



Cindy in Iraq: A Civilian's Year in the War Zone

Cynthia I. Morgan

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Cindy in Iraq is Cynthia Morgan's hair-raising yet jubilant chronicle of her perilous year in war-torn Iraq as a truck driver -- the most dangerous civilian job in the war zone.

In the summer of 2003, a friend in the National Guard stationed in Iraq wrote to Morgan about KBR, a Halliburton subsidiary that was hiring drivers. Morgan was from a family with a long military history; her oldest son was in the National Guard at the time. Wanting to do her part for her country and struggling financially after leaving her abusive third husband, Cindy decided she was "tired of surviving her life and not living it."

She left everything and everyone behind and set out for Kuwait and Iraq to be a truck driver for KBR. She felt Iraq would give her the opportunity she needed to make some changes in her life. Her three sons, then ages 18, 16, and 15, along with the rest of her family, supported her decision, but made her promise that she would always tell them the truth about what she was going through as a driver in Iraq. Drawn in part from the emails she posted home and the journals she kept, *Cindy in Iraq* re-creates in vivid detail how Morgan overcame the stigma of being one of the rare female truck drivers and quickly rose through the ranks to become a convoy commander. She led her fellow Reefer Cowboys -- "reefer" is short for "refrigerated truck" -- in convoys that delivered necessary goods to soldiers stationed in such notorious hot spots as Baghdad Airport, Camp Anaconda -- a place as dangerous as its name -- and Fallujah. A moving target for insurgents and with virtually no training, and unarmed as well, she faced being ambushed and shot at, all while learning how to navigate Iraq's difficult terrain. As the insurgency heated up, contractors were in more and more peril, increasingly kidnapped and executed. By the time Cindy's year in Iraq was up, she had shrapnel in her arm. She also discovered that there are times when the enemy can be someone you know.

Cindy's journey to Iraq was also a voyage of self-discovery: "I knew that I would find out who I am and what I am made of here.... Honor, integrity, pride, and humanity can all be discovered. I know that I still am a very passionate person when it comes to the things I believe in.... I am still me, but more.... So my story of being over here is not just one of a female truck driver driving in a war zone in Iraq. It is a story of me finding the world, and of me finding me."

Cindy's is an eyewitness account of war that few journalists can offer: The grateful Iraqi children, the hardworking U.S. soldiers, and the personal stories of soldiers and civilians alike thrown together in a war unlike any other the United States has ever fought.

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