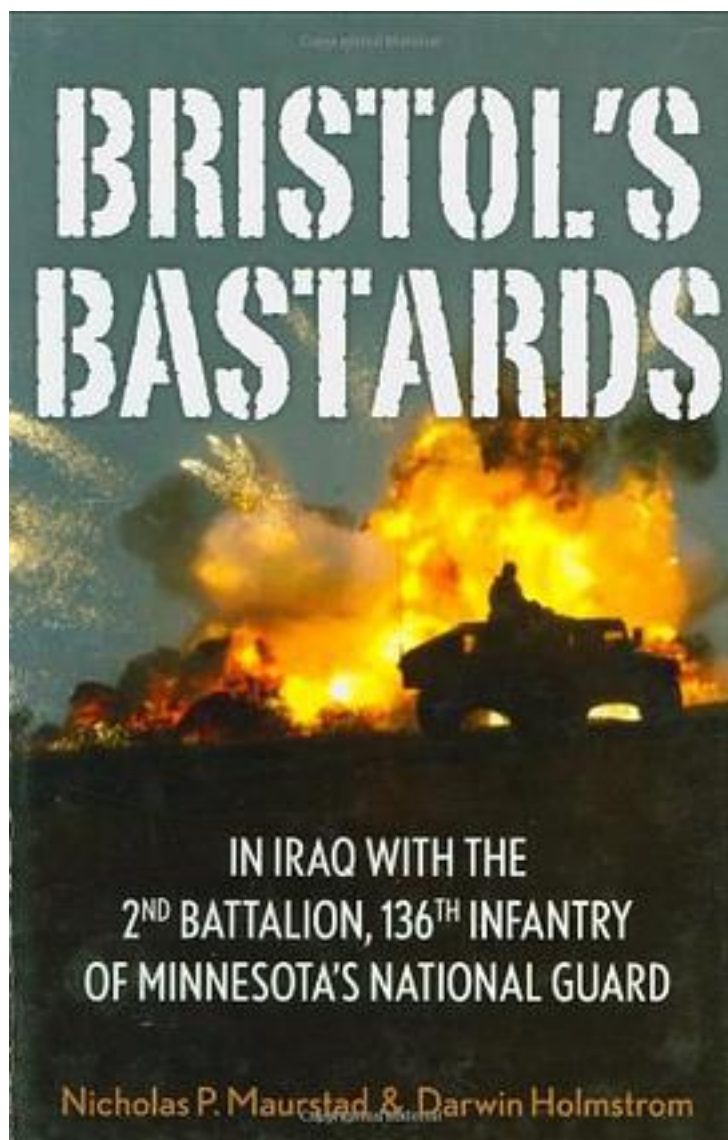


Bristol's Bastards



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Bravo Company, the 2-136th Infantry of Minnesota's National Guard, is composed in large part of farm kids from the Midwest who can replace a tank track on the side of the road using nothing but an adjustable wrench, a Zippo lighter, and a short length of two-by-four. They fought alongside the Marine Corp in Anbar province through the deadliest period of Operation Iraqi Freedom. And they earned the nickname 'Bristol's Bastards', when Lt. Col. George Bristol adopted Bravo as one of his fighting companies. Spec. Nicholas Maurstad, a member of Bristol's Bastards, brings to life the experience of fighting in Iraq with the fierce warriors of Bravo Company, kicking down doors, dodging IEDs, battling insurgents in the streets of Fallujah, and helping one another survive in the deadliest place on earth. Nick Maurstad was a member of the Minnesota National Guard's Bravo Company, which by early 2007 was the most senior unit on Camp Fallujah. Bravo Company discovered a torture house and rescued its victims; helped reduce the amount of IEDs and indirect fire attacks by more than seventy percent; and captured twenty-six known terrorists, including seven al Qaeda operatives in one operation. The unit earned high esteem across Camp Fallujah because of the safety and security they brought to the immediate area, a dramatic contrast to the rest of Iraq.

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