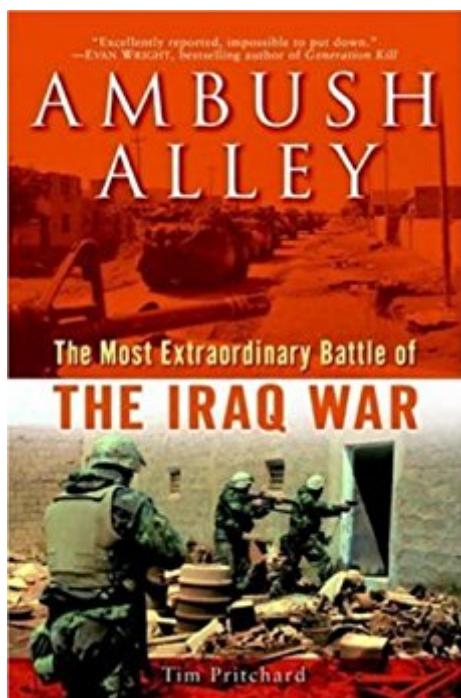


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Ambush Alley: The Most Extraordinary Battle Of The Iraq War



Synopsis

March 23, 2003: U.S. Marines from the Task Force Tarawa are caught up in one of the most unexpected battles of the Iraq War. What started off as a routine maneuver to secure two key bridges in the town of Nasiriyah in southern Iraq degenerated into a nightmarish twenty-four-hour urban clash in which eighteen young Marines lost their lives and more than thirty-five others were wounded. It was the single heaviest loss suffered by the U.S. military during the initial combat phase of the war. On that fateful day, Marines came across the burned-out remains of a U.S. Army convoy that had been ambushed by Saddam Hussein's forces outside Nasiriyah. In an attempt to rescue the missing soldiers and seize the bridges before the Iraqis could destroy them, the Marines decided to advance their attack on the city by twenty-four hours. What happened next is a gripping and gruesome tale of military blunders, tragedy, and heroism. Huge M1 tanks leading the attack were rendered ineffective when they became mired in an open sewer. Then a company of Marines took a wrong turn and ended up on a deadly stretch of road where their armored personal carriers were hit by devastating rocket-propelled grenade fire. USAF planes called in for fire support play their own part in the unfolding cataclysm when they accidentally strafed the vehicles. The attempt to rescue the dead and dying stranded in "ambush alley" only drew more Marines into the slaughter. This was not a battle of modern technology, but a brutal close-quarter urban knife fight that tested the Marines' resolve and training to the limit. At the heart of the drama were the fifty or so young Marines, most of whom had never been to war, who were embroiled in a battle of epic proportions from which neither their commanders nor the technological might of the U.S. military could save them. With a novelist's gift for pace and tension, Tim Pritchard brilliantly captures the chaos, panic, and courage of the fight for Nasiriyah, bringing back in full force the day that a perfunctory task turned into a battle for survival. "Ambush Alley" is a gut-wrenching account of unadulterated terror that's hard to read yet impossible to put down. London-based journalist and filmmaker Tim Pritchard, who was embedded with US troops during the initial stages of the American-led invasion of Iraq, paints a compelling picture of one of the costliest battles of the Iraq war that will anger, horrify, and sadden, regardless of one's political views." --The Boston Globe

From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

I was a corporal with 1/2 on that fateful day that changed my life forever. Tim Pritchard's retelling of our story was right on as far as I am concerned. The confusion, chaos, and total fear of combat is something that can never be accurately felt by someone who is reading a book unless you have experienced it for yourself. The important thing is that the story itself is told. Not how well it is told, just that it is told. I could not put the book down until I finished reading it once I started. From the first words I was immediately transported back in time to that day and his storytelling brought back up many memories I had forgotten, some good and some bad. It was very interesting for me to get a complete picture of what actually went on that day and be able to see all the pieces of the puzzle and not just my own. Take it from someone who was there, this story is the real deal, uncensored and brutally honest. March 23, 2003 was not something pretty or something we should push under the rug and forget about. It did happen. Combat is the most horrible of things in this world and I hope our story will make people realize this. But to deny that it ever happened would also be a travesty. The bravest of Marines paid the ultimate sacrifice that day and the fact that Tim Pritchard has told our story is the best way I know to honor those brave Marines. Their memories will live on forever. Thanks Tim, you have given us all honor.

It is refreshing to finally see a book that does some justice to the events of March 23rd 2003. I have been disappointed time and again by authors who sacrifice accuracy, credibility and realism in an effort to make a quick buck. Speaking as a Marine who lived through March 23rd and the days that

followed I can say that this account is by far the most accurate and compelling effort to date. Mr. Pritchard deserves a great deal of credit for talking to the individual Marines who were there and letting them tell their stories. The result is a personal and realistic look at the horrors that confronted the Marines of Task Force Tarawa in the city of Nasiriyah. It seems that Pritchard's focus was on the individual Marine. Too often authors try to recreate the tactical picture with such detail that they forget about the people who lived it. He captures the terror, confusion and utter chaos that defines combat. From the first word to the last this book captures the readers emotions. What happened that day was important and deserves to be told. This book is a tribute to the fighting spirit of the United States Marine Corps as well as a testimony to the fact that there are no certainties in war. Well done Tim.

I am always nervous about a person who didn't partake in the battle or the war writing a book about it. I remember Tim coming around base asking to speak with people. He wasn't the first, and the other had muffed pretty badly on a lot of areas. He assured everyone that our story would be told as it was, no big fish stories, and no cover-ups. He obviously did his homework well. This book is true to life. Like it or not, this is what happened. There might be some wild west like narrative, but actually it wasn't that different. This was a whirlwind of a battle and Pritchard catches the current perfectly allowing the reader to follow as the battle progressed. Thank you for doing this day justice, I believe this is a must read for a true account of a bloody day in Iraq. Semper Fi

A well written book about the worst day of the war. My son was there and assures me that this was the way it was. Two themes shine through: the importance of the U.S. Marine Corps' unparalleled training, and their unique ability to "adapt and overcome". I'd like to thank Mr. Pritchard for writing a fair and unbiased account of a much untold story.

This book hits the nail on the head. The urban battlespace and skillfully executed deceptive tactics of today's unconventional enemy changes the rules about the way battles are fought and won. A navigation blunder by a supply convoy set events into motion that drew American forces into the enemy's Somalia-like "fire sack". It was the Iraqi force's dream come true - an opportunity to recreate the end-state of 1993's Black Hawk Down. Col Davis and the Marine's of Task Force Tarawa were too smart to let that happen. Despite the misapplication of close air support that killed Marines - Task Force Tarawa was successful. God Bless the young men who fought this battle.

OK! Tim Pritchard you (expletive deleted)! It is now 3:35 AM and I am finishing your book. Tim's writing is explicit, visual and brings the smoke, confusion, terror, dedication and courage of these marines into my life. The writing in Ambush Alley sets the new bar for reporting on the events on the ground in warfare, and particularly the experiences of those fighting in Ambush Alley. He describes in detail the individual actions and experiences of the participants -- and in many cases the thoughts and feelings going through the grunts minds to the officers. He leaves the analysis of the events to another writer, and I think wisely so -- that would detract from the experience of "being there." Deserves 6 stars. Now I can go wash the blood off my hands and try to stop the shaking. --
Roger

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