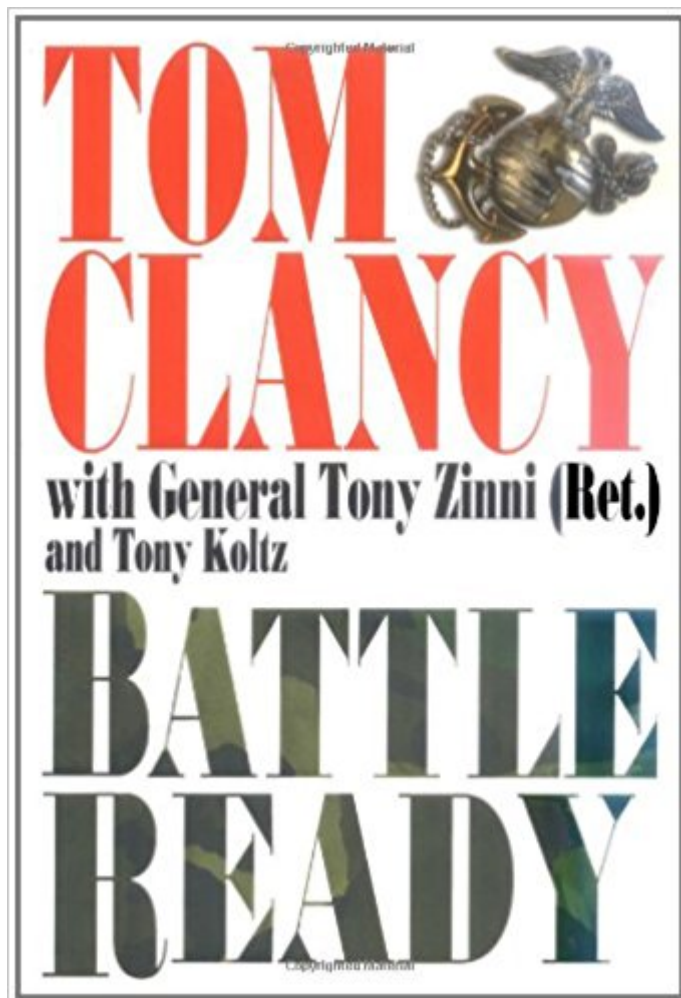


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Battle Ready (Study In Command)



Synopsis

In his first three Commanders books, Tom Clancy teamed with Generals Fred Franks, Jr., Chuck Horner, and Carl Stiner to provide masterful blends of history, biography, you-are-there narrative, insight into the practice of leadership, and plain, old-fashioned storytelling. *Battle Ready* is all of that-and it is also something more. Marine General Tony Zinni was known as the "Warrior Diplomat" during his nearly forty years of service. As a soldier, his credentials were impeccable, whether leading troops in Vietnam, commanding hair-raising rescue operations in Somalia, or-as Commander in Chief of CENTCOM-directing strikes against Iraq and Al Qaeda. But it was as a peacemaker that he made just as great a mark-conducting dangerous troubleshooting missions all over Africa, Asia, and Europe; and then serving as Secretary of State Colin Powell's special envoy to the Middle East, before disagreements over the 2003 Iraq War and its probable aftermath caused him to resign. *Battle Ready* follows the evolution of both General Zinni and the Marine Corps, from the cauldron of Vietnam through the operational revolution of the seventies and eighties, to the new realities of the post-Cold War, post-9/11 military-a military with a radically different job and radically different tools for accomplishing it. It is an eye-opening book-a front-row seat to a man, an institution, and a way of both war and peace that together make this an instant classic of military history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"In the lead-up to the Iraq War and its later conduct, I saw at a minimum, true dereliction, negligence, and irresponsibility, at worse, lying, incompetence and corruption." So says former U.S. Central Command commander in chief Zinni, who retired in September 2000 and has been outspoken ever since regarding the uses and abuses of the U.S. military. This book is the latest of Clancy's nonfiction Commanders series, which has previously featured collaborations with Gen. Fred Franks Jr. of the army, Gen. Chuck Horner of the air force and Gen. Carl Stiner, formerly U.S. Special Operations commander. As in those books, Clancy gives adequate background on his subject and his subject's context, then quotes him liberally, consigning tens of pages at a time to Zinni's italicized first-person reflections. Beginning the book with the 1998 CentCom-coordinated attack on Saddam Hussein (the unfortunately named Operation Desert Fox), Clancy and Zinni next move through 150 or so pages of Zinni's service as a Philadelphia-born (in 1947) Marine infantry officer during Vietnam and his racially charged Headquarters and Service stint on Okinawa in the early '70s. The book then flashes forward to the end of the Cold War and steams along from there, with details on Zinni's European command service, including 1990 meetings with a recently de-Sovietized Russian army and support operations during the Persian Gulf War. Zinni joined CentCom just in time for the Somalia debacle, and he is candid about its failings. Over the next years, Zinni traveled widely in parts of the world that were obscure to the U.S. then (Pakistan, Central Asia), but are central now, and played cat-and-mouse with Saddam regarding weapons inspections all through the late '90s. But it is Zinni's 24-page closing statement, "The Calling," that will sell the book to nonbuff civilians, summing up his service and the ways in which he feels his generation's legacy is in jeopardy. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

