



Sleeping with Custer and the 7th Cavalry: An Embedded Reporter in Iraq

Walter C Rodgers

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An essential document of the first American war of the new century

Under a full opalescent moon in the spring of 2003, CNN correspondent Walter C. Rodgers and three colleagues climbed into an unarmored Humvee loaded with satellite transmission equipment and fell into column formation with the MIAI Abrams battle tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles of Apache Troop, Third Squadron, of the storied 7th Cavalry and crossed the Line of Departure between Kuwait and Iraq. *Sleeping with Custer and the 7th Cavalry: An Embedded Reporter in Iraq* is Rodgers's account of the fight from the Kuwaiti border to the Iraqi capital of Baghdad.

Rodgers was embedded with the “tip of the tip of the spear,” the armored reconnaissance unit tasked with clearing the way for the invasion of Iraq. For the next three weeks Rodgers—a seasoned combat correspondent who has covered armed conflicts in the West Bank, along the “Green Line” in Lebanon, and in Sarajevo, Azerbaijan, and Afghanistan—was a first-person witness to the opening campaign of the most significant war America has embarked upon since Vietnam.

Rodgers and his journalistic colleagues in Operation Iraqi Freedom became pioneers in the process of embedding, the placing of journalists who can transmit video reports in real time under combat conditions with no censoring authority to block their reporting. During this journey into war, Rodgers and his crew embraced the dangers, the numbing fatigue, and the moments of stark fear of the young armored cavalrymen they lived with twenty-four hours each day, an experience that created for them the lifelong bond that only soldiers serving together under fire share.

Rodgers also details his return visit to Iraq a year later, reflecting on the nature of war and sharing his personal feelings about a conflict that has claimed the lives of over fifteen hundred American men and women. The volume is illustrated with photographs taken during the invasion by Jeff Barwise, the CNN engineer who accompanied Rodgers.

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