



The Hidden History of America at War: Untold Tales from Yorktown to Fallujah

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Multi-million-copy bestselling historian Kenneth C. Davis sets his sights on war stories in *The Hidden History of America at War*. In prose that will remind you of "the best teacher you ever had" (*People Magazine*), Davis brings to life six emblematic battles, revealing untold tales that span our nation's history, from the Revolutionary War to Iraq. Along the way, he illuminates why we go to war, who fights, the grunt's-eye view of combat, and how these conflicts reshaped our military and national identity.

From the Battle of Yorktown (1781), where a fledgling America learned hard lessons about what kind of military it would need to survive, to Fallujah (2004), which epitomized the dawn of the privatization of war, *Hidden History of America at War* takes readers inside the battlefield, introducing them to key characters and events that will shatter myths, misconceptions, and romanticism, replacing them with rich insight.

The Hidden History of America at War: Untold Tales from Yorktown to Fallujah Details

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From Reader Review The Hidden History of America at War: Untold Tales from Yorktown to Fallujah for online ebook

J.J. Lair says

I learned a lot from this book. I heard the name Rochambeau, but now I found out about him. Washington's pals and the personnel in the army is never really told in school. The after war facts that lead to the next war. I liked how each war had this story arc to it.

There are no good wars. The stories of sexual assault and brutality were horrifying. They don't teach the Phillipine struggle in school, and they should, because it has repeated in my lifetime. What happened to the soldiers was just brutal.

WWII was a war portrayed in movies and shows, but the reality was very R rated. I appreciate how he told me what happened to the German actress.

We get to the current wars and I lived through these and yet there was so much I didn't fully know or understand.

This was a very well done book with loads to learn.

Carl Palmateer says

I'm not sure what hidden things were revealed. Everything seemed very basic stuff. I was thinking this might have some interesting oral history and the like but I was wrong.

This is a pretty standard deconstruction which assumes complete ignorance on the part of the readers and is often as simplistic as the elementary and middle school courses it decries. There are some nuggets that could be used and useful. First, however, you have to get past the sermonizing and sanctimony.

Everydayreader1 says

Noted Historian and author, Kenneth C. Davis, takes the reader on a historical journey spanning over two centuries--from the Battle of Yorktown in 1781, to the Battle for Fallujah (Iraq) in 2004. He illuminates these battles in astounding and interesting detail, as well as four others--all in an effort to explain why we go to war, the consequences of doing so, and many of the blunders and miscalculations that occurred along the way.

I learned a great deal from reading this book. The author fills in much detail missing from history textbooks and completes the picture. Adding much detail and situational clarity, I feel I have a broader understanding of these events. Not only was this book informative, the presentation of the information was most interesting. I was reading history, but felt I was reading a great novel. This is one of the best nonfiction titles I've read this year.

I am looking forward to reading much more by Professor Davis. If you have an interest in United States history and/or military history, I highly recommend this book. If you simply want an enjoyable read, this book will provide that as well.

Adam Palmer says

Historian Kenneth C. Davis documents 6 battles (Yorktown, Petersburg, Balangiga, Berlin, Hue and Fallujah) which represent a change to military doctrine and also public perception. In each battle the military learned a hard lesson or then again maybe they didn't.

The author's research is well documented. The bibliography and research covers 34 pages.

I would recommend this book to anyone that enjoys military history. I learned many unknown facts in each chapter, ranging from General Washington's insistence on hanging defecting soldiers, to American General Frank Howley telling his Russian counterpart in post war Berlin that if he couldn't discipline his raping and pillaging troops that he would let his soldiers to shoot first and ask question later.

Arlene says

Enjoy all of his books.

Jill says

Kenneth C. Davis, the author of the popular "Don't Know Much About..." series, attempts to illuminate readers about some of the "hidden history" that we should have learned in school but didn't. He is a popular historian with a keen sense of detail and a lucid and engaging writing style. If you have read a lot about the period of history or science that is his topic, you aren't likely to learn much new, but you will enjoy his retelling. If you are unfamiliar with the topic at hand, you will find his treatment full of interesting factoids.

In this book, Davis provides an in-depth examination of six landmark battles:

Yorktown, Virginia – October 1781
Petersburg, Virginia – June 1864
Balangiga, Philippines – September 1901
Berlin, Germany – April 1945
Hué, South Vietnam – February 1968
Fallujah, Iraq – March 2004

He argues that it is "nearly a moral imperative to understand war." He discusses not only why these battles were fought, but who participated, how combat seemed to them, and how the conflicts affected America's national identity. Although super patriots may be disappointed to learn that the American military has not always been perfect, Davis avoids either a pacifist or totally negative outlook.

His format here is to begin each chapter with several relevant quotes from prominent people, then take us into the midst of the battle, then fill in details of the "back story" that adds context and analysis to his narration. This technique occasionally leaves the reader with the feeling that he had an "Oops, I forgot to tell you that..." moment, and the story begins all over again. In the process, he sometimes repeats some very

basic fact, which can be mildly annoying. Nonetheless, this book would make an appropriate text for a survey course on American military history at many colleges.

