



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release (Sherman, CT)

01/13/17

Connecticut veteran publishes memoir about heroism and bureaucracy in Iraq

Connecticut resident Marc Youngquist saw firsthand the heroism displayed by everyday military volunteers serving in the Middle East. In his book, “The 143rd in Iraq: Training the Iraqi Police in Spite of it All,” he tells their stories.

Youngquist’s own experiences revealed that when soldiers returned to civilian life they didn’t speak of their acts of bravery. Their coworkers, and perhaps their own families, did not know what these men and women had done in the war zone.

Youngquist made this discovery after returning from service in Baghdad with the 143rd Military Police Company, a National Guard unit based in West Hartford. After coming home, he spoke occasionally to school children about the military. His talk always included the story of Andrea Cloutier, a staff sergeant, who with five others ran through explosions from a mortar attack to rescue three wounded soldiers.

January 13, 2017



After one such talk a teacher approached him and explained that although Cloutier was one of her best friends, Cloutier had never talked about she had done in Iraq.

Youngquist had several more similar conversations about others he had served with and realized that he wanted to tell their stories.

“These conversations repeated themselves many more times, with the same response each time,” Youngquist writes in the book’s forward. “No one knew. With this book, I am trying to let everyone know.”

The backdrop to the individual stories is the ongoing trials that all members of the unit endured: Daily firefights with the enemy and difficulties with the military administration, which often ignored or didn’t appear to care about what was happening at the front.

The result is a book that tells what life was really like for members of the unit.

A former commander of the 143rd describes the memoir as a “bare knuckle blow-by-blow account of how my former soldiers performed so magnificently in Iraq ... the gritty truth as only a soldier’s NCO would tell it.”

The book is being republished by Emerald Lake Books of Connecticut after the original publisher allowed it to go out of print.

Emerald Lake Books founder Tara Alemany felt that more people need to read “The 143rd in Iraq.”

“As the mother of an active service member, I’ve been amazed at how ignorant I was regarding what our troops go through during their deployments. Whether at home or abroad, these men and women give selflessly of themselves. Oftentimes, they feel forgotten by those they left behind, when a simple note or care package would do so much to lift their spirits.

“When Marc told me that his former publisher had taken his book out of print soon after publishing it, I realized that this was a contribution we could make to honor the sacrifices, both large and small, made by these brave men and women.

“Emerald Lake Books is proud to bring this story to a larger audience so that those of us here at home never take for granted what our troops are enduring for us.”

Youngquist himself joined the Marines as a teenager and served briefly in Vietnam. After several years in civilian life in Connecticut, including time as a patrolman with the Cheshire Police Department and as a security investigator, he joined the Army Reserves and trained as a drill sergeant. He left the reserves after the Army failed to



activate his unit for duty in the Middle East and transferred to the National Guard, which had seen action in Iraq.

“I wanted to be in it,” Youngquist said, although he added, “My wife would kill me if she heard me say that.”

Ironically, in early 2001, Youngquist said, he was preparing to retire from the Guard when his wife, Marcia, pointed out that he had only a couple of years to qualify for a pension. He decided to stay, figuring the end of his term would be quiet.

The terror attacks of 9/11 changed that – though Youngquist admits he relishes military life.

“I enjoy the challenge and the difficulty of it,” he said. “I feel the need to serve.”

In Iraq, the 143rd trained Iraqi police but also patrolled the streets of western Baghdad and defended citizens and itself from insurgents. The responsibilities he felt toward his troops, Youngquist said, kept him focused.

“You’re training them to accomplish a job and survive and it’s not a perfect world but we’re serving our country and as screwed up as our government is, it’s still better than most other places,” Youngquist said. “When you go to Baghdad, you’re not thinking about President Obama or President Bush, you’re thinking about the people you’re with and about their families, who are counting on you not to screw things up.”

Youngquist lives in Connecticut with his wife, Marcia.

###

To interview Youngquist about “The 143rd in Iraq: Training the Iraqi Police in Spite of it All,” contact Tara Alemany at tara@emeraldlakebooks.com or Paul Steinmetz at Paul@paulsteinmetz.com.

Press release distributed by Emerald Lake Books.

January 13, 2017