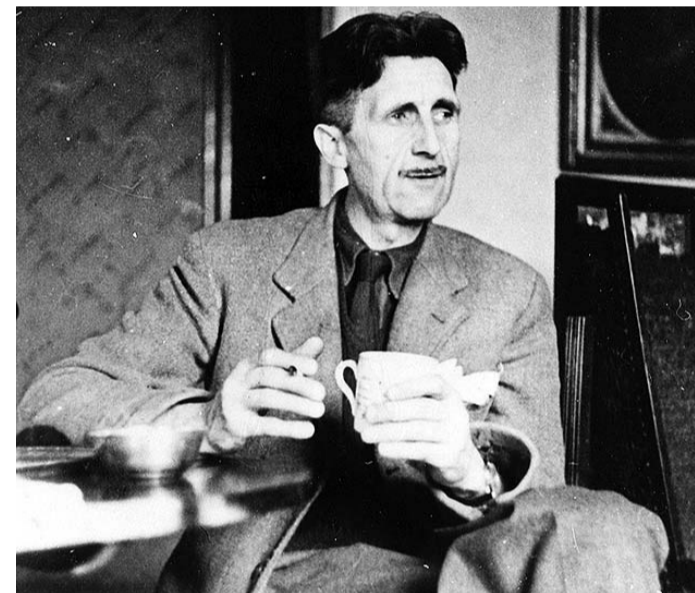
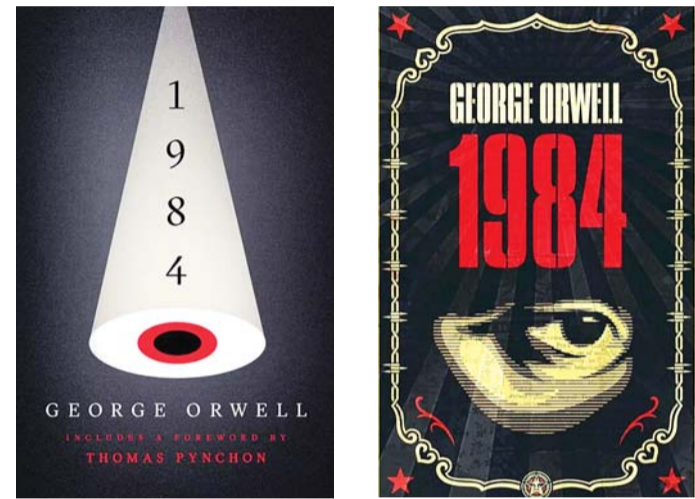


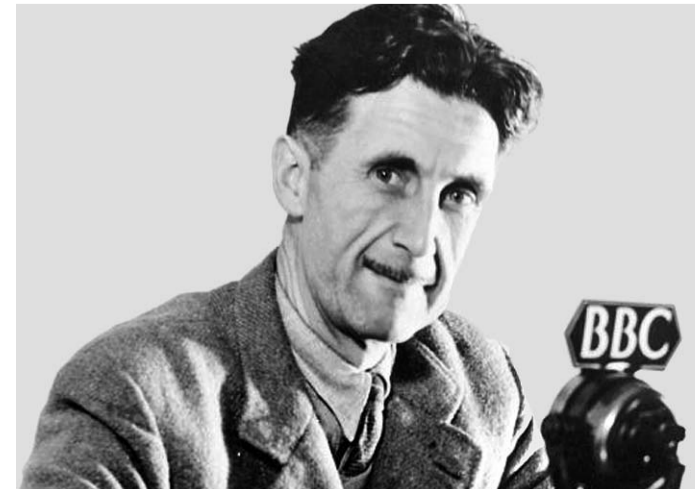
#GREAT

Writing his greatest work killed George Orwell

"I have made all this money," he would tell his hospital visitors, "and now I am going to die." -Orwell



