

## **Duty Bound: A Wounded Warrior Battles Back From PTSD to Coach the High School Basketball Team He Once Starred On**

**Bob Larrañaga**

CreateSpace (Dec 30, 2017)

Softcover \$14.99 (352pp)

978-0-578-18983-3

*Duty Bound is an emotionally affecting novel that delves into the lasting consequences of combat.*

Bob Larrañaga's engaging novel *Duty Bound* captures the essence of the battles that many wounded warriors fight long after their tours are over. Its lead grapples with the aftermath of his military life, which challenged and changed him physically, mentally, and emotionally.

A roadside bomb in Afghanistan kills Ron Canfield's closest battlefield buddies; he is left with a prosthetic leg and a deep sense of guilt. Ron relives his experiences in dreams and daytime recollections of his lost US marine comrades. He struggles through rehabilitation and tries to find his place in the civilian world, as well as to reconcile his relationship with his former drill sergeant father, who treats him more like a recruit than a relative.

After months of surgeries and therapy sessions, Ron takes a job as his high school alma mater's basketball coach amid racial tension and personal threats to his sanity and safety. As he is an amputee diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, everyone from parents to fellow faculty members to a local media personality question his fitness to coach kids.

What's more, the first game of the season pits him against a old basketball rival—the school's former coach, who is also suing his ex-employer for discrimination. But Ron's medical team, fellow veterans, and his own high school coach are part of a cheering squad helping him overcome the off-court drama and prove that he is just as effective a coach as he was a combatant.

Most of the book's action takes place not on the battlefield but in the hospital halls of Walter Reed and on the basketball courts of Baltimore. This takes *Duty Bound* beyond the realm of a conventional war story. The multifaceted challenges that Ron and other key characters face help to move the plot along at a pace similar to that which his players bring to the court. Forays into extended basketball play-by-plays are the only points at which the story slows.

Character dialogue is strong. Larrañaga manages to stay on the right side of originality while still allowing his characters to employ motivational sayings appropriate to their roles as coaches, physical therapists, and gung-ho former military men. Carefully selected adjectives and creative metaphors, such as the "doormat of cigarette butts" at a VFW hall's doors, help create vivid, sensory scenes, if they are rather plentifully used. Prose is otherwise polished and tight, giving the impression of careful, technical crafting.

*Duty Bound* is an emotionally affecting novel that delves into the lasting consequences of combat without relying on sentimentality, patriotism, or pacifism. It contains effective commentary on how soldiers, military families, and civilians all bear the wounds of war in one way or another.

CHARLENE OLDHAM (January 31, 2018)

*Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. Foreword Reviews and Clarion Reviews make no guarantee that the publisher will receive a positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.*