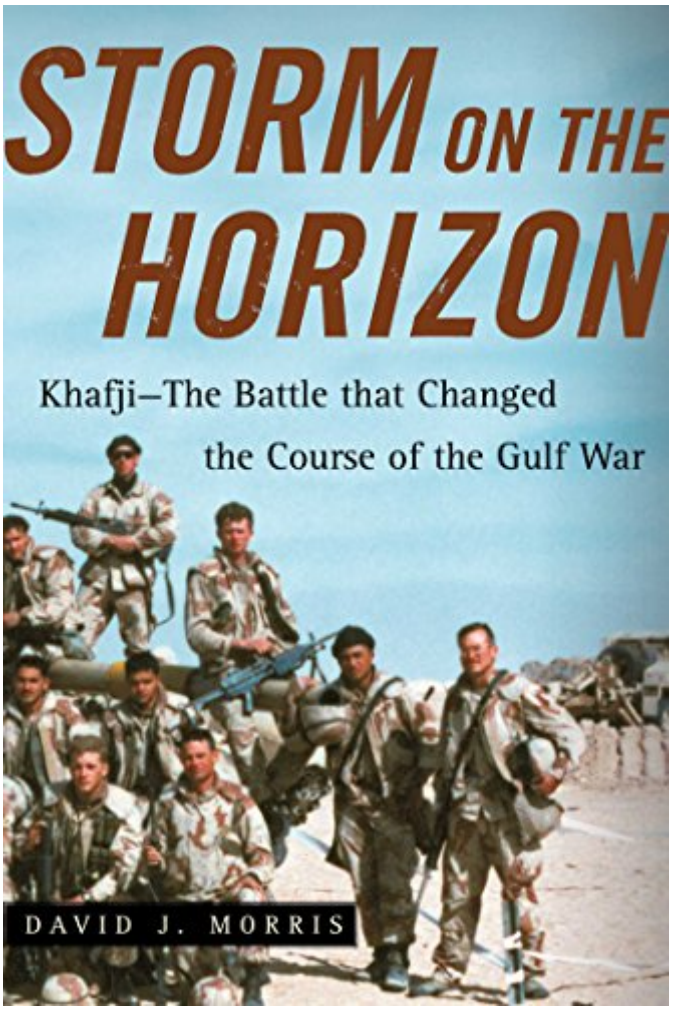
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Storm On The Horizon: Khafji--The Battle That Changed The Course Of The Gulf War



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Synopsis

Storm on the Horizon is the little-known story of the key land battle of Desert Storm: the Battle for Khafji -- and how that engagement has become part of military history. Combining some of the most powerful writing on war ever with a Marine's eyeview of combat, former Marine officer David J. Morris has brilliantly recreated this crucial battle that nearly changed the outcome of the Persian Gulf War. Storm on the Horizon is war writing at its finest. On January 29, 1991, Saddam Hussein launched his three best armored divisions across the Kuwaiti border and into the Islamic Holy Land of Saudi Arabia. Their mission: to disrupt the massive U.S.-led Coalition preparing to evict them from Kuwait, and to bloody the Americans on CNN. Caught without warning in the path of this juggernaut were scattered groups of lightly armed U.S. Marines and Special Forces soldiers. Storm on the Horizon is the gripping and compelling story of how these elite fighting men escaped the Iraqi onslaught and reversed the assault with an unprecedented combination of high-tech weaponry and American know-how. This is the story of the first battle of the smart-bomb age. Storm on the Horizon drops you in the middle of the most intense battle of the Persian Gulf War. The Marines are trapped and outnumbered, their weapons no match against the Iraqi tanks bearing down on them. Their only lifeline to the rear is a barely functioning radio. Drawing upon extensive veteran interviews and previously classified reports, David J. Morris's vivid minute-by-minute narrative takes you through the battle from its beginning as a scattered collection of skirmishes to its fiery final act in the streets of the abandoned Saudi Arabian town of Khafji. Morris captures this ordeal through the eyes of the men who were there, giving readers a rare front-row seat to an incredible sequence of events. Max Morton, the pilot of a Cobra attack helicopter is forced to make an emergency landing in the heart of Khafji as the Iraqis are attacking. He and his crew narrowly escape after locating a tank of mystery fuel at a local oil refinery. Medic Kevin Callahan, member of a team of Marines caught behind enemy lines, watches helplessly as a female U.S. Army soldier and her male comrade are captured by Iraqi soldiers and spirited to Baghdad. Ronald Tull, suffering untold wounds, wakes up next to his burning light-armored vehicle thinking that it has been struck by an enemy tank round. Only later does he learn the full horror of the events that led up to the death of his seven buddies who were on board. But Storm on the Horizon is far more than a battle saga. It is a thoughtful examination of a new generation of fighting men coming to terms with its own war, a journey into the minds of men under supreme stress, and a heartfelt account of the innocence lost in a heartbeat and mourned for a lifetime. At once an unflinching chronicle of men at war and an appalling tableau, Storm on the Horizon looks into the savage heart of modern combat and raises troubling questions about the era of conflict that lies ahead.

