Blood flows over my left hand and I lose my grip on his hair. His head snaps back against the floor. In an instant, his fists are pummeling me. I rock from his counterblows. He lands one on my injured jaw and the pain nearly blinds me. He connects with my nose, and blood and snot pour down my throat. I spit blood between my teeth and scream with him. The two of us sound like caged dogs locked in a death match. We are. On the night of November 10, 2004, a U.S. Army infantry squad under Staff Sergeant David Bellavia entered the heart of the city of Fallujah and plunged into one of the most sustained and savage urban battles in the history of American men at arms. With Third Platoon, Alpha Company, part of the Army's Task Force 2/2, Bellavia and his men confronted an enemy who had had weeks to prepare, booby-trapping houses, arranging ambushes, rigging entire city blocks as explosives-laden kill zones, and even stocking up on atropine, a steroid that pumps up fighters in the equivalent of a long-lasting crack high. Entering one house, alone, Bellavia faced the fight of his life against six insurgents, using every weapon at his disposal, including a knife. It is the stuff of legend and the chief reason he is one of the great heroes of the Iraq War. Bringing to searing life the terrifying intimacy of hand-to-hand infantry combat, House to House is far more than just another war story. Populated by an indelibly drawn cast of characters, from a fearless corporal who happens to be a Bush-hating liberal to an inspirational sergeant-major who became the authors own lost father figure, it develops the intensely close relationships that form between soldiers under fire. Their friendships, tested in brutal combat, would never be quite the same. Not all of them would make it out of the city alive. What happened to them in their bloody embrace with America's most implacable enemy is a harrowing, unforgettable story of triumph, tragedy, and the resiliency of the human spirit. A timeless portrait of the U.S. infantryman's courage, House to House is a soldiers memoir that is destined to rank with the finest personal accounts of men at war.

My Personal Review:
As a Viet Nam era veteran, I am quite aware that the way wars are fought change from war to war. World War I was fought different than World War II, the Korean War different from Viet Nam, and as this savagely true account of the war in Iraq bears witness to, is unique with its own horrors. This first hand account by Staff Sergeant David Bellavia (Bell) summons up memories of the great book Blackhawk Down. But in my opinion, the fact that the author is a participant in the horror described, gives it a more lethal punch in the readers gut.

Being a veteran, what immediately impressed me about Bells writing is that no one was spared from his piercing truthful words. Including himself. It was reassuring to know that after all these years, there is still a societial clash between most officers and enlisted men. Bell shows he will bare his soul with divine honesty even when he is the one being stripped naked in a judgmental spot light. A perfect example, is when he owns up to the real reason he joined the Army, was because he froze up and didnt defend his mother and father during a home burglary by some crack heads. He realized he needed to become a man and felt the army would help him reach that goal.

The reader is made aware immediately, of what all war veterans already know, but most media outlets dont emphasize near enough, and that is, WAR IS HELL. As early as the second page of this powerful outpouring of the grim facts of what is todays kind of war were told: Shattered bodies litter the ground around us. Vacant corpse eyes, bulging and horror struck, stare back at us. The stench of burned flesh is thick in our nostrils. While on our second patrol in Iraq, a civilian candy truck tried to merge with a column of our armored vehicles, only to get run over and squashed. The occupants were smashed beyond recognition. Our first sight of death was a man and his wife ripped open and dismembered, their intestines strewn across shattered boxes of candy bars. The entire platoon hadn't eaten for 24 hours. We stopped, and as we stood guard around the wreckage, we grew increasingly hungry. Finally, I stole a few nibbles from one of the cleaner candy bars. Others wiped away the gore and fuel from the wrappers and joined me. This book is obviously not for your Aunt Bessie, unless she really wants to know what modern war is about.

It is also about good Officers and NCOs that believe in what America stands for. Its meetings before dawn before heading to Fallujah, where the Officers that the troops respect give speeches that would make Vince Lombardi proud. Part of the speeches are also telling the troops that all of them wont be coming back. A great statement by Bell regarding a speech says it all: A great speech is only partly about what is said. Often what matters more is who says it and how it is delivered. There are truths of war in this book, that a lot of people dont want to know or believe. The enemy is shooting themselves up with all kind of drugs ranging from Steroids to AMERICAN EPINEPHRINE - PURE ADRENALINE that will keep a heart pumping even after its owner has been exposed to nerve gas or chemical weapons. So if you see a reporter on TV demeaning an American soldier

...
for smashing the enemy a few extra times in the face, it might not be extra, it might be what's minimally necessary.

This book is sure to go down in the annals of war literature as an all-time classic. I recommend it highly!

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House to House by David Bellavia - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!