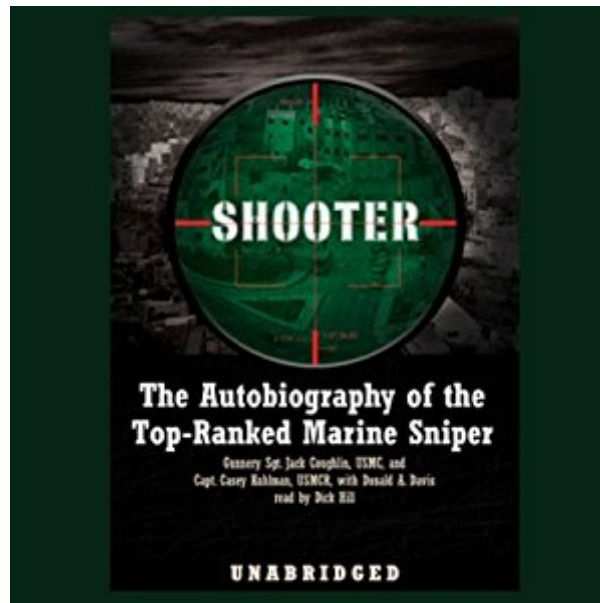




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Shooter: The Autobiography Of The Top-Ranked Marine Sniper



Synopsis

With more than sixty confirmed kills, Gunnery Sgt. Jack Coughlin is the Marine Corps's top-ranked sniper. Coughlin has written a highly personal story about his deadly craft, taking listeners deep inside an invisible society that is off-limits to outsiders. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This was a good book not just on snipers but a history of the invasion of Iraq from a first hand account. I was more interested in the Gunny's perspective on the invasion than the parts about sniping. I found it informative and open minded. I used to love reading books about Marine's and this book reminded me of why. I love the esprit de corps of the Marines and it comes through in this book. With all the controversy about snipers and the Chris Kyle story I believe this is a great companion to the saga of the sniper.

This book was interesting from the first page to the end. The accounting of the military actions intertwined with the personalities of the men that Jack Coughlin served with made this book extremely interesting. The book opens an interesting window into the relationship that non-coms and officers have with each other. Good non-commissioned officers are worth their weight in gold as this book brilliantly illustrates. In addition, the personal struggles and problems that Jack had to struggle with made this book even more interesting. As a Navy veteran who encountered similar

personal crises with family and children, I could relate to this book quite well. It seems that single fathers are becoming more common these days. I do not know Jack Coughlin but I pray that his life has been as fulfilling as mine and that he is as proud of his service to this wonderful country as I am. Edgar L. Cortes, MD

I'm not a military person, but rather very interested in the experiences of the men and women of the United States military. I did live through the Viet Nam war and my father served during WW II. Needless to say, my interests are what authors such as Jack Coughlin saw and experienced during today's war on terrorism. This book, "Shooter", is his personal experience, what he saw of himself, his belief of American patriotism, and how he dealt with his service. He shares his strong belief of a new modern application of integrating snipers into war. Perhaps Carlos Hathcock was one of several pioneers that pushed the value of snipers to the modern battlefield. I believe that Jack Coughlin's book clearly takes sniping to the next level where the military needs to unleash sniping to its potential. What the author reveals is a view that the traditional military is bulky and at times generals and command are reluctant to break from the mighty and huge foot print of traditional forces. Call it ego? Reading this book revealed that snipers are just not excellent marksmen, but more, much more. They are experts in infiltrating deep into enemy areas, experts in reconnaissance and counter-reconnaissance, artillery and air support, force multipliers and life savers. Reading this book, is gripping and the reader almost feels what the author sees, hears, smells and tastes. Transparent, as though you are right there. Needless to say, when someone such as the author ends his career, I could feel and begin to understand the void he lives through. Assimilating back into a civilian life is most difficult. I congratulate the author for his tremendous contribution to defending our nation and the sacrifices he's made. This was a great book well worth reading.

