

# **Bravo Two Zero Study Guide**

**Bravo Two Zero by Andy McNab**

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# Plot Summary

"Bravo Two Zero" by Andy McNab, Sergeant, SAS, tells the story of a soldier in the British Special Forces in the early 1990s. In January of 1991, Andy and seven other men were sent behind Iraqi lines to complete a top-secret mission called Bravo Two Zero. The story tells of the struggles they faced from communication failure to snowstorms and captivity.

Andy had a propensity for getting in trouble and after his first arrest when he was 16, he decided to join the Army. It was a good move for him. At first he did not like the rules and structure, but soon found out that the negatives far outweighed by the positives of other aspects of military life. He loved the adventure and excitement that came along with the job and he remained dedicated to his work even though it was the source of the demise of three marriages.

In 1991, Andy was sent on a mission to destroy landlines in the Northern Main Supply Route and to find and destroy a Scud. There were seven other men on a mission, and it was called Bravo Two Zero. He left his girlfriend, Jilly and his daughter, Kate and went off to Iraq. The team had limited information to go on since there weren't very many updated maps. They also knew that their mission was very dangerous because the terrain was so flat that there was nowhere to hide. So they did not take vehicles, but asked to be dropped off by helicopter. They had two weeks to complete their mission.

Right from the start, their mission was difficult. Their radio communications were failing, it was unusually cold, and they discovered that there were humans with dogs right in their vicinity in areas that they thought were isolated. Survival was key, especially after they were compromised, and the team began a 100-mile trek to Syria where they could find safety. Prepared for a warmer climate, the team members were freezing and battling hypothermia. They were stuck in a blizzard and had several confrontations with the enemy.

At one point, the team accidentally split up. They all knew their final destination and hoped to reunite in Syria. This did not happen. Andy, himself, was captured just two miles from Syria's border. He was taken to a military camp where he was beaten and interrogated. Before they left on their mission, the team had come up with a cover story. Andy stuck to it, despite his beatings. While dealing with the hardships of imprisonment, Andy found one glimmer of hope. At this camp, he saw one of his Bravo Two Zero team members named Dinger. The two saw each other on a regular basis and were able to inspire each other with quick smiles, winks, and the occasional whispered word.

Beatings became a regular part of life as well as inhumane treatment within the cells. However, Andy never broke and stuck to his story. Later on in the prison stay, he and Dinger were reunited with a third member of the team. When the war was over and they were released, they discovered that five of the eight members of Bravo Two Zero survived. The team members made it home, regained their health, and headed back to work.



# Chapters 1-4

## Chapters 1-4 Summary and Analysis

"Bravo Two Zero" by Andy McNab, Sergeant, SAS, tells the story of a soldier in the British Special Forces in the early 1990s. In January of 1991, Andy and seven other men were sent behind Iraqi lines to complete a top-secret mission called Bravo Two Zero. The story tells of the struggles they faced from communication failure to snowstorms and captivity.

Chapter 1 opens right in the heart of drama and immediately gives the reader an idea of what the author thinks about war. The Regiment was preparing for action as Iraqi troops and armor rolled across the border with Kuwait. Andy McNab and other members of the Counter Terrorist team were not part of the preparations, although they wanted to be. They were almost done with their nine-month tour of duty. On January 10, 1991, Andy, along with half of the squadron, was given three days notice of movement to Saudi to his great relief. They tested their weapons and prepared to leave. He had one final night with his girlfriend, Jilly. It was a tense evening because she knew where he was about to go and the dangers involved in it.

Andy met up with three members of his gang in the camp accommodation area. Dinger, Mark the Kiwi, and Stan joined him as they loaded onto the aircraft that would take them out. He described Dinger as a scary looking, rough, tough chain-smoker who had a very sharp, analytical brain. Solid and unflappable, Dinger was also a great companion that one could rely on. When the team landed in Riyadh, they didn't have time to enjoy the lovely weather. They had to settle into their new home, which is a hangar that was 150 feet wide and 300 feet long. 14 soldiers, along with all their equipment and weapons, shared the hangar. As they settled in, Stan offered them some tea.

Stan was the son of a Scottish father and a Swedish mother and he was born in South Africa. He had moved to Rhodesia just a short time before the collateral declaration of independence so he knew all about terrorist warfare. He joined the territorial Army after his family moved to Australia. Stan was a large man and easily attracted women with his 6 foot three, handsome, large frame. In this chapter, the author also introduces Mark, who they called Mark the Kiwi. Andy met Mark in Brisbane in 1989 when they played against each other in a rugby match. Although he was only 5 foot six, he was powerful.

The members of the regiment were happy to be in the hangar together. There hadn't been gathering such as that since World War II. Since they didn't know what their mission was yet, they used their time to brush up on their weaponry skills and to practice their nuclear, biological, chemical drills. Andy wondered what would happen to him if he were caught by the enemy. He expressed a lack of fear in regards to death. Andy had prepared for it mentally, and had already made sure all his paperwork was in order, including notes for his next of kin. At the close of the chapter, Andy learned that they had a task for him and his team. He watched the news and saw the residential



areas in Tel Aviv, which showed children in their pajamas. It made him remember his own childhood.

Chapter 2 continued where Chapter 1 left off, with Andy thinking about his childhood. His mother, whom he never knew, left him on the steps of the hospital when he was a baby. His foster parents adopted him when he was two. Andy's father was a cab driver after working in the National Service in the Catering Corps, and his brother had been part of the Royal Fusiliers for five years when Andy was young. He was inspired by his brother's adventures in faraway places.

Andy was always getting himself into trouble. He spent his early teens running away from home. When he was 16, he was arrested and discovered that he hated being locked up. Since he decided that he couldn't keep out of trouble, he decided to enlist in the Army. Andy was placed in the infantry in the Royal Green Jackets regiment. He hated at first, with all its rules and regulations. Once they started working with rifles, he started enjoying it more. In 1977, Andy was posted to the second Battalion and was sent to Gibraltar. He really enjoyed this. His first tour was in Northern Ireland, and he saw immediate action. It was here that he had his first taste of the excitement of battle as well as the realization of the sadness of facing death.

