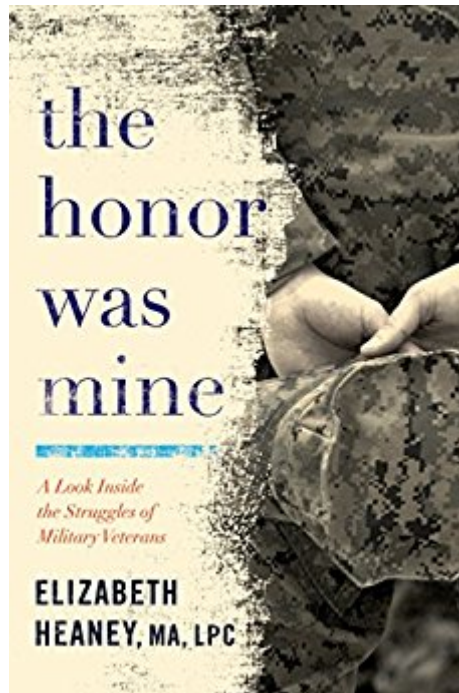




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The Honor Was Mine



Synopsis

A Nautilus Book Award winner. A young combat veteran hides in his closet under a pile of clothes on bad nights. Another, home for five days, can't figure out how to talk to his wife. And a commander's spouse recounts the soul-draining effect of attending nearly one hundred memorial services. When therapist Elizabeth Heaney left her private practice to counsel military service members and their families, she came face-to-face with unheard-of struggles and fears. Emotions run deeply and often silently in the hearts of combat veterans in this eye-opening portrait of the complex, nuanced lives of service personnel, who return from battling the enemy and grapple with readjusting to civilian life. Presenting the soldiers' stories told in their own words as well as her own story of change, Heaney offers an intimate perspective, not of war itself but of its emotional aftermath. Some of these stories scrape the bone; others are hopeful, even comical. Every one reveals the sacrifices of those on the front lines and the courage, grace, and honor with which they serve.

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Customer Reviews

I served in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Elizabeth Heaney did a superb job highlighting the struggles faced by not only the service members when they return home, but the often forgotten sacrifices made by their loved ones. This is the best book that I have read in years and was truly sad to reach the end of the book. Thank you Elizabeth for the sacrifices you made on your journey to help our service members and thank you again for taking the time to write this book. It should be required reading for all Americans.

"The Honor Was Mine" was years in the making, and the author has made every year count. She has captured both her own growth and the heart-wrenching experiences of the modern day soldier with clarity and exquisite prose. As the daughter of a West Pointer and career Army officer and a friend to many who have served today but don't talk about it, I am deeply grateful that Heaney has found a way to express their universal experiences with candor, discretion, and compassion. I am recommending this to every veteran I know. Thank you, Ms. Heaney, and bravo!

The prologue of this book sets a tone which should be remembered throughout the book. We see the reality of a soldier reacting to a new life after service. It honestly made me cry. In this book, the author tells her story of coming to counsel these soldiers (used as she did, a generic term to cross all branches rather than as the actual term) interspersed with short tales about people she met and spoke to. The stories are cleansed of identifying information; they still retain every drop of meaning and affect. In the interest of being completely honest, I am a relative of two service members. I am familiar with the terms that the author has to define for most readers. I understand the "family" perspective. I can identify with it. I like that the author was honest in the beginning. That she spoke of her ideas and predispositions about soldiers... That they're addicted to war... That they enjoy it. It makes the transition she goes through more moving and heartfelt. Soldiers do not crave war. They do not want to participate. They, however, do the hard job many of us cannot or will not. That should be remembered no matter a reader's personal view on war. This book handles that gap well and speaks to both sides of the war debate. Some quotes that spoke to me..."Success could be getting to know the person who came home and letting go of the person you were when you deployed." (Author)"They are expected to engage in the next task without hesitation or question - that's what soldiers do." (Author)"I don't know how to miss them so much." (Soldier)"They faced experiences many of us would never agree to face; they carried burdens that would break even the strongest among us." (Author)"They gave me a prescription and told me to come back in three months."

(Soldier)The section of the book which connected most with me was Her Son in Chapter 7. It described the organized chaos that comes when soldiers return to a hangar full of family and friends. I've done this. Many observations that the author made were things I experienced, witnessed or felt. It was a good feeling of community... Even as it described one particular event that had already happened some time before. It brought back the memories of happiness I witnessed and the thankfulness I had myself. I received a free Kindle copy in return for an honest review.

Elizabeth Heaney has given us an honest and heart wrenching insight into the every day struggles of service men and women returning from their experience of war. In the pages of this well written account of their stories, she also tells her own story of transformation as she takes that first step with them on the path towards healing their invisible wounds. I want to read and learn more about the subject. I hope there is book # two in the works! T. Adams

I thought being antiwar meant being antimilitarism. This meant anti soldier too. The Honor Was Mine changed my thinking, I'm still against war unless our country is threatened or genocide occurs, but now through this profound book the true courage it takes to being in the Services mean just that. Being of service. The struggles these men and women and families endure are extreme, sometimes full of pride, sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes both. The author does a great job educating knee jerk ignorance and stereotypical opinions, especially mine. Thank you for that.

To some it might be a bit boring but the message is clear. Many military service members, their families and friends and relatives go through hell during times of conflict. Many require a shoulder to lean on or an ear to listen to their stress. As a 20 year military retiree (Air Force) I wasn't aware of the civilian counselors that were/are available. My service, largely not involving stressful situations - although I did have a few hairy moments - was probably the reason. I highly recommend the book, especially to those who never served and who may have negative or neutral outlook towards the military.

Our book club had the privilege of discussing the book with Elizabeth Heaney. The depth of her commitment and her ability to convey (both in writing and in person) the multiple stressors and sacrifices endured by our troops deployed repeatedly to Iraq and Afghanistan and their families and the dearth of resources to help them are remarkable. I highly recommend The Honor Was Mine as a book club book. It is worthy of discussion. I echo another reviewer who said the book changed her

view of the military. Coming of age in the Viet Nam era, I, too, equated anti war with anti military. As I matured I gained respect for those who serve, but this book moved me to a far more positive position and it moved me emotionally as well. Sharon Tirrell

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