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In February 2003 sixty elite operators from the SBS, with SAS embeds, were sent 1,000 kilometers behind enemy lines to take the surrender of a 120,000-strong Iraqi army in a mission that seemed lunatic from the start.

Caught in a ferocious ambush by vastly superior forces, the unit launched an epic bid to escape, inflicting carnage on their enemies. Running low on fuel and ammunition, and with their surviving vehicles shot to shreds, they faced dwindling options as the Iraqis closed in. The unit blew their vehicles, destroyed sensitive kit and prepared for death or capture . . .

This is the untold true story of the most desperate battle fought by British and allied Special Forces trapped behind enemy lines since World War Two.

Zero Six Bravo: The Explosive True Story of How 60 Special Forces Survived Against an Iraqi Army of 100,000 Details

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From Reader Review Zero Six Bravo: The Explosive True Story of How 60 Special Forces Survived Against an Iraqi Army of 100,000 for online ebook

Keith McArdle says

First, let me start by writing that this is a real story and the events described in it are non-fiction, which makes it even more amazing.

When M SQN of the Special Boat Service (SBS: the Navy equivalent of the SAS) was tasked with infiltrating Northern Iraq and forcing the Iraqi 5th Corps to surrender, they didn't know what they were in for.

60 special forces operators and twenty modified Land Rovers against 100,000 Iraqi soldiers supported by main battle tanks and heavy machine guns.

British "intelligence" suggested that the 5th Corps' morale was low, they weren't going to fight and would more than likely surrender at the first sight of M SQN.

Unfortunately, nothing could be further from the truth. An incredible story of courage, resilience and dogged determination in the face of insurmountable odds.

This book is well written and I found it difficult to put down. I hadn't heard of M SQN's plight before, which was part of the reason I purchased the book. I'm glad I did.

An incredible true story. I highly recommend it.

Nathan Fletcher says

When they say explosive they aren't kidding. Once they get deployed in Iraq the book becomes impossible to put down. I read this book in 2 days it was an incredible read and amazed at their survival. Damien Lewis writes an amazing piece of history. Highly recommend.

Dachokie says

Modern Day Thermopylae ...

This book was reviewed as part of Amazon's Vine program which included a free advance copy of the book.

Maybe I had at one point, but considering the flood of daring Spec Op stories these days, it is understandable that only the most recent exploits are memorable. With that being said, Damien Lewis' ZERO SIX BRAVO details one such mission that I was previously unaware of: A group of 60 British special operators sneaking deep into Iraq to seek the surrender of the 100,000 strong Iraqi Army's 5th Corps in the early days of the Iraq

War. While the boldness of the mission plan and the teeth-clenching chaos it produced certainly provide a great storyline, the book seemed stuck in “preheat” a little too long before things started to cook.

The factors surrounding this particular mission are most compelling: Super-elite British SAS/SBS forces (which included a smattering of Americans) driving open-top Land Rovers over 1,000 miles into Iraq to force/urge an enemy fighting force of 100,000 to surrender. The almost absurd risk of the mission earned the nickname “Operation No Return” before it even started. Despite the raiding force’s superior technology, weaponry and skills, the uncertainty of how the Iraqi’s will react to the surrender request would dictate not only success or failure, but life or death for the British operators. Basically, the mission added up to driving 1000 miles into enemy territory just to kick a hornet’s nest and see how it reacts.

This book certainly has the ingredients for a nail-biting thriller, but it falls a little short of being great in the sense that it dragged on a little too long (roughly 2/3s of the book) before the real action starts popping. Another issue is that Lewis opted to focus on one unit’s experience of the mission (M Squadron) as opposed to an overall view. In other words, we’re only getting part of the story. There are some instances where the narrow perspective of one unit’s predicament leaves readers guessing at what other units in the group are doing in critical moments ... Lewis simply details one of several finely-tuned cogs in the well-oiled 60-man machine and it isn’t even the commanding cog. When the entire force runs into the enemy and everything goes awry, the narrow scope Lewis presents hints at other units in the group acting less-competently (getting mired in river bed and failing to prevent the enemy from obtaining sensitive/classified equipment). While this surely may be unintentional, it comes across that way at times.

When the British force is ambushed before reaching their objective, the action starts ratcheting up exponentially. The combat described in the book is more “cat and mouse” with the SAS/SBS men (the mice) driving around the desert at night trying to avoid a hunting party that appears to include tanks from the Iraqi 5th Corps and diehard Saddam loyalists (Fedayeen) zipping around in Toyota’s with heavy machine guns mounted to them (the cats). The sense of desperation and frustration are clearly outlined as the group finds itself surrounded with avenue of escape and not enough ammunition or manpower to fight its way out of the predicament. The last 1/3rd of the book is action-packed and exciting; it just took a little too long to get there.

