithful representation of the twists and turns of the turbulent, controversial time. While in Vietnam, Kotcher was once abducted; dodged an ambush in the Delta; talked with a true war hero in a hospital who had charged a machine gun; and had a conversation with a prostitute. A rare account of an American Red Cross volunteer in Vietnam, *Donut Dolly* will appeal to those interested in the Vietnam War, to those who have interest in the military, and to women aspiring to go beyond the ordinary.



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