



Fallujah Awakens: Marines, Sheikhs, and the Battle Against al Qaeda

Bill Ardolino

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The cradle of an insurgency that plunged Iraq into years of chaos and bloodshed, Fallujah conjures up images of the brutal house-to-house fighting that occurred during the 2004 U.S. invasion of the iconic city. But attacks in the area actually peaked two years later, when American and Iraqi government forces struggled with a reinvigorated insurgency and the prospect of premature withdrawal by U.S. forces. *Fallujah Awakens* tells the story of the remarkable turnaround that followed. Journalist Bill Ardolino explains how local tribal leaders and U.S. Marines forged a surprising alliance that helped secure the famous battleground. It is one of the few books to recount events from both American and Iraqi perspectives.

Based on more than 120 interviews with Iraqis and U.S. Marines, Ardolino describes how a company of reservists, led by a medical equipment sales manager from Michigan, succeeded where previous efforts had stalled. Circumstance combined with smart, charismatic leadership enabled Americans to build relationships with members of a Sunni tribe--once written off as dangerous and intractable-- who pushed al Qaeda and other insurgents from their notoriously rebellious area.

Accidental killings, intertribal rivalries, insurgents, and intrigue all conspired to undo the tenuous alliance forged between the Americans and tribesmen on Fallujah's Peninsula. But the partnership was cemented after a Marine commander's risky decision to welcome nearly 100 injured civilians onto a secure American facility after a ruthless chemical attack by al Qaeda.

The book's gripping storyline will appeal to readers of historical nonfiction. Its exhaustive documentation will prove valuable to military students, analysts, and historians and will help policy makers better understand what is possible in counterinsurgency. Photographs and maps further enhance the reader's understanding of everything from tribal dynamics to the geography of firefights.

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