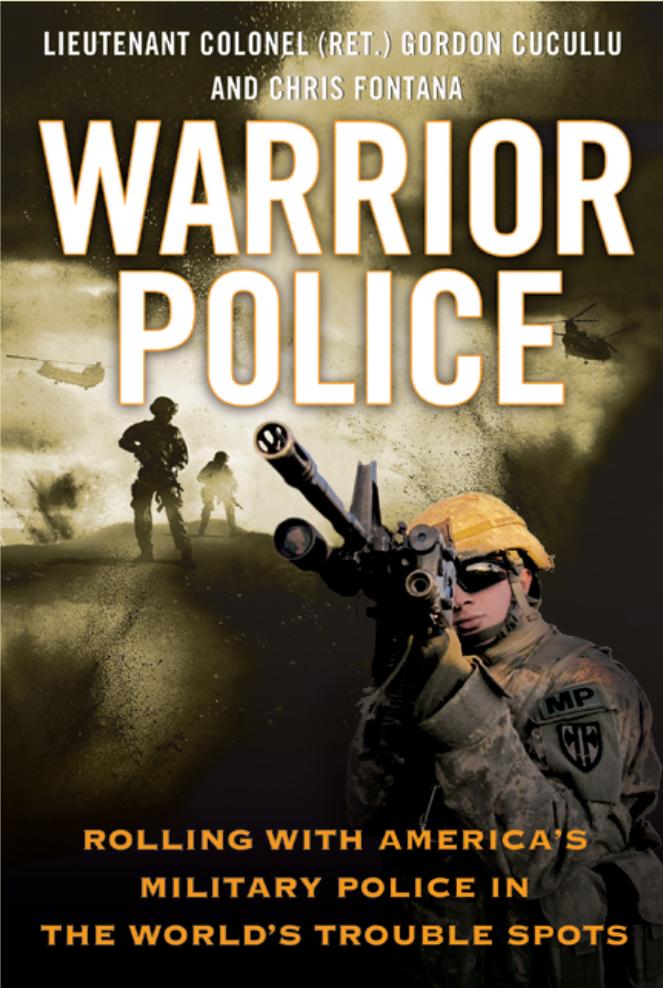


**READ IT FIRST**

LIEUTENANT COLONEL (RET.) GORDON CUCULLU  
AND CHRIS FONTANA

# WARRIOR POLICE

The book cover features a central image of a military police officer in the foreground, wearing a yellow helmet and holding a rifle. In the background, two other soldiers are visible in a dusty, outdoor setting. The title 'WARRIOR POLICE' is prominently displayed in large, white, bold letters with a yellow outline. The authors' names are listed above the title, and the subtitle is at the bottom.

**ROLLING WITH AMERICA'S  
MILITARY POLICE IN  
THE WORLD'S TROUBLE SPOTS**

WARRIOR POLICE: ROLLING WITH AMERICA'S MILITARY POLICE IN THE  
WORLD'S TROUBLE SPOTS. Copyright © 2011 by Lieutenant Colonel (RET.)  
Gordon Cucullu and Chris Fontana. All rights reserved. Printed in the  
United States of America. For information, address St. Martin's Press,  
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010.

[www.stmartins.com](http://www.stmartins.com)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Cucullu, Gordon.

Warrior police : rolling with America's military police in the world's trouble  
spots / Gordon Cucullu and Chris Fontana.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-312-65855-7

1. United States—Armed Forces—Military police. 2. Iraq war, 2003—  
Campaigns. 3. Iraq War, 2003—Personal narratives, American. 4. Afghan  
War, 2001—Campaigns. 5. Afghan War, 2001—Personal narratives, American.  
I. Fontana, Chris. II. Title. III. Title: Rolling with America's military police in  
the world's trouble spots.

UB825.U54C84 2011

956.7044'342—dc23

2011020902

First Edition: September 2011

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

# 1

## NOTHING BUT THE FLAG

The windowless Pentagon conference room shuddered with a strange vibration seconds before the deep rumble of an explosion rocked the building. Colonel David Phillips glanced at his watch, noting the time—0937—while springing from his chair, running for the door alongside shocked colleagues.

As if in a slow-motion nightmare Phillips raced down the long Pentagon corridors in the most direct route to his far-side office. He quickly encountered emergency workers who already blocked the way. Without pause Phillips glanced around, desperately looking for a stairwell. He almost tumbled down the wide staircase toward the nearest exit. Pushing his way through crowds of evacuees, he sprinted outside.

