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The Fires Of Babylon: Eagle Troop And The Battle Of 73 Easting



Synopsis

On the morning of August 2, 1990, Iraqi armored divisions invaded the tiny emirate of Kuwait. The Iraqi Army, after its long war with Iran, had more combat experience than the US Army. The Kuwaitis had collapsed easily enough, but the invasion drew fierce condemnation from the United Nations, which demanded Hussein's withdrawal. Undeterred by the rhetoric, the Iraqi dictator massed his forces along the Saudi Arabian border and dared the world to stop him. In response, the United States led the world community in a coalition of 34 nations in what became known as Operation Desert Storm. Leading this charge into Iraq were the men of Eagle Troop in the US Army's Second Armored Cavalry Regiment. Commanded by then-Captain H. R. McMaster - who would go on to serve as National Security Advisor in the Trump administration - Eagle Troop was the lead element of the US VII Corps' advance into Iraq. On February 26, 1991, Eagle Troop encountered the Tawakalna Brigade of Iraq's elite Republican Guard. By any calculation, the 12 American tanks didn't stand a chance. Yet within a mere 23 minutes, the M1A1 tanks of Eagle Troop destroyed more than 50 enemy vehicles and plowed a hole through the Iraqi front. History would call it the Battle of 73 Easting.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"The Fires of Babylon" for a civilian like me truly helped me understand Operation Desert Storm of 1991 and modern warfare. The book tells the story of the U.S. ground war against the Iraqi troops led by Saddam Hussein. Mike Guardia, formerly an Army Armor officer, leads the

reader through the transition of the American Army in the Vietnam era into the 1990s, by telling the story of the officers and soldiers of Eagle Troop in the U.S. Army's 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment. He gives us the story of their training in the U.S. and Germany which included everything from acclimation to the desert, preparations for chemical warfare, to the writing of their wills and last testaments and having pre-deployment photos taken in case they did not return. Their wills were written after Thanksgiving, and on December 4th they flew to Saudi Arabia. Once there, each soldier had to drink three bottles of water per day to survive in the desert and learn to battle the abrasiveness of the sand, which prompted many to repair their boots with duct tape. Then there were unexpected roadblocks like when they were being bussed to their battle stations by Arab drivers. There was an unexplained stop when all the drivers left their buses. The soldier told our author he thought to himself, "Why are we stopping the war for a prayer call? We're already here in the desert, let's get moving!" Finally on February 22nd the Eagle Troop drove their tanks into Iraq. After a month long air campaign against the Iraqi Army, the ground battle that lasted 100 hours began on February 23rd and was described in great detail, battling a sandstorm as well as the Iraqi tanks. The story of this battle and victory in the desert brought me a much better appreciation of what the U.S. soldier endured then and have endured for centuries. This book is an excellent read for those who want to understand the history of Operation Desert Storm and the U.S. Army.

Excellent well written and researched the first true book on one of the most famous tank battles in history. It is not about division running around the battlefield, It is about a Cavalry Troop of approx. 140 men lead by a Captain taking on a bigger and well equip force and showing how the US Military transformed itself from the old Vietnam Days to a modern Military Juggernaut! The story is about the men first , the tactics and the equipment...The battle is studied at West Point, this book should be part of it as well!

Best read in conjunction with Douglas Macgregor's Warrior's Rage for an intriguing account of an intense modern heavy armor battle from multiple perspectives. MacMaster plays a prominent role, but this is not his personal account, so it's different from Macgregor's book. Especially good at humanizing the story of the entire troop, emphasizing how much of a team operation modern combat is. Highly recommended.

In a political era when scandalously few of the United States' political leaders have been

shaped by military service, this book provides a fascinating look at a formative moment in the career of HR McMaster, who as this reviewer sets pen to paper serves as the country's National Security Advisor. The brief survey of an armored battle that takes pride of place in a world that sees few such large-scale engagements of tanks tells as well the satisfying story of the U.S.

Military's improbable feat of transformation from post-Vietnam malaise through to the disciplined, strategically minded force that destroyed Saddam Hussein's forces in the First Gulf War. *Guardia's FIRES OF BABYLON* chronicles the U.S. Army's pivot from an anti-Soviet blocking mission that had lost its relevance by the time the Berlin Wall crumbled to a highly fluid challenge from operating positions in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and eventually Iraq itself. It was commanders like McMaster (a Captain at the time of 73 Easting) who brought the discipline and savvy that produced overwhelming military success against an Iraqi force that was judged to be capable of kicking butt on the battlefield. In the end, only one butt got kicked in an epic slaughter that could have led to the removal of Saddam but for the political considerations that led the first President Bush to pull up short. Yet none of this was foreordained. Things might have turned out badly. That they did not is a story that deserves retelling, particularly in the environment I mention in this review's first paragraph: one where a highly disciplined fighting force enjoys emotional support from a populace that has little real understanding of what it takes to fight. *Guardia* performs his narrative duty in a way that puts flesh and blood, face and voice to a limited number of armored warriors who prepared to face down Iraq and then did so with stunning speed and results. We follow them from Germany to Saudi and then across the berm into Iraq. This reader is struck by how severely intelligence had over-rated the Iraqi troops that waited there, and by how little our armor and infantry could have known of that until contact had been made. The opposite would have been calamitous. *Guardia* teases out the humanity of these soldiers, together with a number of other fascinating threads that include the shifts of military technology that were taking place at the time (for example, in armored troop carriers and among the tanks themselves); the critical pivot-point of professional and disciplined small-unit leadership; and the powerful strategy and tactics that were brought to bear on Saddam's challenge. Not one of these themes has any element of automatic in it. Each is the product of sustained effort in a single direction. Else Saddam might have stood. This reviewer also appreciates the author's description of how quickly and savagely the desert can turn from friend to foe, and how the wrong turns can effectively incapacitate an otherwise overwhelming force. A superbly well chosen collection of photos and the now obligatory (after *Band of Brothers*) *After the Storm* trace the lives and careers of soldiers come home. Four stars for a well informed and nicely told story that both illuminates and

teaches, perhaps without the polished writing that would have earned it a fifth.

Great book Recommend for every tanker. Very well written, ever tanker should enjoy this book. I only hope all the guys got the help they needed.

This book gives what is probably a pretty good feel for the day to day life of a Recon Marine in Iraq. It was dirty, confusing and the men suffered a lot of hardships. They performed well and dealt with the unfortunate fact that civilians, including kids, are sometimes killed and wounded in war. I wonder if the portrayal of the officers and men are entirely accurate. It seems like almost officers above the rank of lieutenant were incompetent. It would seem even none of the enlisted men were what we normally think of as "normal". The book was written by an embedded reporter. It's a worthwhile read. It did not make me want to go to Iraq.

A chance to get to know the personnel of Desert Storm, along with the preparation and this momentous victory. It will take into the horrors, terrors and frustrations of war,

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