

Bullets and Bandages by Robert J. Saniscalchi



A young man volunteers for the army and then ships off for service to Vietnam in 1968. He has heard all the stories about the Nam and he is scared. However, he can't possibly comprehend the nightmare that awaits him until he begins to live it. He survives countless horrors in combat only to discover that the biggest struggle may be found at home when he returns to civilian life after his tour is over. *Bullets and Bandages* is the fictionalized true story of

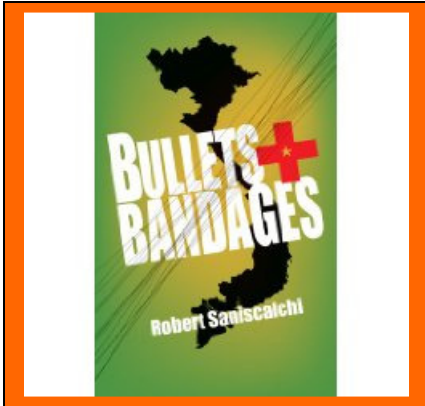
author Robert J. Saniscalchi's brother's experiences in the Vietnam War.

We meet our protagonist, nineteen-year-old Robert Marrino from New Jersey. Rob takes extra training in boot camp and becomes an army field medic. Soon Rob is on a plane heading to a country he knows little about to fight in a war that does not threaten his homeland. He takes a level of comfort in prayer, as his hands shake in fear of his first mission. He learns combat survival skills in the jungle from an experienced platoon sergeant, and forms a close friendship with Corporal Clarence Green. His squad mates die one after another in an endless string of battles. Rob turns increasingly to his faith as he begins to doubt he will make it home to his family. Meeting a beautiful young nurse at the base and beginning a relationship shows Rob that something good can exist in a place of so much ugliness, pain, and despair.

Veterans of the Vietnam War have been writing about their experiences for more than four decades. Each story reveals a little more of the secrets that so many of the survivors have kept bottled inside for so long. Army medics have been often described as unarmed non-combatants. Not "Doc." Rob was involved in every firefight his squad took part in; gunning down enemy troops one minute and then saving his injured buddies the next.

I'm not sure a writer who has not experienced war can truly capture the damage done to the body, mind, and soul of the combat soldier; however, Saniscalchi does a great job of telling his brother's story. He shines a fresh light on the heroic work of the field medic.

He dedicates his novel to all American veterans of past wars, and to the ones still fighting for freedom and democracy.



I recommend *Bullets and Bandages* to readers who wish to gain a better perspective on the Vietnam War and for those who enjoy a good thriller.

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Reviewed by William Potter For [Reader's Choice Reviews](#)

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