



Why We Lost: A General's Inside Account of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars

By Daniel Bolger

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“*Why We Lost* is neither a memoir nor a window into private meetings and secret discussions. It is a 500-page history . . . filled with heartfelt stories of soldiers and Marines in firefights and close combat. It weighs in mightily to the ongoing debate over how the United States should wage war.” — *Washington Post*

Over his thirty-five year career, Daniel Bolger rose through the ranks of the army infantry to become a three-star general, commanding in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Perhaps more than anyone else, he was witness to the full extent of the wars, from 9/11 to withdrawal from the region. Not only did Bolger participate in top-level planning and strategy meetings, but he also regularly carried a rifle alongside soldiers in combat actions. Writing with hard-won experience and unflinching honesty, he argues that while we lost in Iraq and Afghanistan, we did not have to. Intelligence was garbled. Key decision makers were blinded by spreadsheets or theories. And we never really understood our enemy. *Why We Lost* is a timely, forceful, and compulsively readable account of these wars from a fresh and authoritative perspective.

“Compelling.” — *Wall Street Journal*

“Bolger is a superb writer, and the book’s most riveting passages are those describing what it’s like to be an infantryman at the sharp end of battle.” — *Cleveland Plain Dealer*

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Editorial Review

Review

"I am glad to see someone of [Bolger's] caliber tackling this subject."--Tom Ricks, ForeignPolicy.com

From the Inside Flap

A high-ranking general's account of the U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and how it all went wrong

Over a thirty-five-year career, Daniel Bolger rose through the army infantry to become a three-star general, filling key command roles in both Iraq and Afghanistan. He took part in meetings with top-level military and civilian officials, where strategy was made and managed. But, unlike most generals, he also regularly carried a rifle alongside rank-and-file soldiers in combat. His knowledge of the Global War on Terrorism — both in principle and in practice — is unmatched.

Now Bolger offers a unique, unsparing, and fascinating assessment of this epochal conflict, from the run-up to 9/11 to the drawdown of troops more than a decade later. Written with breathtaking immediacy and unflinching honesty, this taut, brave book takes us deep inside the military establishment to explain why we lost — and why we didn't have to. Though America boasts the world's best-trained, best-equipped military — many of whose thrilling successes and unnerving challenges are recounted here — it failed time and again to capitalize on the skills and courage our forces displayed in combat. Intelligence was garbled. Key decision makers were blinded by spreadsheets and theories. And, at the root of our failure, we never really understood our enemy. *Why We Lost* is an urgent and riveting examination of these wars from a perspective of unsurpassed authority and candor.

From the Back Cover

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DANIEL BOLGER completed thirty-five years in the U.S. Army, retiring as a lieutenant general in 2013, having held command posts in Iraq and Afghanistan. His military awards include five Bronze Star medals (one for valor) and the Combat Action Badge.

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