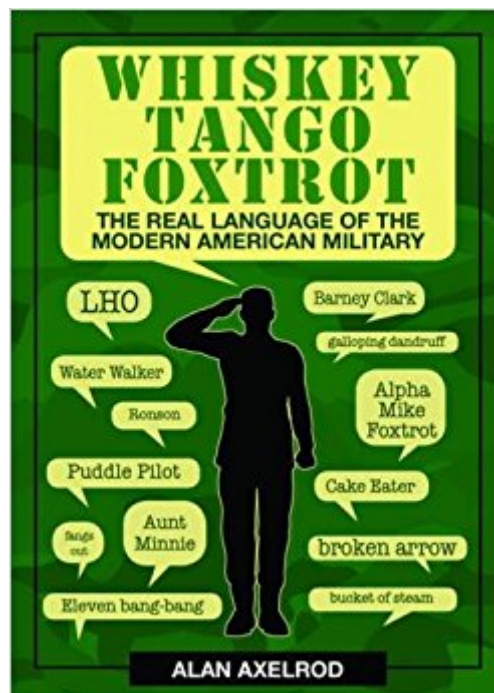




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Whiskey Tango Foxtrot: The Real Language Of The Modern American Military



Synopsis

Few areas of human endeavor have produced more—or more colorful—terms than has the military. Soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen have over centuries come up with words, phrases, and acronyms to express everything from raw emotion to complex technology. The military is both a distinctive way of life and a community, and a command of its slang is essential to admission to full membership within the group. Most military slang is almost always familiar only to the troops. Mating mosquitoes, for example, refers to the two-chevron insignia of the Army corporal. Gadget describes an enlisted man or woman who is temporarily promoted to a position of increased responsibility to fill an urgent need, while a panty raid is a foray into enemy territory for the purpose of gathering evidence of adversary activity. Among the less delicate entries are the day the eagle shifts, or payday, and skimmer puke, a submariner's term for any surface ship sailor. (And then there's the book's title, the acronym for What The F-ck). Many elements of military vocabulary have become part of our national speech: John Wayne, boondocks, attaboy, and hot dog. But whether the words and phrases are the exclusive property of our fighting men and women or are also in general use, the "real" language of the modern military set forth in this lively book embodies a uniquely American attitude and an exuberantly colloquial, unwaveringly honest, and enduringly American grace under pressure.

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Customer Reviews

Alan Axelrod is the author of more than forty books on military history, business management, trade reference, and other nonfiction. He and his work have been featured in BusinessWeek, Fortune,

Men's Health, Cosmopolitan, Inc., Atlanta Journal-Constitution, and USA Today. He lives in Atlanta, Georgia.

Great book and fast service.

book too simple or not total updated to slang. was ok

This is a book that will take you into the world of military acronyms - at least some of them. Many of the ones that are in here are politically incorrect or sexist terms that inhabit military personnel's language. The military call signs - alpha, bravo, charlie - where whiskey tango foxtrot comes from is not listed, neither are many of the other commonly used acronyms in here such as AWOL or TDY. Two that always surprises me people do not know - but then I have spent my whole life with the military. The chapter divisions really make no sense to me and so you have to page through each section to see if what you want to know is there. Some of the definitions are not complete or are relegated to one service's use. Real world is said to be what National Guardsmen and reservists call civilian life, when it is also what military personnel call the continental US when they are stationed overseas, especially out in the boonies. Brown shoe is defined as a navy term for aviators and submariners, black shoe for other navy personnel. Nothing is mentioned concerning the black shoe/boot, brown shoe/boot army which was a division of the years when brown footgear was issued until the 1950's then black until the camo of Middle East conflicts. Therefore the statements, "I was in the black boot army, my father in the brown boot army". Ground pounder is defined as a grunt, a marine infantryman, when the army has used this as a term for infantrymen since WWII. Many other frequently used terms are missing and detail is given on several ships such as the USS Slurpeefish, but even though they use the term Flak Bait, they omit where that comes from. This could have been an interesting and complete book; instead it reminds me of the young military dependents laughing at the sexual, bodily function language they have heard around the base.

Very well written with just the right humorous touch. Gives you not only the meaning of hundreds of acronyms, but also explains their origin. A really very enjoyable read.

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