



Bristol's Bastards: In Iraq with the 2nd Battalion, 136th Infantry of Minnesota's National Guard

Nick Maurstad, Darwin Holmstrom

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Minnesota's toughest farm boys take on Iraqi insurgents
in one of the most irreverent and outrageous memoirs to come out of the war

Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 136th Infantry Regiment of the Minnesota National Guard, composed in large part of farm kids from the Midwest who could replace a tank track on the side of the road using nothing but a crescent wrench, Zippo lighter, and a two-by-four, fought alongside the Marine Corps in Anbar province through the deadliest period of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Bravo Company earned the nickname "Bristol's Bastards" after USMC Colonel George Bristol, commanding officer of **the I MEF Headquarters Group**, adopted this band of fierce warriors as one of his own. Specialist Nick Maurstad, a member of Bristol's Bastards, brings to life the experience of fighting in Iraq, kicking down doors, dodging IEDs, battling insurgents in the small towns surrounding Fallujah, and trying to help one another survive in the deadliest place on earth.

Maurstad lost three friends in Iraq, and a friendly demeanor belies his own frustrations. He has intense memories, such as disarming an insurgent who was raising a handgun to shoot while in bed with his wife and children. . . . His mental hurdle for now is visiting the graves of the friends he lost.

—*St. Paul Pioneer Press*,

October 28, 2007

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