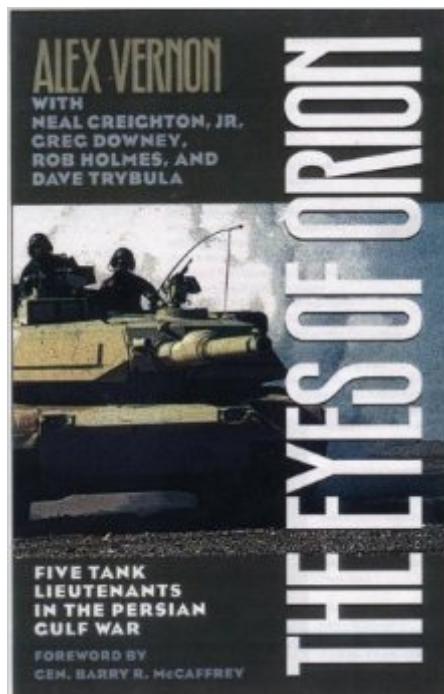


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The Eyes Of Orion: Five Tank Lieutenants In The Persian Gulf War



Synopsis

A personal account of the day-to-day experiences of five US platoon leaders who served during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. The young officers describe their deployment to Saudi Arabia, six months' desert training, combat and occupation in Iraq, and finally their homecoming.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A few years after the conclusion of Desert Storm, four veterans of that war decided to get together and write a memoir of their experiences. Eventually they added a fifth member. What distinguishes them was that all five served as platoon commanders in a single Armor battalion that was a part of the 24th infantry Division. This division conducted the "left hook" campaign where they entered Iraq in the desert, raced to the main Basra - Baghdad roads, and blocked them so the Iraqi Army could not retreat. Four of these Lieutenants graduated in the same West Point class and so knew each other even before the war, and by the time Desert Shield started, they had already been in command of their platoons for almost a year. Nonetheless, they were still relatively junior 2nd Lieutenants who directly led their platoons from the hatch of an M1 tank or from a Bradley fighting vehicle. The period that this book encompasses starts from when the 24th Division went on alert to deploy to Saudi Arabia until they return home to Fort Stewart, Georgia. A final chapter allows each of them to reflect back on their experiences in the intervening six years and update the readers on what happened to them since the war ended. The main parts of the book divide into the activities of Desert Shield; the activities during Desert Storm, and then their reflections. Each of these parts tells its story in a mélange of stories and recollections from each of the five authors intermingled with

each other. It is sometimes unclear who is telling what story. However, one of the positive (and very interesting) attributes of this style of writing is that sometimes the same event or anecdote is told from different perspectives and you can try to piece together what really happened yourself.

The attack on the USS Cole came just hours after I had just finished a book on the Gulf War. The book was titled "Eyes of Orion". Its subject was five 23 year old US Army M1 tank/ Bradley Fighting Vehicle commanders' experience during Desert Shield through Desert Storm. Their accounts held no punches and left me feeling on the bounds of horrible that our country had to ask these boys to do this, but happy that they survived. A large portion of the book was dedicated to the 5 months of Desert Shield which in my own terms I could sum up as my own experiences as a US Marine in practically any CAX I participated in at 29 Palms. The desert is a brutal place to live and work. That part of the book was refreshing to remember some of the hardships I had endured. However it was the actual battle that was horrifying. It left me with the impression of some components of our Army as being a group of "I'm not going home til I shoot something". This story doesn't cover tank vs. tank battle with the Iraqi army (however it does cover US Army Tanks Vs. US Army tanks). "IRON SOLDIERS" (Tom Carhart) is the book you want to read if that's what you want. Once the ground war started they were constantly under fire from their own units. In our military there is a special unit assigned to Division level that has radar which can electronically "see" enemy (as well as friendly) artillery firing through the air. It can immediately plot where the rounds came from, send out these coordinates to a counterbattery unit which within moments fires its own volleys on the artillery position the radar had tracked. Too often in these accounts, when an American artillery unit fired, they themselves were fired upon by our own Divisional artillery.

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