He was blinded for a moment in the bright sunlight. As he looked west, his worst fears crashed into the center of his soul—gigantic roiling clouds of oily black smoke gushed from the distant side of the building. All that he had prepared for during his long Army career, yet had never personally experienced, stretched out before his eyes in a kaleidoscope of chaos.

Fire trucks and emergency vehicles were already jumping the curbs and tearing across the lawns as onlookers—witnesses—were driven back from the scorching heat, the stench of jet fuel and flames shooting out from a monstrous crater in the side of the Pentagon's smooth, five-story wall.

His side of the building.

*Where are my people?* his mind screamed as he struggled to absorb what was clearly a mass-casualty situation and fought against waves of nausea at the realization that every one of his staff could be dead or lying wounded inside.

That fateful morning certainly hadn't started out that way.

Phillips, a lanky military police officer, had only recently been parked in a relatively quiet temporary assignment at the Pentagon, as director of security for the Army staff, while waiting to take command of the 89th Military Police Brigade at Fort Hood, Texas. "We're going to put you in a quiet job, in charge of Army security at the Pentagon for a few months, so that you can focus your energies on prepping up for your new command," his superiors had told him. And it was working out very well.

Life was good for the forty-five-year-old native of Cleveland, Ohio. Things at his current home in Alexandria, Virginia, were humming along, and he had a great staff with an energetic senior noncommissioned officer at his side. His unit ran smoothly without a lot of stress. After almost twenty-one years in the Army his future looked brighter than ever.

Even the commute to the Pentagon had been pleasant that morning. The stifling humid heat of August in Washington had blown away, replaced by the kind of crisp, clear September weather that makes real estate agents salivate. On a day like today you could sell D.C. to anyone. After checking in with his office and grabbing a cup of coffee he'd hiked across the Pentagon complex to attend a meeting.

Phillips had idly wondered how long the building could function without the endless stream of meetings that occupied his days. Meetings, he decided, were a mental treadmill: Run like hell but never really get anywhere.

Everyone in the conference room was dutifully focused on the issues at hand when suddenly a faceless staffer—later on, nobody could recall who it was—erupted through the door shouting, "Quick, turn

on the television. An aircraft has just crashed into the World Trade Center in New York!”

Someone snapped on the conference room flat screen and all present gaped at the terrifying sight of the North Tower of the World Trade Center consumed by billowing gray clouds of smoke, debris, and flames against the bright blue New York morning.

“How in the hell did that happen?” someone wondered aloud. “There’s not a cloud in the damn sky.”

Voices began to chatter. “Look!” someone exclaimed. “There’s an airplane.” In the background the camera caught a civilian airliner dipping low over the harbor and banking steeply.

“Jesus Christ!” The second plane impacted the South Tower in a fiery billow. Those in the meeting could only imagine the sound as pieces of debris showered downward and flames licked hungrily at the higher floors.

The room erupted with chatter. “This looks deliberate,” someone noted. “We’re under attack!” By now news crews began to focus long-distance lenses on hapless people crowding openings in broken windows, waving shirts, crying for help.

The tiny distant figures on the flat screen before them began, slowly, individually or while holding hands, to jump from more than eighty stories high to their deaths.

The conference room fell silent. Colonel Phillips struggled to comprehend the images before him.

It was as if time itself stopped, although everyone in that conference room knew that everything—reality itself—had instantly changed in a way that most civilians would not fully recognize.

And then under their own feet the entire building vibrated. A deep explosion resounded through the building. “We’ve been hit!” someone shouted. They rose simultaneously, moving as one for the door and whatever the future held.

Now outside, Colonel Phillips paused, trying to absorb the magnitude of the disaster that confronted him. It seemed to be a version of

the aftermath of a car bomb in Beirut or some other war zone. Somewhere else in the world, certainly not America. He was nauseous with worry. How many of his people had been killed or wounded?

Even from a relatively safe distance he could see furniture, drapery, and plumbing hanging obscenely from broken floors, waving in the heat from roaring flames. Twisted rebar was exposed along jagged concrete edges where American Airlines Flight 77 had hit his office suite. *Where are my people?* The thought screamed again in his head, over the cacophony of shouts, sirens, and roaring engines.

A familiar face darkened by smoke popped out next to him without warning. His acting sergeant major, Sergeant First Class Harry T. Byrd, shouted into his ear over the roar of the fire, “We’ve got to get any of our people who are still alive out of there!”

Phillips made a quick visual reconnaissance. Before him a gaping hole was ripped in the side of the Pentagon. Where could they enter that gave them the best chance?

