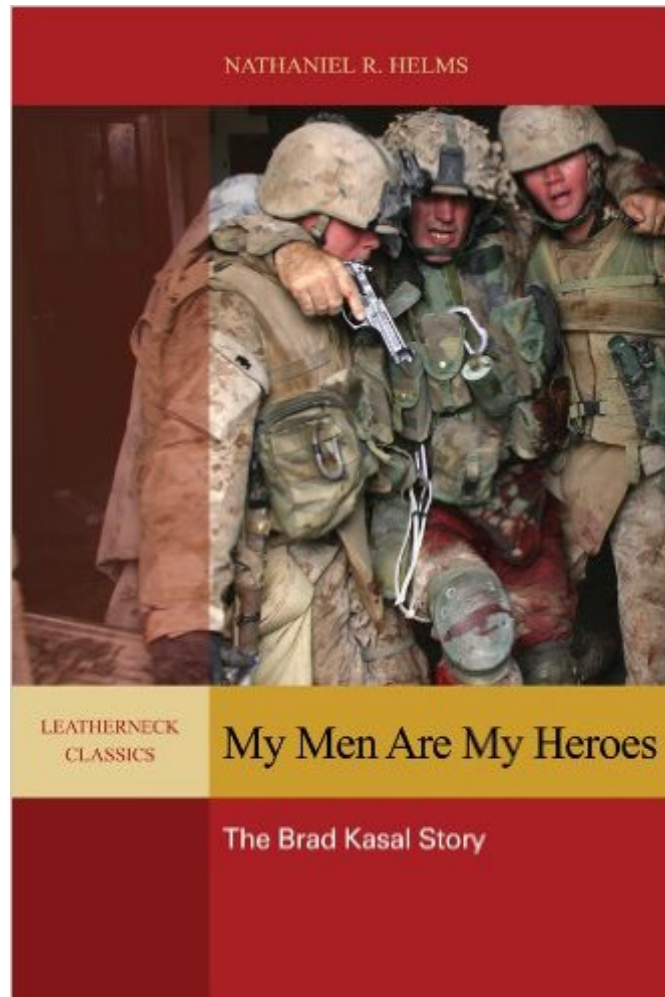


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My Men Are My Heroes: The Brad Kasal Story (Leatherneck Classics)



Synopsis

My Men Are My Heroes introduces its readers to a living standard of Marine Corps esprit de corps and military decorum. Sergeant Major Bradley Kasal, the pride of Iowa, is a small town boy who wanted to be a United States Marine even before a poster perfect Marine recruiter marched into his high school gym and offered him a challenge Kasal couldn't resist. Two decades later Kasal stood stiffly at attention, one leg literally shot in half, while the Navy Cross was pinned to his chest. Kasal is currently the Sergeant Major of the Infantry School at Camp Pendleton, CA until he retires in May, 2012. After a brief visit to his childhood Kasal's story quickly gathers steam, introducing the reader to his early Marine career; adventure filled years that earned him the name "Robo-Grunt" from men who don't offer accolades easily. Kasal uses his experience climbing the ranks to illustrate how Marines grow, and how they are shaped by the uncompromising attitudes of the officers and non-coms charged with turning young Marines into tigers. Kasal's adventures culminate in Iraq. By now he is 1st Sergeant Kasal, ramrodding Kilo Company, 3/1, a rifle company in 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines, the mighty "Thunder Third" that would cover itself with glory in 2004. Two days into Operation Iraqi Freedom in March 2003 Kilo is ordered to hold open a critical road between two bridges that Saddam's fierce Fedayeen Saddam were just as determined to take away. Kasal makes his stand on that road, literally standing tall amidst fierce gunfire, demonstrating the kind of leadership Kilo Company needed to get the job done. Kilo's fight was part of the first big test of Marine Corps combat capabilities in the second Iraqi War and the only major engagement the Marine Corps fought during the heady days of the "Drive Up" to Baghdad. When it was over the so-called "Ninjas" of the Fedayeen Saddam were smashed. A week later Kasal was in Baghdad, welcomed with open arms by the exuberant population. A year later 3/1 was back to Iraq, in Anbar Province, the epicenter of the brutal war now raging in the former tribal stronghold of Saddam and his henchmen. The smiling faces that had greeted 3/1 the year before were gone. Kasal is the 1st Sergeant of Weapons Company, 3/1, the armored fist of a light infantry battalion. After four months of ambushes, IEDs, and deadly skirmishes 3/1 is ordered into Fallujah, to take the ancient city back from Al Qaeda and the foreign fighters who had turned the ancient "City of Mosques" into a fortress. It is there, in November, 2004 that the "Thundering Third" entered into Marine Corps legend and Kasal into the Pantheon of Heroes for his actions during the most savage battle the Marines fought in the Iraq War. At a non-descript house in a walled neighborhood in Fallujah Kasal, at the time accompanying a squad of Kilo's riflemen into a contested house, becomes involved in a close-quarter duel with fanatical Chechen fighters. The fight rages throughout the house, at times Marines and the foreign fighters were

exchanging rifle fire and grenades at ranges of less than 10 feet. For almost two hours the squad is trapped inside the house. During the brawl Kasal is shot seven times, almost loses his leg when it is nearly severed from his body, and sustains 47 shrapnel wounds when he used his body to shield a wounded Marine laying next to him from an enemy grenade. In the skirmish, forever known as the "Hell House" fight, Kasal was awarded the Navy Cross, the nation's second highest award for heroism.

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Customer Reviews

This book was very nice reading. I read it in one sitting and I was left very impressed with 1stSgt Kasal's harrowing experience fighting in Al-Falluja. As a former Marine I am biased towards the special mission of our Marines. However, the story of the fine men that were involved in this battle, was riveting. As 1stSgt Kasal explains that the Marines haven't been involved in urban warfare since Vietnam's battle of Hue city, the Tet offensive. As Marines, or any trained ground combat forces know, fighting in close quarters is the most dreaded situation any combatant can encounter. And as always, it is up to the ground pounders, the grunts, to weed out the enemy and destroy them. No bomb from the sky (conventional anyways), ever works completely. It didn't work in Tarawa, Saipan, Iwo, or Okinawa, history has shown that to be true. That is why Marines, are all trained to be marksmen or riflemen, meaning, learned men/women that set their sights on the enemy and shoot to kill in every situation. The best at this profession are the highly trained and motivated Infantry units of the Marine Corps. And 1stSgt Kasal, along with his men, were doing just that in Iraq. Killing

insurgents, who for the most part are a threat to the security of The United States Of America. Al-Falluja was a show down ready to happen, and the Marines were ready and willing to fight it out with the Jihadist who were taunting and killing Marines, service men, and foreign contractors in and around that area. If we don't fight them in their territories then they will bring the fight to the States, it's just that simple. It happened during 9/11 and it will not stop until radical Islamist conquers the world for their form of Islam.

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