Making his way up the ranks, Andy became Lance Cpl. in charge of a four-man patrol in South Armagh. He did well there, gaining the favor of the British Army. By 1979, he developed a true love for the Army. He became the youngest infantry corporal in the Army at that time at the age of 19. Life wasn't always easy in the Army, and sometimes he was sent to places that were difficult to live in. His first wife divorced him because she couldn't handle his placement in Tidworth, and he refused to leave. His second wife, Debby, also had difficulties with the way the Army took over his life.

As part of his continued training, Andy had to endure the Combat Survival course. He worked with the team, and also on his own, which suited him fine. During this training, he learned about the protocol for a captured soldier. While he found it uncomfortable, he didn't think it was too hard. This is a foreshadowing of what was going to happen to him in the future. He survived the six grueling months of training and was given the famous sand-colored beret with a winged dagger. Andy got to choose his squadron, and he chose Air. Debby didn't appreciate all his training and left him. The next year, Andy started dating his next door neighbor named Fiona. They had a daughter named Kate. Fiona was his third wife. Right after they got married, he was sent overseas for two years. A few months after he returned, the marriage dissolved. In 1990, Andy met Jilly, and it was love at first sight.

In Chapter 3, Andy was very happy that he was given the role of patrol commander, and he was happy that he had the opportunity to work with Vince. Vince was a 37-year-old expert at mountaineering, diving, and skiing. He looked rough, and was upset that his time in the regiment was almost up since he had only two years left. The team met in the briefing area, an isolated area where no-one could overhear their mission or their planning. Here they joined up with Bob, a man who Andy described as a physically and mentally strong man who was only 5'2" tall.



The team was told that their task had two parts. One was to locate and destroy the land mines in the area of The Northern Main Supply Route (MSR), and the other part was to find and destroy Scud. They had 14 days to do the job. They asked for any information available including topographical information, photography, satellites, and weather information. There wasn't much information available. The team discussed what types of weapons they needed and started to plan. Looking at the maps, they realized that hiding was going to be very difficult because the terrain was so flat.

They looked at the maps, and got more information about the weather. It was supposed to be a little bit cool, but not too uncomfortable. Since the ground was so flat, they decided not to worry about vehicles, for rather get dropped off by helicopter. By the end of the day, they knew how they were going to do the task. Still, they pushed forward with their plans knowing that every little detail was critical to the mission.

After they made their plans for landing and determined what equipment and what weapons to bring, they started to think about capture. They decided they needed a good story in case they were captured so they had something to say when they were asked to give more information beyond their number, rank, name, and date of birth. The information couldn't betray their Regiment. The next step was to figure out what they were going to carry. Since they were not using motor transport, they needed to bring only the bare minimum. Communication equipment was key. Since it would be relatively warm, they decided not to take their sleeping bags. By 22:30, everything was planned. Andy and Vince stayed behind to run their outline plan by the Sgt. Maj. and the officer commanding.

Andy didn't sleep well that night, and Chapter 4 opened with his explanation of what was going through his head. He was thinking about Jilly and hoping she wasn't getting upset about things that she saw and heard through the media. He was also thinking about the team's plans, and how the war affected people's lives. As people begin waking up, there was a frenzy of activity as they double checked all their supplies and tested weapons. They rehearsed for different types of scenarios that they might encounter and practiced different types of lying up points (LUP) since they didn't know the lay of the ground. Vince distributed the equipment evenly among the patrol, and the team practiced getting off the aircraft.

On the 18th, they were told that they were going to move to another location. They flew out of the operating base and landed in a large Coalition air base. They were closer to the Iraqi border and felt the cooler air. While trying to fall asleep, Andy heard wave after wave of what looked like B-52s passing over, heading for Iraq. Right before dawn, sirens wailed, and everyone had to run for cover. That afternoon, Andy was given a formal set of orders. He was briefed on the weather conditions, which were supposed to be cool and dry. The orders were for the team members to infiltrate the area by Chinook, move up to the LUP-comanche area, LUP routine, recce, target attack a landline, take actions on the Scud location, then exfiltrate or resupply and re-task. The pilots were also filled in on their part of the mission.



At lunchtime, they were told that they might not be able to get in, that they were going to try. The team was ready for action, and they started loading up into vehicles to drive out to the Chinook. As they headed out, Bob suddenly remembered that he messed up and forgot to finish completing his will form. He asked a friend to find it and mail it to his mother. He had already signed it. When they were 12 miles away from the border, they looked out of the aircraft and saw innumerable aircraft 1,000 feet above them, flying with split-second timing. Andy commented that it looked like something out of "Star Wars." Right near the border, they were told that they had to go back. It was frustrating for everyone, but they took the extra time to recheck their supplies and relax a bit.

On the morning of the 22nd, they woke up and Dinger smoked a cigarette. It was cool, and no-one wanted to get out of bed. Stan made coffee from the comfort of his own sleeping bag. The mail came right before they were going to head out and Andy received a letter from Jilly.



# Chapters 5-8

## Chapters 5-8 Summary and Analysis

As Chapter 5 opened, the team posed at the tailgate of the freshly camouflage-painted Chinook for a Bravo Two Zero team photo. The team loaded onto the aircraft surrounded the teasing of other soldiers who pretended they were planning a funeral. The men started analyzing the ground below them as they flew across Saudi and decided that it looked like a brown billiard table. This time they made it over the border. They passed over the main territory between Jordan and Baghdad and were happy to spot a road that they could use as a location fix. The ride was sometimes rocky as the pilots had to maneuver the aircraft to avoid visibility and weaponry targeted at them. They made it to the ground safely, landing on a dried up river bed. It was a beautiful night, but cold.

