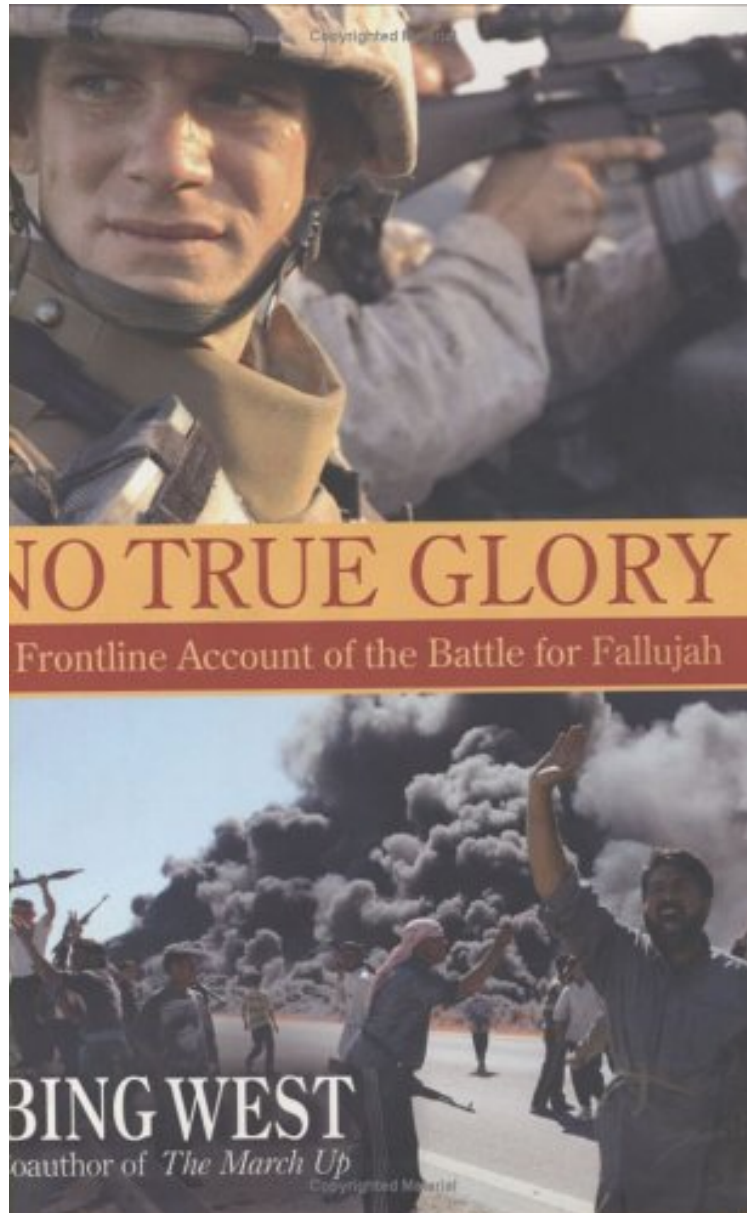


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No True Glory: A Frontline Account of the Battle for Fallujah

Bing West

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Bing West : No True Glory: A Frontline Account of the Battle for Fallujah before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised No True Glory: A Frontline Account of the Battle for Fallujah:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Good detailed account By Clem As I write this review, the United

