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Road To Baghdad: Behind Enemy Lines: The Adventures Of An American Soldier In The Gulf War



Synopsis

In 1990, U.S. Army Major Martin Stanton was a military advisor stationed in Saudi Arabia. Encouraged by the Army to broaden his cultural horizons, and assured by the U.S. embassy that Kuwait was perfectly safe, Stanton took off for a long weekend there. Roused by gunshots his first night in Kuwait City, Stanton looked out the window and discovered he was in the middle of a full-scale invasion. Iraq's Gulf War had begun and in the Kuwait City Sheraton, overlooking the entire western part of town, the United States had inadvertently encouraged an Army officer to go "behind enemy lines". As fighting continued and bullets hit the hotel's facade, Stanton began phoning in intelligence reports to his superiors. He noted the arrival of the first tanks and their strategic deployment to places with the most shade as well as the Sheraton's transition from hotel to Iraqi military headquarters. From the top floor of the hotel, Stanton would scour the surrounding streets with his binoculars, then descend to the lobby, where he'd lounge around the door of the Iraqi command post's map room conveniently converted from the Sheraton's conference room gleaning what he could and reporting back intelligence. Without a doubt, the Pentagon had unwittingly scored a major coup. Yet Stanton's prime position was short lived. Rounded up by the enemy, he would spend the next four months in Iraq as one of Saddam's "guests" also known as human shields as the western hostages were shifted among various strategic facilities: chemical weapons factories, oil refineries, and power plants. Despite his dire circumstance, Stanton nevertheless strove at all times to do his duty to the best of his ability by continually taking notes and looking for ways to smuggle out information. In his role as a roving human shield, Stanton saw more of Iraq than he ever wanted to. Fortunately, he was released in time to fight the Gulf War with his Saudi unit. With the same insight and intelligence evident in his first book, *Somalia on \$5 a Day*, Martin Stanton has produced another fascinating account that offers readers a rare glimpse of a different time in the Middle East, when Saddam Hussein was at the height of his power and ambition, and when the U.S. was simply trying to repel an invader.

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Customer Reviews

Truth really can be stranger than fiction--and better reading, as well. Colonel Stanton's very impressive, highly readable memoir of his extraordinary adventures prior to and during the first Gulf War is a remarkable book--both for its ability to capture the inventive nature and casual courage of our finest military officers and for its ability to tell a thrilling personal story in a way that is neither bragging (too often a fault with first-person accounts) or pretentious. Stanton has the gift of telling a story straight and letting events speak for themselves. His experiences when stranded in Kuwait City during the opening phase of Iraq's invasion--when he kept an open line to U.S. authorities for days and reported directly from the Iraqi headquarters in his hotel--might have made a fine story in themselves, while revealing much about the Iraqi military's hidden weaknesses. His follow-on adventures as a prisoner-of-not-quite-war, absolutely true and corroborated, are better than the stuff of classic adventure novels. And he made it back to friendly lines in time to fight Desert Storm. This is a splendid military tale, well-told, of adventures that rival the great old military narratives from the Middle East, whether of Gordon Pasha, Lawrence or Wingate. And it's enormous fun to read, while making it very clear how we were able to defeat the Iraqis so handily. As this review is written, Colonel Stanton, whom I am privileged to have met as a consequence of my own military service, has served on the ground in our second Iraq war and is now in Baghdad, working on the reconstruction of Iraq. He's a soldier's soldier--and a superb storyteller. This book could not be more timely. The next time you feel the impulse to pick up a fictional thriller, skip it and read Stanton's book. It's more exciting--and it's true. Destined to become a modern military classic!

Marty Stanton has the ability to spin a fascinating story. Before the first Gulf War, he was assigned to a one of a kind military organization, quite unlike anything which most career soldiers will ever experience. The opportunities that assignment gave him for travel and interaction with the locals, lead to a unique perspective on that period of history. Coupling his rare view of events with his

sense of humor, he has used his gift for writing to produce an accurate account of events which is fun and easy to read. Most soldiers never have the opportunity to find themselves in the sort of situations that Stanton writes about. Using plain language that takes you along with him on the adventure of a lifetime, this book is a must for anyone going on an assignment as a military advisor or observer. A good read for anyone interested in history, the military, or life in the Middle East.

I thought this was a great read. It shows the military trainers to Saudi Arabia and the system the Kingdom uses to train its National Guard. Marty was in the wrong place at the wrong time when he decided to take a weekend trip to Kuwait. It was funny hearing the author talk about how bumbling the Iraqis were with the occupation. It was almost like the Keystone cops conquering a country. Please big white guy, take a look at our strategic deployments on this big map of Kuwait. Then keeping the hotel switchboard open to international calls. I thought this was a fun read about the First Gulf War. Marty was a guest of Saddam for many months, and this book describes how he survived the meager food of a guest. Probably dated with the end of the second Gulf War.

I will not write a detailed review, suffice to say I agree with the other 5-star ratings already written and highly recommend this book. Very well written and keeps your interest throughout. I enjoyed the narrative from cover to cover and it gave a great insight into the "mentality" of the middle east and what we continue to be up against in that region (with friend and foe). I'm glad he was able to survive, put it together in a book and not be just another untold story.

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