While I was a little disappointed in Lewis’ presentation, ZERO SIX BRAVO was a worthy read in that it sheds light on how elite soldiers respond so well when the stuff hits the fan. Bad intelligence resulted in 60 men facing certain death, but these men innately found ways to handle everything thrown at them (in the dark, no less) ... amazing. I certainly wouldn’t mind seeing a screen-adaptation of the story. One thing I do find mind-boggling: that of the book being written in part to offset these SAS/SBS being labeled as “cowards” for refusing to die or be captured (they fought their way out of a disaster). You seriously have to wonder what special-kind of idiot would seriously label any Special Forces soldier as “cowardly”. If anything, the book certainly dispels that ridiculous notion.

Cropredy says

This book is what I would call SAS-lit, like chick-lit for guys except instead of romance and BFFs, you get a healthy dose of Pinkies and Gimpies, manned by tough operators with names like Scruff and Dude.

The story is quite exciting and fortunately there is little time spent on the soldier's years of training or

personal lives. Let's just say that things get (really) harrowing.

One thing this is not is military history, told by a dispassionate scholar. Instead, it is the story of a behind the scenes Iraq mission of 60 British SBS and SAS on Land Rovers (the Pinkies) and quadrcycles. The mission was launched just before the 2003 invasion and is told through the eyes and mind of one Pinkie leader. I suspect the protagonist was the author's only source, as spec ops members don't talk to authors as a general rule.

If you enjoy this kind of stuff, check out 'Pathfinder' by Blakely for an equally amazing story that took place on the other side of Iraq.

Peter T says

Damien Lewis had access to the men from this mission - and the contents has been vetted by the British military. It's hard to believe you are reading a non-fiction book.

Written in an engaging style, I found it hard to put down.

A fascinating insight into the tenaciousness and resourcefulness of the British Special Forces.

Anne says

A very, very good story, though I wish it weren't told for dummies as in:

"if an extra guy is on the vehicle, the gunner cannot use the gun... 'Am I in the way of your gun'? the extra guy says and the gunner cannot use the gun no matter what he does... So the gunner could not use his gun"

If only the author and the editor had been brave enough to cut down the story with a third.

Jamie Rose says

I don't give many five star ratings. This definitely deserves it.

Susana789 says

Dokumentárne a informa?ne bohaté. Miestami písané aj/najmä? pre ?udí, ktorých sivé mozgové bunky si odsko?ili na dlhšiu dovolenku, ale realita sa od ak?ných príbehov (a ich vizualizácií) ?asto zna?ne líši.

Deferrers says

A long winded account that really could have been halved in its publication. Repeated facts and opinions that made you want to just get to the key events. A good insight though in to what our Special Forces have to endure. One has to ask who dreamt up this whole Operation as it was a lack of forethought and tactical support that let our forces down yet again. One Chinook, come on!!

Rebecca Hughes says

Worth a read

William says

Being a reader of military history and fiction, this book is over the top. Quite possibly one of the best I have read this year. It is the story of British SAS behind enemy lines during the Iraqi War. The trials that these 60 soldiers went thru is beyond belief. It is a MUST READ for military lovers.

Even though this is factual account, let me explain the book like this: you can read the great naval fiction where a British ship is under fire by two French frigates (the mundane books), or you have the authors that write about having a British frigate where 1/3 of the crew are mutinous, 1/2 the crew have yellow fever and the ship is being chased by two French frigates, oh and yes- the mizzen mast just got shot off. This book describes the latter one, except it is in real life.

I believe this is the 2014 version of the 2004 original version. I think the 2004 book may have been titled: Operation Certain Death.

Igor Ljubuncic says

Here comes the hotstepper.

So, a review. First, I feel kind of sad for the British SF. They always operate on thin margins, and never that awesome and expensive array of cool stuff that the Americans have. They also never fail to mention that. But then, it makes sense. War is expensive.

This book follows the team of SAS/SBS going into Iraq to ask the Iraqi 5th Division, some 100,000 men, to surrender. As you can imagine, this does not go as planned. Fighting ensues. The special forces are in retreat, followed by an army of terrain-savvy Fadaeen in 4x4 Toyota pick up technicals with 12.7mm guns, army regulars in Kraz-225 trucks, and for dessert (desert, ha ha!), a bunch of T-72 tanks with thermal imaging. The Brits have a bunch of underpowered Pinkies (Land Rovers), some machine guns, and Lancastershire curry. Stay chipper.

