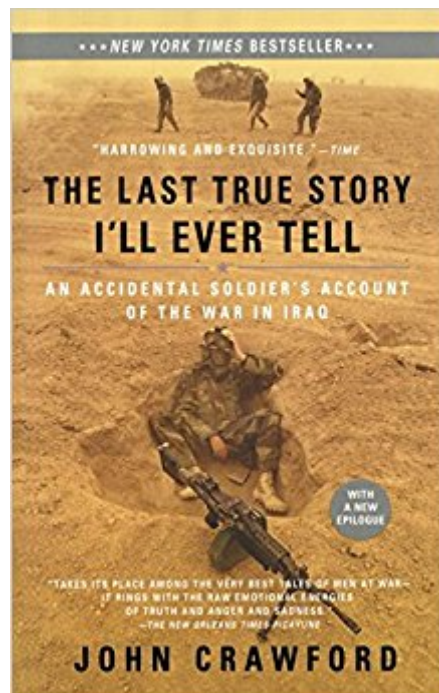




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# **The Last True Story I'll Ever Tell: An Accidental Soldier's Account Of The War In Iraq**



## Synopsis

In the tradition of Michael Herr's *Dispatches*, a National Guardsman's account of the war in Iraq. John Crawford joined the Florida National Guard to pay for his college tuition, willingly exchanging one weekend a month and two weeks a year for a free education. But in Autumn 2002, one semester short of graduating and newly married – in fact, on his honeymoon – he was called to active duty and sent to the front lines in Iraq. Crawford and his unit spent months upon months patrolling the streets of Baghdad, occupying a hostile city. During the breaks between patrols, Crawford began recording what he and his fellow soldiers witnessed and experienced. Those stories became *The Last True Story I'll Ever Tell* – a haunting and powerful, compellingly honest book that imparts the on-the-ground reality of waging the war in Iraq, and marks as the introduction of a mighty literary voice forged in the most intense of circumstances.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Having joined the National Guard for the tuition benefits, Crawford, like many of his contemporaries, never expected to do any heavy lifting. Early on, he admits his is "the story of a group of college students... who wanted nothing to do with someone else's war." But when his Florida National Guard unit was activated, he was shipped to Kuwait shortly before the invasion of Iraq. Armed with shoddy equipment, led by incompetent officers and finding release in the occasional indulgence in pharmaceuticals, Crawford cared little for the mission and less for the Iraqis. "Mostly we were guarding gas stations and running patrols," he explains. As for Iraqi civilians, "I didn't give a shit

what happened to any of them," he confesses after inadvertently saving an Iraqi boy from a mob beating. Crawford's disdain grows with each extension of his tour, and he leaves Iraq broke, rudderless and embittered. Unfortunately, Crawford dresses up his story in strained metaphors and tired clichés such as "truth engulfed me like a storm cloud" and "you can never go back home." Despite its pretensions, Crawford's story is not the classic foot soldier's memoir and should provide enough gristle to please military memoir fans. 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.

“Potent”Crawford tells tales that bring human dimensions to his situation. •  
The New York Times“A National Guardsman who never expected to see battle  
writes a shattering account of the war that changed his life. •

People“Tremendous...An incredibly gripping book, and incredibly well-written. It's a  
remarkable story...I commend [Crawford] not only for his service, but for the account of it, which is  
really a wonderful read.” •Jon Stewart, The Daily Show with Jon Stewart“Harrowing and  
exquisite.” •Time“Takes its place among the very best tales of men at war •it rings  
with the raw emotional energies of truth and anger and sadness.” •The New Orleans  
Times-Picayune“It's f\*\*\*ing dynamite” | Like Michael Herr in Dispatches, Crawford  
really has it down. He„, got it nailed. • •Thom Jones, author of The Pugilist  
at Rest“Crawford is a wonderfully descriptive writer •and reading this book feels like  
climbing into a Humvee to patrol Baghdad in 130-degree heat. • •Minneapolis Star  
Tribune

I was required to read this as part of my World Cultures class and was blown away by how my it  
changed me. I went from thinking where am I going with my art and worried about little things in life  
to what should I be doing to help soldiers as well as help put a light on the war even though we were  
told it ended long ago.This book made me pick up my pencils and paint brushes and start doing  
work that might make people think again about being more concerned with the color of a dress over  
the death and destruction in Iraq.

Its far too easy for a civilian to stick a magnetic yellow ribbon on the end of their SUV, say nice  
things supporting whatever war we happen to be fighting, and believe they are supporting the  
troops. Many will not like what I am about to write but most Americans are so ignorant about what

these men and women have to put up with that it is criminal. Movies portray glamorous fight scenes and non-serving pundits talk about "doing one's duty" without ever serving one day themselves ignoring the hardships carried by soldiers, Marines, sailors, airmen and their families. John Crawford's book offers a view into the weary world and mind of a combat soldier. It isn't glamorous and offers nothing in the way to justify the war in Iraq. It is about one man trying to survive and keep some small part of his sanity dealing with things that are completely alien to the fat and lazy civilians for whom our wars are at best episodes in some low rated reality show.

I appreciate the depth and honesty in the book. My heart goes out to every soldier and the chaos that follows their hearts and minds for the rest of their lives.

This is my Uncle Johnny. When this book first came out I wasn't really old enough to understand it. As I'm not older and have read it again it really sinks in the reality of war.

A meandering account of the first days of the Iraqi War. Interesting in places, redundant in others. Pretty good account into the mental wanderings of a war weary soldier.

Great writing (mostly). The story was probably as ordinary as one could find from soldiers who served in Iraq, which plus the good writing made it worth the purchase. I wish it could have had a happy ending, but war does that to people.

Everyone should read this book to get a really true picture of this war. The author writes in a way that keeps you intrigued although you feel like you know what is happening in this war. But none of us realize the grueling danger of the day to day effort to follow orders and stay alive until you read this book. I must say that I was very much surprised at the ending!

I have gone through about 10 copies of this book, I do enjoy reading it and I always give it out to young Soldiers, that is why I have picked up so many of them

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