As they let their eyes get accustomed to the dark, Andy started to get a fix on their position. Andy heard a dog barking in the distance. It was from a plantation that he saw approximately nine miles to their east. They didn't know about this plantation, and this worried Andy as he questioned how much of their information was accurate. They saw their first Scud, then everybody was ready to move on. Setting up a plan, they decided to head north where they would eventually hit the half buried petroleum pipeline. They would follow that until they hit a major ridgeline, where they would meet. Half an hour later, they discovered a watershed that they could use for LUP. It would give them the cover that they needed. Settling into the area, Andy observed what was happening around him and reported it back to the men. They set up communications to transmit the situation report, but the communications didn't work. They tried different antennas throughout the day, but nothing communications still would not go through. When they moved out again, they realized the seriousness of their situation. The area that they had planned to infiltrate was full of population. After patrolling, they looked at their maps, adding the new information. They kept trying to communicate using the radios, but the communication devices still didn't work. This did not make Andy unsettled, however, because there was a backup plan for when the pilots came back to pick them up.

In Chapter 6, the team was in hiding, listening to vehicles going back and forth. They were not a problem. Then, a herd of goats came closer to them and found their hiding spot. Behind the goats was a young child who was watching the goats. The men did not know whether the boy would tell others that he had found them, or if he would ignore the situation, but they had to expect the worst. Packing up, they started out. A vehicle came close, and they realized that they couldn't escape, but would have to run and fight. As the vehicle became closer, they realized that it was a bulldozer, and the driver did not see them. They decided to move out quickly after the tractor left so they could escape. On their patrol, they heard the sound of tracked vehicles and knew that they were facing danger once again. The infantry began fighting them, and Andy decided to rush at them with his team. It worked, and the Armored Personnel Carrier backed off. The team decided to get out of the area before another band came after them.





Bravo Two Zero changed their direction to avoid detection as Chapter 7 opened. They were moving as fast as they could to get out of the contact area. Chris was hit by an antiaircraft shell, and they thought he was dead, but he was fine. As night fell, the Iraqis lost sight of them. All eight members of the team were fine. As they rallied together, they assessed the equipment situation. The radio was left behind, and they had used a quarter of their ammunition. As they were sipping water and eating sweets, Dinger was bemoaning the fact that he had just lit a cigarette before they were attacked, but he never had the opportunity to smoke it.

Using a tactical beacon, they tried to communicate with the Airborne Warning and Control System, but the message didn't go through. Andy decided that they should head west for Syria since the enemy would think that they were heading south. It was a 100-mile hike. As they were marching, they had several close encounters with vehicles along the way. Andy was upset about the communications situation, not understanding how four different communication devices were unable to work. They moved fast at first, trudging through despite the freezing cold. After 6 miles, they were starting to slow down, and Andy discovered that Vince was limping. He had been injured when they confronted the enemy. Meanwhile, Stan was starting to show signs of serious dehydration.

Instead of stopping once an hour, they started stopping once every half-hour. This slowed them down tremendously. The weather was getting worse, with high winds driving into them. Hearing aircraft, they decided to take a rest and send out another tactical beacon. They got a very faint response telling them that their signal was very weak and to try again. When Andy told the aircraft they were communicating with to turn back north, he didn't get any reply. Following protocol, Andy told Vince that he was going to try the tactical beacon. Vince was supposed to transmit the message down the line. For some reason, he did not do that, and Andy forgot to check to make sure he had done it. This caused a separation in the team. They hoped to meet up later. Pushing on with their journey, Andy kept thinking about his frustration regarding the team split. There was no sign of the rest of the team by the time they found cover for the day. It was freezing cold, and they burned all their paperwork to make sure everything important was destroyed, and Dinger had a cigarette.

Around seven in the morning, it began to rain. It had not rained in the desert since 1985. The rain turned to sleet, which then turned to snow. This was a big problem for them since they had little to keep them warm. By 11 o'clock in the morning, things were getting much worse. Frozen, Andy heated up some water. Dinger decided to have another cigarette, but it was hard for him to light it since he was shaking so badly from the cold. From their hiding spot, they could hear vehicles passing throughout the day, and by two o'clock Mark realized that they were in trouble. Andy was starting to hit the first stages of hypothermia, and Mark was wearing fewer layers than anyone else. They needed to get moving. Since it was still an hour and a half before dark, they decided to head out using a deception plan since they would be leaving tracks in the snow. The men headed east then looped so that they ended out going Northwest.



Water supplies were getting low and the weather was making a negative impact on their plans. Instead of heading west, they decided to head north. They left the snowy area but still had to face the biting cold wind. Mark was suffering the most from the cold and when they found shelter, Bob and Andy jumped on top of him to give him body heat. Dinger made hot drinks to warm everyone up. Usually it was extremely risky to do this during the night, but they didn't have a choice this time.

Water was essential, and the team decided to head towards the river bed. The landscape became a little kinder to them with its undulating ground. Two Iraqis came very close to spying them, but didn't. Marck began to have severe problems with the cold, and they decided to take a break. They only made it a little less than six miles that evening, but they were still alive. On the 26th, the weather changed. Three men rested during the day and decided to push on for the border. They realized if they pushed really hard for 12 hours, they could make it over the border that evening. Things were looking better. At 1530, they heard a horrible sound. They had been discovered by goats again. This time, an old man came along with the goats. He greeted them as if nothing was wrong, and they talked with him a little bit. After half an hour of chit-chat, the man headed off and so did they.

The men decided to hijack a vehicle. The first one that came along was a 1950's New York yellow cab. The father and son in the cab were very scared, and Dinger got two packs of cigarettes from the son before they left them on the side of the road. The car was difficult to drive, but it was faster than walking, and they were finally warm. At one point, they were stopped, and soldiers are checking of vehicles. They knew they wouldn't make it through and decided that if they were split up, they would meet again in Syria. They made it out of the car and to safety, eight miles from the border. Everything was looking good until they were once again spotted. As they were running, they could see the lights of Syria. They continue pressing forward and running from the Iraqis who spotted them. Andy made it, but Mark went down. Andy was comforted to know that Mark had died quickly.