This is the fourth book in Clancy's nonfiction Commanders series; all have been cowritten with generals. This one chronicles the 40-year career of the now-retired Zinni, which includes two tours in Vietnam, two years as an instructor at the Basic School in the U.S., and his role as head of the U.S. Central Command. He also served in posts in Okinawa, Vieques Island, Germany, Turkey, and Somalia. Zinni reflects on the Vietnam War, saying, "Today we are seeing a stream of apologetic books by the policymakers and military leaders of that era--as though saying mea culpa enough will absolve them of the terrible responsibility they bear." On Operation Desert Storm, he says, "The only reason [that campaign] worked was because we managed to go up against the only jerk on the planet who was stupid enough to challenge us to refight World War II." On the Iraq war, he insists, "False rationales presented as justification, a flawed strategy, lack of planning, the unnecessary

distraction from real threats, and the unbearable strain dumped on our overstretched military, all of these caused me to speak out." He warns that military conflict has changed in the twenty-first century and we have been reluctant to recognize it or to acknowledge it. Whether or not readers agree with Zinni, this is a book that demands our attention. George Cohen Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

I also fear for the future, not because we have not learned from the past, but because we are not learning from today. Walking through today's world backwards is a guaranteed recipe for total failure.

I liked the book as it gave insight to "being a Marine". I had hoped this book would have devoted a chapter to details of the Iraq occupation plan that General Zinni developed so I could compare how the Bush Administration executed the War. There were over 600,000 tons of know explosives that were not secured and we have 670,000 that have been given disability including 300,000 traumatic brain injuries from IED's made from these explosives.

This was the perfect companion on a trans-Atlantic flight. Tom Clancy's prose are always easy to identify and always most welcome. I wish the audio version was more available as I'd like to go through the book once again.

For the serious, this book absolutely merits a careful reading, together with Dana Priest's "The Mission: Waging War and Keeping Peace with America's Military," and--for a fuller and free overview--my various reviews on emerging threats, strategy and force structure, and why our current "military only" approach to foreign policy is ineffective. There are some tremendous gems in this book, some of which I summarize here. 1) Zinni is impressive in his grasp of grand strategy, of the urgency of understanding the threat, devising a full approach that mixes and matches *all* instruments of national strategy, and that focuses--as Zinni learned to focus in Viet-Nam, on the hearts and minds of the people rather than the force on force battles (a means to an end, not an end in themselves). 2) Zinni's understanding of war comes across very early in the book when he describes the six completely different wars that took place in South Viet-Nam, each with its own lessons, tactics, and sometimes equipment differences--nuances that conventional military policy, doctrine, and acquisition managers back in the US still do not understand: a) Swamp War, b) Paddy War, c) Jungle War, d) Plains War, e) Saigon War, and f) DMZ War. 3) Zinni has read SLA Marshall

on "The Soldier's Load", and he notes that the equipment that the South Vietnamese carried was lighter and better for their needs--the US military-industrial complex burdens our Armed Forces with overly heavy things, too many of them, that actually impair our ability to fight. Perhaps even more fascinating, Zinni sees that buying equipment for our troops locally cuts the cost by 4/5th. Not what your average US contractor wants to hear, but precisely what I as a taxpayer am looking for--with the added advantage that this puts money into the local economy and helps stabilize it.⁴) Within the center of the book, there are rich lessons about war-fighting and peace-making that will stand the test of time. Most impressive is Zinni's focus on pre-emptive relationship building across the region.

a) Relationships matter, and relationships forged in advance go a very long way in avoiding misunderstanding and defusing crises. If you have to fight, relationships are the single best means of reducing the fog of war and assuring good integration of effort across cultures, nations, and armies.

b) Speed and mixed forces matter. Zinni was the master, in four different timeframes, of using speed and properly mixed forces to achieve effects not possible with larger forces arriving late. In Viet-Nam he worked with "the Pacifiers", especially reinforced company-size units that had been specially augmented with flamethrowers, extra machine guns and mortars, and their own engineers and scouts, all trained for instant deployment. At Camp Hansen, during the times of race riots, he learned the value of a fast, big guard force *combined with* constant and open dialog with the troops in distress. In humanitarian operations, he learned that rapid delivery of food tended to rapidly reduce the violence--get the food flowing fast, and reap the peace benefits. And finally, in developing the Marine Corps variant of special operations capable forces (not to be confused with the uniquely qualified Special Operations Forces), he developed the original capabilities of doing special things "from the sea."

