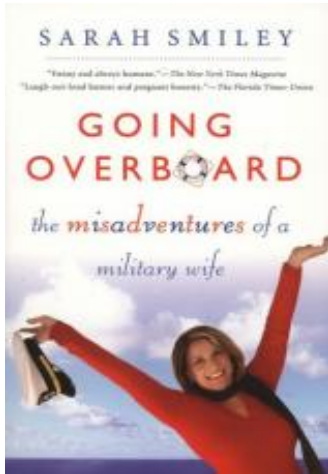


# Going Overboard: The Misadventures of a Military Wife

by Sarah Smiley

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## About the Book

A former Navy brat and present-day Navy wife, Sarah Smiley knows better than anyone that weddings and funerals--even childbirth!--take a backseat to Uncle Sam. Yet when Sarah's husband, Dustin, is sent away for an unexpected deployment, what follows is a true test of strength and wit that even Sarah's list-making mother couldn't have prepared her for. Just when Sarah thinks she has it all under control, a charming doctor creates temptation that is hard to resist. Now, with one distant spouse, two children and three best friends, Sarah learns that life sometimes means going a little overboard.

Exceptionally frank and brazenly funny, this memoir of marrying young and growing up late exposes everything you never knew you didn't know about life in the military....and then some.

## Discussion Guide

1. Do you think the Smileys' relationship is typical or atypical of a marriage? How is it the same or different from your own marriage?
2. In **Going Overboard**, Sarah reveals both positive and negative aspects of life in the military. Which of these surprised you the most?
3. In the book, we only get a glimpse of the Smileys' marriage as told by Sarah. How do you think the story might be different from Dustin's point-of-view?

4. It seems as though Sarah married young and found herself later, causing her to make certain changes in her relationships. What personal changes have affected your own relationships? Were they positive or negative changes?
5. How did Dustin and Sarah's upbringings affect their marriage? How has your own upbringing affected your present-day relationships?
6. Is there a moral difference between an "emotional affair" and a physical one? Do you think Sarah actually had an emotional affair? Or just a fantasy? Was it all in her head? Or did the doctor cross "the line"?
7. Do you think military marriages are more susceptible to extramarital affairs than civilian ones? Why or why not?
8. Why do you think Sarah was drawn to the doctor in particular? How are he and Dustin alike and different?
9. Would this story be different if Dustin were not in the military? How so?
10. On pages 177 Sarah asks the questions, "Oh, so just because my husband is serving our country I'm supposed to excuse him of any bad behavior?" and "Why does everyone expect me to suddenly deem everything else in my life null and void just because my husband is in a war?" Do you think Sarah is right to feel this way? Should certain persons be given leeway in their behavior if they are considered heroic?
11. In the end, who do you think has changed the most, Dustin or Sarah?

## Author Bio

Navy wife Sarah Smiley is the author of a syndicated newspaper column that reaches more than two million readers weekly, and of the memoirs *DINNER WITH THE SMILEYS* (Hyperion, 2013), *GOING OVERBOARD* (Penguin/New American Library, 2005) and a collection of essays titled *I'M JUST SAYING?* (Ballinger, 2008).

Sarah has been featured in *The New York Times Magazine* ("Confessions of a Military Wife," November 6, 2005) and *Newsweek*, and on ABC's "Nightline," "CNN American Morning," "CNN Sunday Morning," "CBS The Early Show," "Fox News Studio B" and "MSNBC Live."

## Critical Praise

"A witty observer of her life and times!"

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