As Chapter 8 opened, Andy pushed his feelings behind him as he pushed toward the border. With only a few hours of darkness left, he only had a couple of miles to go, yet he was so physically depleted that he decided not to move on. Finding a drainage ditch, he moved along. He crawled under the steel span of a culvert and prepared for the day. Andy heard the ominous sounds of goats' bells, but for once the goats did not notice him.

It was a beautiful day and there was not a cloud in the sky. From his hiding spot, Andy listened to all the activity surrounding him and found it scary. Time dragged by. A group of vehicles came by and stopped right near him. Andy felt as if he was going to die in a drainage ditch 2 1/2 miles from the border. He was compromised. Dragged out of the ditch, he was beaten and put into a Land Cruiser. It was a bumpy ride, further traumatizing his already beaten body. The Cruiser came to a stop in a town where people in the crowd came forward to beat him some more. As his training kicked into gear, McCain refrained from fighting back.



The vehicle started moving again and he was taken to a local military camp. When Andy was taken out of the vehicle, he saw a beaten man lying on the grass. It was Dinger. This made Andy feel a whole lot better as if he might survive the situation. He was searched, and they took everything away from him except for his compass and an escape map, which they didn't find. He was blindfolded and taken to another room where he was pushed into a chair. He wondered if he was about to be tortured. He was punched in the face, and others came forward to start beating on him also. He decided not to show emotion, even when they began kicking his ribs with steel toed boots. They continued beating him for approximately 15 minutes, and during the scuffle his blindfold came off. The floor was smeared with blood and mud. Just as he felt he was going to die, they stopped.

Someone started interrogating him, asking him his name, age, religion, and where he was from. They switched tactics and tried to make Andy feel as if they were helping him, but he only gave basic information that they already knew from the materials they had taken from him. They beat him more when he didn't get them the right answers. He started telling them the cover story that he and his teammates had come up with before they left for Iraq. He made sure he stuck to the story. When they asked about his personal life, he made up lies that were based on truth. They kept beating him, and he eventually passed out and was unconscious until he was woken up with a boy stubbing out a cigarette on his neck. When he opened his eyes, he was outside, near Dinger. Both he and Dinger were put into the back of an open pickup so the Iraqis could parade them around town, showing off their prisoners. The locals started beating them with sticks and punching them and spitting at them.

Back in a military camp, they were taken to a room with five beds. Andy was handcuffed to a metal fixture on the wall. The place was warm, but he was in pain from the beatings. He tried to focus on happier times such as visits with Jilly and Kate. As he was reminiscing, the door opened and a man came in, threatening to kill Andy. The guards defended him, letting Andy know that no matter what they were doing, they did not plan to kill him. He struck up a conversation with the guards and humored them. His hand was hurting tremendously, and he asked for some relief for his pain, but they wouldn't give him any relief. When they finally released his hand, it was swollen and totally numb. He was thrown into a Land Cruiser, and Dinger joined him. The prisoners were told not to talk. As Andy remained silent, he concentrated on keeping oriented as the vehicle moved forward.



# Chapters 9-12

## Chapters 9-12 Summary and Analysis

Bombs were falling all around them as they drove around in the truck as Chapter 9 began. Andy had lost any bit of orientation that he previously had, and they drove for an hour and a half. Still blindfolded, he couldn't see when they dragged him out of the vehicle, but he had a feeling that they put him in the same room as before. This time, they cuffed him to what he thought was a bed. Later he wiggled out of the blindfold and realized that it was the same room. His hands were swollen and still in agony, and he thought about Jilly to escape the pain.

After two hours, he was dragged back outside and put back in the truck. Dinger was with him once again. Andy was beginning to get worried about his hands, which were swollen to twice their normal size. He couldn't feel his fingers or anything beyond his wrists. When the car stopped, the prisoners were marched across a courtyard quickly. This was very hard on their feet. They were taken to a semi dark room, and their equipment was placed on a table in front of them. The prisoners were asked about their equipment and weapons. During this inquisition, Andy stuck to his story and didn't tell them the truth. This made them angry, and they beat him once again. He was taken to another room that was more pleasant, and a man began to question him kindly. Andy continued pretending that he did not know anything other than the story he had already told. Since the man seemed so kind, Andy asked him for some food, and was given some rice, bread, and stewed tomatoes. They undid one of his handcuffs so that he could eat, and the release of pressure felt wonderful. However, Andy could not hold his spoon in his numb hands. He adapted so he could eat.

The man told Andy that one of his friends was in the hospital, and Andy couldn't tell if that man was bluffing or not. He still stuck with his story. After this questioning, they put the blindfold back on and took his handcuffs off. Andy was pleased that he still had his mental resources. He was put in a corridor with Dinger, and the two quietly caught up with each other. As they talked, they realized that neither of them knew where Bob was, Legs was probably dead, and Mark was dead. Later they were handcuffed and blindfolded again and taken out to the Land Cruiser to drive through Baghdad. They were taken into a new building where they were placed in small, dark rooms that smelled like a toilet. This was because it was a public bathroom. Andy curled around the pan and went to sleep.

As Chapter 10 opened, Andy was waking up feeling completely disoriented. He knew it was imperative to keep track of time to maintain his mental capacities. He tried to ignore his discomfort and made efforts to get along with his guards. They were taken to another vehicle, and Andy got to see Dinger again. He didn't look very well. They were handcuffed and blindfolded again and they wondered where they were going this time. One of the guards warned them that if they believed in a god, they would be meeting him soon. This made Andy fearful, wondering what sort of tortures the enemy would



impart. Andy was thrown into a dilapidated cell filled with excrement and mud. He was beaten some more, and he worried about his family and whether or not they would find out if he was killed.

