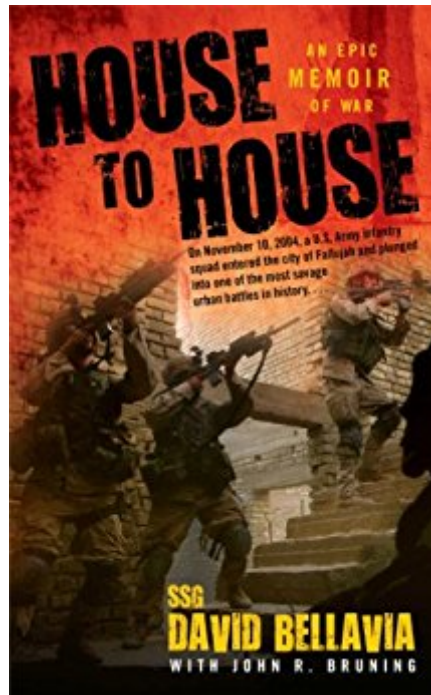


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# House To House: An Epic Memoir Of War



## Synopsis

"Blood flows over my left hand and I lose my grip on his hair. His head snaps back against the floor. In an instant, his fists are pummeling me. I rock from his counterblows. He lands one on my injured jaw and the pain nearly blinds me. He connects with my nose, and blood and snot pour down my throat. I spit blood between my teeth and scream with him. The two of us sound like caged dogs locked in a death match. We are." On the night of November 10, 2004, a U.S. Army infantry squad under Staff Sergeant David Bellavia entered the heart of the city of Fallujah and plunged into one of the most sustained and savage urban battles in the history of American men at arms. With Third Platoon, Alpha Company, part of the Army's Task Force 2/2, Bellavia and his men confronted an enemy who had had weeks to prepare, booby-trapping houses, arranging ambushes, rigging entire city blocks as explosives-laden kill zones, and even stocking up on atropine, a steroid that pumps up fighters in the equivalent of a long-lasting crack high. Entering one house, alone, Bellavia faced the fight of his life against six insurgents, using every weapon at his disposal, including a knife. It is the stuff of legend and the chief reason he is one of the great heroes of the Iraq War. Bringing to searing life the terrifying intimacy of hand-to-hand infantry combat, *House to House* is far more than just another war story. Populated by an indelibly drawn cast of characters, from a fearless corporal who happens to be a Bush-hating liberal to an inspirational sergeant-major who became the author's own lost father figure, it develops the intensely close relationships that form between soldiers under fire. Their friendships, tested in brutal combat, would never be quite the same. Not all of them would make it out of the city alive. What happened to them in their bloody embrace with America's most implacable enemy is a harrowing, unforgettable story of triumph, tragedy, and the resiliency of the human spirit. A timeless portrait of the U.S. infantryman's courage, *House to House* is a soldier's memoir that is destined to rank with the finest personal accounts of men at war.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I want to start by saying that you need to read this book. Until a few hours ago, I felt that Colby Buzzell's irreverent but accurate "My War" was the best micro (that is company level or below) accounting of the Iraq War by the those who fight it. SSG David Bellavia's and John Bruning's account is a no-punches-pulled, politically incorrect infantryman's eye view of the war in 2004. My unit replaced Bellavia's in Diyala Province in 2005, several months after the Battle of Fallujah. I knew his fallen company commander, Capt. Sean Sims, when we were lieutenants together, so this memoir is something I as a military professional on my second tour here can relate to. Bellavia's imagery and descriptions are amazing; and he deftly brings out the personalities of his comrades in arms like a master storyteller. One of the challenges in a book like this is trying to keep so many people straight as the story progresses, but he does this effectively by recounting key moments with each individual which serves to indelibly burn that person into the mind. From his fellow squad leader, mirror image and battle brother Fitts, to the hard-talking, no BS platoon sergeant, to the team leader who devoured at least three MREs at the attack position just before entering the city, Bellavia gives everyone their due diligence, yet keeps the story going. The preface, titled "Coffins of Muqdadiyah" is as relevant to the kind of fight we're seeing in Southern Baghdad as it was more than three years ago in an area about 60 km to the northeast.

As a Viet Nam era veteran, I am quite aware that the way wars are fought change from war to war. World War I was fought different than World War II, the Korean War different from Viet Nam, and as this savagely true account of the war in Iraq bears witness to, is unique with its own horrors. This first hand account by Staff Sergeant David Bellavia (Bell) summons up memories of the great book

"Blackhawk Down". But in my opinion, the fact that the author is a participant in the horror described, gives it a more lethal punch in the readers gut. Being a veteran, what immediately impressed me about Bell's writing is that no one was spared from his piercing truthful words. Including himself. It was reassuring to know that after all these years, there is still a societal clash between most officers and enlisted men. Bell shows he will bare his soul with divine honesty even when he is the one being stripped naked in a judgmental spot light. A perfect example, is when he owns up to the real reason he joined the Army, was because he froze up and didn't defend his mother and father during a home burglary by some crack heads. He realized he needed to become a man and felt the army would help him reach that goal. The reader is made aware immediately, of what all war veterans already know, but most media outlets don't emphasize near enough, and that is, "WAR IS HELL". As early as the second page of this powerful outpouring of the grim facts of what is today's kind of war we're told: "Shattered bodies litter the ground around us. Vacant corpse eyes, bulging and horror struck, stare back at us. The stench of burned flesh is thick in our nostrils.

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