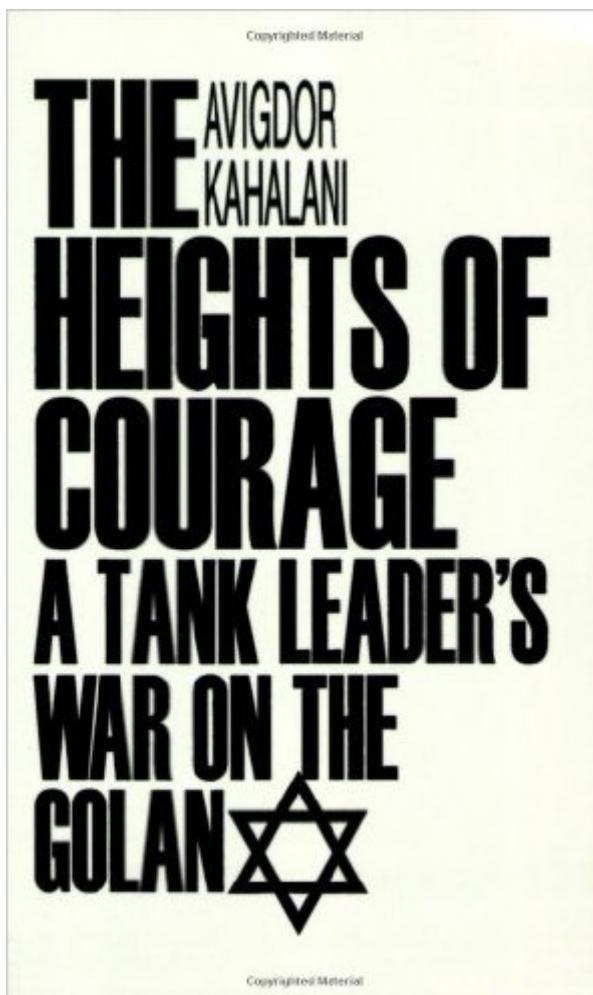


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# The Heights Of Courage: A Tank Leader's War On The Golan



## Synopsis

In October 1973, the State of Israel was invaded by Egyptian and Syrian forces. Despite early losses, Israel managed to outfight its opponents. The brief and bloody Yom Kippur War stands as a unique chapter in modern military history. Fought primarily by tank units, the war became a story not only of battle strategy and tactics, but also one of human discipline, endurance and sacrifice. While many historians have chronicled the events of the Yom Kippur War, few have been seasoned by actual combat. Avigdor Kahalani, commander of a tank battalion on the Golan Heights during the Yom Kippur War, describes this experience in *The Heights of Courage*. Beginning with a description of the initial Syrian offensive, he recounts the personal endeavors of his men, their fears and their ambitions, as well as their emotional and physical hardships. His stark account traces the efforts of the Israel Armored Corps as they struggle to overcome extreme difficulties and setbacks. The author describes their ultimate penetration into enemy territory and their approach to within forty kilometers of Damascus.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I have served in Iraq and Kosovo as an officer in the US Army and this is one of the best accounts of Tank Warfare I have ever come across. It was mandatory reading in my Military History Class at West Point. After reading this book, I felt as if I had walked in the author's shoes and seen the war from his prospective. I could not believe that his Brigade Commander gave him only a few hours to attack into Syria.... amazing. What is truly compelling to learn how Israelis viewed this war in a much

different way from Americans. If an American is sent to war, it usually requires a one week boat ride or a 24 hour+ flight. Loved ones are a distant memory an ocean away. For the author and his men, defeat meant that their wives and children would die too, for they were living only a few hours behind the front line soldiers.

I recommend this book for anyone who wants a glimpse at modern war from the eyes of a soldier and commander. Kahalani does a fine job at recording the details of one tank battalion's perspective of the 1973 war. He captures the essence of the desperate nature of the Israeli battle on the Golan. Detailed accounts and conversations draw the reader into the story.

I read this book in Hebrew. Avigdor Kahalani is one of the great soldiers in the history of Israel. He was close to death from wounds on the field of battle, and yet came back to fight another war. The action of Kahalani and his men on the Golan Heights during the first days of the Yom Kippur War helped save the State of Israel. Kahalani is a soldier's soldier who does not idealize war but presents it in all its confusion, disorder, dirt and difficulty. He tells his story straightforwardly and clearly. Those more experienced than myself have said that this is one of the best books about combat that they have ever read. It is also a book about real heroism and character and how they truly do exist in the world.

Undoubtedly this is one of the greatest, most well written battle stories of our time. This is an excellent first-hand account by one who was there and experienced the fighting from beginning to end. A brilliant book written from the vantage point of the men actually fighting on the front line. This is the absorbing story of a Unit Commander of Battalion 77 of the Israeli Army, fighting against incredible odds against numerically superior and better equipped Syrian forces on the Golan Heights, during the Yom Kippur War of 1973. The author, Avigdor Kahalani (who received Israel's highest military decoration - the Medal Of Honour), reveals and transmits the fears, traumas and other aspects of human behaviour experienced during the often unbearable stresses of battle. We are provided with detailed accounts of how a few courageous men and their leaders, prevailed against desperate, apparently insurmountable odds. This in the context of a failure by Israel to recognise the Arab threat, to sufficiently mobilise in time and thereby being forced to face immense enemy offensive actions with only a small standing force of regulars. The author provides an analysis of the tactics used, initially just to contain the Syrian offensive & survive, and then to counter-attack resulting in a victory which forced the Syrians to sue for a ceasefire. This is the

compelling story of an elite brigade, from the Commanding Officer through to the soldiers on the ground, who defeated the Syrian forces and succeeded in destroying all the Syrian tanks that had penetrated the Golan Heights. A breathless read which proceeds at a lightning pace. I highly recommend this book, it really is a first class read. I also recommend another book on this subject entitled, "Duel For The Golan; The 100 Hour Battle That Saved Israel" by Jerry Asher/Eric Hammel. To fully understand the Yom Kippur War, one really needs to understand what occurred on the Golan Heights and the possible repercussions of an Israeli defeat. These two books will provide an excellent reference on this subject.

The Heights of Courage is the war memoir of Avigdor Kahalani, a tank battalion commander during the Yom Kippur War of 1973. His job was to defend the Golan Heights and Galilee from the Syrian attackers. The Yom Kippur War is the last, truly conventional war that was fought in a more or less "clean" war, and in this case the Arabs nearly won. Their drives into the Sinai and Northern Israel were a clear existential threat. Kahalani and his men are therefore fighting for their very homes and families. His account is an easy to follow story of the defense of Israel and the following counter-attack into Syria. His men are subject to constant artillery fire and at one point have an enemy tank intermixed with the battalion. This leads to a tense showdown-Is the tank ours or theirs? Is it aware of where it is? Can we sneak up on it? An enjoyable enough read.

I met general Kahalani in Israel in 2007 and heard him address that year's class of incoming IDF recruits as they were introduced to the different branches of service. An amazing story and a true "hero of Israel"

The book is an easy (and quick) read. However, the author doesn't take much time to go into detail about equipment or tactics. It's a very basic memoir about the difficulties of moving a tank force around from place to place in order to meet a numerically overwhelming enemy, especially when moving at night with very little in the way of modern western war technology. Impressive book none the less. If you like military history, and are interested in a single person's perspective of a few battles in the Arab-Israeli war, then this would be a good read.

I had to think "How could he have remembered every conversation with so many people? He went into quite some detail. But it takes you into a journey of war-type thinking and actions and the heroes who put themselves in harms way for their country. He uses military jargon that I didn't

understand.

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