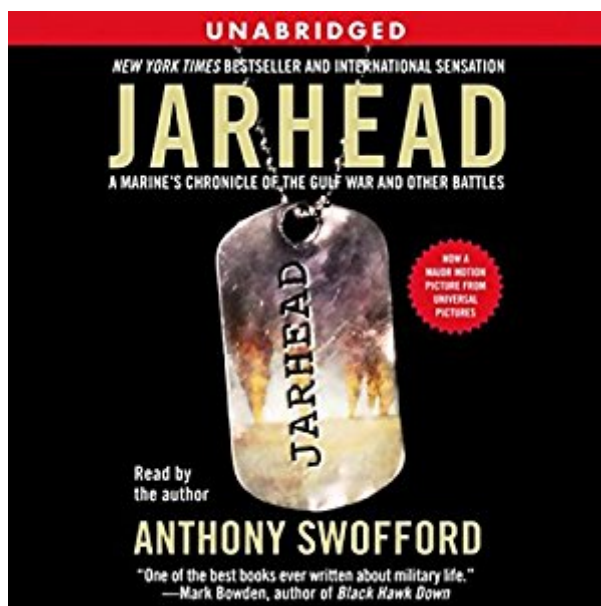


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Jarhead: A Marine's Chronicle Of The Gulf War And Other Battles



Synopsis

When the marines -- or "jarheads," as they call themselves -- were sent in 1990 to Saudi Arabia to fight the Iraqis, Swofford was there, with a hundred-pound pack on his shoulders and a sniper's rifle in his hands. It was one misery upon another. He lived in sand for six months, his girlfriend back home betrayed him for a scrawny hotel clerk, he was punished by boredom and fear, he considered suicide, he pulled a gun on one of his fellow marines, and he was shot at by both Iraqis and Americans. At the end of the war, Swofford hiked for miles through a landscape of incinerated Iraqi soldiers and later was nearly killed in a booby-trapped Iraqi bunker. Swofford weaves this experience of war with vivid accounts of boot camp, reflections on the mythos of the marines, and remembrances of battles with lovers and family. As engagement with the Iraqis draws closer, he is forced to consider what it is to be an American, a soldier, a son of a soldier, and a man. Jarhead insists we remember the Americans who are wounded or killed, the fields of smoking enemy corpses left behind, and the continuing difficulty that American soldiers have reentering civilian life. A harrowing yet inspiring portrait of a tormented consciousness struggling for inner peace, Jarhead will elbow for room on that short shelf of American war classics. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 8 hours 5 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Audio

Audible.com Release Date: October 10, 2005

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B000BPJVJA

Best Sellers Rank: #14 in Books > History > Military > United States > Operation Desert Storm
#594 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > History > Military #2120 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Leaders & Notable People > Military

Customer Reviews

Great book. I sw the movie and it's nothing like the book the movie should have been more like the book. What happens in the book tells a great story and Hollywood missed out adding and mixing up

details in the book. I am army ms not a marine and still loved the book. Took me back to my time in the sandbox

Jarhead puts you through the experiences of an enlisted Marine Corps sniper who never got to fire his rifle in Desert Storm. It's the story of men with a lot of pent up rage who never have a release for it, naturally it finds a way to manifest itself in other ways. Jarhead is a really interesting take on military memoir. It's way more honest than the majority of others and puts the author in a vulnerable and unflattering place at times. In the same way Swofford sometimes comes off as unreliable in the way he describes himself at points, constantly describing himself as a physical beast which I wasn't completely sure about. Nevertheless, Jarhead is an excellent read. The fact that so many senior enlisted marines and officers hate it should be enough of an indicator that it's worth it.

Coming to this book, I had little knowledge of any branch of the military, much less the marines, other than through a few third degree connections. But I knew that I didn't like war, particularly the wastefulness of war, which is something Swofford touches on quite a bit. But what most stuck with me was the description of sand: a material which "makes futile every effort or endeavor"--the perfect metaphor for this book. If you want an honest depiction of every side of what it meant to be a Marine in the Gulf War, read this book. Even if you don't like it (and maybe you shouldn't?), it will change you. Swofford has some opinions, which people may or may not agree with, but he's validated to have those opinions because he lived through it.

Swofford's unflinching description of his own demons as well as that of becoming and being a Marine ring true. The novel is written with an economy of language which says more than many books twice its length. There seem to be no false notes and no bravado. Any young woman or man considering joining the military might be well-served by giving "Jarhead" a read.

Wow, this portrait of war is funny in the Catch-22 mode of humor, profane and graphically realistic. It is a sad statement about our society that young men and women can be manipulated by hateful propaganda to develop the Gung ho spirit that undermines morals and morality, mental health, and view life as a cheap, expendable commodity. The writer's self examination reveals a increased understanding of himself and the machinations of war. Difficult to read, but entertaining and enlightening. This should be mandatory reading for any young person who has allowed parents,

movies, video games, recruitment personnel, etc. to influence them to think that war is glamorous or good. Not for the faint of heart.

This is a very difficult book to put down. Swofford writes with the flair of a novelist using language that is at times poetically vulgar. His depiction of a military life and his indoctrination to it alternate with painfully candid memories of childhood and family life. Jarhead captures the military culture from the bottom up and records the day to day events of the life of a Marine leading up to the first Gulf War. The actual combat like the war itself seems almost anticlimactic after the tremendous buildup. His descriptions of the corpses of Iraqi soldiers that are seemingly everywhere at the close of the war are graphic and shocking. Swofford has a great ability to blend historical and factual experience with literary talent. This book will be considered a classic of the military memoir genre for years to come. Reading this now as another war rages in the same terrain brings home the reality in a way that news broadcasts even with embedded reporters does not. Swofford writes with the insights and skepticism of an insider and does show the Corps. warts and all. However unlike some of the other reviewers I found nothing offensive in that. His writing also reveals an implicit pride in having been a Marine and an acknowledgement that the training and equipment of the US military is unsurpassed.

I picked up this book because Swofford blurbed Mary Pauline Lowry's *Wildfire,* which is my new favorite novel EVER. War books usually aren't my thing, but I really enjoyed this one. Swofford is smart and funny and insightful. I think anyone who likes Lowry's *Wildfire* will like *Jarhead,* and vice versa.

Incredible story. I really enjoyed getting inside the head of a Marine like this. I plan on rereading this regularly

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