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Saber's Edge: A Combat Medic in Ramadi, Iraq

Thomas A. Middleton

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The National Guardsman, the citizen soldier called upon to fight for this nation in a time of war, is one of the least understood — and perhaps one of the most compelling — figures of the Iraq War. Saber's Edge is the story of a middle-aged Vermont firefighter called upon to be a soldier in the worst place on earth — Ramadi, Iraq. In a few short weeks Thomas A. Middleton went from being a suburban dad to a combat medic traveling between platoons, filling in for other medics and engaging in some of the fiercest and most crucial fighting of the war.

This is the war as experienced from the ground level: days of tedium interspersed with the adrenalin of combat; moments of lighthearted laughter broken by the sorrow of loss. This is also the story of the unique wartime perspective of our guardsmen. Unlike the raw, unformed young recruit, the mature guardsman often comes with the burdens of family, experience, and a developed sense of self. Accordingly, Sgt. Middleton's story chronicles the inner conflict created by his long-time professional role as a healer and his newfound life as a warrior in the urban battlefields of Iraq. Thrust into a culture and theater of war that he is little equipped or trained for, the author tries to make sense of his actions. Coarsened by combat and increasingly disdainful of the local population, he receives solace and insight from his life-long faith and ultimately emerges as a man who understands his role in the world.

Saber's Edge is also the story of the Green Mountain Boys of Task Force Saber: a story of comradeship and communion amid fierce street fighting in a crucial theater of the Iraq War (the eventual site of the "Al Anbar Awakening"). Based on the author's first-hand experiences and interviews with other soldiers, Saber's Edge presents a riveting account of modern urban warfare and the inspiring story of one man reconciling his actions in warfare.

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