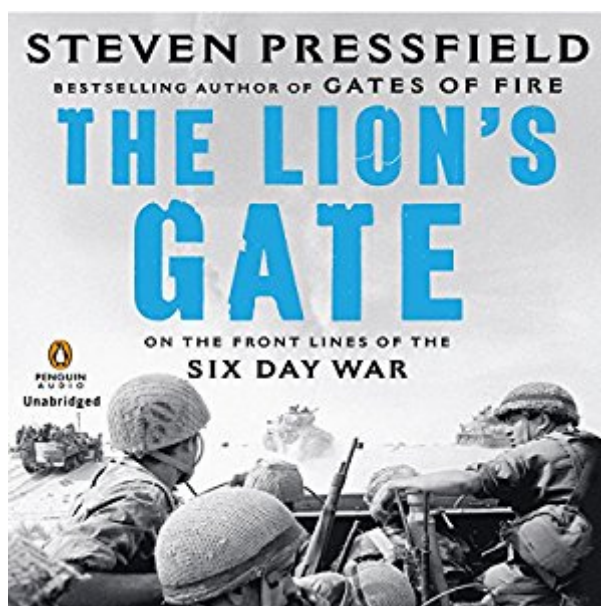


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The Lion's Gate: On The Front Lines Of The Six Day War



Synopsis

The best-selling author of *Gates of Fire* and *Killing Rommel* delivers his first work of military nonfiction - an epic narrative of the Six Day War. June 5, 1967: The fearsome, Soviet-equipped Egyptian Army and its 1,000 tanks are massed on Israel's southern border. Meanwhile, the Syrian Army is shelling the much smaller nation from the north. And to the east, Jordan and Iraq are moving brigades and fighter squadrons into position to attack. Egypt's President Nasser has declared that the Arab world's goal is no less than "the destruction of Israel." June 10, 1967: The combined Arab armies are in ruins, their air forces totally destroyed. Israel's citizen-soldiers have seized the Gaza Strip and the entire Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, the Golan Heights from Syria, East Jerusalem and the West Bank from Jordan. The land under Israeli control has tripled. The charismatic, eye-patch wearing Defense Minister Moshe Dayan has barreled through the Lion's Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem, meeting up with a gang of paratroopers who have already raised the blue and white flag that frames the Star of David. How on earth did this happen? Only Steven Pressfield could get the real story from the fighter jocks in the air, the tank commanders through the sand, and the infantrymen on the ground. Through more than 300 hours of interviews conducted in Israel, he has written a gripping chronicle of the six days that changed the Middle East forever. He also captures the universal experience of individual soldiers compelled to stare down mortal fear and move headlong into a firestorm. *The Lion's Gate* blends the immediacy of Mark Bowden's *Black Hawk Down*, the esprit de corps of Stephen Ambrose's *Band of Brothers*, and the soul of James Bradley's *Flags of Our Fathers*. It will join the indispensable canon of military nonfiction.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

While I usually do not read war or action stories, my adrenaline was kicking in on overdrive as I sped through *THE LION'S GATE*. I knew many of the details before I had even opened the book, but it was so real and fresh that I felt I was actually there: in the airplanes, helicopters, jeeps, tanks, and trudging along in IDF boots. I remember following the Six Day war as it happened, beginning with Egypt's closure of the Straits of Tiran and the UN leaving the Sinai. I was living in Ohio and all the media reports were talking about all the damage being inflicted on the Israeli military and Israeli cities and civilians. It was frightening. Soon after the end of the war, the real story got out: Against amazing odds, Israel had destroyed the Egyptian air force within a few hours and had captured all of the Sinai, The West Bank, and Golan Heights. Afterwards, I followed media reports and read books about the war. None of them matched the story revealed in Steven Pressfield's *THE LION'S GATE*. Formatted as a chronological oral history, Pressfield presents key segments of the war. He interviewed sixty three military personnel who fought in the Sinai, Jerusalem, and the Golan and lets them tell what they experienced at that critical time. We are there as the plans of attack for Sinai, Jerusalem, and Golan are drawn and redrawn. Through their words, they tell us what was going on in the minds of the Israeli military personnel directly involved. They relate how the IDF operates: Orders from the top are frequently ignored or altered because of the situation on the ground. While there were orders to not attack civilians or religious sites, they had to decide what should be done when they were attacked by civilians or from mosques or schools?

Pressfield serves up another extraordinary story. This time he binds together a collage of first person accounts into an extraordinary narrative. Pressfield tells this story from up and down the Israeli, IDF, and IAF ranks and across the international machinations into the run-up and conduct of the 6-day war. Pressfield sets the stage to zoom into the microscopic society of civilian/soldier kids in combat. The kids are led by surprising and extraordinary civilian/commanders to simply never give an inch. The reason was pretty simple as no less than victory and more, that no battle can be lost in so small a geography and no loss is too great to grant the last man standing a retreat. In typical Pressfield style, the meat of story grows to an unstoppable read. Pressfield explains up front that this is an unapologetically biased portrayal from his perspective. Reviewers that might pan the book as one sided are more than adequately warned. Pressfield has the eyewitnesses named for

the skeptic to question. Reading a book delivers a particular experience to the reader. The experience here is the combination of a superb book multiplied by one's own recall of the events and the still central and current global realpolitik. I can recall the UN withdrawal from Sinai at Nasser's demand and we knew it was for the express purpose of clearing the way for the Muslim Nationalist's run at their own final solution. I had forgotten that the US was not Israel's ally. I had forgotten that France, alone, was Israel's only material ally. I mentally moved the French up a few notches of respect. "In '67 the army is too poor to have its own trucks for troop transport. We must use civilian vehicles ..." This is not an easy book for a 'pro-Israel' American to read.

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