Worried about his own mental condition, Andy made a conscious effort to hold onto his sanity. He was beaten on a regular basis, and he was extremely hungry and thirsty. Every time he was interrogated, he stuck to his story. There was a time when the guards kicked open his door. Andy braced himself for another interrogation and beating. This time, however, they dragged him a few meters away and put him in another cell where Dinger joined him. They were ecstatic to see each other and set about assessing their injuries. Dinger filled Andy in on the events that had taken place in great detail, explaining what had happened to him, Legs, and Bob after they had been split up.

The three had escaped from the Iraqis by swimming across some freezing water. Legs was dying from the cold so Dinger ran off to find some help. He tried to pass himself off as a local, but it didn't work. He was taken prisoner. Bob had somehow separated from the group. Dinger thought he was with Andy, and Andy thought he was with the other group.

Dinger and Andy were given blankets, water, and soup. Things are starting to look much better. They could hear other people getting beaten, but no one came for them. During the night they heard the guards taunting, and wondered if they were saying the name Stan, or telling someone to stand. They couldn't tell.

The next morning Andy was handcuffed and blindfolded and taken away. During this interrogation they discussed religion. He tried to persuade the captors that he was a Protestant Christian. He showed them that he had a foreskin, which he wouldn't have if he were a Jew as they were accusing him. They thought this was very funny. Later that day, they interrogated him again, asking him more about the aircraft. He didn't give them any usable information. They beat him some more, breaking some of his teeth.

Andy was exhausted and extremely hungry and thirsty. They gave him some liquid that barely passed as water to rehydrate and the pain as the fluid hit the teeth that had broken during his beatings was excruciating. He looks past the guards and saw Stan. Stan was brutally beaten but alive. The next time he was taken for interrogation, the man that had always been kind to him was more impatient and matter of fact. He told Andy that they had the team's signals operator in the hospital, and that the man was telling them the truth. Andy wasn't sure whether they really did have Legs or not. It was possible that Legs had survived. In spite of more beatings, Andy stuck to his story. They continued beating him over a period of days. In addition to punches and kicks, they pinned him down and ran red hot spoons over open sores. He decided that Legs hadn't told them anything, or they wouldn't be after him for information.

The prisoners were handcuffed and blindfolded as people continuously came in and out of their cells, yelling at them and beating them. While it was bad enough being beaten, it was worse hearing the people beating up Stan and Dinger. One time when he was taken in for interrogation, things were different. It began pleasantly. The inquisitor told



Andy that he had a dentist there to look at his teeth. Andy didn't trust it, but he didn't have a choice. The dentist took out pliers and pulled out his tooth while the inquisitor laughed. Stripped of their clothing, the prisoners were left in their cells exposed and cold. They heard bombs falling all around them, and Andy found himself wishing one would land on him. He was having a hard time holding onto his sanity. One day the guards came into his cell, and one was carrying a newspaper. This helped Andy get a firmer grip on reality because there was a date on the newspaper. They had been tortured for five consecutive days.

The beatings continued, and Andy decided to change tactics after eight days. He asks to guards to find an officer, and gave them some more information, but he made sure it was information that wouldn't jeopardize the Regiment. Now that he was talking, they were kinder to him, and they offered him a cigarette, which Andy asked them to give to Dinger. This time, after he had returned to his cell, the guards came back and gave him some clothes and removed his handcuffs and blindfolded. He also got some decent food and water.

Chapter 12 began during the afternoon of the sixth. Andy was handcuffed and blindfolded again and taken to a vehicle. He discovered that Dinger and Stan were moved with him, which made him feel good. The three were taken to a military prison where they were placed in cells that were approximately 12' x 9'. A guard came in and asked if he wanted to be with his friends, and Andy said that he did want that. He was taken to an empty cell, and was thinking that they were messing around with him when the door opened and Dinger walked in. Several minutes later, Stan joined them. Thrilled that they had a chance to communicate, they began to tell their stories rapidly. Stan explained that Vince was dead, but he didn't know what happened to Chris since they were separated. The other two let Stan know what they knew. The prisoner governor came in and introduced himself to them and made a point of the fact that whatever had happened to them in the past was not his responsibility.

After the prison governor left, the three decided that they would show respect to their guards in hopes that they might get some special treatment. While they improved mentally and physically, they would try to plan an escape. They had some minor victories, but were still treated poorly. The chapter flashed back to Stan's story. As they were heading for Syria, Vince was in very bad shape. Hypothermia was affecting his thoughts, and the team members lost him in a blizzard. Stan and Chris were discovered by a herd of goats, drawing the attention of a goat herder who drew pictures in the sand indicating food, a house, and a vehicle. Stan decided to investigate the vehicle option, and they split up. It was a trap, and Stan was taken as a prisoner of war. He stuck to the same story that the others had.

The next day more prisoners came into the cells near them including some Americans. The three continued to make plans for escape, using anything that they could from their cell, such as a straight nail, as potential helps for escape. They continued to try to get along with the guards. Sometimes they got food, and sometimes they didn't. On the night of the 13th they heard a lot of commotion in the streets. Several days later, the guards weren't as friendly as usual. Andy was blindfolded, cuffed, and taken out of the





cell. When he and the guard were walking, Andy hit a lamppost, and his nose started to bleed. The guard got in trouble for this. Andy had to make a video, and he remembered his lessons from the Vietnam War where people used silent communication to show that they were being forced to say things under duress. He made himself seem incoherent and drowsy and kept rubbing his eyes with his finger while avoiding looking directly at the camera. When he went back to the cell, the guards took Dinger out. They gave him a cigarette when he was in front of the camera, and he held it in a way that was very unnatural for him. Stan decided to stroke his hair regularly and looked down at the ground while he was being interviewed.

