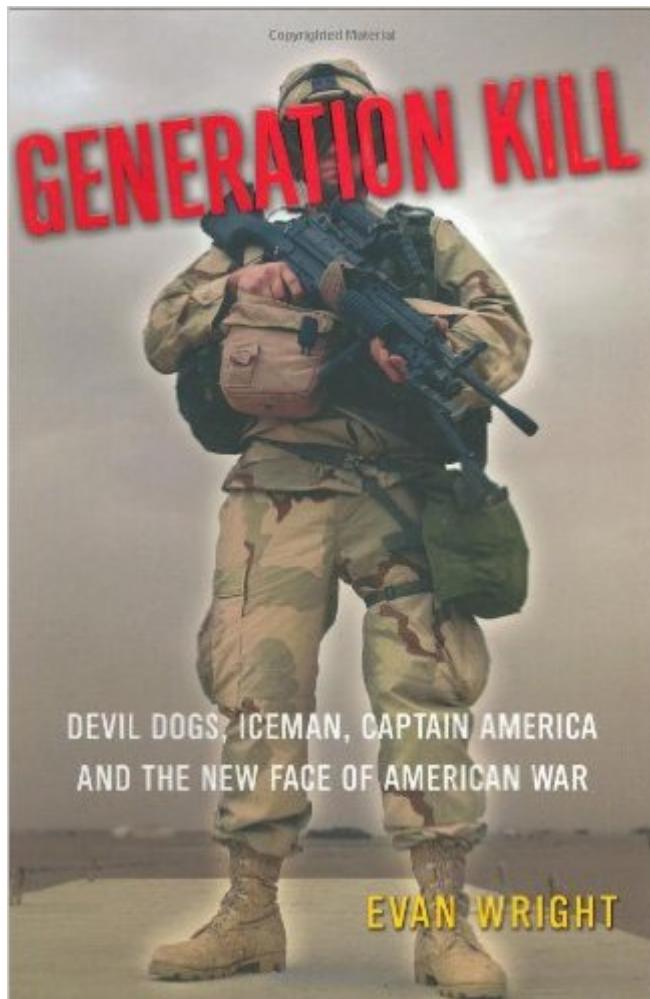


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Generation Kill: Devil Dogs, Iceman, Captain America And The New Face Of American War



Synopsis

In the tradition of Black Hawk Down and Jarhead comes a searing portrait of young men fighting a modern-day war. A powerhouse work of nonfiction, Generation Kill expands on Evan Wright's acclaimed three-part series that appeared in Rolling Stone during the summer of 2003. His narrative follows the twenty-three marines of First Recon who spearheaded the blitzkrieg on Iraq. This elite unit, nicknamed "First Suicide Battalion," searched out enemy fighters by racing ahead of American battle forces and literally driving into suspected ambush points. Evan Wright lived on the front lines with this platoon from the opening hours of combat, to the fall of Baghdad, through the start of the guerrilla war. He was welcomed into their ranks, and from this bird's-eye perspective he tells the unsettling story of young men trained by their country to be ruthless killers. He chronicles the triumphs and horrors-physical, moral, emotional, and spiritual-that these marines endured while achieving victory in a war many questioned before it began. Wright's book is a timely account of war; even more important, it is a timeless description of the human drama taking place on today's battlefields. Written with brutal honesty, raw intensity, and startling intimacy, Generation Kill is destined to become a classic and take its place in the canon of the most captivating and authentic works of war literature.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you can only read one account of the Iraq War, this should be it. Wright spent about a month with a squad of recon Marines -- essentially the special forces of the corps -- and his account is nothing short of gripping. It is also exhausting, as Wright subjects the reader to a full range of emotion -- from

joy to appalling horror to pride. Wright has a keen eye for the details that bring the stories of the war to life. The banter between the soldiers is fascinating and frequently hilarious, and is definitely a highlight of the book. No other account brings you closer to the men who slugged this thing out as they barreled across the Iraqi desert. It is useful to keep in mind that this book calls the shots as they are seen from a small group of soldiers on the frontline of the war. What this book is not is a comprehensive overview of the run-up to the war or of the overall strategy employed by the U.S. military. The soldiers often gripe about certain officers and decisions taken at the higher levels. Some of the complaints are balanced out with alternate views. Wright's account is valuable not for its even-handed treatment of every side in a particular issue, but for giving insight into how the men on the ground met and dealt with problems that cropped up during their historic mission. The book does dwell on a lot of the mishaps encountered by the soldiers. Among the headaches endured by Wright's squad: a lack of lubricating oil to keep their weapons functioning properly, muffed radio communication thanks to incompatible encryption, and general cluelessness about the true nature of their mission, which was basically to drive through enemy positions to draw fire so their position/size/strength could be estimated.

Whether you were for or against Gulf War II, this is essential reading about it. Rolling Stone writer Wright was embedded with an elite U.S. Marine reconnaissance unit that was often at the "tip of the point of the spear" during the invasion of Iraq. He spent approximately two months with them, riding shotgun in a Humvee as they were used as ambush-bait in the push north. The result is brilliant front-lines reportage that's at turns harrowing, hilarious, shocking, and chaotic—reflecting the reality of combat at its most basic level. The book's title is provocative, designed to sell rather than describe the contents. And yet, Wright does have something to say about the new generation of American soldiers sent to fight in Iraq: "These young men represent what is more or less America's first generation of disposable children. More than half of the guys in the platoon come from broken homes and were raised by absentee, single, working parents. Many are on more intimate terms with video games, reality TV shows and Internet porn than they are with their own parents." Based on that excerpt, one might expect Wright to go on to provide a litany of the unit's worst excesses and examples of Marine Corps machismo and arrogance. Thankfully, he instead is interested in the men and not stereotypes, and manages to gain acceptance among them. Some have critiqued the book for this—essentially saying that because Wright became tight with these Marines, he couldn't be objective about their actions. While it would be absurd to suggest that Wright operated under total objectivity, as a critique, it doesn't hold up. Most of the book is Wright just writing about what he

sees happen and recounts the feelings the men share with him about their experiences.

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