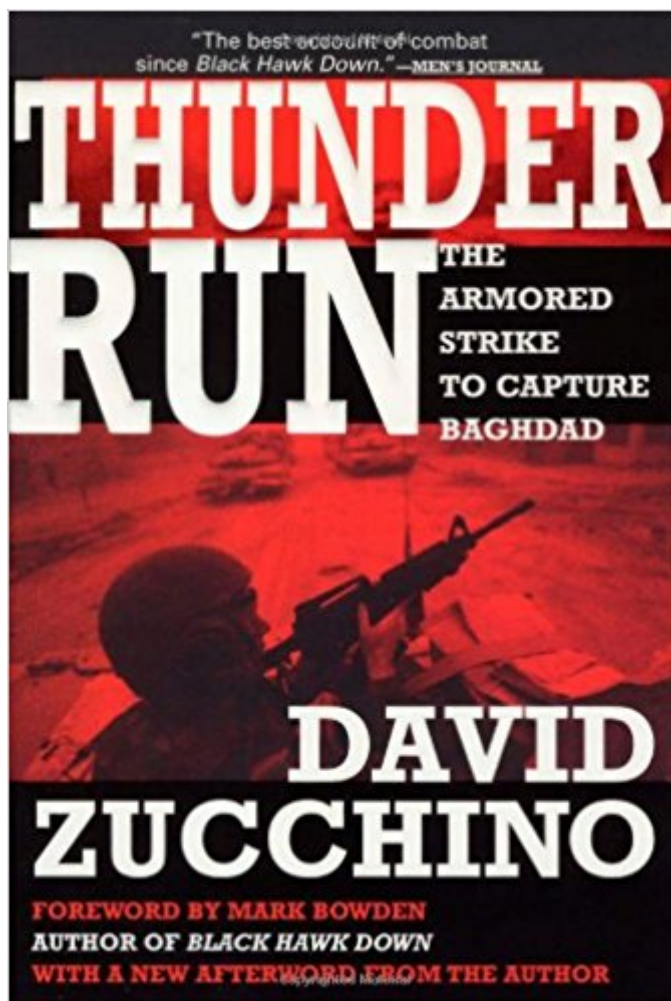


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# Thunder Run: The Armored Strike To Capture Baghdad



## Synopsis

In one of the boldest gambles in modern military history, just three battalions and fewer than a thousand men launched a violent thrust of tanks and Bradley Fighting Vehicles into the heart of a city of 5 million people and, in three bloody days of combat ended the Iraqi war. Thunder Run is the story of the surprise assault on Baghdad-one of the most decisive battle in American combat history-by the Spartan Brigade, the Second Brigade of the Third Infantry Division (Mechanized). More than just a rendering of a single battle, Thunder Run is a candid account of how soldiers respond under fire and stress and how human frailties are magnified in a war zone.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Even a very short, victorious shooting war against a disorganized, dispirited, vastly outnumbered and underequipped enemy is hell. That is the central message that Los Angeles Times correspondent Zucchino brings home startlingly well in this riveting account of the American military's lightning capture of Baghdad in April 2003. Zucchino (The Myth of the Welfare Queen) is an experienced, Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter, and he shows off his reportorial skills in this reconstruction of the "lightning armored strike" in Iraq that the military refers to as a "thunder run." The narrative focuses on the men who commanded and battled in the tank battles as the Americans fought their way to Iraq's capital city. It is often not a pretty picture, nor one for the faint of heart, because Zucchino unhesitatingly and graphically describes the violent and grisly fates that befell hundreds, if not thousands, of Iraqi Republican Guard troops and fedayeen militiamen, their Syrian allies (at the border) and the unfortunate civilians who were killed or wounded by the deadly

high-tech American armored vehicles and their well-trained crews. He also does not shy away from intimately describing the deaths and injuries of American troops. The Americans who fought their way into Baghdad engaged in, according to Zucchino's account, a vicious, if short-lived, war. While the Americans overwhelmed the Iraqis on the road to Baghdad, U.S. troops faced periodic stiff resistance; rocket-propelled grenades caused death and destruction among the crews in the Bradley fighting vehicles. Zucchino tells his story primarily from the American troops' point of view, but does include a section describing the experiences of a Baath Party militia leader and some Republican Guard officers in this high-quality example of in-depth and evocative war reporting. First serial to Men's Journal. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

It is a popular misconception that the city of Baghdad fell painlessly, like a ripe plum, into the hands of U.S. forces. True, the feared scenario of a protracted, Stalingrad-like siege did not emerge. However, as this intense and thrilling account makes clear, the capture of the city was no walkover. Zucchino is a foreign correspondent for the Los Angeles Times with extensive experience in war coverage. His account is a fast-paced, gritty, and frequently surprising story of men and women in combat, and he expertly interweaves the drama of individual human experiences with the broader strategic and tactical objectives. There are gut-wrenching, deeply disturbing accounts of slaughter, and Zucchino captures the sheer savagery of the early stages of the battle as Iraqi regular and irregular troops sought to parry the initial U.S. armored thrust into the city. Of course, inspiring examples of individual heroism are cited, but there is also a consistent, almost chilling, aura of cool professionalism--these men are superbly trained warriors, after all. Despite the relative inexperience of many of them, they display expertise in the art of high-tech killing. Zucchino's assertion that the conquest of Baghdad could revolutionize concepts of urban warfare is likely to be hotly debated, but this is an outstanding chronicle of an underreported battle of the war, and the buzz is likely to be loud. Jay Freeman Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The author was an embedded journalist with the US armored forces that made the first thrusts into Bagdad. Accordingly, he was a privileged eye witness of the at times intense and fierce fighting that accompanied the US forces on their way. While this is not a definitive history of the armored assault and other US operations that eventually led to the final defeat of the Iraqi regime, the author's writing style and the composition of the book makes for an interesting and catching account. In