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Customer Reviews

I am very leery of books with titles like "the battle that changed the course blah blah blah" because so often it adds up to melodrama hyperbole for the book cover. But this time it’s legit, and this battle does seem to have changed the perception of Desert Storm conflict, at the time it was being fought...even if it’s mostly forgotten today.As an Army veteran of Desert Storm, I was already far north in Saudi Arabia when Khafji happened. I recall being dumbfounded that Iraq could occupy any part of Saudi Arabia for any amount of time at all. I had assumed the LAV that was destroyed by the A-10 was actually shot by Iraq (although we found out quickly it was friendly fire).What surprised me most was how it confirmed some memories I had long forgotten. Looking back at Desert Storm now, I knew (as I was convinced in 2003) that Iraq would never use chemical weapons. I was also convinced it would be an easy victory. But, seeing some sections that Morris describes about the commander’s worry and near-panic over casualties made me go look at some letters home I had written, and turns out I wrote all sorts of melodrama about how I expected half my small unit to get

killed based on what I knew about our mission at the time. So while the ground war turned into a total rout within minutes of the start, I guess I didn't know that at the time (although my letters did predict the big joke of chemical weapons).More importantly than my old memories, however, is how valuable this book is in comparison to 2010 military action. The Marines that Morris describes are really NEW warriors. Other than Panama and Grenada, the military of 1991 had seen no legitimate, lengthy action. This book is an outstanding look at a military we've basically forgotten, but that led the way to the military of post-9/11.Morris has written a couple good essays (I think one is titled "Notes from the Jarhead Underground"), but his voice and style in this book is far superior. In his essays, which come out of his embedded trips to Iraq, he tries much too hard to copy Michael Herr's voice in "Dispatches." It's not necessary, and while he's had good success with those essays, I think he'd be better served by being a little more of the Morris that's represented in this book.The research and interviews are excellent, considering the length of time that's passed. Desert Storm was such a weird little war; at the time it meant everything, but a month after it was over it seemed like a somewhat-uncomforable weekend camping trip.For veterans of Desert Storm, this is a good reminder that while the "war" turned into a big joke for most of us, there were some number of soldiers and Marines (exclusively in Khafji) who were fighting it out just as feircely then, as soldiers and Marines would do from 2002-??.I've been embedded in Iraq as a photojournalist several times since, and while I try to get decent information and good stories about soldiers serving overseas, I'm very envious of Morris' journalistic ability to get this story down on paper in such a compelling, and informative way.On that note, the Marines have complaints about how this battle has been ignored, and their contribution overlooked. Fair points.And yet, in two accounts, Morris describes the Marines - at gunpoint - chasing away Bob Simon, and later tricking a bunch of reporters into getting swept up by the Saudis. And they laugh, and they think it's funny...Well, if any of those reporters had been allowed access, in a war with nothing else to cover and nothing else to talk about, they would have reported Khafji like it was Gettysburg II. So that was their chance at the history books, and then it went the other way.

This book is written well and a good read. I especially appreciate the clarity in the descriptions of what battle confusion looks and feels like. I reject the idea that one cannot understand without experiencing it. One can't experience it personally from a book, but a good writer can indeed enable you to understand. Read it twice, as I have many other books about this engagement.

Raw but not crass. Unglorifying. Seemed balanced and without agenda. Interesting history and

insight into how friendly-fire incidents can happen.

This is a breakout book for a Marine officer with an amazing ability to write - This is a story about a battle virtually no one ever heard about, yet author Dave Morris does an excellent job capturing the terror of fighting an overwhelming armored force. And as seems to happen all too often, there were more Marine casualties from our Air Force A-10 pilots (who have an ability to kill Marines with a heartbreaking regularity - see "Charlie Battery; A Marine Artillery Battery in Iraq" aboutyet another Air Force FUBAR at An-Nasiriyah).Interesting to note the army's ability to have their convoys get lost in Iraq, and their women soldiers captured (see Jessica Lynch !)The author has written one of the better books about the Marines in Desert Storm - he puts you up in the front lines, and makes you care about the Marines as they fight. Well done !!

As a veteran of the fight for OP 4 on Jan 29 1991, I can honestly say that this book got it right. I literally trembled as I read it. It put me right back to that cold night. I highly recommend this book.

I loved the inside look at small marine units and as a retired marine officer I found myself laughing and smiling when the author caused me too remember my training and past platoons. Brings to life a battle I had little knowledge about and one I didnt here about from my buddies that were over there. A quick read.

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