

SOLDIERS. As his patriotism is called upon, the soldier draws the short straw. He is lured by promises of mateship and adventure, or at least good pay and a decent professional education. **B**ut first the soldier must be trained to kill. This training is merciless. **N**ext our soldier has to pay for his education. He has to endure - and inflict - unspeakable horrors. Then the soldier is returned to society. But the horrors of war are burnt into his mind. **W**ill he cope?

A soldier, who served for only six weeks, had witnessed an atrocity involving a civilian victim and had to listen to the sounds of a man slowly dying, after he shot him.

When he returned from his tour of duty he became a drunk and suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder and severe depression. After a few months he suicided.

Horrors of war too much for soldier, SMH, 1 Nov 2007

see also WAR

A devastating book: WAR is a FORCE THAT GIVES US MEANING by war correspondent Chris Hedges, is "bitterly poetic, powerful and ruthlessly philosophical," LAT. I find it as shocking as Spielberg's Schindler's List:

"The discarded war veterans are never a pretty sight. They are troubled and some of them are physically maimed. They often feel betrayed, misunderstood and alone.

"It is hard for them to integrate again into peacetime society. Many are shunted aside, left to nurture their pain alone. They may turn the violence they inflicted against themselves."

The book offers an unvarnished account of what it feels like to kill humans. William Manchester in Goodbye Darkness: "It is never clean, easy or neat; killing is a dirty business.

"Nothing is more sickening than watching a human life snuffed out, nothing haunts more. A dark feeling of disgust and self hatred clotted my throat, gagging me in my stupor."

The accounts from war zones are horrifyingly graphic; they describe how soldiers become de-humanized and that war forms its own culture. The rush of battle is a potent, lethal drug as soldiers decide who lives or dies.