passing he also corrects the usual appreciation that taking over Bagdad was an easy task with little fight. At times the reader gets the impression that he is immersed in a fierce battle the size of D-Day landing at Normandy, but which ends with "only" a few casualties on each side, so the narrative at points verges at the more sensationalist side. Overall however, the author succeeds in presenting the insight of modern armored fight in urban environment like I have not seen before, and as such this book is recommended for both the casual reader more interested in the battle scenes as well as to the more technical reader who wants to read about how tanks are lead in an hostile urban environment and the corresponding challenges and solutions.

What an amazing book. The book is very well written to describe true life events. It opens your eyes to the tragedies of war while offering a intimate portrait of what goes on in the thinking/head of all ranks. I definety recommend this book! Whether you are in the military or not it will give you a better appreciation of the sacrifices made during war.

Zucchino's book *Thunder Run: The Armored Strike to Capture Baghdad* seems to be one of teh best accounts of the 3rd IDs "Thunder Run" into Baghdad. I've recelently read a lot of literature on the invasion of Iraq, including excellent books such as *One Bullet Away* by Nathaniel Fick and *Generation Kill* by Evan Wright which highlight the Marine advance and feign that helped contribute to the fall of Saddam, as well as other books about the Army's advance, to include Rick Atkinson's excellent account on the 101st Airborne. However, there have been relatively few books out there that have been able to concentrate on a specific battle. That's not to say that its such a bad thing. Many of the books listed above provide incredible insight into the commander's thoughts and the experiences of the troops through the 23 day advance and even the pre-invasion deployments of the 3rd ID to camp Doha, then Yankee, etc. Nonetheless, Zuccino's book is an excellent overview of the troubles and successes of the Spartan Brigades experiences in Baghdad, the ferocity of the battle, the trepidation and elation of the soldiers, and the brutality that goes with war and the loss of comrades. Immediatley the author is shot en-media-rez into the action during the night that the brigade receives the WARNO and then the hasty OPORD to go to battle. Zuccino then takes the reader on a harrowing adventure of the first Thunder Run which killed or wounded an estimated 1,200 enemy and then the brave decision to move the brigade to the center of the city and hold it. But the adventure isn't as easy as it seems and the reader begins to understand the complexities of keeping this force alive, supplied, and preventing it from being isolated. Zuccino takes you to the brutal intersections of Larry, Moe, and Curly, Saddam's palace, and the staging point of BIAP, then

Saddam International Airport. Zuccino's task, like Mark Bowden with the Battle of Mogadishu, was immense: to study and disseminate the pivotal battle of the war, and he succeeds magnificently.

Thunder Run is destined to be a military classic equal to 'To Hell and Back', 'Ghost Soldiers', and 'Black Hawk Down.' The mission itself has all of the excitement and human drama such a story needs. In addition, the author does a fine job of writing and, unlike many other embeds and their stories, took the time to conduct over 100 interviews of the participants including even a few Iraqis. The result is a solid account of the events that many of us saw live on TV (and if you did see the coverage you'll be amazed at what you DIDN'T see). The author was not embedded with the units involved but was at the Iraqi Airport when the first Thunder Run ended and was able to interview some of the participants soon thereafter. He then followed up with extensive interviews of the other participants in the following months. The author covers all of the events of the first and second Runs and does a fine job of intertwining the thoughts and actions of the major participants. This is very much a 'you are there' story. A gripping read and a true testament to not only the honor, courage, and professionalism of the U.S. armed forces but also to the Iraqis. This is a must read if you have any interest in military history or the Iraq War. It is also a significant account because the number of detailed works on armor operations at the tactical level are few and far between.

The author weaves personal stories of 3rd ID participants in Thunder Run, which took place in Baghdad, into the flow of the story creating an interesting read. One gets the feeling of being there and absorbing details of the battles that took place. Especially interesting was the bareing of strengths and weaknesses of the Abrams tank, Bradley Fighting Vehicle, and the thin-skinned resupply vehicles. Having watched what took place on TV, my original impression was that the forays into Baghdad were not difficult. After reading Thunder Run, I now have a completely different view of what took place, and applaud all of the 3rd ID for their tenacious fighting. I now realize that heavy armor units carried much more of the war rather than the view of air superiority doing it all. I also absorbed the point that personal body armor prevented lots of casualties.

Good book, but zero pictures and maps could be improved

I chose a 5 star rating because this was an excellent book. I'm not an avid reader but this book captured my attention and my senses.

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