

# Starved for Bullets

A Collection of Scars

By

Ryan Goodrich

## Dedication

This collection of scars, from the sands of Iraq and Afghanistan, is, first and foremost, dedicated to all my fellow Marines who gave their lives and inspired much of what I have written on the following pages. But, I would be wrong in just saying that Marines are the only ones that can hold the line for a nation's freedom; all the armed services fight side-by-side to ensure our fragile way of life is sustained and my thoughts go out to each soul that has given his blood, so others can cherish their own.

To my wife, Colleen, for saving my life; literally. I would not be here today if you had not seen what others couldn't. You are my life source and I love you.

To my best friend, Andrew Ewers, who spent many long hours listening to my first attempts at poetry, you are everything a human being can hope for a friend to be. Thank you, brother, for helping me to find my voice.

I would also like to acknowledge an amazing high school teacher who is undoubtedly responsible for my continued efforts in

writing this book. Mrs. Diane Belman, from Clovis High School, is, in my humble opinion, one of the few great English teachers in America. She constantly encourages her students to think outside-the-box and always spends the extra time with them to guarantee their success as competent and creative writers. She is more than a teacher, though, as all her students who know her by the name of “Mom” will affirm.

May everyone who reads this book understand at least one thing...freedom is never deserved, unless you're willing to fight for it without hesitation; for only when you have earned something, can you fully appreciate its worth and, more importantly, its potential.

Semper Fidelis!

## Understanding the Bullet

Many individuals who have read my poems have asked me the same question, "That was amazing, but, what in the hell are you talking about?" I have only two pieces of advice for those who attempt to understand the pages set forth:

1. Remember where you came from and
2. Try to think of what life would be like if you were dropped into the middle of a sweltering foreign desert with only a rifle and a daypack...knowing full well that you were going to be there for longer than just one day and that you may not make it past one step.

If you follow these two simple guidelines, everything will manifest itself as it should. May these bullets reveal what you have chosen to conceal. Happy hunting, dear reader!

1.

A Marine is Born

# *Equal to None*

Nothing had a vision, where something could breathe...

And it all began in a fire-dance display, which injected the void with a recipe for destruction and riddled the ages  
with somber twilight...

Vast space ebbing against blistering giants, burnt victims of yesterday delights, where darkness swallows the  
leftovers of brilliantly blinding temptations.

They feed off the young and multiply into greater swelling collections of ice, sailing lights and molten beads of  
rejection, raping their neighbors with collisions in the night, where criminal slights do pass, bringing in the dawn of  
silent distractions, forcing the birth of the infantile crusade, it will spawn in the distance with its mother, naturally  
budding in the heat of delusion.

This breeds the generations of cloned constraints, babbling as the flippancy of oceans and streams, where it  
sculpts the surface of perfection with brittle blades...

Those unscrupulous masters!

Hiding in the shadows of corpulent satisfaction, arced high throughout the withering landscapes, they settled  
on a clump of iron and steel, contemplating their resources for life, like the clay-pigeon souls they stockpiled for  
slaves...

Instead, they fashioned a legion of hellish dogs quite attuned to shredding clay like water balloons, but such  
creatures knew the evils of gods and turned rabid on their makers, to save what clay was left with thought.

These nightmares resembled the others, created likenesses ranked among shadows of men...

So few, so proud, and still equal to none.

# *How to Earn Your Skin*

It all began in the womb where the father echoed his violence in passion to his son, counting the days he would march on into sunset. In the darkness of slumber and growth he fashioned weapons to defend the ages, where, soon, they would bring in the waves of his name on their lips. He would thirst after the scent of splattered lives and cry out for another round in the blur of clashing titans, so their mark would bleed on in spaces where few would journey beyond the stars.

Once the son hungered for the open seas, he would find his way into the world and leave the confining shadows of existence. No mother to hold his hand, for the art of devastating movements was to fill his lungs and slip with the streams of his veins. He was beaten into the corners of rat-infested chambers and stripped of his skin to extract the weakness that huddled within and out of sight.

They placed a mirror before his naked mess and he looked on into the eyes of a stranger. A man behind the glass held a fresh pair of skins in his palm and dangled the issue beyond the reach of pain. The boy's eyes glistened and strained under the weight of a great tsunami, but the reflection gave him strength. He could imagine being whole again and wrapped in the armor of silk that would surely absorb the coming rains of fire.

So he extended his arm to accept the offer...

Then the man launched the skins across the valley, slapped a rifle in the lad's hand and chuckled as he spoke,

"If you want it, you got to earn it."

## *This is the Rifle*

See here, this is the **Butt Stock**, where enemies are forced to drown in graves of shallow roots; where soon the quality of faith in numbers subtracts the fatal response that bleeds into the pain of echoed silence.

And this is the **Shell**, that finds the bastard's head and tunnels into the splintered gaps, ever deeper, of devils who blame their sands' parched state on the fortunate souls of better men and their gods.

And this is the **Chamber**, as it whispers "Too young" in your dreams; such blood-lusting of bullets for everyone who dares to lay eyes upon the sheen of its hollow core.

And this is the **Gunpowder**, hiding in the basements of tortured minds and twisted aortic valves, the ones that drip their glutinous thoughts of worlds without souls to breed for war.

And this is the **Trigger**, you know, that early morning chill on the edge of your spinal fluid, bleeding into the cavities of crowded rooms, where the teenage fantasy attracts the stalking vice of pregnant mistakes.

And this is the **Clip**, now filled with your reticent comfort, because, believe me, when a blind savior you fear and plead with on the long nights has surely faded, all that's left is your surplus of straw and pilfered stones for pennies on the sacrifice.

And this is the **Shoulder Strap**, as it supports your sleeping memories of future lovers who yearn for the taste of supple breasts and, of course, the inexplicable suicide that slaps a grown man into submission for another round.

And this is the **Scope**, watching, unmoved, by the robed abortions expiring for a single tank of prehistoric tanning oils and a million busted |-Pod screams within these spoiled walls!

And this is the **Barrel**, that so few have learned to speak in the tongues that resonate beyond the realm of bitter satisfaction, and, marching on, they still find the courage to aim far and true in spite of where their bones shall speckle the sand...

For this is the **Rifle**, and though there are many like it, this one is mine.

## About the Author

Ryan Goodrich is a medically retired U.S. Marine who lives a quiet life with his wife, son, and two dogs in Oregon. He is currently a successful Information Technology Manager, which reflects his many years as an Aviation Communications Technician while serving in the Marine Corps. Ryan holds a B.A. in English and a fire for the written word. His experiences in the military have taken him to more than twenty different countries around the world, where he has seen the best and worst of everything that makes us human. The good and bad have both shaped his harsh and passionate style, but the memories are more vivid than words will ever be able to express. It is his hope that fellow veterans and civilians alike will be able to understand and embrace what it means to serve one's country and appreciate all that is so easily lost or forgotten.