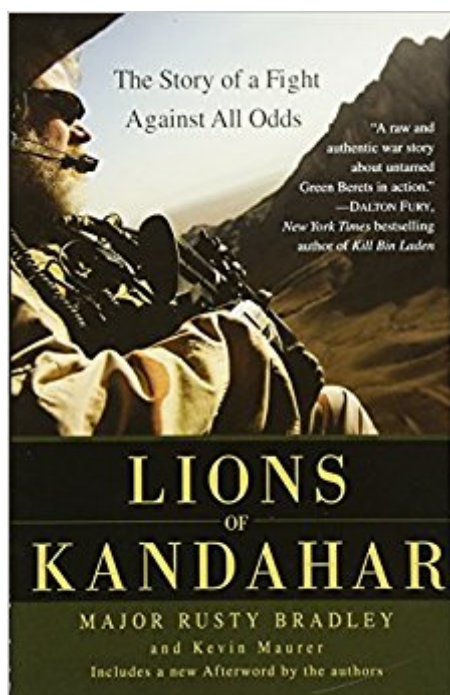


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# Lions Of Kandahar: The Story Of A Fight Against All Odds



## Synopsis

Includes a new Afterword by the authors One of the most critical battles of the Afghan War is now revealed as never before. *Lions of Kandahar* is an inside account from the unique perspective of an active-duty U.S. Army Special Forces commander, an unparalleled warrior with multiple deployments to the theater who has only recently returned from combat there. Southern Afghanistan was slipping away. That was clear to then-Captain Rusty Bradley as he began his third tour of duty there in 2006. The Taliban and their allies were infiltrating everywhere, poised to reclaim Kandahar Province, their strategically vital onetime capital. To stop them, the NATO coalition launched Operation Medusa, the largest offensive in its history. The battlefield was the Panjwayi Valley, a densely packed warren of walled compounds that doubled neatly as enemy bunkers, lush orchards, and towering marijuana stands, all laced with treacherous irrigation ditches. A mass exodus of civilians heralded the carnage to come. Dispatched as a diversionary force in support of the main coalition attack, Bradley's Special Forces A-team and two others, along with their longtime Afghan Army allies, watched from across the valley as the NATO force was quickly engulfed in a vicious counterattack. Key to relieving it and calling in effective air strikes was possession of a modest patch of high ground called Sperwan Ghar. Bradley's small detachment assaulted the hill and, in the midst of a savage and unforgettable firefight, soon learned they were facing nearly a thousand seasoned fighters from whom they seized an impossible victory. Now Bradley recounts the whole remarkable story as it actually happened. The blistering trek across Afghanistan's infamous Red Desert. The eerie traces of the elusive Taliban. The close relations with the Afghan people and army, a primary mission focus. Sperwan Ghar itself: unremitting waves of fire from machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades; a targeted truck turned into an inferno; the death trap of a cut-off compound. Most important: the men, Americans and Afghans alike—the "shaky" medic with nerves of steel and a surgeon's hands in battle; the tireless sergeant who seems to be everywhere at once; the soft-spoken intelligence officer with laser-sharp insight; the diminutive Afghan commander with a Goliath-sized heart; the cool maverick who risks all to rescue a grievously wounded comrade—each unique, all indelible in their everyday exercise of extraordinary heroism. Praise for *Lions of Kandahar* "A raw and authentic war story about untamed Green Berets in action." "Dalton Fury, New York Times bestselling author of *Kill Bin Laden* "A powerful and gripping account of a battle that helped shape the war in Afghanistan. . . . With crisp writing and page-turning action, *Lions of Kandahar* is one of the best books written about the conflict." "Mitch Weiss, Pulitzer Prize-winning

investigative journalist and co-author of *Tiger Force: A True Story of Men and War* **“**One of the most important documents to emerge from the war in Afghanistan.**”** •The Seattle Times **“**Powerful . . . a riveting account of a strategic battle that doesn’t glorify war or focus on heroic deeds . . . Make room on your military bookshelf for *Lions of Kandahar*.**”** •San Antonio Express-News **“**Bradley takes the reader into battle.**”** •Time

## Book Information

Paperback: 320 pages

Publisher: Bantam; Reprint edition (May 19, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0553386166

ISBN-13: 978-0553386165

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.7 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 830 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #41,748 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #39 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Leaders & Notable People > Military > Afghan & Iraq Wars > Afghan War #43 in Books > History > Military > Afghan War #43 in Books > History > Military > United States > Veterans

