

LOGLINE

Coming home from war is just the beginning.

SYNOPSIS

Walking nearly 6000 miles, a Marine Veteran confronts unprocessed traumas from war. A hopeful story of resilience and courage meant to inspire all audiences.

After years of struggling, Jonathan Hancock confronts the demons that had overtaken his life. Visiting his fellow 2/4 Marines - a unit known as the The Magnificent Bastards - and families of their fallen along the way, this journey highlights incredible compassion.

With remarkable honesty, insight and humor, Jon's journey gives a uniquely positive approach to the post-war topic. It's about changing the ways one relates to traumatic memories. It's about beginning the healing process.

WEBSITE: WWW.BASTARDSROAD.COM

IMDB: [HTTPS://WWW.IMDB.COM/TITLE/TT8992064/](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt8992064/)

FACEBOOK: [@BASTARDSROAD](https://www.facebook.com/BASTARDSROAD)

INSTAGRAM: [@BASTARDSROADMOVIE](https://www.instagram.com/BASTARDSROADMOVIE)

TRAILER: [HTTPS://VIMEO.COM/263537316](https://vimeo.com/263537316)

COUNTRY OF PRODUCTION: USA

GENRE: DOCUMENTARY

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

YEAR: 2020

"You told everyone my darkest secrets and revealed my self-destructive thought patterns. Although it shook me to my core, the healing and perspective I gained from watching has changed my life forever."

"It's going to bring all of us closer and tear down these walls we have put up to isolate ourselves. "

"Beautiful testament of strength and resolve. Warriors from our generation will be able to connect with the film and society may learn the challenges veterans face when coming home."

"This will help so many guys out there that maybe can't see the light at the end of the tunnel. This will show them, and help them get moving towards it."

~ REMARKS FROM COMBAT VETERAN AUDIENCES



ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

It's never been easy for war fighters to reacclimate into civilian life when they come home. But today, when they represent such a tiny portion of our population - 1% serve in the military, but only 1 in 100,000 experience combat - Veterans' challenges are greatly compounded by living in a stigmatizing society largely ignorant of the psychological burdens they bring home.

In 2004, Hancock fought in the Battle of Ramadi with 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines — historically known as The Magnificent Bastards. They suffered one of the highest casualty rates in the Iraq War. 1 in 4 were wounded or killed. After Ramadi, Jon served in Human Intelligence for several more tours before getting out of the Marines in 2009.

Like so many Veterans, Hancock struggled when he returned stateside. They will battle PTSD, survivor's guilt and moral injuries for the rest of their lives. And perhaps most difficult of all, they are separated from their brothers in combat - their strongest support network.

A 2019 Veterans Affairs report sheds light on the ongoing tragedy of this marginalized population. More than 60,000 Veterans committed suicide from 2008-2017. The suicide rate for Veterans is 50% higher than it is for non-veterans. Our youngest Veterans from recent conflicts, aged 18-34, have the fastest growing suicide rate, having increased 76% since 2005.

Jon was close to being included in those statistics. But with a new mission he fought to retake control of his life one step at a time across the country he fought for.

INSIGHT

Those that serve in the military commit themselves to the purpose of becoming a link in a chain, to follow orders when commanded, to be trained into a cohesive unit that is able to operate under the dire and stressful conditions of combat. War fighters learn to compartmentalize so they can do their jobs as effectively as possible, to attack any threat without hesitation, to kill if necessary. War demands things that nobody but those who experience it have any chance of relating to. The most natural emotional reactions like grief, doubt, regret, shame and fear are shoved away...until you get home.

Most people understand the ultimate sacrifice some make on the battlefield, but few realize there is a different type of sacrifice made by those who make it home. Their combat experiences have forever changed how they will relate to the world. Bastards' Road provides a unique level of insight into the lives of this vulnerable population, illuminating their never-ending fight and unbreakable bonds.

