

CHASING THE DAYLIGHT

*One Woman's Journey
to Becoming a U.S. Army
Intelligence Officer*



JOANNA RAKOWSKI

This memoir is a captivating and inspiring
experience that leaves a lasting impression—

Independent Book Review

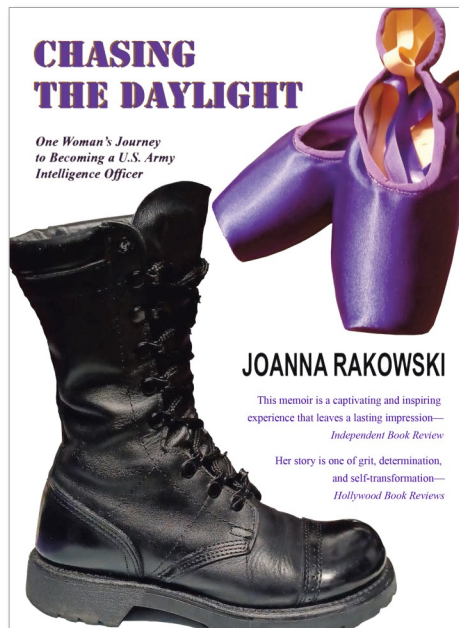
Her story is one of grit, determination,
and self-transformation—

Hollywood Book Reviews

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A New Identity Found Through the Military Service

NORTHBROOK, IL September 6, 2023—With her first book, *Chasing the Daylight: One Woman's Journey o Becoming a US Army Intelligence Officer*, author Joanna Rakowski delivers a powerful story of personal transformation from a fragile ballerina to a hard-core soldier.



In the summer of 1991, Joanna, a young Polish woman travels through Germany. At a refueling stop she encounters two American soldiers and has her photo taken with the heroes she looks up to. A decade later, she's one of them, a soldier in the United States Army, living her dream.

On the surface, *Chasing the Daylight* chronicles Joanna's four-year journey to transformation into a US Army intelligence officer, her grueling training, and her evolution as a soldier. Throughout the story, she battles her physical shortcomings, insecurities, and fears. She also faces two major obstacles: she is an immigrant and English is not her native language. She's already 31 years old, surrounded by a much younger, physically stronger soldier population. Conquering loneliness, and lingering isolation is Joanna's way of finding herself in her new country. The book offers a unique perspective on the process of transformation through selfless service and learning how to fit in the most powerful armed forces in the world.

Chasing the Daylight helps the readers recognize that it's possible to achieve a fundamental, personal transformation through hardships, failures, and challenges and to ultimately find one's new place in life, stronger than ever before.

The memoir is 412 pages and is now available in paperback, hard cover, and eBook formats, in 74 countries. It is currently sold in over 100 online outlets worldwide, independent bookstores nationwide, and local area bookstores.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joanna was born and raised in Poland, and she immigrated to the US in 1995. While in the Army, she was an interrogator, linguist, and all-source intelligence analyst. She is retired and lives in the Northbrook, IL. *Chasing the Daylight* is Joanna's literary debut, based on her four-year service in the US Army.

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AUTOBIOGRAPHY & MEMOIR

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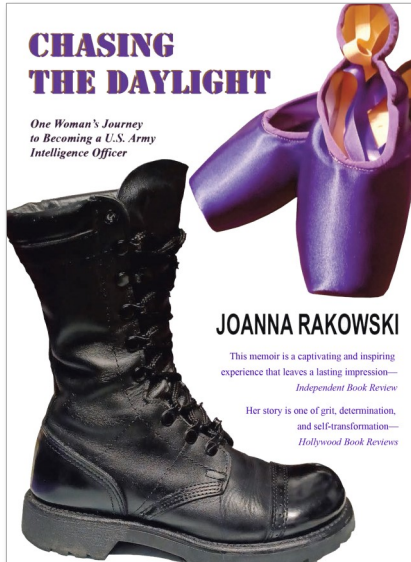
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One Woman's Journey to Becoming a U.S. Army Intelligence Officer



What is it like to belong to the world's most powerful armed forces at the dawn of the 21st century? Does a military tale have to be about the men going to war? You'll find out here.

