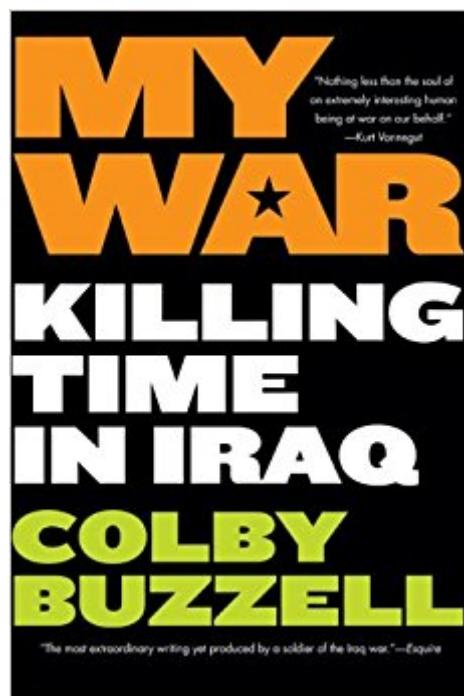


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# My War: Killing Time In Iraq



## Synopsis

Colby Buzzell traded a dead-end future for the army-and ended up a machine gunner in Iraq. To make sense of the bloody insanity surrounding him, he started a blog about the war and how it differed from the government's official version. As his blog's popularity grew, Buzzell became the embedded reporter the Army couldn't control-despite its often comical efforts to do so. The result is an extraordinary narrative, rich with unforgettable scenes: the Iraqi woman crying uncontrollably during a raid on her home; the soldier too afraid to fight; the troops chain-smoking in a guard tower and counting tracer rounds. Drawing comparisons to everything from Charles Bukowski to Catch-22, *My War* depicts a generation caught in a complicated and dangerous world-and marks the debut of a raw, remarkable new voice.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

*My War* is a book that will challenge many of the most common assumptions about the Iraq War and the people fighting in it. Colby Buzzell, the book's author and a U.S. Army machine-gunner who did a year-long tour in Iraq, is not the stereotypical small-town soldier from a Red State. He grew up in San Francisco eating pot brownies at the Haight-Ashbury Street Fair, skateboarding, and listening to punk and heavy metal. He supported Ralph Nader for president, reads George Orwell, and his dad worked in Silicon Valley. But he was sick of his "life in oblivion," bouncing around from one dead-end job to another. As Buzzell writes in his typically gritty prose, "I didn't want to get all old and have my bratty grandkids ask me, 'Grandpa, where were you during the Iraq war?' and me

going, 'Oh, I was busy doing temp work and data entry for 12 bucks an hour.'" In search of adventure, Buzzell joined the army and got sent to Iraq. First stationed in the ultra-dangerous Sunni Triangle, he quickly mastered how to use the M240 Bravo machine gun: "Just get behind that muthafucka and just fire it." His fellow soldiers, mostly hip-hop fans or headbanging metal-heads like him, killed time watching porn on mini-portable DVD players or listening to Metallica on their iPods while on patrol. Long boring spells were interrupted by wild fits of confusing action. On one of Buzzell's first missions, two platoons fired thousands of rounds at near point-blank range at an unarmed Iraqi civilian. Amazingly, he survived. Out of boredom, Buzzell started a blog, one of the first by an ordinary "Joe" grunt in Iraq. It became a media sensation and got Buzzell in trouble with the REMFs ("Rear Echelon Mutha Fuckers") because of his less-than-glamorous portrayal of the war and his superiors, whom he accuses of constantly lying to the public and the soldiers under their command. *My War* may be disappointing to readers looking for deeper introspections on the moral questions behind the war, but it is a pretty convincing case against the claim that everything in Iraq is going fine. --Alex Roslin --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

With this relentlessly cynical volume, Buzzell converts his widely read 2004 blog into an episodic but captivating memoir about the year he spent serving as an army "trigger puller" in Iraq. Posted to Mosul in late 2003, Buzzell's platoon was ordered "to locate, capture and kill all non compliant forces." Accordingly, his entries describe experiences pursuing elusive guerrillas (aka "men in black"); enduring sniping, rocket and mortar attacks; and witnessing the occasional car bomb. Face-to-face fighting almost never occurs. No matter: though the combat scenes are exciting, this book is actually more engrossing as a portrait of the day-to-day life of a young American soldier who has "read, and re-read, countless times, every single one of [Bukowski's] books." Like Bukowski, Buzzell appears to be a sentimental misanthrope; he pours scorn on everyone from cooks to generals to President Bush. He also despises the media, the antiwar movement and everyone who thinks they understand what's happening in Iraq. That his superiors kept their hands off his blog for several months, however, shows they understood that;despite its foul language, griping, insults directed at higher officers and occasional exposure of dirty linen;Buzzell's work never really wavers in its portrayal of American forces as the good guys in a dirty war. (Oct.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

*My War: Killing time in Iraq* is a raw and gripping story from the point of view of Colby Buzzell and

his role in the American occupation of Iraq while serving in the Stryker Brigade. This book is no holds barred and tells the side of the story that often goes unsaid because of the shocking reality of it. He even outlines the attempts of the Army to suppress his view of events. Mr. Buzzell provides great detailed insight into the lives of soldiers embroiled in this conflict. Once I started reading it, I couldn't put it down. It's a very interesting story told completely uncensored that captures all of the visceral emotions of his view of the war and all that comes with it. Highly recommended.

