

Acts of Courage: Inside America's Military

TODAY'S ★ ★ ★ ★ AIR FORCE ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ HEROES



by Miriam Aronin

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U.S. SOF Adviser**

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Attacked!

It was a beautiful, sunny morning on September 11, 2001, in New York City. At 8:46 A.M. firefighters in the station house of Ladder Company 6 heard a thunderous noise. When they rushed outside to see what was causing the sound, they were shocked. Above them an airplane was flying low—too low. Seconds later the plane crashed into the 110-story North Tower of the World Trade Center. Shortly after, a second plane crashed into the South Tower. It wasn't long before U.S. officials learned that the two planes had been **hijacked**.

Smoke poured from the towers after being attacked on September 11, 2001.

About two hours after being hit by the planes, both towers had collapsed.

New York City was not the only place that was attacked on September 11. Another plane hit the **Pentagon** in Virginia, and one also crashed in a Pennsylvania field. Nearly 3,000 people were killed in all. Who was to blame for these terrible tragedies? A **terrorist group** called **Al Qaeda** took responsibility. The group's leader, Osama bin Laden, had organized the attacks from his base in Afghanistan. On October 7, 2001, the U.S. government sent Air Force warplanes to Afghanistan to bomb the terrorists' training camps.

Warplanes, such as this F-16, were sent to Afghanistan in October 2001.



War in Iraq

As the fight against terrorism continued, it expanded to Iraq. U.S. government officials believed that Saddam Hussein, the ruler of Iraq, was building powerful weapons, including **nuclear** ones, to use against the United States and other countries. They thought he needed to be stopped. As it had done in Afghanistan, the U.S. Air Force led the charge in Iraq with an air attack on March 20, 2003. Though weapons were never found, the U.S. and its **allies** were able to remove Saddam Hussein from power.



Members of the Air Force landing on a building rooftop in Iraq



The U.S. Air Force has served in many parts of Iraq and Afghanistan. The red parts on this map show where some of the events in this book took place.

Thousands of brave U.S. airmen have served in Afghanistan and Iraq in the years following September 11, 2001. This book **recounts** some of their courageous stories. The bravery and selflessness they have shown in fighting for their country is the very definition of *hero*.

A U.S. airman flies
over Baghdad, Iraq.

The Air Force is the branch of
the **armed forces** responsible
for military operations in the air.

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About the Author

Miriam Aronin is a writer and editor. She also enjoys reading, dancing, and knitting. She would like to dedicate this book to her cousins Chaya, Yossi, Michael, Necha, Menucha, and Moss.

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TODAY'S ★ ★ ★ ★ **AIR FORCE** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ HEROES

In the years following September 11, 2001, thousands of brave men and women have fought in the war against terrorism in Afghanistan and Iraq. Many of them have faced extremely dangerous, even deadly, combat situations. How did they react? Find out as you read some of their amazing stories. From Staff Sergeant Earl Covell, who risked enemy gunfire to direct fighter jets that saved the lives of his teammates, to Senior Airman Jason Cunningham, who gave his life while giving medical care to others, the U.S. airmen in this book show what heroism truly means.

★ **TODAY'S AIR FORCE HEROES**

TODAY'S ARMY HEROES

TODAY'S COAST GUARD HEROES

TODAY'S MARINE HEROES

TODAY'S NAVY HEROES

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