Some trucks had already broken out hoses and were beginning to pour streams of water into the inferno, made even more intense by burning jet fuel. Water hitting the flames turned into steam, further clouding the view. Bodies lay on the ground and on stretchers. Wounded military and civilian workers staggered from the wreckage. People—both fellow Pentagon workers and emergency services personnel—rushed to assist.

Phillips snapped into warrior mode, connecting with Byrd’s eyes. “Let’s go!” Ignoring emergency workers who were waving and shouting at them to get back they both swiftly moved into the flaming wreckage. They felt the flames burn their exposed skin.

Phillips smelled the singe of burning hair and recoiled at the stinging on his face and arms. Oily smoke blackened their uniforms. Stumbling through the debris they made their way to the destroyed offices.

There was no one left alive to help. Frantically running from office to office they shouted into the roar of the flames. With ceilings crashing down and flames erupting around them they realized that everyone was either dead or had escaped.

Phillips made it to his own destroyed office. He glanced at the

wreckage and found one object that meant more to him than anything else in the room: an American flag, sheathed in a protective thick cloth case, damaged by flames but intact. Grabbing the flag, Phillips yelled for Byrd. “Let’s get out of here! There’s nothing more we can do.”

Together they stumbled coughing and choking from the ruined wing of the Pentagon, gasping for clean air to clear the smoke from burning lungs. As emergency workers surged past Phillips grasped the flag tight to his body. It was all he could save from the deadly attack.

Phillips was lucky. He survived the 9/11 attack without undue physical damage. Sergeant Byrd suffered lingering damage from smoke inhalation and would ultimately be medically retired from the Army.

# 2

## MILITARY POLICE SOLDIERS' 9/11 AWAKENING

It was a nice early fall morning when Donald Lowery woke that September 11th in Centralia, Illinois, not far from his hometown of Salem. Lowery, a landscaper working hard to establish a steady business, was struggling along on two to three hundred dollars per week and had his fair share of challenges. He was preparing to head out to the latest job when the phone rang. It was a message being repeated millions of times over that morning: “Turn on the TV!”

He watched smoke pour from the North Tower of the World Trade Center and heard the hysterical voices of commentators as they spotted the second airliner banking in from the south across the broad expanse of New York Harbor. Lowery was stunned as the fireball erupted in the second tower. Over the following days, as he watched repeats of the attack and solemn presidential addresses to Congress and the American people, Don Lowery was determined that he would revenge the attack. He decided to join the Army and get into the fight.

Staring into an unknown future, Lowery could never imagine that one day in a firefight in a gritty faraway town in Afghanistan he would be forced to make a decision to shoot grenades at Taliban fighters—a decision that his Army career would hinge upon.



Staff Sergeant Andrew J. Chesser was watching *Sponge Bob Square Pants* with his two children, Austin and Ashlynn, when the phone rang. He flipped to a cable news channel, and like most of America, he was immediately transfixed. *This can't be real, this is like a Hollywood disaster movie*, Chesser thought. *It must be a hoax of some kind*. Yet when the news of a third aircraft hitting the Pentagon came up, the reality immediately sank in: He was a soldier, and his country was now at war.

For the Lake Worth, Florida, native it was not his first rodeo, having served in Kosovo, Somalia, Bosnia, and Desert Storm. He knew war and that he would shortly become involved. However, not even Chesser, who was on leave that day, would have been able to predict how quickly. Within two days he was told to report to his MP unit in Hawaii. "Get ready to deploy," were his orders.

It seemed a fairly cut-and-dried proposition at the time. No one could predict, least of all Chesser, that he would spend five of the next nine years in the seemingly endless dusty plains of both Iraq and Afghanistan.

While Jennifer Manning sat in sixth-grade history class in Greenfield, Indiana, the morning was suddenly interrupted by an announcement from the principal. "All classes are to cease immediately," the voice on the PA system intoned. "Turn all classroom televisions to CNN now."

It was the morning of September 11 and Jennifer—along with millions of American children in class—watched the second hijacked flight crash into the South Tower of the World Trade Center, heard the frantic news of a hijacked flight hitting the Pentagon, and one crashing into a Pennsylvania farm field. Students were stunned.

The scene definitely affected Manning. On the spot, she pledged that, when she was old enough, she would do something to somehow help her country.

On that day Manning may have imagined herself in a starched uniform, standing proudly before an admiring group of friends—yet not

even in her dreams could she have ever envisioned herself balanced in the lurching turret of an MRAP gripping a .50 caliber heavy machine gun in her gloved fists, goggles down against the swirling dust, preparing to help search for Taliban fighters in a dirty Afghan qalat.