States of America is still shell shocked by the brutal terrorist killings that occurred in San Bernardino, California in November 2015. Sadly, the country doesn't appear to be united. President Obama and the far left think that stricter gun laws can prevent such atrocities whereas those on the far right, including presidential candidate Donald Trump, are essentially wanting to ban all Muslims from the United States. War is hell. I only say this because the whole Iraq mess seemed to culminate from the terrorist attacks on 9/11. We went to war believing Saddam Hussein was hoarding Weapons of Mass Destruction. Since most agree that we had faulty intelligence and no weapons were found, what could we do now that we've committed ourselves? Well, the good news is that Hussein was toppled from power, and forced to flee (he was eventually found, and systematically executed). The Iraqi people rejoiced, and our 24 hour news coverage showed a jubilant population celebrating in the streets while ransacking his ubiquitous palaces and statues that wallpapered Baghdad. The problem was, what happens next? Here's where most people, excluding the political astute, simply were clueless. Many believed that we could "destroy" Iraq and then somehow rebuild the backwards country to resemble the state of Vermont. Those who know better knew better. This book puts us right in the middle of the nastiest place in Iraq, the ugly grime-filled city of Fallujah. This is the last place where anyone would want to be during a war. A bit like the Siberian Front in World War II. What author Bing West manages to do is tell a very thorough account of the frontlines during this calamity that began in April 2003. He spends equal time talking about the battles with several of the key players on the ground, as well as many involved in the military and political leadership. The author shows us that there's a very big disconnect going on here. Fortunately, this is not a "Pro War" nor an "Anti-War" book. The author manages to focus on war, and any war is extremely unpleasant. While reading, I couldn't help draw many parallels to the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. A big criticism of that war is that it seemed as though the U.S. wanted the South Vietnamese to win the war more than the South Vietnamese did. Such seems to be the case here. Even with Saddam Hussein gone, you can't expect a nation that has been embroiled in a set way of living to suddenly throw all the shackles off and embrace democracy. Even after Saddam is gone, there are rife political sides, and most still hate America. A sad analogy: If you adopt a five-year-old dog that has been abused and tormented its whole life, that dog will never be "normal", no matter how much love you shower upon it. So America really wants to help. Money is spent. Money is given to Fallujah and Iraq. Lots of money. That will inspire them. Right? Nope. So we give more money. More decisions are made, more disagreements between leaders, more frustrated marines on the battlefield. etc. etc. You have to admire the marines for wanting to get the job done. They know they have the manpower to obliterate this hell-hole, and they're highly motivated after seeing all of the injustice and nastiness firsthand. But we can't fight wars that way anymore. Not with CNN reporting every move we make. Sadly, casualties in a war always expand beyond the enemy on the frontlines. Buildings get bombed containing innocent civilians, and the 24 news networks are quick to make these the lead stories, which then drives up animosity for any conflict. So President Bush knows he has to be careful. One needs to only remember the Abu Gharib prison story that made headlines during all of the Fallujah crap. Most Americans can probably tell you more about that incident than they can the whole Fallujah episode because, let's face it, a story about prisoners being unjustly tortured makes sensational headlines. Hindsight tells us that even though we were finally "successful" in Fallujah, nothing has really changed. Imagine turning on your kitchen lights at 2 a.m. and seeing 100 cockroaches. If you're lucky, you can kill about 5 of them, but the rest will scurry under the surface, multiply, and be back the next night. And the cockroaches in Fallujah have guns and homemade bombs. Like Vietnam, we may have dropped a lot of bombs and killed far more of the enemy than what we lost, but until you break the psyche of the enemy (as we did with Germany and Japan), you can never really say that you've "won" the war. We were never able to accomplish that in Iraq, and Fallujah was where this was at its ugliest. A good, but depressing read. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Definitely a winner of a book. By Eddie Wannabee There you have it. A book that basically tells how under appreciated our armed forces are in the conflict called Iraq. Like opening a can of worms, trying to step in to bring the powerful forces of democracy to a region where perhaps that kind of notion can not be understood. Of course, the ones who have to deal with all the violent resistance from the insurgents, is the faithful US Armed Forces, where the Marines seem to always take front stage, not to discredit all the other members of the finest force of this world. This book is written by absolutely one of the best there ever was, a writer that knows and feels for our soldiers as much as anyone could. This is one book that should be read by anyone who might think the life over there is easy, the consequences of being there not too challenging. I happen to love our Armed Forces, and it hurts to know all the suffering our troops have gone through, having to deal with the politics that corrupt all military campaigns. Too many roadblocks created by those who sent them there in the first place, but one thing remains very clear: there are countless enemies disguised as regular people, and I can understand that the fight in Fallujah was no easy job, for the backstabbing that takes place outside of the tight units that got the job, would be enough to make the back of one's hair stand up. Instead of being able to go there in full force, too many restrictions governing the missions, for what will the world say if the poor population of Fallujah, who seemed to be very pleased with the bodies of Americans hanging in their bridge, complained of military abuse on the part of the invading army every chance they could voice their discontent. This book was as good as one is going to get in this modern war that started what it seems now a long time ago. 4.5 Stars. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. " It wasn't quite as bad as Stalingrad. By Charles Kovacs I hope this

book is required reading for all infantry officers, and preferably for all others as well because it covers seamlessly a long campaign from the strategic to the operational to the tactical level, right down to individual squads and even the individuals. As the sub-title states, the campaign is the Battle for Fallujah, but this was actually several battles with distinct phases and it took over a year. Bing West starts with a brief and exceptionally lucid introduction, then explains the intricate command relationship on Iraq as well as the complexities of politics which involved major political, religious and tribal divisions. This section is indispensable for an understanding of what was happening in Iraq after we took Baghdad and destroyed the Baathist regime. There is then the seamless move to the battles, not just in Fallujah, but Ramadi and Sadr City as well. All of these were battles for cities, i.e. street fighting or as it is now called "operations in the urban terrain." It wasn't quite as bad as Stalingrad, Berlin and Budapest in WWII, but then the US forces engaged rarely exceeded an infantry regiment or brigade against high odds, albeit made up of untrained, but often fanatical fighters. The descriptions of these engagements are both hair-raising and exciting; this was a book hard to put down, even knowing the end. There is a constant switching between the fighting and the "big picture" view and this is essential for gaining a knowledge of how the United States conducted its occupation and nation-building in Iraq. In fact, even in spite of many missteps, this turned out to be successful by the end of 2008 and started deteriorating afterwards when Pres. Obama announced the withdrawal of US troops. Be that as it may, there were missteps enough in 2003-4 and the author describes them in detail but without acrimony or hyperbole. Indeed, he is careful to write history objectively, with personal views/conclusions limited mainly to the last chapter. I found it difficult to disagree with them. The author, by the way, is eminently well qualified for the subject by way of his service in the USMC and the Defense Department. This is actually rather a short book, but it contains two long excerpts from Bing West's other books on Iraq and I am planning to buy both, although the excerpts by themselves are very useful.

