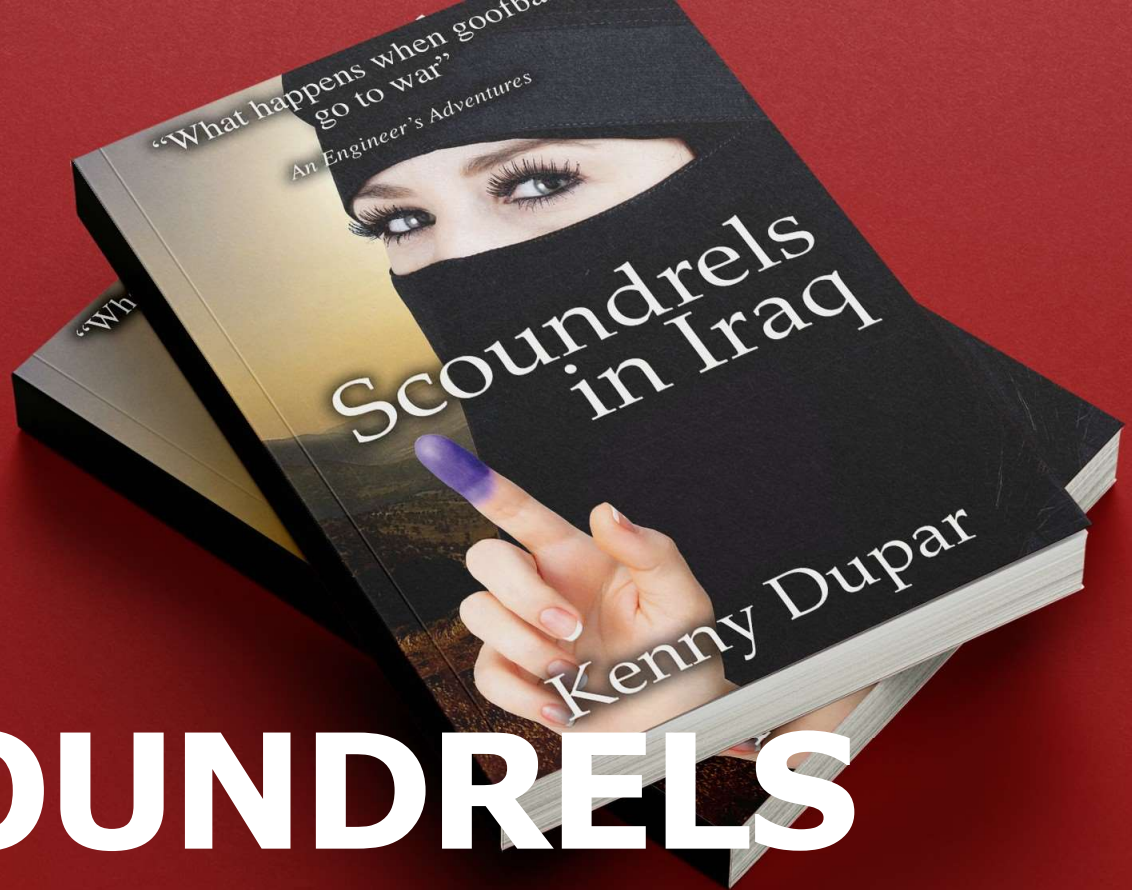




SCOUNDRELS IN IRAQ

Most Soldiers aren't the Infantry Boys runnin' and gunnin', performing harrowing missions. People have seen a one-sided, violent representation of the war in Iraq. Some Americans leave for war straight from their neighborhoods and families. Many of these citizen patriots have wicked skills and low impulse control.

Men shooting their guns in dramatic fashion is a tiny fraction of wartime activity. The sizeable contributions of female Soldiers in Iraq have been largely excluded in media. Engineers, military intelligence, police, psych ops, aviation, transporters, comms, finance, postal, medical, staff pukes, the ash and the trash, itty bitty units that plan, man guardposts and make water safe to drink haven't been given their due.

Scoundrels in Iraq relates the gritty adventures. I inadvertently explained the result of the war, how and why ISIS appeared; still finding the ridiculous and funny in order to continue the march: providing a glimpse of the anguish of being separated from family, the worry of getting hurt and the fear of coming home when your loved ones have moved on without you.

