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Black Hawk Down - Book Reviews

A battle that changed the world, **Black Hawk Down** will alter how we look at the modern battlefield and the respect we have for those who fight on it. The story sends you from anger to tears, from laughter to quiet moments alone. It is the power of the personal accounts and the research of the author that brings the 1993 battle into your heart.

Mark Bowden is not a military expert, but his manner and style of reporting earned him the respect of some family members and the people he interviewed. Thus the book becomes the combatants story told through a single author. A book not built on finger pointing or blame, yet is well aware of all of the issues. At the end of the book the author looks at many of the issues and dedicates it to the people who fought the good fight. That dedication was forged starting on his first interview, and has developed into a book for generations.

"'Unfortunate Losses' have names", is a phrase most Special Operations Forces will remember. A SOF Banquet not all that long ago had one of the Medal of Honor recipients' wife sitting in the audience. She was introduced during one of the speeches which quickly followed with applause. Many of the members bowed their heads in recognition of the brave warrior. When you finish **Black Hawk Down**, your head will bow in memory and respect for all Task Force Ranger members.

It is that aspect that makes this book nearly required reading for all SOF and anybody who sets his sights on trying out for any of these units. If this book has a flaw, it misses a few accounts of bravery and heroism only known to a tiny fraternity whose common bond is uncommon valor.

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"Your account of the events in Mogadishu on October 3, 1993 is an inspirational and evocative retelling of one of the most significant military operations of the past 10 years. Though there is heroism and professionalism aplenty, you also bring out the errors and missed opportunities that contributed to the unfortunate outcome of the mission. Both senior leaders and young soldiers can learn much from this

compelling story. . . . Black Hawk Down will occupy an honored place in my personal library."

*-General Henry H. Shelton,
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff*

"The October 3 Battle of the Mogadishu Bekara Market was the most intense ground combat engagement fought by U.S. Forces since the Vietnam War. Mark Bowden has done an artful piece of work in capturing the heroism and dedication of the members of Task Force Ranger amid the chaos of a close-in and personal fight."

*-General Wayne Downing, US Army (ret),
(who at the time of the October,
1993 battle was commander in chief
US Special Operations Command)*

"*Mark Bowden's Black Hawk Down* is superb both as journalism and as literature. Not only has Bowden produced one of the finest pieces of investigative journalism of our time, but his vital, vibrant descriptions of this heroic yet tragic day in American military history place the reader and all of his senses in the midst of the chaotic action. One can not only see the heroism and death and fear and tragedy, but can feel, hear, smell, and even taste it, both from the American and Somali points of view."

*-L.H. "Bucky" Burruss, Lt. Col. (ret),
U.S. Army, & Author of Mike Force,
A Mission for Delta and Clash of Steel*

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