Orwell was widowed in 1945 and moved to the small island on the edge of the world to write his greatest novel. But he didn't think that at the time, in fact, he thought that this would be a commercial failure. Every other novel he had written had come quickly and was completed in under a year. But this, what would prove to be his final work, was years in the making. The idea came to him surveying Tehran conference of 1943, and the novel was slow to form in his writing and reading in the coming years. In 1947, he retreated to remote Scottish island of Jura, rejected all offers of other works and resolved to finish the book. The previous winter had been one of the coldest in the memory and Orwell's health had been faltering. He knew he was running out of time. He hoped to have the draft finished by October but as he wrote and time went on, he became more and more frail, before it got so bad that he had to stop writing completely. He had tuberculosis, and spent the next seven months in hospital. And fearing that he may not survive this, he told a friend that should he die, the unfinished manuscript should be destroyed. But he briefly recovered for long enough to return to Jura and finish the manuscript. And then because he couldn't convince a typist to make a journey to the remote island, Orwell typed the manuscript himself, hunched up in bed, chain smoking, next to a faltering heater. Nothing he could have done would have made his health worse. On 4 of Dec, 1948, the job was done and the copies of the novel were sent to his publisher and agent. Having initially thought that he would call it *The Last Man in Europe*, he eventually settled for a different title, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. His publishers were convinced that it would be a roaring success, but paper shortages after the second world war meant that they had to limit the number of copies they could print. So, while they thought they could have sold 50000 copies of the first edition, they only could print half the amount. There was a palpable excitement for the reception of the book, they even brought the launch forward so that it didn't clash with Winston Churchill's new release. While all of this was going on, Orwell had been in hospital, in the Cotswolds and remained there for its publication. Sales of the book on both sides of the Atlantic made Orwell, for the first time in his life, a rich man. But the circumstances in which it was completed had taken their toll. "I have made all this money," he would tell his hospital visitors, "and now I am going to die." He was moved to room no. 65 of University College Hospital in London, where he would marry his second wife, Sonia. And he spent the months after that wedding, on 21 January, 1950.



● Bulbul Joshi

In the late 1950s, American engineers designed a small, cheap fighter aircraft that the United States itself never truly wanted for frontline dominance. It was simple, lightweight, inexpensive, and intentionally built for export to allied nations that could not afford America's most advanced jets.

That aircraft was the Northrop F-5 Tiger II. First conceived in 1959 and introduced during the early 1960s, the F-5 carried one of the characteristics associated with modern air warfare. It had no stealth capability, no GPS-guided strike systems, no sophisticated electronic warfare package, and no beyond-visual-range missile doctrine. Its pilot had to physically see an enemy aircraft before engaging. Its bombs were largely unguided. Its radar was limited. Analysts for decades dismissed it as obsolete and nearly suicidal in any modern battlefield environment.

The United States sold the fighter widely across the developing world, Vietnam, Thailand, Morocco, Iran, and others. It was viewed as a practical Cold War tool for friendly states, not as a centerpiece of American military power.

Yet in 2026, the very aircraft considered a museum relic would expose weaknesses inside the most expensive defense architecture ever constructed.

Iran's Forgotten Fleet

Iran acquired its F-5 fleet during the 1970s under the Shah, before the Islamic Revolution transformed relations with Washington. After

sanctions isolated Tehran for decades, most military observers assumed that the aircraft would eventually become unusable. But sanctions forced Iran towards self-reliance. Iranian engineers rebuilt aging systems domestically, improvised spare parts, modernized selected avionics where possible, and preserved operational capability far longer than Western analysts expected. While the United States invested in stealth fighters, satellites, AI-assisted targeting systems, and trillion-dollar defense ecosystems, Iran focused on adaptation under constraint. The result was not technological superiority. It was strategic unpredictability.

