



2009

# Ghosts of War: The True Story of a 19-Year-Old GI

Sandra L. Tidwell

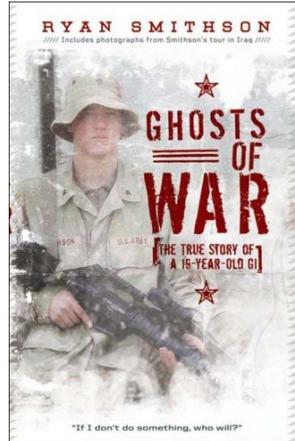
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Tidwell, Sandra L. (2009) "Ghosts of War: The True Story of a 19-Year-Old GI," *Children's Book and Media Review*: Vol. 30 : Iss. 1 , Article 23.

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Smithson, Ryan. *Ghosts of War: The True Story of a 19-Year-Old GI*. HarperCollins, 2009. ISBN 9780061664687. \$16.99. 322 p.

Reviewer: Sandra L. Tidwell

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Biographies; Informational;

Subject: Iraq War, 2003-- Personal narratives--American--Juvenile literature; Smithson, Ryan--Juvenile literature; Post Traumatic Stress Disorder --Juvenile literature; Books--Reviews;

When Ryan Simpson, a junior in high school, watched the horrors of the September 11, 2001, attack on New York, he instinctively knew it was his duty to enter the armed services and do his part to protect America. *Ghosts of War: The True Story of a 19-year old GI* is Ryan's account from that day in his history class to coming home after serving in Iraq in the EQ (equipment) platoon as an Army engineer. The book is arranged into three sections with a total of a nine week Basic Combat Training: Red Phase; White Phase; Blue Phase. Although he did not serve on combat missions, Army Reservist Simpson did experience work "outside the wire" and was vulnerable, even inside the wire, to bombs and the reality of unexpected death or injury.

This book shows the Iraqi War experience from an enlisted person's point of view. It adds to the information portrayed through television and newspaper coverage of the war. An added perspective of the good feelings the oppressed common people of Iraq have for the U.S. military's presence in Iraq is gained. Writing this book became a major part of Ryan's therapy for PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder) and being able to finally escape the unexplained and unannounced onset of fear of death. A helpful ten-page glossary is at the back of the book, consisting mostly of meanings of military abbreviations. Language and content may be unsuitable for some readers..