I too like non-fiction and am a fan of first person military accounts. I opted for the unabridged audiobook version read by Dick Hill who did an excellent job. Coughlin's story is an interesting one that covers much of the roller coaster of life, career, and battlefield events and decisions. Overall, I found the book enjoyable. With many authors, there are things that can become bothersome, such as formulaic stories, inconsistent timelines, missing information, and statements of fact that are obviously in error. This last category occurs throughout the book which is bothersome because it is set off by Coughlin's insistence on repeatedly stating how good he is, how shooting comes so easily to him, etc., but especially how well he knows his craft. He may know his craft, but the statements in error and inaccurate descriptions certainly made me question as to whether or not other information

in the book not familiar to me is accurate or not. Probably the first thing that I really noticed that indicated that the information Coughlin was going to provide wasn't going to be realistic was his claims that he was so good and knew his craft so well that he knew what was going to happen even before he pulled the trigger. Really? Then I don't know why the Marine's top sniper pulled the trigger knowing that he was going to miss, but that must have been the case since he did miss shots and make poor shots. I would be inclined to think that if he knew how the shot was going to turn out and that the outcome wasn't good, that he would not take a bad shot. This shortcoming was countered by him stating that even when he missed, then he knew why he missed. Based on examples from the book, that wasn't the case at all. One example later in the book was of the only combatant that ever survived being shot by him and was shot by him twice. That is a big claim that there is only one given that as Coughlin noted that during battle, he and other snipers undoubtedly shot a lot of people but could never verify the kill. So there likely were others that survived being shot by him. So there was a combatant spotted running. Coughlin noted that there were formulas for computing the shot given the speed and distance of the moving target that give a minimum accuracy of 90%. I believe the accuracy estimate is a maximum, not a minimum. So Coughlin shoots at the runner who doesn't go down and shoots a second time and he does go down. Coughlin is embarrassed and can't believe he missed. Later, he is called to check out a prisoner "who looks like he has been shot by a sniper." I have no idea how such a determination would have been made. The prisoner had been shot twice, once through the arm and once through the chest with a through and through from back to front...hardly diagnostic of being shot by a sniper. So he made the first shot which was not what he expected (so much for knowing what happens before he pulls the trigger) and a second shot that was good, but was far from fatal, missing all the vital organs despite good placement. Initially and repeated throughout the book is Coughlin's descriptions of what he sees through his "powerful 10x Unertl scope." 10x is certainly much more powerful than just going with iron sights, but Coughlin's descriptions of people and things nearly 1000 yards distant being brought in so close with the sight that he feels he could reach out and touch them with his hand is just amazing. By "amazing," I mean "silly." It is really amazing when he talks about the amount of detail that he can see, down to subtle facial expressions and grooming. He does correctly note that seeing a person at 1000 yards through a 10x scope makes them appear as they would at 100 yards with no scope. So Coughlin must have amazingly long arms if he can reach out and touch something 100 yards away with his hand and his eyesight is awfully good as well, maybe too good. Throughout the book are descriptions of bullet impacts that are right out of Hollywood, with claims of bodies being thrown about by the impacts of singular shots. The physics behind the descriptions indicates the descriptions are less than

accurate. As an expert in his craft, it would be expected that Coughlin would separate the difference between what the bullet impact can actually do versus what is produced from the body's reaction to impact. Coughlin's descriptions make it sound like the bullets performed much like their Hollywood counterparts. In different parts of the book, Coughlin notes human biometric averages that he supposed used to help make his shots. He stated that the height of the average man is 72". That isn't even the height of the average Marine, average US male, or average Iraqi male. There are only a few places in the world where the average height of a male is 72" or more, but over the majority of the planet, the average is less, often many inches less. In another spot, Coughlin discusses making a shot at nearly 1000 yards with his rifle that with its special ammo, will hold groups of 1" or less at 100 yards which means 10" or less at 1000. Okay, no problem there, but then he notes that such accuracy should be fine for head shots at 1000 yards because the diameter of the average human head is 12" which is an amazingly stupid statement. The diameter of a basketball is only about 9.5" and I can't think of too many people with heads significantly larger than a basketball. Depending on the direction of viewing, the human head ranges from about 6" (front view) to 9" (side view), on average (US). There is some variability, of course, but Coughlin would be hard pressed to find anybody with a head the size he described as an average. Beyond these unfortunate embellishments and errors of fact, the story flows well enough and the descriptions of events and what led up to them is quite interesting as are the emotional descriptions that accompany them. If you are a war buff you will likely enjoy this book quite a bit, but it helps if you don't actually pay attention to the details.

The Iraq War through the eyes of Marine sniper, Jack Coughlin, reveals an honest, autobiographical view of modern-day warfare with its stressors that challenge a soldier in every aspect of his life. Coughlin explains what is going on inside the man as he maintains a rugged veneer of a stoic, cold demeanor that earns him the reputation as a bad-ass. The skill he demonstrates throughout the book is worthy of praise and glory, both of which he does not desire. A career Marine who would not change a thing about his duty and service for his country and loved ones is not enough to save his marriage at the end of that career. He retires in 2005 as the most proficient Marine sniper in American history and becomes a full-time Dad to raise his daughters, finished with war forever.

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