PTSD AND SUICIDE

Suicide is a big topic today across our entire population. Unless you've been there, you can't imagine the depths the mind has to reach to feel like it's the only way out. It's hard to feel like there's someone to talk to that will get it. Today's Combat Veterans, being such a tiny portion of the population compared to the draft-heavy militaries of World War II and Vietnam, and so spread out from each other, quickly become high-risk for suicide.

Combat Veterans come home and try to shake off this frame of mind, but instead find themselves continuing it, which pushes those around them away. Isolation sadly becomes natural. It also becomes their greatest danger. The more time they spend alone trying to cope with their memories and moral injuries, the harder it is to pull themselves out. They were taught to rely on each other, but even this becomes very difficult because they feel like they're letting their brothers down. It's a vicious cycle, worsened by society's stigmatization and victimization of their lives, the last thing they want.

HOPE

Bastards' Road seeks to promote a greater understanding of the issues Combat Veterans face, and even help rethink what treatment and healing means. Jon Hancock's utterly unique personality shines a light of hope on this tough topic. His huge heart, stark honesty and disarming humor are on display throughout the film. The story of redemption and self-empowerment is an inspiration to any audience.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Why would somebody walk that far, for so long? That's what I asked myself after seeing a TV news segment on somebody I went to high school with. I didn't know him back then, but we shared many mutual friends.

When I first contacted Jon on his walk I knew nothing about what he'd been through. The military was a foreign world to me. None of my family or friends had served. All I had to go on was that he was a Marine and had PTSD. But I immediately liked him and we quickly took steps to organize a trip for me to follow him for a few days.

Over the course of the last 8 months of Jon's walk, I was able to make a handful of trips to capture pieces of his journey. He'd send me a GPS pin and I'd track him down in a rental car. I drove down these long state highways scanning the road until I saw that red Marine Corps flag flying off his backpack. He smelled really bad every time. I never got used to it. Neither did he.

We became great friends. Most days it was just him and I, but I was lucky enough to meet many guys Jon served with, as well as several Gold Star families of their fallen. It was eye-opening to see Jon's transformation in their presence. He smiled brighter, laughed harder and cried less. It's like they kept the best versions of themselves for each other.

I learned their scars from war will never heal. They will never stop thinking about the ultimate sacrifice of their brothers. But together, those that survived remind each other that it's important that they are still here.

MAIN CREDITS

A FILM BY

Brian Morrison

PRODUCED BY

Brian Morrison

CO-PRODUCED BY

Nick Kovacic
Mark Stafford

WRITTEN BY

Mark Stafford

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Brian Morrison

EDITING BY

Brian Morrison

MUSIC BY

Jeremy SH Griffith

FILMMAKER BIOS



BRIAN MORRISON

DIRECTOR·PRODUCER·CINEMATOGRAPHER·EDITOR

A director, cinematographer and editor based in the Baltimore, Washington D.C. area. With over 15 years of experience producing corporate, commercial, wedding and music videos, his work is currently focused in the health care industry. *Bastards' Road* is his first feature documentary project.



MARK STAFFORD

WRITER

A screenwriter and novelist from Annapolis, MD. His unique experience and insight bring the narrative of *Bastards' Road* to life.



**JEREMY
SH GRIFFITH**

COMPOSER

A multi instrumentalist, producer and mixer based in Florida. He has worked with artists such as Johnny Swim, Norma Jean, Sunbears and Old Sea Brigade. He has previously scored the film *Dare Not Walk Alone* from Indican Pictures.



**ERIN
KENWAY**

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

An award-winning independent producer and lawyer based in Seattle. Primarily representing economically disadvantaged victims of domestic violence in civil dissolution and child custody cases, Kenway also served on several committees for both the Washington State and King County Bar Associations. She was also a Global Campaign Manager for broadcast, print, digital, and social advertising campaigns for Amazon's award-winning Brand / Mass Advertising team.