One of the young guards was fascinated by London and was interested in music. He talked with the prisoners regularly and through him they got information. It was through him that they learned that Saddam Hussein had signed a treaty. They also learned when the ground war started. One night a new prisoner came in, and they learned that the ground war was nearly over. On March 3, Stan and Dinger were told that they were going to be released. Andy asked them to make sure that they spoke to Jilly, and they agreed. He was happy for his friends, but wondered why he couldn't go home, also. Later in the day he was put out in the courtyard where he enjoyed soaking up the sunlight. On March 5, Andy was told that he was going home. He didn't trust it at first, especially when they were blindfolded and taken out. They were taken to a hotel, which teemed with camera crews and soldiers and Red Cross vehicles. Andy started realizing that it was true. He really was going home. He asked about Dinger and Stan, finding out that they had been through there. Reading the soldier list, he realized that Legs had not made it after all. The inquisitors had been lying when they told him that Legs was in the hospital.

As they were taken up to the third-floor for safety, they were told that they could ask for anything and if it was possible, it would be provided for them. Andy had eggs, beer, and some bread. A man came upstairs and asked for him saying that someone wanted to see him. When he went downstairs, Andy saw Mark. His team member who was shot, and he saw go down. As they compared stories, Andy found out that Mark had been taken as a prisoner of war, and that his foot had been shot. They were worried about gangrene. The next day, the men rode off in a convoy, which took them to the aircraft that would take them home for real.



# Chapters 13-Epilogue

## Chapters 13-Epilogue Summary and Analysis

The Americans on the aircraft were getting dressed up so that they would look good on cameras as Chapter 13 opened. Andy and Mark didn't worry about this since they were not allowed to be photographed and would get off the aircraft after all the media were gone. The pilots did some celebratory acrobatics, and the mood was festive. They landed in Riyadh where they were met by some of their people who instructed them on their transportation plan. They would be taken out on ambulances to a C-130, which would fly them out and land in another airfield where they would be picked up by a BC 10, which would take them to Cyprus where they would go to a hospital. Everyone was celebrating when they met up with Stan and Dinger, who was smoking a cigarette. They had already contacted Jilly. The men went through several days of tests, and Andy learned that he had hepatitis. He also had a dislocated shoulder, ruptures in the muscles on his back, scar tissue on his kidneys, burns on his thighs, and a loss of dexterity in both of his hands. He was very eager to get home. They flew into Brize Norton, where they met their officer commanding. He poured champagne and told them to take a couple of days off.

Chapter 14 opened with the comment that they had two days off. On Monday, Andy spent the day with Jilly, enjoying the feel of familiar old clothes. On Tuesday, Katie stayed with him, and they watched videos. On Wednesday he went back to work. The Regiment sat down with the five survivors for a debriefing. They also visited the widows and families of the members who had died. The entire debriefing took three weeks. Chris had a chance to tell his story. After Stan had gone off with the goatherd, Chris headed off towards the Euphrates. He was desperate for water, and at one point he accidentally drank water from a chemical plant. He was very close to the border but was not doing well. He passed out and when he woke up he was hallucinating. He knew he needed water, so he risked going to a nearby house. The family in the house gave him food and water. Chris showed the family a paper that stated that anyone who helped him get to the British Embassy or to the allied forces would receive a reward. He was taken to the embassy, which made arrangements for him to fly out. By the time he got home, he had lost a huge amount of weight and it took two weeks for him to walk properly. It took six weeks before he got sensation back in his fingers and toes. The water from a chemical plant that he drank was water from a uranium processing plant. It gave him a severe blood disorder and he also had problems with his liver from drinking dirty river water.

The team learned about rescue missions that were mounted as a result of their lost communications procedure and their corrupt signals. After the war, the Iraqis found Vince's body and delivered it to the Red Cross. Bob's and Leg's bodies were on the same plane as Vince's. After the funerals for them, Andy went on a camping trip with Jilly in California. Two weeks later, he went back to work.





In the Epilogue, Andy talked about how the war changed him. He had a new appreciation for warmth, and some things, such as the rattle of keys, still made him nervous. However, he still had a great love for the Army. He had been through a lot of stress, but that was just part of the job. He appreciated the excitement that came along with working as a soldier.



# Characters

## Andy McNab, Sergeant, SAS

Andy McNab, Sergeant, SAS, was an orphan from South London who was raised by adoptive parents. He joined the Army when he was 16 years old to keep himself out of trouble. By the time he was in his 30s, he was a Special Forces commander participating in the Gulf War. He loved the thrill and adventure of the lifestyle that came along with being a soldier. When times got tough, he just figured this was part of his job and what he got paid for. Andy enjoyed being a leader, and he took his responsibilities seriously. This did not mean that he was perfect, however. Sometimes he made errors and he truly regretted them, but learned from them and moved on. He had a deep respect for the soldiers that he worked with and was willing to sacrifice his life to help his comrades in arms. His dedication to the men helped him withstand torture in captivity.

## Dinger

Dinger was a member of Bravo Two Zero, along with Andy McNab. He was also a fellow prisoner of war who helped Andy survive all the torture and inquisition he experienced in the military camp. Dinger was a tough looking character with scary eyes and a scary voice. Despite his rough looks, he was a deeply loyal friend and soldier and was very intelligent. He had a very sharp, analytical brain. Like Andy, he was dedicated to his comrades and withstood torture rather than giving out any truth that would harm his Regiment. He was a constant inspiration to Andy during their time in captivity, offering support just by his nearness. Whenever he had the chance, he would smile or wink at Andy, offering encouragement while they were imprisoned. When things got rough with their captors, if he was capable of it, he would smile and act nonchalant. A chain smoker, Dinger was constantly trying to get cigarettes while the team was escaping and when he and Andy were in captivity.

## Bob Consiglio

Bob Consiglio was part of the Bravo Two Zero mission. He was admired for his immensely strong character both physically and mentally. He did not survive the mission.

## Chris

Chris was part of the Bravo Two Zero mission. He was very athletic and Andy called him the most determined, purposeful, and deadly man in the Regiment.



## Vince Phillips

Vince Phillips was part of the Bravo Two Zero mission. He was the oldest man on the mission at 37 years of age. He had two years left of service at the time of their mission. He did not survive.

## Legs

Legs, whose real name was Steve Lane, was a family man with a five-month-old child. He was an expert signaler on the Bravo Two Zero mission. He did not survive.