"This is the face of war as only those who have fought it can describe it."—Senator John McCain
Fallujah: Iraq's most dangerous city unexpectedly emerged as the major battleground of the Iraqi insurgency. For twenty months, one American battalion after another tried to quell the violence, culminating in a bloody, full-scale assault. Victory came at a terrible price: 151 Americans and thousands of Iraqis were left dead. The epic battle for Fallujah revealed the startling connections between policy and combat that are a part of the new reality of war. The Marines had planned to slip into Fallujah "as soft as fog." But after four American contractors were brutally murdered, President Bush ordered an attack on the city—against the advice of the Marines. The assault sparked a political firestorm, and the Marines were forced to withdraw amid controversy and confusion—only to be ordered a second time to take a city that had become an inferno of hate and the lair of the archterrorist al-Zarqawi. Based on months spent with the battalions in Fallujah and hundreds of interviews at every level—senior policymakers, negotiators, generals, and soldiers and Marines on the front lines—No True Glory is a testament to the bravery of the American soldier and a cautionary tale about the complex—and often costly—interconnected roles of policy, politics, and battle in the twenty-first century.

From Booklist
The most hard-fought campaign since the invasion of Iraq by coalition forces in April 2003, the battle for Fallujah seems here to embody most every facet of the American military experience in that country—inordinate courage by the fighting men and their immediate superiors, indecision and contradiction by U.S. leaders from the top down, a disconnect between military will to succeed in Iraq and a lack of dollars and troops to support it, and a treacherous relationship between Fallujans and those Americans who would do everything to "help" them. West, who coauthored *The March Up: Taking Baghdad with the United States Marines* (2003), does touch on the larger policy decisions made by U.S. leaders concerning Iraq but really only as they affect the soldiers trying to execute those decisions in Fallujah. Instead, West's focus is on the "frontline," putting the reader at the negotiating table with U.S. military commanders and Fallujan sheiks, imams, and rebel leaders; in the barracks; and on the street, fighting hand to hand, house to house, in some of the fiercest battles of the Fallujah campaign and the Iraq war. Appearing neither pro nor antiwar, West simply delivers a remarkably detailed, vivid firsthand account of the American military experience, 2004-05, in a highly combustible part of Iraq. Alan Moores
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"While many other correspondents have ventured to the front lines in Iraq, few have stayed as long as West, or brought as much knowledge of military affairs to their work. The result is a book that ... features amazing accounts of heroism, brutality, perseverance, and gallows humor."—Max Boot, *The Weekly Standard*
"No True Glory is the gripping account of the valor of the Marines in the fiercest urban combat since Hue. Yet, the even-handed description of the vacillation regarding policy will likely please neither some of our senior officers nor the White House."—Former Secretary of Defense, James R. Schlesinger
"No True Glory is the best book on the U.S. military in Iraq to emerge so far."—Tom Ricks of *The Washington Post*
"The finest chronicle of the strategy behind battle and the fighting during battle that I've ever read!"—General Carl E. Mundy, former Commandant of the Marine Corps
"A remarkably detailed, vivid firsthand account of the American military experience.... West's focus is on the "frontline," putting the reader at the negotiating table with U.S. military commanders and Fallujan sheiks, imams, and rebel leaders; in the barracks; and on the street, fighting hand to hand, house to house, in some of the fiercest battles of the Fallujah campaign and the Iraq war."—Booklist
"West describes the fury of the fighting in Fallujah and Ramadi in a

style that makes him part historian, part novelist — the grunts' Homer.”—LA Times Book “West successfully brings the war back home in all its agonizing and illuminating detail. From the combat stories of those on the ground all the way up to the White House, West [is] uniquely placed to write a chronicle of the fight. The narrative truly shines.”—The Christian Science Monitor“Exhaustively reported...West paints a picture of highly capable Marines struggling to make the best of untenable political circumstances.”—Washington Post Book WorldFrom the Inside FlapThis is the face of war as only those who have fought it can describe it.”—Senator John McCain Fallujah: Iraq’s most dangerous city unexpectedly emerged as the major battleground of the Iraqi insurgency. For twenty months, one American battalion after another tried to quell the violence, culminating in a bloody, full-scale assault. Victory came at a terrible price: 151 Americans and thousands of Iraqis were left dead. The epic battle for Fallujah revealed the startling connections between policy and combat that are a part of the new reality of war. The Marines had planned to slip out of Fallujah "as soft as fog." But after four American contractors were brutally murdered, President Bush ordered an attack on the city—against the advice of the Marines. The assault sparked a political firestorm, and the Marines were forced to withdraw amid controversy and confusion—only to be ordered a second time to take a city that had become an inferno of hate and the lair of the archterrorist al-Zarqawi. Based on months spent with the battalions in Fallujah and hundreds of interviews at every level—senior policymakers, negotiators, generals, and soldiers and Marines on the front lines—No True Glory is a testament to the bravery of the American soldier and a cautionary tale about the complex—and often costly—interconnected roles of policy, politics, and battle in the twenty-first century.