

**BREAKING  
THE HABIT**

**BY:  
SSG BELET**

Summary

REVIEWS

analysis

Response

# As a Teenager



- Good Work Ethics
- Dating a “bad” girl
- Bad influence from his girl and her friends
- Starts smoking because of them, but never continued

# Deployed to Afghanistan

- Hates it over there
- Feels like everything around him is out to screw him over
  - Bitter about his experience
- Overseas, he was initially looking forward to his experience
  - People around him are stupid
    - Is soon leaving Afghanistan
- For now, left behind to show 1/3 the ropes

# Back as a Teenager in HS



- Picked up the habit of smoking again
- No thanks to the tobacco shop keeper

# Back to Afghanistan Christmas

- Now that sucks, being over 10,000 miles away from home
- Envious of those back home
  - The men tries to make the most of it with presents
- But ultimately, it still sucks

# 3 Months into the Fleet

- Experience with the USMC sucks
  - Feeling the pressure from being so far from home
- Stress causes him to smoke even more than before



# After the Christmas Party

- On New Years Eve, he gets the final word and date of when he will be leaving
  - Happy to leave the god forsaken place
    - On his way back, starts thinking of what he will do
  - Re-enlist? School? Get a Job?

# Thinking of something Poetic

- Poetic moment in the USMC
- No one will ever understand what we went through here
- I'll never be closer to anyone than I am to these guys
  - I'll never forget what happened over here

# What he has to show

- Absolutely nothing worthwhile
- Besides glorifying training operations
- Few bootleg movies
- A postcard from a Thai stripper



# Guts and Glory

- Everyone joins the military for guts and glory
- Want to be heroes of war (John Wayne, Audie Murphy)
- In the long run, they use us and throw us away

# Bad Habit

- “But they don’t understand and truly never will”
- Its not for guts and glory, not for the experience, not for his brothers in arms
- All because it is another bad habit
- Just like smoking

# REVIEWS



• TRANSITIONS

• MILITARY ACROMYMS

# Editing

- It read that I five foot seven and 160 pounds.

- Grammar

- Ssgt plays Santa , passing out small gifts that he had people send from the States.

- Detail

- These exchanges were common the next few months until, finally, on a cold Korean evening, I got caught in Nicotine's sticky web.

#

By New Year's Eve, I was down to one or two cigarettes a day, and that was only on watch. I don't understand why this is here... it's still the military setting, even though it's later on.

- transition confusion

Needs to introduce the characters by nickname.

After a post workout smoke and protein shake, I go up in the tower with the ever cheerful **Black Whale**, the wind slicing through my government issued warming layers,

# Editing

- Military past choppy and lots of dialogue; youth past more story-like. He needs to flesh out the military past so that readers can better understand his purpose.

I'm bitter. My last three weeks in country will be nothing but standing post, and, sadly, that sums it all up perfectly.

["Yo, B!" hollers Tilley as I pull up and jump from the turret. "Come check out this video, man!"]

Ashley rode on the back pegs of my bike as I pedaled down to Jacob's Island Park, a common, yet out of the way hangout for young folks. When we arrived, Misty produced a battered pack of Cowboy Killers and a Zippo lighter that she undoubtedly lifted from a local shop.

- "What's your run time again? 23? 23:30

-Explanation

- These cause readers to step out of the story to try and understand better



# Military acronyms

*(Well, this is it, I think as we pull back into the (OSB). My last go 'round in the*

*'Stan and thank the Lord for that!*

Other examples:

SMAW, LCPL, OSB, the Fleet,

Okie, JAF, K-Bay, SOI

# analysis

- Themes throughout Belet's Story
  - Smoking
  - The monotony of the Marine Corps.
- The transformation of Belet.
  - Begins as (semi) innocent youth
  - Nervous husband
  - Cynical Soldier



# analysis

- Belet's Intended Audience
  - Older, more mature audience
  - Have a general idea of what war is
- Belet's impact on his audience
  - Use of Pathos
  - "All I want to do is bury my head in my sleeping bag and try not to picture the awesome Christmas that my family is surely enjoying. I want to forget missing my daughter's first Christmas." (Belet 8)

# Response

- We see SSGT Belet's changes and similarities from different parts of his life.
- Belet often uses tobacco as a metaphor for his own development, such as starting seriously when he first joined the military and quitting on his way out of his deployment.
- Belet offers valuable insight into the mind of a deployed soldier with his descriptions of boredom, frustration and excitement.

# Response

- Belet's work shows that an author can effectively meld widely separated anecdotes even though they are out of order and from different time periods in the protagonist's life.
- Belet shows the reader a different perspective on the war, one that is not extremely negative or positive.
- The chapter shows that an effective writer does not need action scenes or intense conflict to create an engrossing story.
- Without the excellent transitions and integration that Belet weaves into his writing, the story would not have made sense
- By evaluating the writing of others we can discover what to look for in our own writings

# Sources

- Smoking-<http://skeptisys.files.wordpress.com/2008/02/smoking.jpg>
- Cigar tube-[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/8a/Cigar\\_tube\\_and\\_cutter.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/8a/Cigar_tube_and_cutter.jpg)
- SwishersweetCigars-<http://www.tobaccobymail.com/images/SwisherSweetLittleCigars.jpg>
- FOB-[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/8/89/Forward\\_Operating\\_Base\\_Logar,\\_Afghanistan.jpg/350px-Forward\\_Operating\\_Base\\_Logar,\\_Afghanistan.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/8/89/Forward_Operating_Base_Logar,_Afghanistan.jpg/350px-Forward_Operating_Base_Logar,_Afghanistan.jpg)
- Smoking marine-<http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/img/11-04/1112marine.jpg>
- Belet, Andrew. "Breaking the Habit." [http://blackboard.usma.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab=courses&url=/bin/common/course.pl?course\\_id=\\_61701\\_1](http://blackboard.usma.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab=courses&url=/bin/common/course.pl?course_id=_61701_1)
- <http://www.magnafabrics.com/images/invprints/566.jpg>
- <http://www.thedctraveler.com/wp-content/uploads/2007/04/marine-corps-flag.gif>
- <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/fb/Marines-with-sniper-rifle-2.jpg>