The Pentagon has been called many things by many people, but to those who work there, directing the defense of the United States, it is simply “the Building.” Monumental in its five-pointed symmetry, the massive five-sided, five-story structure encompasses over six million square feet of floor space and covers twenty-nine acres of formerly swampy ground.

There has always been much more to the Pentagon than concrete, limestone and steel. In The Pentagon, veteran defense writer and novelist David Alexander delivers the inside story on the people who have brought the Building to life, from army chief of staff General George Marshall and Secretary of War Henry Stimson, charged with creating a force that could defeat Germany and Japan, to the “whiz kids” brought to the Pentagon by Kennedy’s Secretary of Defense Robert MacNamara. Alexanders look down the corridors of power unfolds the modern history of the American defense establishment, its personalities and politics, and the evolving role that the Pentagon has played in our national security.

From its initial design to its restoration after the attack of 9/11, this book tells the story of the Pentagon as it is inextricably linked to the story of American power and strength.

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My Personal Review:
Enormously rich in detail, stunning in its vivid descriptions and bold character portraits, expert in the scope and breadth of its knowledge, rich in its depth of detail, the Building is nonfiction that is written with a novelist’s brilliance and a scholar’s keenly balanced sense of historical perspective.

The book is a crowning achievement for David Alexander who has succeeded in elevating journalism to the lofty heights of narrative history as few authors before him have been able to do.

While there have been glimpses inside the Defense Department and the Pentagon before, no one until now has published a comprehensive and detailed report on the often arcane inner workings of the mammoth defense establishment of the United States and its embodiment in the sprawling government building that houses it.

As one of the most important works of investigative journalism to have come out of Washington in years, this fascinating book should be on the must-read list of everyone concerned with America’s growing list of military commitments around the world.

This is beyond a doubt the best-written book on a major nonfiction theme to appear in a long time. From the first page to the last there is the unmistakable voice that sets the true writer off from the ranks of media clones and corporate pretenders with at best superficial narrative powers.

David Alexander's The Building has the guts and grit and sweat and muscle of the powerful personalities that built the Pentagon from the ground up using practically nothing but dirt and water, and the determination to do the impossible in record time.

Like the builders of the Pentagon themselves, David Alexander has seemingly done the impossible: he has brought to life the incredible story of the Pentagon and the role it has played from Pearl Harbor to the War in Iraq. This is truly a nonfiction book that reads like the best of fast-paced adventure fiction.

The Building: A Biography of the Pentagon is a remarkable achievement. It proves that once David Alexander gets a story in his sights and cocks the hammer, scoring a bullseye is inevitable.

Also see: David Alexander's action thriller Under Attack

Also see: David Alexander's action thriller Threatcon Delta: Assault on the Pentagon

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