



McNamara's Folly

Hamilton Gregory

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In 1966, President Lyndon Johnson and Defense Secretary Robert McNamara were desperate to find additional troops for the Vietnam War, but they feared that they would alienate middle-class voters if they drafted college boys or sent Reservists and National Guardsmen to Vietnam. So, on October 1, 1966, McNamara lowered mental standards and inducted thousands of low-IQ men. Altogether, 354,000 of these men were taken into the Armed Forces and a large number of them were sent into combat. Many military men, including William Westmoreland, the commanding general in Vietnam, viewed McNamara's program as a disaster. Because many of the substandard men were incompetent in combat, they endangered not only themselves but their comrades as well. Their death toll was appallingly high. In addition to low-IQ men, tens of thousands of other substandard troops were inducted, including criminals, misfits, and men with disabilities. This book tells the story of the men caught up in McNamara's folly.

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