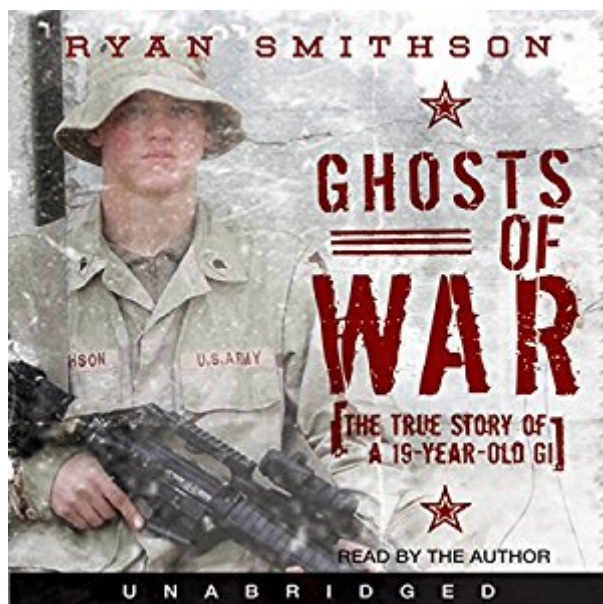


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# Ghosts Of War



## Synopsis

Ryan Smithson joined the Army Reserve when he was seventeen. Two years later, he was deployed to Iraq as an Army engineer. In this extraordinary and harrowing memoir, readers march along one GI's tour of duty. It will change the way you feel about what it means to be an American.

--This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

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## Customer Reviews

After reading Ghosts of war, I learned what my time in Iraq was about and what it ment to others. I have new perspective about what it means to be young and tossed into war. I recommend this book to anyone, young or old, that wants to know about this war and what it is to be a soldier!

My husband came up to me one day and told me that his buddy Smithson that he went to Iraq with was writing a book about their time there and that he was going to be in it. He was like a little kid at Christmas. My husband bought it the day before it was released. When he finished reading it he told me he wanted me to read it. So I did. He never told me details about anything that happened while he was over there. There were things in the book I never knew happened. And, even though it scares me to think about what he went through, reading it made me realize the good he was doing. Ghosts of War is one of the most beautiful books I've ever read. I highly recommend it. Please read it. It'll touch your heart.Sincerely,Sandi Zerega

Many first-person accounts of war are too intense (or too profanity-laden) to suggest to younger high school readers. Not that war isn't intense and profane, but Smithson's book finds a middle ground; one that allows the reader to feel the truth of being in Iraq, without presenting it too brutally for readers in their mid-teens. Smithson also captures the sometimes boring, sometimes ridiculous, sometimes heart-wrenching bits and pieces of being in a small cog in a big machine, in a country where some of the people want to kill you. His even handed, caring and yet truthful voice (which does come forth with four letter words from time to time) transported me from my comfy sofa to his hot barracks, and frightening daily life, and gave me more than just a glimpse at what it's like to serve one's country in a difficult time.

I'm a high school librarian in Michigan, and I ordered this book after just a quick glance at its cover in a HarperCollins advertisement (From the cover, it seemed like something that might appeal to my school's male readers, a population I struggle to reach). Having heard nothing nothing about the book or its author, I expected nothing - but I've turned the last page a changed person. What's changed? My views about the war in Iraq and more specifically the kids - kids like Ryan Smithson - that fought, are fighting, that war. I'm so much more aware of and grateful for their sacrifice! Not only was I surprised by my reaction to *Ghosts of War*, I was also surprised by the writing, for Smithson is a really good writer! If I'm able to finish them at all, war memoirs generally leave me feeling bogged down and confused as a reader, but Ryan Smithson writes about war and its operation so as to make it truly interesting and understandable. His writing is also honest - emotionally honest - and more than one chapter brought on those slowly-trickling-down-the-cheeks readers' tears. It appears that HarperCollins is marketing this as a Young Adult book. While it is certainly a title I will recommend with enthusiasm to my school's teen readers, (grades nine and up) it's also something that I hope adults will pick up, too. As an avid reader and a librarian, I consider this among the best books of the year!

Amongst the multitude of books about the war in Iraq, *Ghosts of War* stands out by capturing the war as seen and experienced by 19 year old Army Reservist and laying it out without pretense or judgment. In a war that's seen more media attention than any other conflict in American history, very little has been written directly for the youth growing up during it, and *Ghosts of War* bridges that gap and provides an American teenage perspective from high school to 9/11 to enlistment and ultimately a year in Iraq. This book should be required reading in high schools and colleges everywhere.

First of all, I suggest this book to anybody who is currently serving in the National Guard or Reserves, you'll really be able to relate to it. Even if you're Active Duty, and especially if you've been deployed. I couldn't put the book down. I could relate in almost every way possible when Ryan went through the phases of Basic Training, it brought back good memories and made me laugh. It was difficult reading the parts about where he wrote home, I just think of all the other soldiers overseas right now. I also could relate to the book because Smithson is from a town near where I live, so all of the places he named, I knew where they were, so it gave me a really good picture. I finished the book in two days, and I suggest this book to anybody. I don't think it used profanity too much, this is the military, that was Iraq, it paints a good picture of his exact feelings and makes you feel like you're there in the moment. I give this book 5 stars, and I will read it again.

I started reading this book on September 11th. Although I have read many books about the wars in the Middle East, and even written one myself, this book was truly unique. It touched my heart from page one and didn't stop, even after I put the book down. This book is an absolute must read for our youth, families of the military, and EVERY American. Bravo Ryan Smithson!

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