



# **The Valley of the Shadow: My Journey from Boyhood to the Soldier that I Became**

*Christopher Gilpin*

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**The Valley of the Shadow: My Journey from Boyhood to the Soldier that I Became** Christopher Gilpin  
The title of this book reflects a time in my life when I was surrounded by death and the possibility of not making the return journey home from combat in Iraq in 2005-2006. I felt a deep obligation to tell my two-and-a-half-year-old daughter, Chrisraine, about the boy that I was and the soldier that I became should I not make it back home to tell her in person. This book chronicles my childhood beginning with my first indelible memory at age four, describing the people, places, and events that molded me into the man and soldier that I became until my son, Christophe, turned four years old. Valley of the Shadow was an easy choice as the title for me because of the biblical and literal connection to me as I experienced combat and lived in a space and time defined by death and the will to overcome that fear. That shadow was ever present, and I fought hard and willed myself not to be engulfed by it. I was much more to my family than a soldier, and I wanted my daughter to know the boy that I was and what made me into the soldier that I became. This journey was filled with periods of joy and great happiness as well as uncertainty and sadness as a boy and much the same as a soldier. I excelled at the things that I applied myself to but was always challenged to perform in order to continue receiving the pleasures of everyday life or to survive a day in combat. So both my childhood and my profession were valleys oftentimes reflecting low points and high points with a sense of duty to survive and overcome the day at hand.

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