

[PDF] Love My Rifle More Than You: Young And Female In The U.S. Army

Kayla Williams, Michael E. Staub - pdf download free book



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Description:

From Publishers Weekly Williams's account of her Iraq service tries very hard to be a fresh and wised-up postfeminist take: Private Benjamin by way of G.I. Jane. Showy rough language peppers every paragraph, and Williams's obsessive self-concern, expressed in a lot of one-sentence paragraphs beginning with "I," verges on the narcissistic. The surprise is the degree to which the

account succeeds and even echoes military memoirists from Julius Caesar to Ernie Pyle. The fear, bad weather, intermittent supplies, inedible meals (especially for the vegetarian author) and crushing boredom of life in the field are all here. Williams's particular strength is in putting an observant, distaff spin on the bantering and brutality of barracks life, where kids from the Survivor generation must come to terms with a grim and confusing reality over which they have little control. The differences are less in the sexual dynamics (which mostly are an extension of office politics) than the contradictions of the conflict in which the troops are engaged, which Williams embodies more than illuminates. She learns Arabic; there's a Palestinian boyfriend and a short, failed marriage during her state-side training. While an ex-punk, Chomsky-reading liberal, Williams questions the day-to-day conduct of the war without ever really engaging with its underlying rationale. Such nuance, though, might be too much to ask.

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From Williams's war memoir is just one in a string that originated from recent U.S.-led forays into the Middle East, and its uniqueness comes from its female perspective. Critics agree that *Love My Rifle* is no deep piece of literature. Instead, it's a shocking, on-the-ground view of one military woman's experience in Iraq. Williams spares no details about the stress of combat, the questionable treatment of Iraqi prisoners, and her scathing opinion of the U.S. administration, though she never explains why she enlisted in the first place. As one of only 15 percent of women employed by the Army, Williams possibly overplays the sexual harassment she suffered—or so claim a few of the more suspect male reviewers. But the story's not over: Williams can be called back to duty any time.

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