## Customer Reviews

A Letter from the Author President Obama announced that 10,000 U.S. troops from Afghanistan will return home this year and another 23,000 will redeploy by summer 2012. For me, it wasn’t an announcement. It was an order by my commander-in-chief and a decision well above my pay grade. Debates over troop levels and strategy are left to the men who wear stars on their uniforms or suits in Washington. My war is one that is fought every day like it is Sept. 12, 2001, whether I am in Afghanistan or not. As an Army officer, I watched, initially horrified, as the planes hit the World Trade Center and knew that I was going to war. I’ve done so five times. But my view has always been from the ground floor. I am the action arm of my commander-in-chief, not a policy maker. In the summer of 2006, my orders were simple: partner with the Afghan army and assist the Canadians as they launched a major NATO offensive through the Panjwayi Valley in southern Afghanistan during Operation Medusa. The mission didn’t go as planned, and my fellow Green Berets and I, with our Afghan allies, seized a key hill--Sperwan Ghar--from Taliban and foreign

fighters, taking the pressure off our Canadian allies trapped in the valley. Over the next eleven days, we held off wave after wave of Taliban fighters before we finally broke them. I spent the rest of that rotation building a base and establishing a series of checkpoints that attempted to secure the valley. We did the best we could to keep the lid on things in Afghanistan until the cavalry arrived. And they arrived last year. With the help of the U.S. troop surge, we were able to establish new footholds, consolidate our gains, and expand Afghan Security control while driving the Taliban from several of their critical sanctuaries, including the Panjwayi Valley. I returned to the valley last summer to assist in establishing security, development, and governance in the valley's villages. As part of a program focused on building up one village at a time, I helped coordinate aid and the training of local police from the district level with the goal of creating a stable local government that could eventually link in with the national one in Kabul. What our units did in 2006 is still a very critical part of the narrative there. Afghans know of the battle for Sperwan Ghar, still remember it, and still know me because of my thick gray beard. The outcome of the battle changed the way the Taliban operates. Where once they fought brazenly in the open, they now hide like cowards in among the Afghan people and fight with IEDs and suicide bombers. And they clearly know the difference between the Special Forces and conventional soldiers and give the "bearded ones" a wider berth. While the other parts of country are now under control of Afghan security forces, there is still very much a fight in the south. The Panjwayi and Zhari districts are key territory because many of the Taliban's leaders are landowners there. This is their center of gravity and the birthplace of their movement. So they are essentially fighting for their homeland in every sense of the word. It is here that the extra troops matter the most. This summer, the key battles and in some way the fate of the war will be decided on this same battlefield. I am often asked what I think we should do in Afghanistan. I have my opinions. But when I put on my uniform every morning, that opinion doesn't matter. I know only one thing: my mission was to go to southern Afghanistan, disrupt the Taliban, and assist the Afghan people in building a country. And I did that. Do troop levels matter? Absolutely. Every soldier, every commander, wants the best equipment and the most men. But I'll worry about troop levels when I have stars on my uniform. Right now my job is to execute the orders of those who do. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

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“Powerful . . . a riveting account of a strategic battle that doesn't glorify war or focus on heroic deeds . . . Make room on your military bookshelf for  
•Lions of Kandahar.  
•San Antonio

Express-News – “Bradley takes the reader into battle. – Time – “A raw and authentic war story about untamed Green Berets in action. Bradley and Maurer crush it! Mr. President, grab a copy – this is a sure-bet Special Forces exit strategy. Unleash more of these brave lions across Afghanistan and America will win this war. – Dalton Fury, – New York Times – bestselling author of – Kill Bin Laden: A Delta Force Commander’s Account of the Hunt for the World’s Most Wanted Man – “A powerful and gripping account of a battle that helped shape the war in Afghanistan. But Lions of Kandahar is more than that. Major Rusty Bradley and Kevin Maurer give readers a stirring inside look at the day-to-day operations of a Special Forces team – and what it takes to defeat insurgents hell-bent on regaining control of Afghanistan. With crisp writing and page-turning action, Lions of Kandahar is one of the best books written about the conflict. – Mitch Weiss, Pulitzer Prize – winning investigative journalist and co-author of the critically acclaimed Tiger Force: A True Story of Men and War – “This is a riveting tale, told from the front lines of the secret war against the Taliban. Lions of Kandahar is the definitive account of a modern Special Forces mission – a must-read for anyone hoping to understand the harsh realities of the Afghan conflict. – David Zucchino, – Pulitzer-Prize-winning journalist and author of Thunder Run: The Armored Strike to Capture Baghdad – “I have read this book three times and I am still chilled to the bone with every word. In Lions of Kandahar you will be riveted by the unabridged action of our real-life military heroes. It took a group of exceptional individuals to accomplish Operation Medusa. We as a nation can only pray we have half the guts and fortitude given selflessly every day on our behalf by the Army Special Forces. – Marshall R. Teague, actor; U.S. Navy (ret.) – “The war in Afghanistan is made for Special Forces, but very little has been written about these soldiers since the initial attack on Afghanistan in 2001. Bradley and Maurer do a great job of showing how these elite units fight and why they are so important to the battle against the Taliban. Lions of Kandahar is a gripping, moving, and well-told war story. – Greg Jaffe, Washington Post reporter and co-author of The Fourth Star: Four Generals and the Epic Struggle for the Future of the United States Army From the Hardcover edition.