I'm not going to pretend that I am like some other reviewers here who followed along with his blog from the beginning. I've never spoken to Buzzell, never read his blog. I heard about this book right here on good 'ole . I wish that this book was required reading for every armchair general who insists on telling everyone exactly how the war is, despite the fact that the closest they've come is watching Black Hawk Down on Blu-Ray. One thing I really liked about this book is that it was in no way a vehicle for Buzzell to air his petty grievances. I've already read a couple war books that were nothing more than a chance to voice every complaint that the author ever had about their chain of command and fellow soldiers and how unfairly they were treated by the system. Buzzell is mouthy, irreverant and unafraid to step on a few toes, but never whiny or sniveling in this book. Without knowing the author in real life I still manage to get the feeling of true honesty in this book. He doesn't even attempt to sugarcoat his reasons for joining the Army in the first place. You'll find no teary-eyed proclamations of patriotism here (though that is not to say that Buzzell is not a patriot and a true example of "America's finest"). Instead, Buzzell very honestly admits that his decision to join was spurred by the realization that his life was going nowhere and by an urge to seek out adventure. Buzzell is very frank about his reasons for wanting to become an infantryman and relates this thirst for killing that some might find distasteful in a very, "Here I am; take it or leave it", manner. As you can see, I highly recommend this book. I recommend it for people thinking about joining the military, people interested in the military, the war in Iraq or just anyone who enjoys reading.

You can find this review as well as many more on my blog [The Dancing Nerd Writes Again](http://www.thedancingnerdwritesagain.com).  
Initial Thoughts: I read this book for my Literature and War class. I was excited, perhaps the more correct term is intrigued, to start reading a first hand account on the war in Iraq. I'll be honest, I didn't know much about the war in Iraq and still don't claim to be any sort of expert. It was a subject I decided to stay blissfully ignorant of but I am happy I got the chance to read this story and get a better understanding of what American soldiers went through and are still going through in Iraq. Parts of this story were actual blog post written while Colby was in Iraq, others are diary entries, and in

between Colby added extra anecdotes and information to help the narrative flow more naturally. I should also mention that this book contains a lot of explicit language. If it was made into a movie it would definitely get an 'R' rating for language, violence, and some drug use. **Spoilers!** I think it is appropriate to start off this review by re-quoting myself from a comment I left on Goodreads immediately after I had finished this book. "I found myself reading this and after ever page thinking, wow. It was really insightful and at times highly amusing." I will say that I'm a bit disappointed in myself and the fact that I waited so long to write this review. But life (aka midterms) got in the way, so I'll try my best to accurately convey my feelings for this book. I learned a lot about a soldier's experiences over in Iraq, many of which left me in awe of the men and women fighting for our country. Some of the accounts were inspiring while others were a bit disheartening. These reactions were understandable when you consider how honest Colby is in his retelling of the events. At times I was laughing, bored, and scared to death and experiencing many of the same emotions Colby had lived through. There is no way I can ever understand what it feels like to be shot at or what it feels like to have sweat running down into my eyes and be unable to move, but through reading this, I feel more knowledgeable and empathetic. As the novel progresses Colby discusses his love of music, art and books. He is a very intelligent human being which came in stark contrast to the beginning of the novel's image of Colby which was a hometown stoner. One of the books mentioned is Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*. I read this book almost two years ago for a Humanities class and fell in love with it. I've highlighted all my favorite passages and keep this book on my desk at all times. I flip through it almost every day when I feel like I need a reality check or a little motivation. I think everyone should read this book at least once and I highly recommend it. Colby is an amazing writer and his descriptions made me feel like I was in the middle of the action, or in some cases non action. It was a really unique perspective and I'm very appreciative of him for writing this account for the world to read. **Conclusion:** I really did enjoy reading this book and had so many wow moments while reading. I have a million little sticky notes highlight my favorite parts or the things I found to be the most interesting. I would recommend this book to someone who wants (for the most part) an unbiased, non partisan account of his life and journey to becoming a soldier. If my review hasn't convinced you to read this book, my apologies. Like I said earlier I should've reviewed this book when it was fresh in my mind because since then I've taken midterms and had to read many other novels and textbooks and everything has started to blend together. You'll just have to take my word for it. Colby Buzzell is a really unique, funny, and honest individual whose work and life deserves an audience. **Rating:** 4/5 stars

This book is a definite page turner. I couldn't put it down. It brings a keen insight to the war in Iraq. There are so many stories out there but this one is very authentic. Colby Buzzell tells the story right. He spend minimal time explaining his personal life before the Army and spends the rest of the book explaining his feelings about a lot that happened in his life during the time that he spent in the war. Colby shares his feelings of getting married before shipping out and how it felt to say good bye to his bride. He also shares his feelings on everything from the desert heat, the heat of battle, his feelings of seeing corpses on the battle field and to how military politics tried to keep him from sharing his thoughts. This book will take you to the war and put you in a platoon of real soldiers. If you want to know what a foot soldier feels about Iraq and what they experience during their tour of duty then pick up this book. You will feel what he felt. Everything from the cold beer shared with the troops to the desert sand that gets into everything to the warm feeling of coming home. Colby did an outstanding job at telling his story. You will have a hard time putting this book down.

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