Evaluation: This is an enjoyable tour of select aspects of American history, and would make good reading for the many, many American citizens who have no idea what actually happened in the past but are nevertheless not loathe to pontificate about it. (See, for example, the recent statements by presidential candidate Mike Huckabee about what Lincoln thought and did - statements that are totally wrong, and surely have Lincoln doing somersaults of despair in his grave.) All those who think they know history would do well to learn something from Kenneth C. Davis.

Rating: 3.5/5

Celestine Ranney-howes says

This book, which I bought because it was on sale, proved to be an excellent choice for this month celebrating Black History. The version I got was specifically done for audio so I don't know if the print version is any different.

Why was it good for February? Because black history ,a large part of all American history, has been left out. I didn't realize that Africans fought in all of our wars, from the Revolutionary War until today. I had heard of the Buffalo Soldiers but didn't know why they were called that and the functions they had after the Civil War. And I was surprised by the tears that started when the narrator began to talk of the Vietnam War. I recommend this.

Mike Day says

This was well written. The author covers some wars that America fought with some facts that many Americans may not be aware of. As a reader of military history, this was worth reading to me.

Gerry Connolly says

In The Hidden History of America at War Kenneth Davis dissects six key military episodes of US history including Yorktown, Petersburg, the Philippines and Vietnam. Fascinating take.

Michael says

As a fan of war history and history in general i have always lamented the fact that too often the human aspect of history is forgotten. This is especially true when you deal with such mythologized American wars like The Revolution, Civil War, and World War 2. The human aspect of these wars tends to get over shadowed by and pushed aside. These wars were still human conflicts where people suffered, sacrificed and in some cases lost their lives. To forget that war is still humans fighting humans and that people's lives are forever altered or even ended entirely is criminal.

Mr. Davis does a masterful job to resurrecting the human aspect of these wars. He tells the story of the people who fought them and what they experienced on a human level. This book made me feel in some small way what these people went through, what they endured, and brought me closer to people whose stories should never be forgotten. I sincerely hope that more people read this book and that this is a new direction and wave that war history books take in the future. To marginalize human conflict and all the hardships it entails would be tantamount to ignoring the lessons of history

Chris Farrell says

I enjoyed this book, which focuses largely on the plight and appalling treatment of black soldiers serving in the US Military from the revolution onwards. While the US was founded on principles of liberty, virulent racism and a clear understanding that liberty did not apply to everyone have been in the blood of much of the country for its entire history, and this clearly extends to its military history to a degree that many may not appreciate. The American Revolution was fought by southerners to protect the institution of slavery as much as in defense of liberty. Blacks who fought valiantly for the Union in very large numbers were not justly treated.

As the book progresses into the 20th century, it's also good to be reminded what a colossal clusterf*ck the Iraq war was, as even now we seem to be moving past it, with Republicans are closing ranks around George W Bush and Democrats afraid of looking weak or being seen as tarnishing the images of the soldiers. Nevertheless, this was an entirely voluntary, completely mismanaged, needless, and totally disastrous war which we would do well to have seared into our collective brains.

Having said all this, the book focuses on only a few topics and with 6 case studies, doesn't really have the opportunity to go very deep on any of them. While I think the campaign in the Philippines will be of interest to many as this is an obscure (to Americans) but important and relevant piece of history, most of the other sections are broad-brush overviews. The book also does not use a very wide range of secondary sources. While I think there are a good number of interesting and critical bits of history here that do focus on the people ignored by standard histories, it would have been better to tell those stories and use those ideas as the sole focus and thesis of the book, rather than wrapping them in bits of pretty vanilla survey history.

Brian says

I thought this was a good book. I liked the chapters about Vietnam and Fallujah the most.

Ken says

Mr Davis Takes a look at several US military actions. these include Washington's views towards Blacks and how much the French helped at Yorktown. The blunders at Petersburg during the Civil War. The unintended consequences of Roosevelt's sending the navy to the Philippines, without any real plans for afterward. And the politics and poor understanding of the situation that ran our war in Iraq.

Davis's writing reminds me of Zinns works, looking at the less desirable side of history. There are many sides to a story. It's good to try and see them all to try and get a better understanding of an event.

Scott Martin says

(Audiobook). Having read Davis' Don't Know Much About History and Don't Know Much About the Bible, I thought this one might be of some interest. Overall, a solid and relatively quick read. He covers six major military battles (Yorktown, Cold Harbor, The Philippines, The Fall of Berlin, 1945, Tet Offensive, 1968 and Fallujah in 2004). While providing a basic overview of the situation leading up to and a narrative description of the battles, Davis attempts to provide a perspective on either a different aspect of a known battle (the role of African Americans and the French in the battle of Yorktown) or to bring to light a chapter in American history that most might not have much insight into (i.e. the Philippines from 1898-1903). His descriptions of those events provide the reader a slightly different, but no less, important perspective on the conflict described. This book would not be the starting point for history, but should serve as a complement to someone who has studied or has had some insight into any of the six battles mentioned. The audiobook reader was solid and did not detract from the material.

Charlie Smith says

Very insightful!