A very enjoyable read.

It's similar to the story of Pathfinders in Sierra Leone - 26 men against 2,000 rebels - Operation Mayhem, and even the writing style is similar. Heaney becomes Grey, a grizzled veteran with a simplistic, jaded outlook on life. Well, kind of expected for the kind of lifestyle.

The one thing you might find ... missing is that the author does not go into emotions, it's all very factual. Contrast this with Black Hawk Down, where you get the personal perspective of what's happening. In this book, similar to Operation Mayhem, but to an ever greater degree, it's enemy south, enemy north, things are as follows, no doubts, no pain. A bit too much like a sitrep.

Furthermore, the language is definitely simple - it's a worker man's language, not an academy thesis. But it's clear and captivating enough. You also get your expected dose of British jargon, like kip, stag, brew, knackered, dog's bollocks, and a somewhat repetitive use of the words legion and sparking, something just a few paragraphs apart.

One last thing - there's also a factual error - they refer to the F-16's cannon as 21mm 7-barrel Gatling-type weapon, but it is in fact a 20mm 6-barrel gun. There.

All that said, this is a captivating tale, especially more so because of the crazy odds, and the fact the British soldiers lacked the necessary firepower to conduct warfare on equal footing with the Iraqis. They didn't have AT weapons, and even the air support could only give them sonic booms for cover.

It's a weird, bizarre, crazy story, and while the action is short and tight, it's riveting, and quite recommended for military history buffs. No Hollywood glamor that's for sure. A can of spam in the best case.

And some rather awesome humor. That one is never amiss.

Spot on mates, dog's bollocks, THE proverbial. Gets me every time.

Enjoy,
Igor

Matt says

Zero Six Bravo by Damien Lewis was about the story of British and Allied soldiers fighting a war in Iraq. This story shows the struggle and how intense it was to survive the attacks of the Iraqi Army. They were outnumbered and in unfamiliar terrain, they shouldn't have survived. I rate this book 3 stars because the first 100 pages were really hard to get through. It was full of a lot of boring detail and background information that personally I did not care about. I recommend this book to people who like war and can take gruesome images created by the author. This book is action packed and the author does a great job with imagery on the battlefield.

James Kemp says

I make a point of reading first hand accounts, although these days I don't expect much from tales of recent events.

This particular book suffers a bit from excessive hypebole. However it is actually very readable, and although much of the outcome is telegraphed in advance the way it's done is through a good hook to keep you reading to find out the detail of how/what happens.

You know when you start to read it that the mission isn't going to go well. In fact without even knowing anything about it I picked up that it must have gone horribly wrong. However I also knew that it couldn't have gone that far wrong, because otherwise I probably would have heard about it since I have an interest in current affairs and military operations.

The story follows the perspective of one SBS Sergeant who was the lead navigator for most of the mission. Mainly it focusses on what he sees, and the actions of his three man vehicle crew. On the whole it is an interesting narrative and it gripped me enough to read longer than I normally do.

There's a clear thread running through it of the forebodings, that may well have been how the central character felt, but are laboured to the extent that it comes across as 20:20 hindsight. There are also some rather strained references to Bravo Two Zero and the similarities with that patrol (both seem to have been compromised because they refused to shoot a child goat herder). That doesn't really wash with me because the goat incident in Bravo Two Zero wasn't repeated in the other books about the patrol and The Real "Bravo Two Zero" gives another version of events (apparently two Iraqi veterans of the Iran-Iraq War spotted the patrol, not a child goat herder).

Despite this I still think it's worth a read, especially if you get it for the knock down price of 99p as I did.

Vivek Agarwal says

This is a brilliant book

If what they say is a true account of their battle in Iraq,

This team of elite forces has seen hell and managed to survive,

The leadership skills of the team leader Grey is excellent, he was leading the team and guiding them to their LZ and making decisions which allowed them to stay alive,

Even though they were elite forces, they were outnumbered and yet they used their survival and fighting and thinking skills, and worked as a team to evade capture as well as to fight

Their mission went from capturing 100,000 Iraqi soldiers to survival and escaping from these same troops who were ready to surrender,

I loved this book, it is scary, and I can only commend and imagine the hardship of each and every person on that elite team

If in my next lifetime I have a chance to be as brave as them, or to learn this art of warfare,

I will sign up immediately

A MUST READ!!

