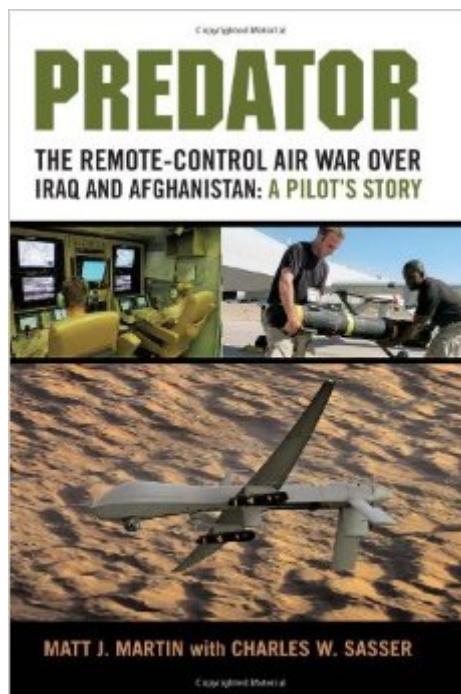


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# Predator: The Remote-Control Air War Over Iraq And Afghanistan: A Pilot's Story



## Synopsis

The Nintendo generation has taken to the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan where remotely controlled aircraft are killing America's enemies and saving American lives. Matt J. Martin is considered a "top gun" in the world of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). For nearly four years, he has flown hundreds of missions on two warfronts in a new kind of combat that, until recently, was largely classified Top Secret. He and his fellow Predator pilots have been actively involved in virtually every facet of the War on Terror in Iraq and Afghanistan: tracking Osama bin Laden; capturing top al-Qaeda leader al-Zarqawi; fighting with the U.S. Marines in Fallujah; and rescuing aid workers kidnapped in Afghanistan by the Taliban. This is Matt J. Martin's story and that of his aircraft, the 27-foot long Predator.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), also known as Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPAs), have played an increasingly influential role in air warfare. Initially used only for photo recce, UAVs have evolved into armed sentinels, endlessly circling over battlefields until their pilots, usually located half a world away, unleash deadly Hellfire missiles, JDAMs or other munitions. Lieutenant Colonel Matt Martin, a UAV veteran, and Charles Sasser describe the THE REMOTE-CONTROL AIR WAR OVER IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN in this fascinating Zenith Press release. Martin, a USAF RC-135 navigator longing to be a pilot, volunteered for UAV training, learning to fly the Predator in 2004. Martin subsequently logged Predator combat missions, helping Coalition forces locate - and terminate - al

Qaeda and Taliban bad guys, supported Special Ops missions, etc.. He later commanded the Predator-equipped 46th Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron stationed in Iraq. While other books on UAVs are out there, Martin's book provides an insider's view of how the Predator was developed and transformed over the years and its use in combat along with the mindset and experiences of a Predator pilot. As borne out in Martin's book, Predator missions are not bloodless video games; UAV operators can see quite clearly their targets and what happens to them when a Hellfire hits. Martin presents his experiences against the backdrop of the Gulf Wars, providing some insightful analysis into events past and present in those troubled countries. In short, PREDATOR 'draws back the drapes' on what was a highly classified part of the Iraq/Afghanistan air war and provides the reader with a glimpse into how air wars will be fought in the future.

Recommended.\*\*\*\*\*FYI.

Through the 1990s and 2000s, the world witnessed revolutions in warfare. In the 1990s, the United States Air Force introduced the world to Global Atomic's MQ-1 Predator remotely piloted aircraft (RPA). Also in this war, what went unnoticed was the Air Force's revolution in fighting from a garrison installation. Strike pilots would leave their Italian homes well before sunrise, plan and execute strike missions in the Balkans, and then return home to their families. This new pattern broke the tradition of warriors secluding themselves in a war zone. With this insulation from the families, warriors would be able to use peers as a support group to help deal with the horrors of combat. With these revolutions of the 1990s, the newest generation of Air Force strike pilots has been deprived of that support group. Instead they are faced with a psychological dichotomy of trying to provide a loving, stable family life & dealing with the psychological trauma of death. "Predator: The Remote-control Air War over Iraq and Afghanistan", by Lt Col Matt Martin and Charles Sasser, offers a glimpse into how both of these revolutions of the 1990s have forever changed combat. The MQ-1 Predator is an incredible new capability for American and allied forces. From this ultimate high ground, commanders can watch or track targets without the slightest hint of the aircraft's presence. Major Martin, one of the Predator pilots, shares insights into how the Predator weapon system supported many of the significant periods of recent Iraqi and Afghan history. His stories range from the humorous to the somber. Yet the common thread through all of his experiences was the life he shared with his wife, Ruby.

Predator: The Remote-Control Air War over Iraq and Afghanistan: A Pilot's Story (2010) by Matt Martin and Charles Sasser is a book that relates the experience of being a Predator drone pilot and

officer during the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Martin was a college ROTC Air Force Officer who wanted to become a fighter pilot but who then wanted to fly for the Air Force. He took the opportunity as soon as he could to pilot Predator drones and became one of the first group of pilots to fly the plane. One of the remarkable things about the predator is that it is flown in Iraq and Afghanistan from US soil except for landing and takeoff that are done by crews on base. Martin relates how strange it is to drive to work in a US city, work flying an aircraft observing and striking at the Taliban and then return home for dinner. The book provides more detail about the Predator than the interesting but flawed *Wired For War*. The weaknesses in the system are discussed. The Ku band data link used by the vehicle sometimes goes down and the plane flies itself autonomously. However during these times any target being tracked is lost. Predators have also had fairly high loss rates due to accidents while few, if any, have been lost in Iraq and Afghanistan due to hostile fire. The Predator carries Hellfire missiles that allow targets to be struck very accurately. Initially the command loop for using these missiles was very time-consuming and insurgents were often able to escape before an order to fire was received but the way in which the drones are controlled has been changed. The book is also interspersed with descriptions that Martin uses to describe himself that feel a little contrived. His description of his relationship with his wife is better done.

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