



# Twice Armed: An American Soldier's Battle for Hearts and Minds in Iraq

*Col. R. Alan King Lt. Col. USAR*

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Lieutenant Colonel R. Alan King and his 422nd Civil Affairs Battalion became operations central after the collapse of the Iraqi army and the beginning of the occupation of Iraq in March 2003. While under his command, these civil affairs and psychological operations soldiers were not content to stay in secure offices inside the green zone. Instead, they knew that to do their job they had to get out and make "house calls," and in the process the 422nd became the most highly decorated civil affairs unit in the history of the U.S. Army, with twenty-one individual awards for valor and five purple hearts.

King was particularly well-suited for the new kind of war being waged in Iraq. Armed with his rifle, a Palm Pilot that contained an English translation of the Koran, and an informed and nuanced respect for Middle Eastern culture, King and his team captured or arranged the surrender of almost a dozen of the most-wanted villains from Saddam's regime, including several from the famous deck of cards. He became privy to secrets as weighty as those of Iraq's nuclear weapons program and as light as those behind the outlandish press briefings of the infamous Baghdad Bob.

*Twice Armed* - its title is taken from Plato's maxim *We are twice armed if we fight with faith* - provides a compelling view of the Iraq war, and the experience from the Iraqi perspective, from one of the war's most decorated officers. The regional expertise that helped King negotiate with clerics and sheikhs also informs his provocative opinions about what it will take to win the battle for the hearts and minds of Iraq, an ancient, mystifying, and deeply religious culture. King has been compared to the legendary T. E. Lawrence, with the press dubbing him "Alan of Arabia," and this book sheds light on a new and necessary component of modern warfare, one that goes far beyond artillery and armor, and instead tells King's story of cultural interaction and respect that yielded results in his area at the beginning of the war. A trenchant and necessary look at how the winning of the hearts and minds of people in Iraq is as crucial to success as the winning of tactical military goals.

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