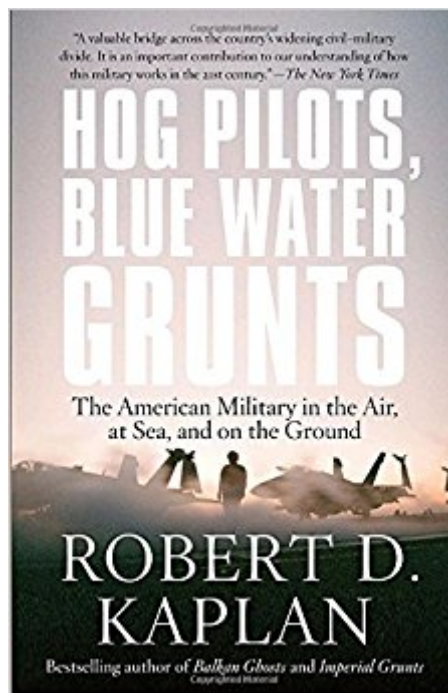




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Hog Pilots, Blue Water Grunts: The American Military In The Air, At Sea, And On The Ground (Vintage Departures)



Synopsis

In *Hog Pilots*, *Blue Water Grunts*, acclaimed journalist Robert D. Kaplan continues his exploration of the American military's challenging and varied commitments around the world. From protecting sea lanes, to providing disaster relief, to preparing for potential military confrontation with North Korea and Iran, Kaplan describes the astonishing, vital, and often unacknowledged operations regularly performed by American military personnel in the air, at sea, and on the ground. Vivid and illuminating, this book takes us deep into the highly technical and exotic cultures of the armed forces, telling soldiers' stories from the perspective of the troops on the ground.

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review. After 9/11, Atlantic Monthly correspondent and bestselling author Kaplan (*Balkan Ghosts*) spent five years living with U.S. troops deployed across the globe. He first reported on his travels in 2005's *Imperial Grunts*, an incisive and valuable primer on the military's role in maintaining an informal American empire. In this shrewd and often provocative sequel, Kaplan introduces readers to more of the soldiers, marines, sailors and airmen who staff the empire's forward outposts. Although the author's travels take him to Iraq, he spends most of his time with imperial maintenance units that are training indigenous troops, protecting sea lanes and providing humanitarian relief from Timbuktu to the Straits of Malacca. Kaplan clearly admires the American troops he meets, though he sometimes questions their civilian masters. He saves his harshest judgment for his fellow journalists, whose relentless criticism of anything less than perfection

amounts to media tyranny, in his view. Kaplan sees the war on terror and the re-emergence of China as the U.S.'s two abiding challenges in the 21st century and argues that, after Iraq, the military will seek a smaller, less noticeable footprint overseas. Kaplan combines the travel writer's keen eye for detail and the foreign correspondent's analytical skill to produce an account of America's military worthy of its subject. (Sept.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Robert D. Kaplan turns away from the more incendiary front line of the war on terror in this follow-up to *Imperial Grunts*. He spent over two years embedded with a diverse group of soldiers, and his admiration for their work comes through on every page. That same high esteem opens up the major vein of criticism, as some reviewers fault Kaplan for veering "dangerously close to cheerleading" (*Washington Post*). Well-researched and sympathetically drawn, these portraits of the modern military are essential reading for those interested in the day-to-day lives of our men and women overseas. Copyright © 2004 Phillips & Nelson Media, Inc.

I greatly enjoy reading Robert Kaplan's books. Versed in history, traveling to places that are largely impractical and with a sharp eye for detail, his books offer glimpse into political/strategic issues as well. This book is a bit of a departure in that this book is focused more on the military members in all kinds of situations, from Marines, Army and sailors in the Navy. This is an inherently interesting book as the book really takes the reader into areas that are ignored (or in this book being a but old) were ignored. Is the book irrelevant because it was written almost a decade ago? No absolutely not. It is still incredibly relevant because the places discussed are certainly still problems. A really great book to read through for the interested observer that gives a scope and picture of just how vast out military commitments are and how many issues exist. Well worth reading.

Liked this better than his *Imperial Grunts* book but that is because this book covered the A-10. My favorite USAF aircraft currently in service. I like Kaplan's writing and the fact that he names enlisted who he talks with. Usually you only get the O's names and then only if they have rank. As I read this over 10 years after he wrote it, a lot has changed in how the USA is using the military and particularly Special Operations. Also the Iraq portion shows how the big boys miscalculated our involvement (hindsight is wonderful). Now with a new president, the Pacific Century will see China dominating and the US pulling back. Big Mistake

As pointed out by several other reviewers, this book is a sequel to the earlier and better *Imperial Grunts*. Kaplan revisits some of the locales of the earlier book and reports tremendous progress in places like Columbia and the Philippines. He spends time on a nuclear carrier, a destroyer and a nuclear fast attack submarine. Those were the best parts of the book. He spends time with A 10 pilots on deployment to Thailand and provides well-deserved credit to these blue collar fighter pilots who fly the unloved but tremendously valuable attack aircraft. It was so unloved by the fighter mafia that runs the US Air Force that they were going to retire the plane. The Army, which depends on air support, and has no air wing of its own like the Marine Corp, offered to take over the plane and add it to its own air arm. The Air Force quickly restored the A 10 units to full flying status and no more was heard for a while about retiring them. Kaplan does travel a lot and the depth of his interviews in the earlier book isn't here but it is still a good source of information about the far flung US military as it fights the savage wars of peace.

Wonderful book about WWII. Recommended by a dear friend and graduate of the Naval Academy. I have purchased two additional copies for our Sailor son and a brother in law retired from the US Navy. Excellent read.

Big warning: this kindle edition has not the least fundamentals - no page numbers, no chapters to go to. Unacceptable!! The book content is interesting and fine and saves the total rating.

The book which preceded *Hog Pilots*, *Blue Water Grunts* (*Imperial Grunts*) was an informative and touching collection of snapshots of service men and women stationed on the edges of America's military map. As of this writing, I haven't finished *Hog Pilots*, but it's clearly cut from the same cloth. I'm profoundly grateful for the specific individuals mentioned in these books as well as their un-named brothers and sisters - all of whom faithfully serve us with ingenuity and determination. I'm also grateful that Robert Kaplan is willing to drag his 50-something bones out to these remote and dangerous places to bring these stories back to us.

Kaplan is one of the last in depth and eloquent international reporters, a must read for anyone who enjoys well written books.

A HIGHLY INFORMATIVE READ. WELL DONE!

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