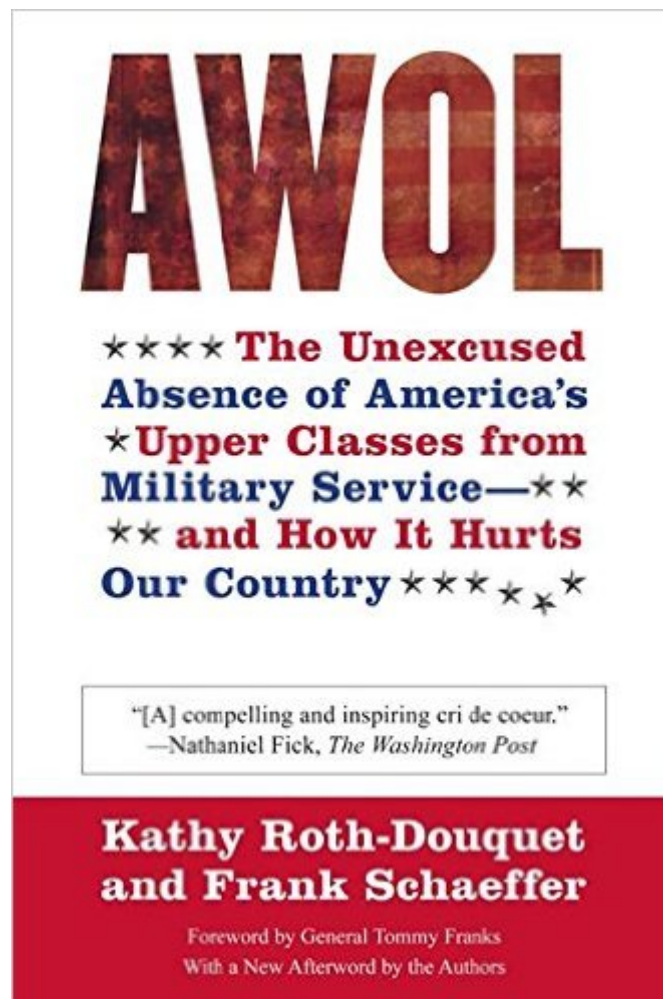


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AWOL: The Unexcused Absence Of America's Upper Classes From Military Service -- And How It Hurts Our Country



Synopsis

In America, it is increasingly the case that the people who make, support, or protest military policy have no military experience. As Kathy Roth-Douquet and Frank Schaeffer assert in this groundbreaking work, the gap between the "all-volunteer military" and the rest of us is widening, and our country faces a dangerous lack of understanding between those in power and those who defend our way of life.

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Customer Reviews

Frank Schaeffer, a terrific writer whether in the world of military, religion, or fiction brings his considerable skills with Kathy Roth-Douquet to bear on this seminal work on this nation's upperclass' failures to support the military in deed, but often provide support with pale words. (I must admit to finding Frank one of the most skilled populist writers around today, and whether in agreement or not, he is a great communicator) The book provides observations and yes, research, and although I have very minor quibbles, (Kathy, gives Clinton too much credit, although she is at times critical as well and while the military did a fine job, the stopping of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo has in reality, just caused other problems in reverse; and Frank supports a lottery draft, potentially problematic, albeit historically, it works more often than not - I prefer Kathy's option) these two authors provide great analysis and insight. The strengths of this book are many: one, on how the military recruits on college campus and spends its money on ROTC programs faults our leaders for not engaging the upperclass. While this is understandable due to ivy league hostilities, it still needs to be pursued; two, the lack of moral clarity among our upperclasses ("me" and my "choice") is staggering and

since these are the people generally with money, they are ripe for political leadership, therefore, possibly using military men and women for their gains in foreign worlds, while not always properly equipping this same military to do the job; thirdly, the "not for people like us" is insightful and speaks to a snobbish group, again, lacking any moral clarity, especially when sacrifices are needed from them.

I was raised in the 60's and the 70's during the Vietnam war. The focus for many of us in those days was avoiding the war at all costs. We were brought up to question authority, be skeptical of what the government told us, and to believe that war is hell and never a solution. As I age and watch world events unfold, e.g. Rwanda, Cambodia, Kosovo, Darfur, and 9/11, the point is well taken that evil does exist, that not everyone is well intentioned or rational, and that dialog can't resolve all conflicts. I have learned too that the international community can be slow to react or fail to react at all. Tragically, there is a time and a place for military intervention e.g. when no other efforts can stop genocide and all other less intrusive options fail. Where inaction is shameful. Who do we look to to defend innocent populations, or to protect us at home? For the most part, we voice unending support for our troops regardless of how we feel about the policies or the policy makers. But most of us do not concern ourselves with who has to do the fighting or who is stepping up to the plate. We assume that those who can, get a good education, get high paying jobs, etc. and those who can't, join the military. Fewer of our policy makers, those who make life and death policy decisions involving the military, have any military experience. Most of us theoretically believe in service but never really consider serving. It's too dangerous, it's too disruptive, it's too distasteful. Where is the equity in letting others fight battles that we agree need to be fought? Many think Iraq was a gigantic mistake. Certainly, most persons of my generation cringe when the Vietnam War is mentioned. This is not a book about whether any particular conflict is right or wrong.

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