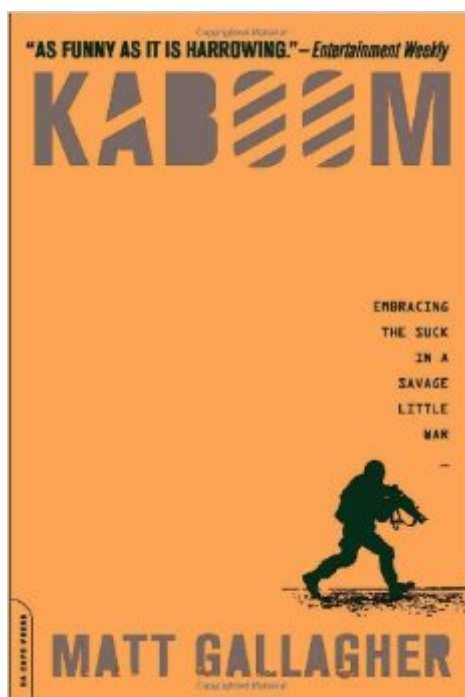


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Kaboom: Embracing The Suck In A Savage Little War



Synopsis

Based on Captain Matt Gallagher's controversial and popular blog, which the U.S. Army shut down in June 2008, *Kaboom* is a sardonic, unnerving, one-of-a-kind Iraq war memoir. "At turns hilarious, maddening and terrifying," providing "raw and insightful snapshots of conflict" (Washington Post), *Kaboom* resonates with stoical detachment from and timeless insight into a war that we are still trying to understand.

Book Information

Paperback: 336 pages

Publisher: Da Capo Press; Reprint edition (April 12, 2011)

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (113 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Junior officer Matt Gallagher parlayed his 15 minutes of fame as a widely-read military blogger into a contract for this memoir of his 15-month deployment in Iraq, where he was assigned to lead a cavalry platoon in counterinsurgency duties in a small desert municipality. Later, he gets in trouble when he submits an unauthorized blog entry complaining about an irrational promotion that takes him away from his beloved platoon, but he gets kicked upstairs anyway and spends nearly half of his deployment as an intelligence captain near Sadr City. Gallagher's sympathy, and his strongest material, lies with the first section of the memoir in which he is actually leading soldiers in dangerous situations -- he wisely emphasizes this part of his war experience in the book. It's interesting to see what modern war looks like, and Gallagher writes an engaging picture of it. Counterinsurgency is more like what we would think of as policing than the types of battles we associate with war in the movies -- diplomacy and the coolheadedness not to shoot in panic situations are more important to his mission than violence. Throughout his deployment, neither Gallagher nor anyone in his unit is injured in combat or fires upon anyone. The greatest loss to his unit comes in an accidental fire that

critically burns a member of his platoon; the greatest loss of innocence he experiences is when he gives a conditional order to fire, even though circumstances make it unnecessary for his men to shoot anyone on his orders. But some military experience is universal, and the usual ground-level gripes about the bizarre and labyrinthine American military bureaucracy get a thorough airing here. (You'd think after all this time we'd have figured a way around that.

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