



The Road to Safwan: The 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry in the 1991 Persian Gulf War

Stephen A. Bourque, John Burdan III

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The Road to Safwan is a complete history of the 1st Infantry Divisions cavalry unit fighting in Operation Desert Storm. Stephen A. Bourque and John W. Burdan III served in the 1st Infantry Bourque in Division Headquarters, Burdan as the Operations Officer of the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry. Based on extensive interviews and primary sources, Bourque and Burdan provide the most in-depth coverage to date of a battalion-level unit in the 1991 war, showing how the unit deployed, went into combat, and adapted to changing circumstances.

The authors describe how the officers and men moved from the routine of cold war training to leading the Big Red One in battle through the Iraqi defenses and against the Iraqi Republican Guard. The 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry participated in the 1st Brigade attack on G-Day, the large tank battle for Objective Norfolk, the cutting of Basra Road, and the capture of Safwan Airfield, the site where General H. Norman Schwarzkopf conducted cease-fire negotiations with the Iraqis. The squadrons activities are placed squarely within the context of both division and corps activities, which illustrates the fog of war, the chain of command, and the uncertainty of information affecting command decisions.

The Road to Safwan challenges the myth that technology won the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Contrary to popular view, it was a soldier's war not much different from previous conflicts in its general nature. What was different was the quality and intensity of the unit's training, which resulted, repeatedly, in successful engagements and objectives secured. It is the story of the people, not the machines, which ultimately led this squadron to the small town of Safwan.

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