QUICK FACTS

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PAGE COUNT:	327 Pages
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FAQ

Why did you write the book?

Writers are allowed to mention the voices in their heads without getting locked up, and mine kept insisting that I write down my Engineer Adventures. I was in interesting places at interesting times. So these vignettes, tales spun through a funny lens, became chapters. My experience allowed me to portray the breadth of the war from the perspective of a goofball. It's much more relatable to non-military folks. I also write to keep my brain from turning into mush.

What was the scariest thing you ever experienced in Iraq?

Besides getting mortared once in a while and the fear of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) on the roads, coming home was the hardest part of going to war. That's pretty common. I came home with all my fingers and toes, shaken not stirred. In other words, I didn't suffer from PTSD because of luck, my own resiliency, and the type of job I had in the Army. We were building stuff in the Engineers, not running and gunning. But when you get back, everybody has moved on without you. Life doesn't freeze frame the way you remembered it. Kids grow, spouses take on new tasks. Relationships break. Employers were supposed to give you your job back. That didn't always happen. And oh by the way, you've changed a lot too. That's really hard to come to grips with.

What are you doing now?

I'm still running work in construction. I'm going to retire the moment I can ensure I won't starve to death, and spend my time writing. I want to do what I want to do! (I sound like a petulant child). Book #2, Pin-up Dolls and Classic Cars: A Covid Love Story, is with the editor. Writing to me is an act

of discovery. I don't want to stick to the same genre, so I wrote a love story. It's not for the Hallmark Channel.

Why did you steal a bulldozer?

Stealing is such a vulgar term, I prefer appropriate. As long as a Soldier doesn't take government property for profit, but for a noble purpose like completing a mission, and doesn't get caught, then a crime really hasn't been committed. Right? The alleged bulldozer was a beast known as the "Teddy Bear", D9 high track, up-armored. We spent \$30,000 on parts for the one that was "appropriated" and we Engineers gave it to the Marine Corps after it was fixed. It kept Marines from getting hurt, that's the why. If anyone is looking for it, tell 'em to ask them. What do you think the Marines are going to say?

Who is the woman with the purple finger?

In 2005, Iraq had its first free and fair election in over 40 years. In order to ensure people didn't vote twice on election day, they dipped their index finger into ink. Shia women didn't wash it off as a matter of pride. She also represents someone else. Any guesses?

Did the US lose the war?

Few people are going to lament the fact Saddam Hussein got hanged by the Iraqi people. The Kurds in the north are certainly glad for increased autonomy, as are the majority Shia Arabs who are now in charge. The script flipped and the former oppressors, Sunni Arabs, are now in the minority. The new government aligns mostly with their fellow Shia in Iran, but there has certainly been a flourishing of political freedom. The US was unprepared for a counterinsurgency or to step into the violent 1400 year Sunni/Shia schism within Islam.

Did you really stowaway to get to Iraq?

I don't like talking about this because of the Uniformed Code of Military Justice. Acts unbecoming of a Commissioned Officer,

stuff like that. My Courts Martial will be interesting. Always remember that a Scoundrel never admits to anything. Confessions are for suckers.

How is your heart now?

Modern pharmaceuticals are keeping me alive. Also, I think I amuse the Creator of the Universe, so She keeps me around to see what I do next. I know how I'm going to die, heart failure. So I got that going for me.

Why do you call yourself the White Don King of Baghdad?

To celebrate the 4th of July 2003, I decided we needed to have a birthday party! We had been in Iraq for a month, living conditions were very austere, Soldiers were really stressed. I found some athletic gear we had brought from Iowa so I decided to build a boxing ring. Everybody loves either watching other people beat on each other, or to do it themselves. So I accidentally became a boxing promoter, thus volunteering to be my Engineer Battalion's Morale Officer.

Now, the most famous boxing promoter of all time is Don King. He's black. We were in Baghdad. I'm white and was acting like I was Don King. No one will ever say anything as silly to the American people. I own it. Upon going to war, I became the White Don King of Bagdad, it's true. The boxing expositions were very popular.

In Scoundrels, who is Tony?

That's the only question on the final exam. Sorry, no clues except, the human mind can do funny things.

