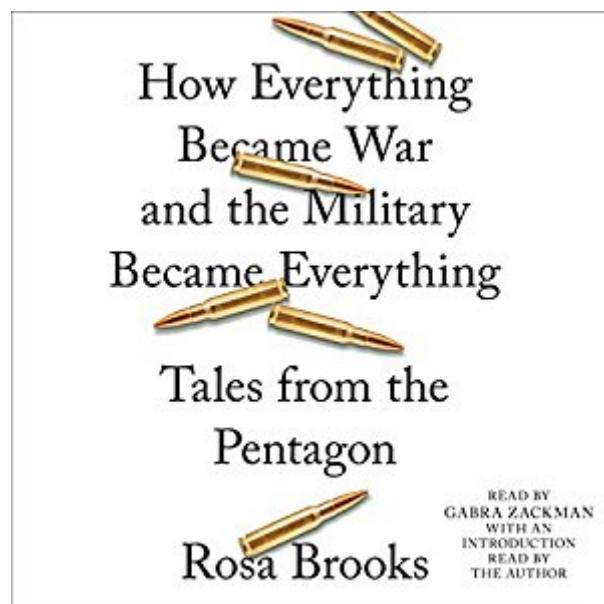


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How Everything Became War And The Military Became Everything: Tales From The Pentagon



Synopsis

The first serious book to examine what happens when the ancient boundary between war and peace is erased. Once, war was a temporary state of affairs - a violent but brief interlude between times of peace. Today America's wars are everywhere and forever: Our enemies change constantly and rarely wear uniforms, and virtually anything can become a weapon. As war expands, so does the role of the US military. Today military personnel don't just "kill people and break stuff". Instead they analyze computer code, train Afghan judges, build Ebola isolation wards, eavesdrop on electronic communications, develop soap operas, and patrol for pirates. You name it, the military does it. Rosa Brooks traces this seismic shift in how America wages war from an unconventional perspective - that of a former top Pentagon official who is the daughter of two antiwar protesters and a human rights activist married to an army Green Beret. Her experiences led her to an urgent warning: When the boundaries around war disappear, we risk destroying America's founding values and the laws and institutions we've built - and undermining the international rules and organizations that keep our world from sliding toward chaos. If Russia and China have recently grown bolder in their foreign adventures, it's no accident; US precedents have paved the way for the increasingly unconstrained use of military power by states around the globe. Meanwhile we continue to pile new tasks onto the military, making it increasingly ill prepared for the threats America will face in the years to come. By turns a memoir; a work of journalism; a scholarly exploration into history, anthropology, and law; and a rallying cry, *How Everything Became War and the Military Became Everything* transforms the familiar into the alien, showing us that the culture we inhabit is reshaping us in ways we may suspect but don't really understand. It's the kind of book that will leave you moved, astonished, and profoundly disturbed, for the world around us is quietly changing beyond recognition - and time is running out to make things right.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Rosa Brooks has written a cogent and succinct description of the process that has brought us into the legal morass where we are in a perpetual state of war in which the laws of war no longer apply. Of course, this summary doesn't do justice to the complexity of the book, and the book can't cover the entire landscape of the complicated intersections between the military and the civilian world, i.e. the issue of the militarization of domestic police forces. It does a superb job of setting the philosophical and legal framework for the question of the nature of war (and therefore also the nature of peace) and suggests that our natural human state includes conflict. A very basic social function is managing that conflict. Brooks contends that in our current system, military and civilian leaders don't speak the same language. Misunderstandings are so profound that if we don't find a way to build common experiences and develop the same view of the world and the problems that confront us, we are unlikely to find the appropriate responses to build a sustainable future.

This book should be mandatory reading for every American who cares about the direction the country is moving. It should be read by everybody in government and the military. It will scare the socks off of you, but at the same time it is a prescription for how to avoid having the military take over America whether intentionally or as a result of mission creep. The author, Rosa Brooks, knows whereof she speaks. Originally from an anti-war background, she is a lawyer teaching at Georgetown law school who has worked in high-level positions in the State Department, in the Pentagon and has personally visited Afghanistan, Iraq, and many other hot spots around the globe. She has interviewed diplomats, generals and common soldiers. Brooks' message is that war has changed since 9/11, that it now incorporates cyberspace, drones, nation-building and boots-on-the-ground. The military is gradually doing stuff that has been the province of the now-under-funded civilian agencies. Unfortunately, it's simply easier to let the military do it—easier but more dangerous to the health of our democracy. Read it and get off the couch if you want to have America survive as a democracy.

Book is absolutely fascinating and informative. It is a reality check for all of USA who have lived thru

these years of perpetual war. Brooks is so detailed and fact checked. Our soldiers are being used to fight for defense of country, rebuild nations destroyed by military and terrorist activities. They are in an untenable situation of having to use their own judgements as to whom is the combatant and who is not. Imagine, being the one firing the bullets that kill and maim children! Imagine being the ones who have to help clean up a drone hit hospital. PERPETUAL WAR has to be stopped. AM ppl are becoming so numbed to death of others, that our value system is in real jeopardy.

Her resume had my attention (from what I understand, she's the daughter of Barbara Ehrenreich) and the book that she delivered is one of the best recent examinations of the military that I've read. Very thoughtful, even-handed and, most importantly, interesting. It had the breadth of another similarly thoughtful work, Rachel Maddow's DRIFT, except Brooks' book focuses more on international concerns like the post-9/11 (well, post-Serbia) notions of sovereignty and the evolving (or devolving, depending on your politics) legal distinctions that under-gird our drone, detention and war policies. It is written more for the informed layman, which is what I am, rather than a wonkish or military crowd. Recommended.

An important book by a civilian with the necessary experience with the military to comment on the disturbingly increasing role played by the military in US national security interests, but the negative character of that role is enhanced, even inspired, by the ignorance and inexperience of too many senior civilian officials in the government. Both of these phenomena are in large part the result of the end of conscription, as the US military becomes more and more isolated from our civilian society. The unfortunate result may be a military that is little more than "patriotic" mercenaries.

I'm not a military book reader usually, but I heard Rosa Parks interviewed on my local FM radio station, WAMC, today, and was so impressed with her that I'm ordering her book. The line that made the most impact was when she said our military is now like Walmart, trying to provide everything everything to everybody, but never at a high enough quality to be satisfying. That incisive observation made me think how the same thing has already happened to our public schools, which have become parents, babysitters, playground supervisors, and the like. And, like education, the military is called upon to do all sorts of things beyond its original narrowly defined mission. Rosa Parks really sounded an alarm. I hope politicians pay attention to it. Here is a link to the interview in case you want to whet your appetite. [...]

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