



## *Fallujah Redux: The Anbar Awakening and the Struggle for Iraq* by Daniel

R. Green and William F. Mullen III.

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Daniel Green and William Mullin's *Fallujah Redux* is a valuable installment in an emerging genre: the Iraq Surge memoir. Unlike the best previous studies of the Surge, which have centered on military planning and political processes within Multi-National Force, Iraq (MNF-I),<sup>1</sup> this book recounts the experiences of two counterinsurgency practitioners at the tactical level of pacification. Mullin commanded 2/6 (Second Battalion, Sixth Regiment) Marines, the unit tasked with driving irreconcilable insurgents from Fallujah. Green, a mobilized Naval Reservist, was a "tribal engagement" officer, essentially a political advisor working with a bewildering array of sheiks and townsmen to create the Provincial Security Forces essential to protecting the city against insurgent reinfiltration, an effort he calls "weaponiz[ing] politics" (24).

In chapter 1, "The Stench of Death (Fallujah 2004-2006)," Mullin sketches the aftermath of the first and second battles of Fallujah (Apr.-May and Nov.-Dec. 2004), which almost entirely destroyed the city's public infrastructure, and his subsequent work as a regimental combat team operations officer in the city during 2005. The reader is struck by the dogged endurance of the ordinary Iraqi civilians still in Fallujah after 2004 and the tactical patience and perseverance of the Marines who daily risked death by IEDs and snipers before the Anbar Awakening.

In the book's other eleven chapters, the authors alternately describe how the Awakening and Surge unfolded at their level (small USMC and USN insignia distinguish the speakers).

I myself was trained in the 2006 revision of the US military's doctrine for counterinsurgency operations—*Field Manual 3-24*—before deploying to Iraq during 2007-8. I find Green and Mullin's work to be an instructive case study of how the political and military elements of the "Petraeus revolution" combined in Fallujah to enable Iraqi elites to temporarily abandon sectarian violence and work toward their endgame goals. Mullin and Green implemented this doctrinal shift to achieve decisive results during their seven-month rotation (Mar.-Oct. 2007).

On the civil side of the counterinsurgency equation, Green used coalition resources to move Fallujah's city government toward real "accountability, responsibility, legitimacy, capacity, and efficacy" (138). Mullin oversaw the more (but *not* excessively) kinetic technique of the "swarm": Fallujah was divided into ten "precincts," so designated to emphasize support for the newly recruited local Iraqi police units. These areas were swarmed in sequence, each in several phases (77-80). First, the establishment of barrier-wall isolation and entry control points (ECPs) ended the terrifying attacks by vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices, which Mullin dubs a "commuter insurgency" (19). Second, the precinct was saturated with Marines and Iraqi soldiers and police, patrolling from joint US-Iraqi security stations. American mentoring quelled tensions between the Shia-dominated Iraqi Army and Sun-

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1. E.g., Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven: Yale U Pr, 2013), reviewed at *MiWSR* 2014-061, and Emma Sky, *The Unraveling: High Hopes and Missed Opportunities in Iraq* (NY: PublicAffairs, 2015).

ni-dominated local police units (45, 125–26). Third, Marine civil affairs personnel worked to restore clean water, sewage, and electricity services, for many Iraqis the true litmus test of the occupation’s efficacy (78, 122–23, 139). Mullin admits that complete success was elusive, but notes that, toward the end of the swarm, each precinct saw enough improvement that residents in still uncleared precincts “started to clamor” for their turn (113). Finally, each precinct created a civilian council to communicate with the city government Green was pressuring to resolve the grievances and complaints endemic to the once shattered and dysfunctional city. By late summer 2007, Mullin observes, “everywhere we sent members of our battalion, peace broke out” (130).

*Fallujah Redux* reads like a compilation of officers’ daily notes, with few post-2007 emendations and barely a mention of the Islamic State’s occupation of Fallujah in summer 2014. Mullin’s focus was on efforts to (a) reduce Marine casualties at ECPs and combat observation posts (42, 48), (b) ensure “morally correct” use of force, even in ambiguous situations such as nighttime sniper over-watches of likely IED emplacement sites, and (c) decrease cases of after-deployment PTSD (40). For his part, Green was preoccupied by endless meetings with, and evaluations of, harassed city officials and many local sheiks and would-be sheiks who sought to influence him and the Marines, often without publicly committing themselves to resisting Al-Qaeda.

Green and Mullin divided insurgents into “Iraqi nationalists, essentially the home team, and Islamist extremists, generally foreigners” (5). In 2007–8, the coalition convinced enough of the former to stand down and tolerate or even support the Surge to allow US forces to terminate it all the sooner. Since this binary perspective reflects Green and Mullin’s own on-the-ground reality, I will not quibble with it here. Future studies will provide a deeper understanding of the actions and motives of specific Iraqi factions during the Surge.

The authors fail to address some interesting questions. For instance, how exactly were other Marine battalions in rural areas around Fallujah able to assist Mullin’s 2/6 in blocking the “rat lines” into the city? Readers who served in Iraq would have appreciated a “wiring diagram” of the command relationships from General Petraeus’s MNF-I down to 2/6 Marines in Fallujah. Since Mullin and Green rarely refer to the other’s work, it is left unclear whether they “cross-walked” their work in face-to-face meetings or were by chance pulling in the same direction in their respective “lanes.” Green, who was embedded with a Navy SEAL contingent of the local Special Operations Command, gently criticizes the highly kinetic “institutional tendency” of the SEALs (23, 34), but does not further discuss the trade-off between pacification tasks and the direct-action raids that became so troubling a feature of the war in Afghanistan.

*Fallujah Redux* is an excellent starting place for both students and experts to learn about the Marine Corps’ role in the 2007–8 pacification of Iraq, an uncommon example in post-1945 military history of America’s ability to “do counterinsurgency.”