Joanna is a fragile, romantic, former ballerina. After a painful rift with her beloved friend and mentor of many years, she joins the U.S. Army. Her dream is to become an Intelligence Officer. She faces a formidable task, but she embarks on a four-year journey to accomplish her goal.

Obsessed with a vision of darkness, Joanna pursues the light, her goal of being part of something bigger than herself. In her journey, often plagued by flashbacks of painful memories of a lost friendship, she conquers obstacles despite her physical shortcomings, discrimination, and abuse. It's a coming-of-age story where Joanna transforms from a hopeless romantic into a soldier, as her responsibilities as an Intelligence Professional in the Army develop.

Chasing the Daylight is an account of Joanna's four-year military service where her love for America, love for her husband, and love for her friend are seamlessly interwoven. The story whirls us into the center of the rigorous army training, and with the intricate details, transports us into the reality that only less than one percent of the U.S. population is experiencing.

Prize for Chasing the Daylight

...a story of strength, courage, and determination...The attention to detail the author gave to every step of the process, really drew me into her story and made for a relatable and memorable atmosphere—*Pacific Book Review*

This is a solid read and finding out the nuts and bolts of military service is something I enjoyed immensely. I can highly recommend this read—*Readers' Favorite*

Chasing the Daylight is eye-opening and captivating. Libraries and readers interested in accounts of women in service will find it involving and hard to put down—*Midwest Book Review*

This memoir is a captivating and inspiring experience that leaves a lasting impression—*Independent Book Review*

Tough-minded, inspiring account of a Polish immigrant's U.S. military training—*BookLife by Publishers Weekly*

Atmospheric writing blends with vivid interior emotions to create a roller-coaster ride that mingles pride, fear, doubt, joy, humor, and sheer determination... Her inspiring tale is not to be missed—*The US Review of Books*



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joanna Rakowski was born and raised in Poland, and she immigrated to the US in 1995. She has degrees from the University of Warsaw (Poland), the National Music Academy in Warsaw (Poland), DeVry University (Chicago, IL), and Benedictine University (Lisle, IL). While in the Army, she was an interrogator, linguist, and all-source intelligence analyst. In her civilian career, she worked as a college instructor, marketing specialist, project manager, and program analyst in the private sector and the federal government. She believes in constant self-improvement and personal growth through experiencing life to the fullest. She loves classical music, working with power tools, and ballroom dancing. She is retired and lives in the Chicago area. Chasing the Daylight is Joanna's literary debut, based on her four-year service in the US Army.

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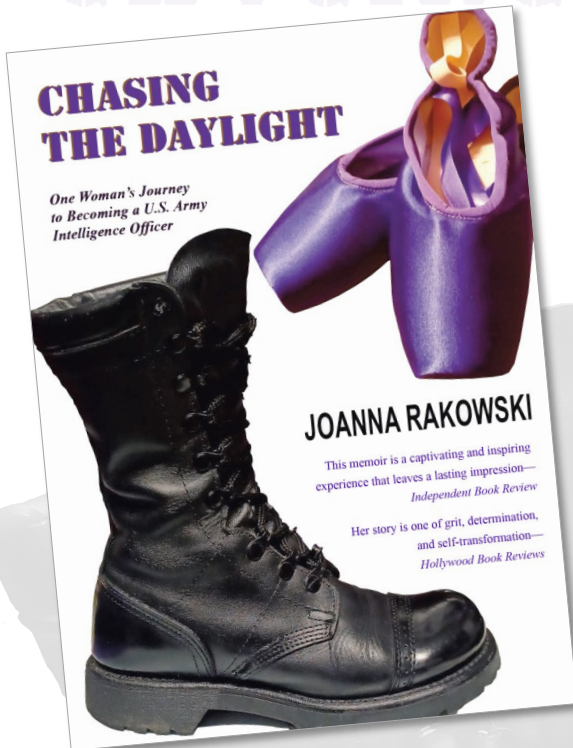
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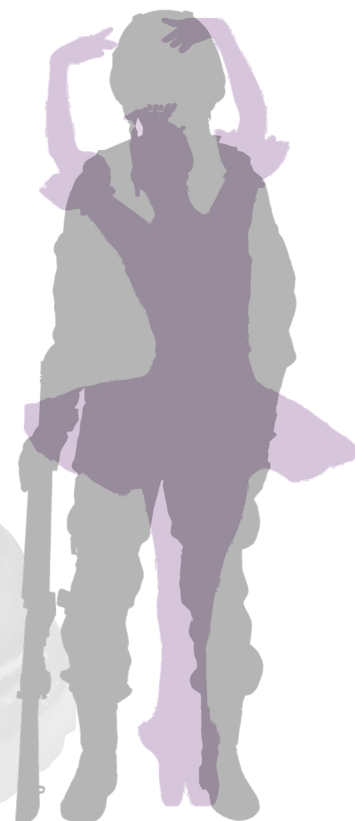
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Chasing the Daylight by Joanna Rakowski is a captivating memoir which provides a unique insight into the life of a dainty ballerina turned army interrogator.... Her story is one of grit, determination, and self-transformation...

