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Into The Warzone
By RELAND

Stepping down onto blacktop, the heat hovering in waves all around, the airfield suffocatingly heavy. Sweat covers my entire person. In full battle rattle, body armor, Kevlar helmet and boots. Mouth salty, head drenched, just sweltering in silence.

The air reeks of diesel fuel, hot earth and body odor, moving along on a current of stifling oven-air mimicking Thanksgiving Day. The endless blue of the sky, splashed with blazing sunlight, stretched out in front of the path to the coolness.

Keep the shades on. Almost there.

Air whooshes out of the opening doors, feeling like the best cold shower ever. Troops moving about, cargo pushed and pulled here and there.

We're in the warzone now.

No comforts to be had.

First the whistle on the air, then "INCOMING" starts blaring as mortar rounds hit the ground with a thunderous BOOM.

Boom, boom, boom.

The impact felt down to my soul, announcing the start of another PTSD story.

Move with a purpose. Move into the bunker, stumbling, thoughts whirling, heart beating so loud, almost drowning out the siren.

Waiting for the ALL CLEAR, my ears strain to decipher anything.

Sitting on hard-packed dirt, surrounded by concrete blocks, with everyone else.

Waiting.