## Mark the Kiwi

Mark the Kiwi was part of the Bravo Two Zero mission. He was an Australian who was a rugby player. He had to spend six months in the rehabilitation unit before returning to squadron duties.

## Stan

Stan was part of the Bravo Two Zero mission. He was imprisoned for a short period of time, along with Andy and Dinger. Born in South Africa, he witnessed the terrorist war in Rhodesia. He quit medicine to join the Special Forces.

## Wife #1

Wife #1 is not named. She gave Andy an ultimatum where he had to choose whether to leave the place they were stationed and take her back to London or to give her a divorce. He chose to stay in the Army.

## Debbie

Debbie was Andy's second wife. They were married in 1982. She did not appreciate all the times they were separated and the marriage ended in divorce.

## Fiona

Fiona was Andy's third wife. She was his next-door neighbor. They were born in 1987 and together they had a daughter named Kate. They divorced in 1990.



## **Kate**

Kate was Andy's daughter. Thoughts of her helped keep him alive while he was a prisoner of war.

## **Jilly**

Jilly was Andy's girlfriend at his time of capture. Thoughts of her helped keep him alive while he was a prisoner of war.

## **Jeral**

Jeral was a young guard who talked with the prisoners regularly. He wanted to know all about London and rock music. It was through Jeral that the prisoners received war updates including information on ground battles and peace signings, which gave them hope.



## Objects/Places

### **Kuwait**

The book opens with Iraqi troops and armor rolling across Kuwait's border.

### **Hangar**

The half squadron stayed in a hangar that was 300 feet long and under 50 feet wide. There were 40 men in the hangar along with all sorts of ammunition, equipment, and vehicles.

### **Shorncliff, Kent**

This is where Andy went for his initial training when he joined the Royal Green Jackets.

### **Winchester**

Andy had a period at the Rifle Depot in Winchester. It was at Winchester that he fell in love with the Army.

### **Gibraltar**

When Andy was stationed in Gibraltar in 1977, he felt as if he were in heaven.

### **Northern Ireland**

Andy did his first tour in Northern Ireland late in 1977.

### **South Armagh**

After his tour in northern Ireland, Andy was sent back to South Armagh. He was Lance Cpl. at the time.

### **Wales**

Andy trained in Wales for Winter Selection in 1984.



## **Hereford**

After grueling training, Andy received his sand-colored beret with wings and dagger in Hereford.

## **Iraq**

Andy was sent out on a mission to destroy landlines and Scud in Iraq.

## **Syria**

After their mission was compromised, Bravo Two Zero headed towards Syria for safety.

## **Baghdad**

Andy was taken to a military prison in Baghdad when he was a prisoner of war.



# Themes

## Work

One of the main themes in this book is work. When Andy was young, he heard from his brother about the adventures that came with military work. When he was in his teens, he recognized the need for discipline and signed up with the Royal Green Jackets. Even though he didn't like it at first, he continued on and soon discovered that he loved his job.

Sometimes the job was very nice, such as when he was sent to Gibraltar and got to enjoy warm climates, good friends, and exotic woman. Other times it was more difficult. Three of his marriages ended up in divorce because the military life was too difficult, and Andy's dedication to his job was more powerful than his dedication to the woman in his life at the time. Sometimes they were sent to remote locations, and Andy was frequently sent away for long periods of time, causing the marriages to disintegrate.

Andy understood the risks that he took as he did his job. When he was lying out in the freezing cold and soaking wet, he reminded himself that this was part of the reason he got a paycheck. When he was being tortured, he realized that the enemy soldiers were just doing their job, and that it was his job to survive the torture. He never resented what he had to do or the situation he was in. When he came back from the war, he moved on to do more work after a couple of days of respite.

## Survival

Throughout this book, Andy was put in numerous situations where he had to fight for his own survival and for the survival of his team members. When they were compromised, they had to turn away from their mission and head for the safety of Syria even though this meant that they had to hike approximately 100 miles carrying 200 pounds of equipment. Together, the team members help each other survive despite injuries and hypothermia. Sometimes they put their own lives at risk in order to help another team member survive.

In captivity, Andy relied on his training to survive. He used strategies and tactics that he had learned from prisoners of war in Vietnam to find the best way to react to his captors. He knew that it was critical to keep his mental facilities straight, and did this by developing strategies for escape, encouraging his fellow team member who was also in captivity, and looking for encouragement from his friend. He also tried to keep track of the days as much as he could.

Although he knew it was difficult, and it went against his nature, Andy did his best to get along with the guards. He knew that this was his chance for survival. It also gave him some small benefits while he was in captivity, even though he was still tortured. Andy also used his family to help him survive. His great love for his girlfriend, Jilly and his



daughter, Kate helped him through some of his toughest times as he remembered better days with them.

## Family and Friends

Andy McNab used family and friendship as a common theme throughout this book. Right from the start, he talked about his own background. His mother had abandoned him on the steps of the hospital when he was a baby. His foster parents adopted him, and he had a much older brother who told him stories about being a member of the Royal Fusiliers. Andy loved the stories about the faraway places his brother had traveled to with his job. His father had been part of the National Service in the Catering Corps.

The job he had wasn't easy on relationships. Andy talked about his first wives, and explained how the marriages did not make it. He did this without resentment. When the story took place, he was in a relationship with a woman named Jilly who seemed to really understand him and what he was facing. She did not interfere, but was there to support him. He also had a daughter named Kate who he really loved and it was thoughts of spending time with Kate and Jilly that helped him through some of his toughest times in captivity.

Andy was not very close to his parents at the time of his mission, but he became close to the members of his team. He had a great respect for them and was honored and proud to be chosen as their leader. Seeing some of his team members helped him survive when he is a prisoner and he mourned those who did not survive.