—*Hollywood Book Reviews*

...this is a well-written, intimate account that breaks the norms of war memoir in its focus on the sacrifices of soldiers who never step foot onto a battlefield. It's also an important reminder of the centrality of immigrants to the U.S. military in the modern era... A poignant story of an immigrant's experiences in the U.S. Army.

—*Kirkus Reviews*

This is a solid read and finding out the nuts and bolts of military service is something I enjoyed immensely. I can highly recommend this read.

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Chapter 1: I, do solemnly swear

(...) Around 4:00 p.m. I entered the “Oath Room” cautiously. It was a completely different world: in the back, I saw a shiny oak podium and a dark, heavy curtain in the background. In the middle of the stage was a speaker’s stand, just like the one U.S. President has in D.C., with an emblem of the Armed Forces on the front. In the corner, an American Flag was mounted in a giant brass stand reflecting dimmed lights on the back. I found myself in a magical world where a wizard was about to cast his spell on me and change my life as I knew it. I wanted to be part of something bigger than myself. America gave me a chance for a better life than I would have had in Poland. I was committed to becoming the best human being I could be. There was no going back. (...) They gave us brief instructions regarding the ceremony. Shortly after that, an officer came on the stage through the side entrance wearing a decorated formal dark-blue uniform. All recruits jumped up to the position of attention as we were told. It was the first time in my life I stood at attention so close to the American flag, my right hand raised, saying the words that would change my life forever: “I, do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States..., I will obey the orders of the President of the United States.... So help me God.” I knew that these words, carved in my heart, were now my guiding light for the years to come (...)

Chapter 6: The victory starts here

(...) The first several yards were called the “low crawl” under the thick barbed wire, where I was merely dragging my face on the ground. I wasn’t even able to look up and verify if I was going in the right direction. Suddenly, the earth beneath me trembled, throwing my whole body a couple of inches up in the air. The noise was atrocious despite my earplugs. Apparently, I passed by the artillery simulator, which certainly felt real. I gasped in disbelief. The live bullets just above my head made me think that even the smallest mistake could cost me my life or a horrible injury. “Don’t look up. Taste the sand. It’s better than the taste of blood,” I was saying to myself. My imagination was ruthless. I could see my helmet flying off my head after getting shot, then my brain exploding into pieces. “Stay low. Don’t look up. Just keep moving forward, wherever it leads,” I kept repeating to myself like a prayer (...)

Chapter 22: Heartache and loneliness

(...) Sometimes, you revisit a familiar place yet find no comfort. Like with the river, you come back to the same spot cherished all those years ago, but the water is now replaced by a fresh stream. A patch of grass turned into a pile of sand. The small tree by the edge grew exponentially. The big rock by the bend is now polished by the patient water. A little bridge had collapsed and appears abandoned in the background. That’s how I felt in Fort Huachuca. I had to relearn how to love it, re-engage in it, and to call it home again.

