



Young, Female and in the U. S. Army

A former military intelligence soldier talks about Iraq

Author of the memoir *Love My Rifle More Than You*, Williams is a former sergeant and Arabic linguist in a military intelligence unit of the U.S Army's 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). During her five years of service, including a year of deployment to Iraq, Williams and her female peers navigated both extreme danger and emotional minefields.

As a soldier in Military Intelligence, fluent in Arabic, Williams found herself at the forefront of the troops' interaction with Iraqis and at the crux of the contradictions soldiers face in the current conflict. Part of her mission was to befriend locals, but she found herself pointing her weapon at Iraqi children. She saw death up close and witnessed soldiers cross the line between interrogation and torture.

Irreverent, vulnerable, angry, and humane, Williams describes what it's like for a young woman to be surrounded by an ocean of testosterone, respected for her skills and qualifications, but treated at different times as a soldier, a sister, a mother, a bitch, and a slut.

On her return to the U.S., Kayla experienced first-hand the difficulties encountered by family members of traumatized and wounded vets, as the man who became her husband (also a veteran) recovered from a serious brain injury sustained in combat and she attempted to personally reintegrate into civilian society. She offers incisive commentary on the religious and sociopolitical sects involved in the conflict and a boots-on-the ground perspective on the stress of combat, the questionable treatment of Iraqi prisoners, the challenges of negotiating the changing demands on today's military.

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