As a female MP, Manning would become one of those responsible for frisking burqa-clad women, with full knowledge that burqas had occasionally been used to hide suicide vests or even to hide fully armed men in disguise. Neither the smell, the dirt, nor the danger would stop her. The little pixie-faced schoolgirl would indeed become fully prepared to fight in some of the harshest conditions experienced by humankind.

Sergeant Tony Rosado was in the Basic NCO Course at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, training at the MOUT (Military Operations in Urban Terrain) site, where a collection of nondescript buildings provides trainees with simulated combat scenarios in streets, alleyways, and inside mock-up banks, stores, houses, and apartment complexes. They were given the word at the field training site and were uniformly shocked and confused by the news. Most of the soldiers there realized that war had been thrust upon them, and believed combat was imminent.

Rosado's developmental training course requirements were part of a set of orders that would move him from his previous duty station in Hawaii to his receiving unit at Fort Hood, Texas. *When I get to Hood,* he thought, *I'd better be really ready to go.*

Within months Rosado would find himself deep into the country and people of Afghanistan, a place few Americans thought of or could even locate accurately on a map. He had no way of knowing that much of his future in the Army would revolve around that blood-soaked geographical anomaly or that he would hold several score soldiers' lives in his hands, dependent on his sound judgment.

At about 11 P.M. in Taegu, South Korea, Buck Sergeant Gary Watford and some buddies were leisurely working on their third case of beer and watching an Armed Forces Network Korea baseball game when their platoon sergeant abruptly stormed in, ordering them to get their gear on and report to headquarters immediately. The United States was under attack.

They threw their stuff on, stumbled over to headquarters, and began calling in their units.

For seven straight days after that, the base was completely locked down, everyone sleeping on cots, sofas, or the floors. Nobody knew what was going to happen next or if a global attack was imminent. *Bet it's Saddam behind this*, Watford and many others in his unit thought. *Taking revenge for unfinished business after Desert Storm.*

Watford never imagined that one day he would be standing outside the gates of the Afghani presidential palace—knowing that the president of the United States was behind a locked gate—and hearing a Navy SEAL whisper in his ear: “Kill that guard!”

In the small Upstate New York town of Keeseville, Jesse James Shambo, son of a logger, was in shop class at AuSable Valley Central High. He was doing some engineering drawings, making a blueprint for a residence. A messenger ducked in and whispered something to his shop instructor, who hurriedly flipped on the television. There the frightful scenes unfolded.

Shambo watched the images before him with growing fury. His two older brothers, Alan and Corey, had already joined the military. Determined to leave the logging business and train for some other trade, he now felt the pull to follow his brothers' example in defending the United States.

About eighteen months later, on July 14, 2003, Shambo signed enlistment papers to be a military policeman. After two months he graduated from basic and advanced individual training and pinned the

crossed pistols of the MP Corps on his collar. By November 2003 he was running missions in Iraq.

What is the Army Military Police Corps—who makes up its ranks, what makes the regiment distinct and unique among the many branches and specialties that comprise the United States Army? Perhaps the singular characteristic that captures the ethos of the regiment is the name bestowed upon its soldiers by one of the famed contemporary leaders, Major General David Quantock: Warrior Police. The Norwich University graduate is one of the legendary leaders of the MP Regiment, who came into the fullness of his career in the cauldron of multiple wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and remote, mysterious places around the world to which MPs are sent in times of trouble.

Defining MP soldiers as Warrior Police effectively describes the scope and breadth of their role in these current wars. They are infantry and cops, destroyers and builders, eliminators and facilitators. And they have to be able to turn from one role to the next—and back—on a dime. In this aspect they are unique among America's fighting forces.

From their very first days in training at Fort Leonard Wood all MPs are taught that they will be called upon to perform a dual role. They deploy into combat realizing that one day they will be called upon to shoot, the next to extend a helping hand. Only the Army's Special Forces, in its dual role as warriors and teachers, includes such a diversity of missions. Unlike the famed Green Berets, who draw a limited number of experienced NCOs and officers into their ranks annually, the MPs include green soldiers on their first tours of duty and rely heavily upon the imagination, bravery, and innovation these men and women provide.

**READ IT FIRST**

**WARRIOR POLICE**

**BUY THE BOOK NOW**

**Amazon  
Barnes & Noble  
IndieBound**

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE BOOK

**macmillan.com**