# Style

## Perspective

Andy McNab was a man dedicated to his military career. He loved the adventure and excitement that came along with his job and had a deep respect for his comrades. When he was given a job, he did it seriously, and was thorough in his training. This book is a summary of one specific mission called Bravo Two Zero. Andy and seven other men were sent to Iraq to destroy a landline and Scud. The mission was a failure for many reasons, and Andy learned what it was like to become a prisoner of war from first-hand experience.

"Bravo Two Zero" offers information on the different ways the soldiers survived the mission, and told how others died. It gave insight into war strategies and showed how wars of the past taught lessons that helped Andy survive the situation he was in during this war. Although he didn't appreciate the beatings and the interrogations, Andy understood why the enemy was treating him like that. He understood their suffering and their anger at their own family members were killed. Even when his situation seemed dire, Andy was able to put things in perspective by comparing himself to prisoners of war from previous eras who had been imprisoned for years.

This book showed how Andy made a decision to live and to protect his Regiment. It showed how his job really was his life. His attention to detail and his ability to learn from training helped him survive.

## Tone

The tone of this book is subjective. "Bravo Two Zero" is the narration of events that happened to Andy McNab and his other team members. It's obvious that the author must remain anonymous. He points this out several times when he talks about photo opportunities that his team must stay away from. The name Andy McNab is actually a pseudonym.

The reader has the opportunity to connect with the author and with military life on a personal and professional basis. Andy's constant regard for his girlfriend and his daughter show his human qualities and help keep them alive. The tone is very casual and the writing is in the first person. Although it is historic, it is clear that Andy is trying to remain objective. He readily admits fault when he does something wrong and shows an understanding for the enemy as they beat him.

The language in this book is very blunt and earthy. It is filled with swearing and slang. Since Andy is from England, there are many terms that readers from around the world might not be familiar with, but it is all in context so the reader is never lost. This is also true regarding military explanations. When Andy describes weaponry, tactical moves,

and other military terms, the reader gets a clear understanding and visual as to what is going on even if the reader is not familiar with military protocol.

## Structure

"Bravo Two Zero" consists of 14 chapters followed by an epilogue. The chapters are not named; they are simply labeled with numbers. At the very beginning of the book, there is a description of the eight members of Andy's team. The chapters vary in length, and some of them are exceedingly long. For example, Chapter 11 has only 16 pages while Chapter 8 has 70 pages.

The end of the book contains maps so the reader can clearly see and understand what the Bravo Two Zero team was dealing with when they were out on their mission. The end pages are followed by a glossary, which is very handy for those who are not familiar with different types of weaponry, and for those who are not familiar with military terms and abbreviations.

In the middle of the book, there is a section of glossy photos, which depict the author with all his equipment, an image of all the 209 pounds of equipment that each team member had to carry, part of the patrol, the Chinook, the deceased soldiers, maps, the communication devices, the transports, and the weaponry. These images make the story more real for the reader and also gives readers a visual idea of some of the equipment the author talks about throughout the book.

The structure of the book is linear. It begins right in the heart of war, with Andy ready for action. It moves into his call for action, his assignment, planning for his mission, then going out on the mission. When trouble hits, the book follows Andy through his capture, but also covers the stories of the other members of his team. When Andy gets home safely, the reader learns how the whole experience was wrapped up and Andy is ready to move on for more action. The reader is not left hanging in any arena.



## Quotes

"As far as I could see, the biggest restrictions in Iraq were likely to be the enemy and the logistics: running out of bullets or water" (Chapter 1, Bravo Two Zero, pg. 7.)

"It's all very well doing all the exciting things - abseiling, fast roping, jumping through buildings - but what being Special Forces is mostly about is thoroughness and precision" (Chapter 1, Bravo Two Zero, pg. 7.)

" 'Your task is in two parts,' said the boss. 'One, to locate and to destroy the landlines in the area of the northern MSR. Two, to find and destroy SCUD'" (Chapter 3, Bravo Two Zero, pg. 27.)

"Detail, detail, detail. It's so important. You might be pushing a door when you should be pulling" (Chapter 3, Bravo Two Zero, pg. 43.)

"The one thing we dreaded was getting captured" (Chapter 3, Bravo Two Zero, pg. 46.)

" 'The signal's Head Shed have just given me our call sign,' Legs said. 'It's Bravo Two Zero. Sounds good to me.' " Chapter 4, Bravo Two Zero, pp. 55

"If you're hit, there's not a whole lot of difference between a confused round and one that was the liberally aimed" (Chapter 6, Bravo Two Zero, pg. 113-114.)

"I kept looking at the watch lying on my chest. I looked once and it was one o'clock. Half an hour later I checked again. It was five past" (Chapter 8, Bravo Two Zero, pg. 187.)

"Whoever is your God, you will very soon be needing him" (Chapter 10, Bravo Two Zero, pg. 284.)

"I looked at the walls and saw fresh bloodstains on the surfaces. They were mine. At least I'd added to the ambience of the cell" (Chapter 11, Bravo Two Zero, pg. 342.)

"I sat in front of the video, thinking hard about an appropriate way of showing that I was doing this against my will" (Chapter 12, Bravo Two Zero, pg. 361.)

"It was one of the worst moments of my life. Our worst fears had been confirmed. They were going to keep back hostages" (Chapter 12, Bravo Two Zero, pg. 371.)

"The light was on at the end of the tunnel, but who was to say it wasn't just another guard with a Tilly lamp coming towards us?" (Chapter 12, Bravo Two Zero, pg. 376.)

"This time we really were going home" (Chapter 12, Bravo Two Zero, pg. 384.)

"We are big boys and we know the rules that we play by" (Epilogue, Bravo Two Zero, pg. 411.)



## Topics for Discussion

Why did Andy McNab join the Army?

Show some examples of why it was a good move for him to join the Army.

How did his job affect the relationships in his life?

What was Andy's attitude towards the mission he was supposed to accomplish?

What caused the mission to be compromised?

What unusual circumstances did Bravo Two Zero face as they headed to safety?

What kept Andy from succumbing throughout his torture?

How did Andy react mentally and physically to his capture and release?