



Boots on the Ground: A Month with the 82nd Airborne in the Battle for Iraq

Karl Zinsmeister

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Includes 32 color photos taken by the author during the month he was embedded with the 82nd in Kuwait and Iraq.

This is a riveting account of the war in Iraq moving north with the 82nd Airborne. Units of the 82nd depart Kuwait and convoy to Iraq's Tallil Air Base en route to night-and-day battles within the major city of Samawah and its intact bridges across the Euphrates. *Boots on the Ground* quickly becomes an action-filled microcosm of the new kinds of ultramodern war fighting showcased in the overall battle for Iraq. At the same time it remains specific to the daily travails of the soldiers. Karl Zinsmeister, a frontline reporter who traveled with the 82nd, vividly conveys the careful planning and technical wizardry that go into today's warfare, even local firefights, and he brings to life the constant air-ground interactions that are the great innovation of modern precision combat.

What exactly does it feel like to travel with a spirited body of fighting men? To come under fire? To cope with the battlefield stresses of sleep-deprivation, and a steady diet of field rations for weeks on end? Readers of this day-to-day diary are left with not only a flashing sequence of strong mental images, but also a notion of the sounds and smells and physical sensations that make modern military action unforgettable.

Ultimately, *Boots on the Ground* is a human story: a moving portrayal of the powerful bonds of affection, trust, fear, and dedication that bind real soldiers involved in battle. There are unexpected elements: The humor that bubbles up amidst dangerous fighting. The pathos of a badly wounded young boy. The affection openly exhibited by many American soldiers--love of country, love of family and hometown, love of each other. This is a true-life tale of superbly trained men in extraordinary circumstances, packed with concrete detail, often surpassing fiction for sheer drama.

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