

Notional

Benjamin Fortier

This is a simulation. A training exercise. You will not be injured in any way. But you need to pay attention, even though it's notional.

What happens here is collected for training. Its purpose is to prepare you for war. It is a simulation. Anything you see will be notional.

When you're preparing to handle a dismembered limb, who can tell me what PPE is required? Don't worry, this is notional.

When that IED takes out your friend's big toe and he stumbles out of his vehicle like a drunken idiot, what's the first thing you should yell at him? Just in case. It's notional.

When you've got that blood soaked high back to clean out, what's the proper cleaning gear you need to get into action? And no, scuzz brushes do not count. We're talking liquids and dry chemicals only. Notional.

You're taking fire. There's a friendly gun truck that's blown up in front of you. Your turret gunner is unleashing hell. What do you do? It's notional.

Another text or phone call. One of your war buddies is dead. Suicide? Overdose? Notional.

Benjamin Fortier is a Marine Corps (USMC) combat veteran with service in Fallujah. His acclaimed poetry collection, *Phantoms* (Dead Reckoning Collective, 2023), won the 2024 Robert A. Gannon award for its outstanding contribution to USMC storytelling through poetry. Fortier is a playwright of *The Path at Belleau Wood* and *Michael and the Saints*. He resides in MA and is a life member and plank owner of the 1st Battalion, 25th Marines Association.