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

*By Ryan Smithson*

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This is his story. It will change the way you feel about what it means to be an American.

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## Editorial Review

From School Library Journal
Starred Review. Grade 9 Up—Smithson experienced the events of 9/11 while in high school and responded by enlisting in the Army Reserve after graduation. He married his high school sweetheart before being deployed to Iraq. Once there, he worked as an equipment operator in an equipment platoon, and while mortar fire was a regular occurrence, the missions he describes were all about bulldozing berms, filling craters created by IEDs, and convoying lumber. One gruesome section describes salvaging parts from Humvees in which soldiers died. A few missions, though, were more in the line of favors to the local population than anything that helps combatants. Some of the author's most poignant passages are his descriptions of interactions with Iraqi children. Where he was expecting rock-throwing, he encountered barefoot, dirty children grateful for the water the soldiers gave them. It is these children and the villagers he met that help explain for him the purpose of the war. The book ends with Smithson's return home, his almost magical escape from night terrors, and his work with children in his own hometown. Writing proves to be his therapy for PTSD. There are mixed metaphors aplenty, crude and morbid humor, and other evidence of a young author, but it all works together to create a tough but powerful look at one man's experience.—*Eric Norton, McMillan Memorial Library, Wisconsin Rapids, WI*
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Review
He lucidly recounts the intensity of battle and the pain of losing comrades. For Smithson, the war is a source of personal enlightenment, and this memoir is a remarkable, deeply penetrating read that will compel teens to reflect on their own thoughts about duty, patriotism and sacrifice. (Memoir. YA) (Kirkus Reviews (starred review))

A tough but powerful look at one man's experience. (School Library Journal (starred review))

Smithson avoids writing either prowar propaganda or an antimilitary polemic, providing instead a fascinating, often humorous-and occasionally devastating-account of the motivations and life of a contemporary soldier. (Publishers Weekly)

Unflinchingly honest. (Kirkus Reviews (starred review))

About the Author

Ryan Smithson joined the Army Reserve and was deployed to Iraq as an engineer at the age of nineteen. Upon returning, he earned an AAS degree in criminal justice. Specialist Smithson doesn't know if he'll be deployed again. He currently works for the American Red Cross as a mobile unit assistant and lives with his wife in upstate New York.

## Users Review

**From reader reviews:**

**Deborah Rinehart:**

This Ghosts of War: The True Story of a 19-Year-Old GI book is not really ordinary book, you have after that it the world is in your hands. The benefit you will get by reading this book is information inside this book incredible fresh, you will get info which is getting deeper you actually read a lot of information you will get. This specific Ghosts of War: The True Story of a 19-Year-Old GI without we understand teach the one who examining it become critical in considering and analyzing. Don't become worry Ghosts of War: The True Story of a 19-Year-Old GI can bring whenever you are and not make your bag space or bookshelves' turn into full because you can have it inside your lovely laptop even telephone. This Ghosts of War: The True Story of a 19-Year-Old GI having fine arrangement in word in addition to layout, so you will not feel uninterested in reading.

**Linda Bryant:**

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**Beverly Woods:**

Is it a person who having spare time in that case spend it whole day by watching television programs or just lying down on the bed? Do you need something totally new? This Ghosts of War: The True Story of a 19-Year-Old GI can be the solution, oh how comes? A fresh book you know. You are therefore out of date, spending your free time by reading in this completely new era is common not a geek activity. So what these guides have than the others?

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