



Essential Histories

## The Iran–Iraq War 1980–1988

Efraim Karsh

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## **The Iran–Iraq War 1980–1988** Efraim Karsh

The Iran-Iraq War, which ended in August 1988, one month short of its eighth anniversary, was one of the longest, bloodiest and costliest Third World armed conflicts in the twentieth century. Professor Karsh addresses the causes of the Iran-Iraq War, unpacking the objectives of the two belligerents and examining how far objectives were matched by strategy. He assesses the war's military lessons regarding such key areas as strategy, tactics and escalation and in particular the use of non-conventional weapons. Finally, he examines the utility of armed force as an instrument of foreign policy.

## **The Iran–Iraq War 1980–1988 Details**

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Author : Efraim Karsh

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## From Reader Review The Iran–Iraq War 1980–1988 for online ebook

### **Joe Collins says**

Osprey's Essential Histories line is a very good line for someone who just wants to the basics of historical conflict or to be used as a primer to have a working knowledge of a conflict before reading a more detailed book about it. This one holds up to that design.

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### **Sham Al-Ghazali says**

Really enjoyed reading it, I loved that it has no bias and even mentioned that some historians believe the conflict goes even as deep as the Arab vs Persians conflict which has existed far before the drawing of the nations. Woop.

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### **Bruinrefugee says**

A clear synopsis of a conflict that has on-going ramifications throughout the Middle East

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### **Chip Hunter says**

This book does a fine job of explaining the reasons behind the war (bizarre though they were) and the general progression, key moments, and outcomes of the war. Karsh writes clearly and concisely, and this volume would be ideal for anyone looking for a brief overview of why the war was fought, when/where it was fought, and the political situations around the world during the time of the war. However, if you're expecting the same sort of detailed analyses and in-depth examinations of military decisions and individual battles, this volume will disappoint. Either due to lack of space or a different focus, Karsh breezes by most of the important battles here, providing very little detail or analyses of the armies or their leaders.

This book does highlight the brutality and horror of this war, probably more so than other Essential Histories. From a section on the use of children soldiers by Iran to the gassing of Iraqi Kurds by Saddam, there are some hard to believe, incredibly awful accountings here. These include pictures of dead soldiers and even one of a dead Kurdish baby.. Troubling to say the least, and brings the reality of war into focus. Neither side here acted like the "good guys", but more like stubborn and power-hungry psychopaths with no regard for the lives they ruined. All in all, a very sad excerpt from our world's history.

This book serves its role, but lacks in the level of detail on military action that is expected from Essential Histories.

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## **Wissam Raji says**

A brief yet concise book about the Iran-Iraq war with a motivating background to what led to it. One interesting fact is that Iran received military assistance from Israel during the weapon embargo in order to counter the Iraqi military might at that time. The author ends his book with a motivation to the first gulf war and how the economic frustration of Saddam Hussein led to his invasion to Kuwait. Recommended read.

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## **Steven says**

Good read. Like the quick coverage format by Osprey. Good primer.

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## **AC says**

The Osprey Essential Histories series (which I'd never heard of) consists of very small (100 pages) descriptive and analytical accounts, some by quite competent historians, of (mostly) minor and often forgotten wars -- some of which, however, are hardly of small significance.

The Iran-Iraq War was one of those events that I had paid little attention to -- I was in graduate school at the time -- and which I remembered, when I saw this volume, that I knew nothing about apart from those images of Iranian children walking into machine gun fire.

It turns out that it was hardly a minor war, as it led *\*directly\** to Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, and thus to the first (and so, to the second) Gulf/Iraqi war. The book is pretty good.

I'm now reading one from the Osprey series on the Soviet-Afghan War...

Another nice thing, apart from their brevity and general sobriety, is that they sell for only \$1.49 on Kindle. So ignore the prices in the list below.

Here is the full list:

<https://ospreypublishing.com/store/military-history/essential-histories>

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## **Declan Waters says**

Another good edition in the Essential Histories series by Osprey. The Iran-Iraq war clearly can't be covered in 100 pages in full detail but this shows the major movements involved and some of the political and social aspects around the war.

Very interesting indeed.

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## **D?nnis says**

More complicated than I supposed after talks with my Iranian pals.

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## **Jonathan says**

Interesting overview of a very long and hard war. Would have enjoyed more detail in some places but the brevity is to be expected given the publication. Some interesting first hand accounts and interviews were provided (particularly the Kurdish survivor and 2 different Iranian 'Boy Soldiers'). An interesting thought was raised in the form of Iraq's use of gas on both military and civilian targets, the West didn't seem to mind all that much when it benefited them and their aims. I suppose they viewed the use of gas as the lesser evil when compared to radical Islam.

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## **Haitham Ali says**

Very interesting book with lots details about the war and what both regimes were thinking at that time.

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## **Patrick Sanfilippo says**

### **A good overview/intro to the topic**

Very to the point and concise as far as the war itself is concerned. Also provides insight into other topics of the war like child soldiers and the persecution of the Kurds. I think a little bit more background information regarding the lead up to the war would have been nice, otherwise a great read.

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## **Venatici says**

Concise and informative account of the longest Third World conflict of the 20th Century.

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