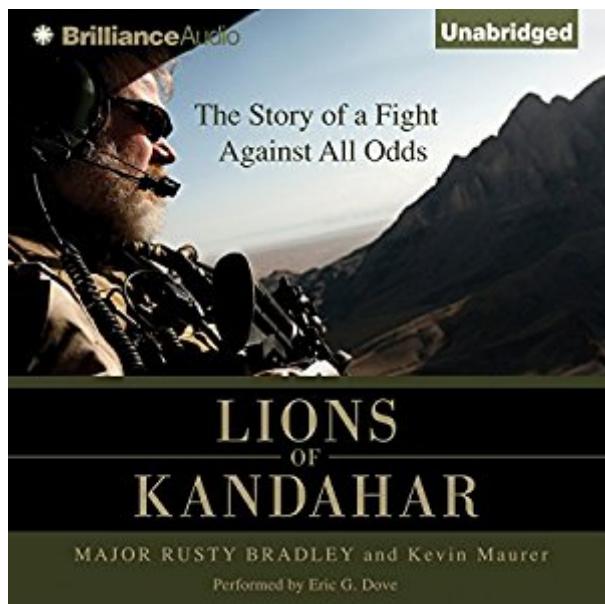


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Lions Of Kandahar: The Story Of A Fight Against All Odds



Synopsis

One of the most critical battles of the Afghan War is now revealed as never before. Lions of Kandahar is an inside account from the unique perspective of an active-duty U.S. Army Special Forces commander, an unparalleled warrior with multiple deployments to the theater who has only recently returned from combat. Southern Afghanistan was slipping away. That was clear to then-Captain Rusty Bradley as he began his third tour of duty there in 2006. The Taliban and their allies were infiltrating everywhere, poised to reclaim Kandahar Province, their strategically vital onetime capital. To stop them, the NATO coalition launched Operation Medusa, the largest offensive in its history. The battlefield was the Panjwayi Valley, a densely packed warren of walled compounds that doubled neatly as enemy bunkers, lush orchards, and towering marijuana stands, laced through with treacherous irrigation ditches. A mass exodus of civilians heralded the carnage to come. Dispatched as a diversionary force in support of the main coalition attack, Bradley's Special Forces A-team and two others, along with their longtime Afghan Army allies, watched from across the valley as the NATO force was quickly engulfed in a vicious counterattack. Key to relieving it and calling in effective air strikes was possession of a modest patch of high ground called Sperwan Ghar. Bradley's small detachment assaulted the hill and, in the midst of a savage and unforgettable firefight, soon learned they were facing nearly a thousand seasoned fighters - from whom they seized an impossible victory. Now Bradley recounts the whole remarkable story as it actually happened. The blistering trek across Afghanistan's infamous Red Desert. The eerie traces of the elusive Taliban. The close relations with the Afghan people and army, a primary mission focus. Sperwan Ghar itself: unremitting waves of fire from machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades; a targeted truck turned into an inferno; the death trap of a cut-off compound. Most important: the men, Americans and Afghans alike - the "shaky" medic with nerves of steel and a surgeon's hands in battle; the tireless sergeant who seems to be everywhere at once; the soft-spoken intelligence officer with laser-sharp insight; the diminutive Afghan commander with a Goliath-sized heart; the cool maverick who risks all to rescue a grievously wounded comrade - each unique, all indelible in their everyday exercise of extraordinary heroism.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Lions of Kandahar" describes the most important battle we've never heard about until now, one in which a few dozen American special forces and Afghan allies saved overall U.S. and N.A.T.O. efforts in Afghanistan from disaster in 2006. Writing this a few days after the death of Osama Bin Laden at the hands of a similar team of Navy SEALS, I find myself thankful we have such special forces heroes on our side in our continuing troubles. The mission of this book is described as follows: "My team was tasked to 'clean out' the Taliban and foreign fighters, mitigate their influence, reinstate local, legitimate governance, and assist in the reconstruction and security of an underdeveloped urban area the size of Rhode Island. This Herculean task was given to ten men." In the course of the book we come to know these incredibly-heroic men, and the answers to such questions as why they fight. "My family is why I fight, but it's hard for them to understand the reason I had to travel thousands of miles away to do it." To some extent, we also come to know their enemy. "Their ideology does not value their own people, except as sacrifices for their cause." The battle itself pits the best of the best American warriors, using advanced equipment and aerial support (a la the Jetsons) against much larger Taliban and foreign forces (the Flintstones) using cheap but effective older weapons and communications technology. We also see, once again, how overly-restrictive rules of engagement nearly lose the day against opponents who respect no such rules. The history leading up to the pivotal battle is detailed and interesting. No punches are pulled in describing prior failures and opposition that led to the battle and almost to its loss.

My husband, Mike, was enlisted in the Army until last year and he had 3 deployments in Afghanistan. When I saw Lions of Kandahar on Vine, I immediately requested it. It wasn't until received it that I told Mike about the book. He looked at the author and told me that they were actually in the same unit. Of course, Mike snatched the book and finished it before I even had a

chance to think about reading it. Just so you know, I can't watch military movies with him because he criticizes anything that isn't accurate. When he finished the book, I asked him if he liked the book and he said "yeah, because it was just the facts and no fluff." I can't think of a better recommendation from him, and after reading it, I have to agree. Lions of Kandahar follows Major Bradley and his men as they embark on an extremely dangerous mission. It shows how the military work with the Afghan National Army and the importance of their relationship. It takes you to the heart of a battle without holding back any of the pain and trauma. I really appreciated how the story was laid out with facts and it wasn't until the very end that Bradley got a bit preachy about the military...but it was brief and didn't annoy me too much. The fact is that this is a real story, not something made for Hollywood. It's not meant to make you angry about the war or rally you to enlist. Bradley has his opinions, and they should be pretty obvious being that he enlisted, but he writes just the facts. His emotions come through to bring the story to life and show what someone in those situations thinks about. This is a book that can be appreciated by anyone who wants to get a better idea of what is happening no matter their opinions.

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