c) Non-state entities, both tribal threats and non-governmental organizations, are the heart of the new battle. Repeatedly Zinni comments on how poorly we do in terms of thinking about strategy, operations, and tactics for the sub-state war, and how badly we do at intelligence about tribes, and at coordinating with non-governmental organizations. Zinni finally discovered the true value of Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations as a flag officer, and ended up nurturing the creation of Civil Military Operations Centers, and a new language, such as "Humanitarian Relief Sectors" instead of "kill zone."⁵) Zinni makes some other observations throughout the book that are relevant now.

a) His respects Clinton as a quick study. Without disparagement, he makes it clear that Sandy Berger and Bill Cohen were mediocrities. He admired James Baker, who tried to do Marshall Plan kinds of things and could not get the beltway crowd to see the light. He is cautionary on General Wayne Downing (who went on with the Rendon Group to sponsor Chalabi--Zinni, on page 343, makes it clear he knew Chalabi was a thief and liar as early as

1998). He is admiring of Ambassador Bob Oakley.b) With respect for foreign capabilities, among the insights are the integrity and capability of Pakistani and Bangladeshi troops, who maintained and then returned US complex equipment in better condition than it was received, with every single tool in every single kit present and accounted for; Italian military field hospitals; African troop tactical fighting discipline and capability.6) The book wraps up with Zinni's recommendations for change, all of which are on target: use retired Service and theater chiefs to constitute the Joint Chiefs of Staff, rather than the Service Chiefs with their parochial interests; earmark budgets for the theater commanders--inter-agency budgets; create an inter-agency strategy and operations center to make the government, not just the military, "joint."Zinni's final observations deal with ethics and the obligation to avoid spin and always speak the truth. Zinni is smarter than the current crop of military leaders, who mistake loyalty to specific individuals with loyalty to the Constitution. He also differs from them in understanding that Operations Other than War (OOTW) is where it is at and will be for the foreseeable future.Missing from the book is any reference to national and military intelligence, other than one small section where he notes it simply was not reliable and not available at the tribal level. Also missing from this book are any references to John Boyd, Mike Wylie, Bill Lind, or G.I. Wilson, all four of whom were, in my opinion, the legs of the intellectual stool that Zinni constructed for himself over time.This is a serious book.

Anthony Zinni was Commander of the US Central Command from 1997 to 2000, after Norman Schwarzkopf and before Tommy Franks (who was followed by John Abizaid). Following his retirement, Zinni was asked by Colin Powell and his Deputy, Richard Armitage, to be the Special Advisor to the Secretary of State for the Middle East.Zinni has subsequently been a strident critic of the Iraq invasion and the Bush administration, particularly the neo-cons in and out of the Pentagon; he has been mentioned as a possible running mate for John Kerry. This book is Zinni's life story, ghost written by a third party and marketed by Tom Clancy. But that's about all it is: what it is not is either an insightful history or a thoughtful policy commentary.Zinni's military career began in Vietnam in 1961 and spanned a period of exceptional changes as America emerged from the slump of the 60s and 70s to take over the mantle of World Leader after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The US military has been faced with unprecedented requirements to adapt, and Zinni was in the middle of it for 40 years. His story is disappointingly one-dimensional, though, more a discussion of his career than an analysis of the issues.Critical of the Peace Dividend and the failure to see that difficulties would arise from the ashes of the Cold War, Zinni's analysis is that East-West tensions were replaced by North-South tensions and that states have been replaced as the key players by

non-states such as al Qaeda, NGOs and multi-national corporations, enabled by the "global information revolution" and cheap transportation for poor people wishing to emigrate, primarily Muslims to Europe. Zinni laments the absence of a post-Cold War Marshall Plan to deal with the rising tensions. Whether his or anyone's vision was actually so clear in 1989 is open to question. Zinni's largest missions were the massive and successful relief effort in Iraqi Kurdistan after the first Gulf war and the support of the international relief mission in Somalia (Black Hawk Down). According to Zinni, the problem in Somalia was the UN, focused not on relief as much as on the political mission to establish democracy, excluding the warlords from the process. Zinni is actually quite sympathetic to Mohamed Farah Aideed whom he says was working with the US before the turnover of command to the UN and Zinni's departure. A supporter of Clinton's instinct for engagement and critical of isolationist tendencies in the Congress that kept resources tight, Zinni identifies 1998 as the year terrorism became an institutional threat. Al Qaeda created a network to link previously disorganized groups to provide training, planning and funding, announcing its arrival that year with the East African embassy bombings (the WTC bombing five years prior is not mentioned). Also that year Zinni met Ahmed Chalabi, supported among others by John McCain, proposing to topple Saddam Hussein with US help; Zinni expressed his disdain, referring to a "Bay of Goats" with "Gucci Guerillas". As Zinni was transferring command to Tommy Franks in 2000, the USS Cole was bombed in Aden and Zinni took the hit before Congress and in the press. Immediately following 9/11 Colin Powell asked Zinni to take the point on Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, another in a long line of well-meaning but utterly doomed such attempts to make peace. The book is easy reading but there's not a lot of meat unless you're really interested in Tony Zinni's career, per se.

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