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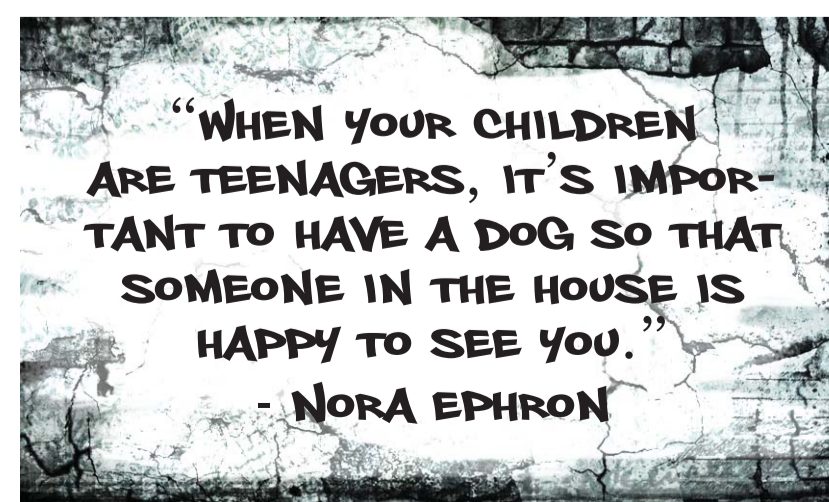
"Epic Fury" Begins According to the scenario, February 2026 marked the launch of "Epic Fury," a coordinated Israeli-American military operation against Iran. Washington believed that Iranian military infrastructure had already been severely weakened. Public confidence in American defensive systems remained absolute.

Across the Gulf region stood layers of integrated protection: Patriot missile batteries guarding major bases. THAAD systems designed for ballistic missile interception. Advanced radar arrays. Drones and aerial surveillance. Intelligence-sharing networks. Satellite monitoring systems. American officials projected certainty. Any retaliation, they claimed, would be intercepted. But every defense system is designed around assumptions. And one assumption proved catastrophic. The systems were optimized to detect threats coming from above.

Iranian planners understood this. Aging F-5 Tiger IIs flew barely 50 meters above the terrain, hugging the ground at high speed while coordinated waves of ballistic missiles and Shahed drones attacked across the wider region, Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Jordan. The objective was not precision elegance. It was saturation. Too many targets. Too many trajectories. Too many simultaneous descents. Modern air defense systems can destroy extraordinary threats, but they still possess finite interceptor inventories, finite radar processing capability and finite human reaction time. Iranian tactics reportedly exploited all three.



THE WALL



#THE NORTHROP F-5 TIGER II



The Weakness in the Radar Horizon

Patriot missile systems are among the most advanced air defense technologies ever built. They are designed to detect and intercept aircraft, cruise missiles, and ballistic threats at significant ranges. But radar obeys the laws of physics.

At extremely low altitude, terrain and the curvature of the Earth create blind zones. Radar line-of-sight becomes limited. Objects flying close to the ground can disappear beneath detection coverage until dangerously late. Iranian planners understood this.

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Fuel infrastructure, ammunition storage areas, logistics facilities, and communication systems were reportedly hit. The symbolism was devastating: a sixty-year-old

BABY BLUES



A later assessment attributed to a major American defense think tank reportedly concluded that Iranian strikes hit more than 100 targets across 11 U.S. military bases in seven countries. Infrastructure was destroyed. Radar systems were damaged. Communication networks collapsed temporarily. Aircraft were lost or disabled. Repair costs alone reportedly exceeded billions of dollars. The Pentagon later acknowledged soaring operational expenses, with total war costs reaching staggering levels within months. Among the most shocking claims in this account was the destruction of a U.S. Air Force E-3 Sentry AWACS aircraft in Saudi Arabia, one of the most valuable airborne surveillance assets in existence.

The Sixty-Year-Old Jet That Slipped Billion-Dollar Shield Of America

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Military analysts struggled to explain how aging Cold War-era aircraft and relatively inexpensive drones had disrupted the most sophisticated military ecosystem in modern history.

The Satellite Blackout

Then another controversy emerged. According to the narrative, the White House contacted Planet Labs, a private American satellite imaging company, requesting suspension of public imagery publication covering affected military zones. Customers reportedly received notices restricting updated imagery access. Soon afterwards, publicly available satellite photos of damaged American facilities became difficult to obtain. Critics argued that the blackout was not meant to hide information from Iran. Iran already knew what it had struck. The blackout, they claimed, was intended to shield the scale of the damage from the American public itself. The New York Times reportedly published comparison imagery before access tightened, showing visible destruction across several installations. For many observers, the symbolism became profound: the United States had effectively blacked out the sky over its own bases.