Of the many books (3 to 4 dozen) I have read on battles and wars in general, including WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan, this book’s description of combat scenes and action captured almost everything except the loud ear piercing explosions and smells of the fray. The descriptions are factual yet engender all the emotions of actually being involved in the battle (Maybe not quite as intense). The battle action is sequential and at times unbelievable. While describing a single 11 day

event, it achieves the author's intent to vindicate America's gratitude toward military personnel. For over two hundred years military personnel have preserved our freedom, although the appreciation of them is not fully understood and generally insufficient. This book will increase the appreciation of all dedicated military personnel.

Awesome account of one of the largest counter assaults that has taken place in Afghanistan. Well written, no bragging, just a Hero's tale. I really enjoyed this book. I have read all of the other big hitters currently being pumped by Hollywood and although I enjoyed them this story stands above the rest. I cannot say thank you enough for fighting for me and my family, for the United States and protecting our flag.

Absolutely loved this book. Give it up to a Maverick SF Captain to write a great recount of an incredible battle and what went into the mission before even getting to the battle. This really gives you a solid look into the day to day lives of the men and not just the action behind the guns. And it really shows you the difference between SF and other Spec Op Teams as they take a truly equitable stake in the Afghan Forces being embedded with them day in day out, your to tour.

I had a difficult time putting this book down because the story it told was very intense. I served with ODA Soldiers in Afghanistan but when I saw them, their mission in the province was training the Afghan Local Police (ALP) and did not get involved in large-scale firefights like MAJ Bradley's team did. MAJ Bradley had a very small SF team augmented by a comparably small number of Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers. If it weren't for the rotary and fixed-wing Close Air Support (CAS) that they received, nobody would've survived that battle.

A fascinating account of the efforts of US Army Special Forces Task force 31 and the support they needed to survive their fight to block an essential Taliban crossroads and help Canadian forces which were stymied because of huge numbers of unexpected fighters and heavy weapons. Close air support made the difference, daring helicopter med-evacs and resupply missions were crucial and all of it orchestrated with the clear understanding that the entire country of Afghanistan and freedom for its people hung in the balance. Eleven days of almost hand-to-hand combat against incredible odds made the difference. They took strongholds and a valley the Russians had never been able to subdue and it was hard. It was the Taliban's back yard. Very well told, combat as only the best can describe, well worth the time.

This book is well written and engaging. The story has actually become a single episode tv show on the American Heroes Channel (former Military Channel), which shows how unique and interesting the story is. Unfortunately the tv show does not give the book or battle the justice, that the book will give the reader. If you want a fast paced read, on an interesting battle in Afghanistan where the Afghan Army and US soldiers fought side by side to win, then this is the book for you.

Lions of Kandahar made me feel as if I was at the battle. I am so proud of the men & women that fight and protect our country and freedom. This book is all action. I would read any book by this author and co-writers. I am a avid modern military reader and I enjoy this title immensely. My advise to you is read it! these guys are A-Team all the way.

The integrity of our military people is in stark contrast to that of the politicians who send them into war. This is a great story that needs to be told. When we send our people to war, we should know what we're asking of them. These guys were handed an impossible job, and they worked miracles to succeed at it. But they paid dearly for their success. Three times the British fought to stabilize Afghanistan, each time with disastrous results. In 1919, after their third effort they managed to establish a border that had everything to do with British interests, and nothing to do with local interests. Now Americans are fighting and dying to police that border, since enemy supplies and troops flow across it freely. Afghanistan has never really been a nation, but rather a bunch of tribes that have always been at war with each other. I pray that I am wrong, but I have real doubts about our ability to establish republican government in such a place. The politicians should know if the mission is impossible, but I fear they just reflect the ignorance of their electorate. Our military families pay the price of our ignorance.

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