



# Road to the Killing Fields: The Cambodian War of 1970-1975 (Texas A & M University Military History)

*Wilfred P. Deac*

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The 1970-75 war in Cambodia directly involved the United States, contributed to the downfall of an American president, led to the "killing fields," and explains much of what has since happened in Cambodia. Yet, because U.S. involvement in that part of Southeast Asia was largely clandestine, the American people know little about it, regarding the fighting in Cambodia as a small sideshow to the Vietnam War. In fact, it was a full-scale war in which a small nation, sucked into the vortex of Cold War geopolitics, was propelled into one of history's bloodiest, most brutal periods. This is the first book to deal exclusively with the military aspects of the Cambodian War. In its introductory chapters Wilfred P. Deac describes Cambodia and its people, the decades of French colonialism, and the early years of independence under Prince Sihanouk. In the balance of the book, Deac describes the events of the five years of warfare: the early American and South Vietnamese incursions and the first Cambodian government offensives; the battle for control of the countryside, lost by the government; the corruption, popular unrest, and political in-fighting that weakened the government; the ascendancy of the Khmer Rouge over their North Vietnamese allies; the nonstop, 189-day American bombing offensive in 1973; the siege, strangulation, and fall of Phnom Penh; and the introduction of the horror of the killing fields. A brief afterword looks at Cambodian postwar policies, the Khmer Rouge-Vietnamese War of 1978-79, and today's prostrate Cambodia, an inevitable result of war.

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