Chaos in the Sky

As the attacks intensified, confusion spread across coalition airspace. Missile launches, drone swarms, electronic interference, and low-altitude penetrations created an environment of overwhelming complexity. Defensive systems struggled to distinguish threats from friendly aircraft in real time. According to narrative, American forces then suffered one of the war's most humiliating moments: friendly fire.

Three American F-15 Strike Eagles were allegedly shot down over Kuwaiti territory by allied defensive systems. Six American pilots ejected over friendly territory after being mistakenly identified as hostile aircraft. The irony became impossible to ignore. The "museum jet" survived long enough to strike its target. America's advanced fighters did not.

The Damage Assessment

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Beyond Technology

The larger lesson of this scenario is not that old aircraft are superior to modern military systems. They are not. The F-5 Tiger II remains technologically primitive compared to fifth-generation fighters and modern integrated warfare networks.

But warfare has never been determined by technology alone. Again and again throughout history, militaries built around overwhelming technological confidence have discovered that strategy, timing, adaptability, and asymmetry can expose vulnerabilities that no amount of money can fully eliminate. Physics still governs radar. Human beings still make mistakes. And expensive systems can still become victims of their own assumptions.

The Final Image

America entered this conflict with unmatched military spending, advanced stealth technology, layered missile defense systems, satellite surveillance, and global logistical reach. Iran entered under sanctions, economic isolation, and technological limitations accumulated over forty years. Yet, the defining image of the war became impossible to erase. A sixty-year-old export fighter, dismissed for decades as obsolete, penetrated America's billion-dollar shield using little more than low-altitude flight, timing, and coordination. And in the confusion that followed, America's own defenses turned against its own aircraft. Not because the old jet was invincible. But because war has never belonged exclusively to the side with the most expensive machines.

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rajeshsharma1049@gmail.com

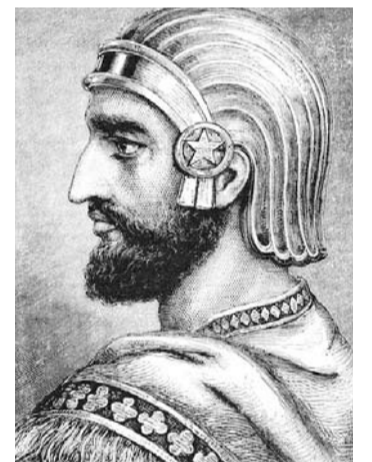
#THE CAPTURE OF BABYLON

Cyrus The Great Won Through Strategy Not Destruction

Cyrus employed a brilliant and unconventional strategy, the diversion of the Euphrates, to secure control with minimal resistance



The capture of Babylon in 539 BCE by Cyrus the Great, founder of the Achaemenid Persian Empire, stands as one of the most remarkable military achievements of the ancient world. Unlike many conquests of the time, Babylon did not fall through widespread slaughter or destruction. Instead, Cyrus employed a brilliant and unconventional strategy, the diversion of the Euphrates River, to enter the city peacefully and secure control with minimal resistance.



The River Diversion Strategy

According to ancient accounts, including those of Herodotus, Cyrus ordered his engineers to dig canals upstream from Babylon. These canals redirected the flow of the Euphrates into nearby marshlands and reservoirs. As a result, the river level inside the city dropped dramatically.

Once the water level was low enough, Persian soldiers were able to march along the riverbed, entering Babylon through the river gates that had been left unsecured. Because the city was reportedly celebrating a festival, resistance was minimal, and the Persians faced little opposition.

A Bloodless Capture

Unlike many ancient conquests, Babylon was taken without widespread violence or destruction. Temples, palaces, and homes remained intact. This approach preserved Babylon's economic and cultural importance and prevented rebellion among the population.

The method of entry itself symbolized Cyrus' leadership, favouring intelligence and patience over brute force.

Historical Significance

The capture of Babylon demonstrated that even the strongest cities could fall through engineering, planning, and psychological insight rather than destruction. Cyrus' method influenced future military thinking and set a precedent for strategic conquest.

The fall of Babylon marked the end of the Neo-Babylonian Empire and the rise of Persia as the dominant power in the ancient Near East, achieved not by burning the city, but by quietly stepping into it.



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman