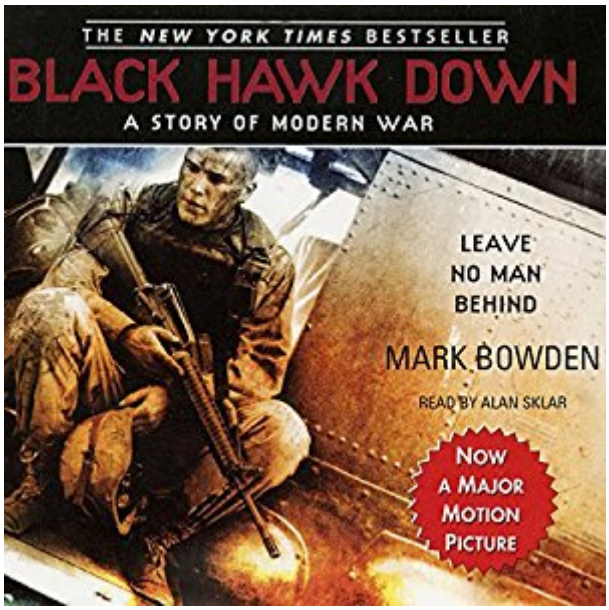
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Black Hawk Down



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Synopsis

Ninety-nine elite American soldiers are trapped in the middle of a hostile city. As night falls, they are surrounded by thousands of enemy gunmen. Their wounded are bleeding to death. Their ammunition and supplies are dwindling. This is the story of how they got there - and how they fought their way out. This is the story of war. Black Hawk Down drops you into a crowded marketplace in the heart of Mogadishu, Somalia with the U.S. Special Forces and puts you in the middle of the most intense firelight American soldiers have fought since the Vietnam war. Late in the afternoon of Sunday, October 3, 1993, the soldiers of Task Form Ranger were sent on a mission to capture two top lieutenants of a renegade warlord and return to base. It was supposed to take them about an hour. Instead, they were pinned down through a long and terrible night, locked in a desperate struggle to kill or be killed. When the unit was finally rescued the following morning, 18 American soldiers were dead and dozens more badly injured. The Somali toll was far worse; more than five hundred felled and over a thousand wounded. Award-winning literary journalist Mark Bowden’s dramatic narrative captures this harrowing ordeal through the eyes of the young men who fought that day. He draws on his extensive interviews of participants from both sides - as well as classified combat video and radio transcripts - to bring their stories to life. Authoritative, gripping, and insightful, Black Hawk Down is a riveting look at the terror and exhilaration of combat destined to become a classic of war reporting.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Excellent book. Written through the soldiers for the soldiers. Mark Bowden was the perfect medium

to paint the picture of those soldiers. It saddens me to see our boys and men judged by people who have no idea what they or any soldier must and might endure. American military is the weapon wielded by our government. Some politicians with righteous intents others with their own agenda. Either way I can't remember the last time a senator, member of congress, or a presidential cabinetever sending one of their own into a real battle. Thank you Mr Bowden. I support our soldiers

I've seen the movie, read the book and listened to the audiobook. My favorite was the audiobook, by far. Unfortunately, movies almost always include scenes that aren't technically correct. But the audiobook had a secret weapon, namely Joe Morton, the narrator. Morton was the real thing, and this is one of those very rare cases where the narrator is so good and appropriate that it makes a good book into classic high art.There is a side to this story that we didn't know at the time the book was published. The earlier attacks on our forces had al-Qaeda behind them. They were meticulously planned well in advance. After that experience, the Clinton administration got our forces out of there. This was supported in our media and presidential ratings went up. It's important to understand the conflict in context.The story itself, not the movie, is technically correct and superb. In it, we can see the sacrifice and bravery of our troops as well as the reality of Mogadishu and fearlessness of the fighters there. The reckless fighting spirit of Mogadishuans was enhanced with khat, a very important drug in their tribal society. Such a place with a culture of hospitality unknown to the West had become a living hell, and it was worse in areas outside that city.In particular we get the story within the story about the survival of Mike Durant. He was a Chief Warrant Officer 3 at the time, serving in the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment. This suspenseful account resulted in a partial silver lining when he was released after eleven days in captivity.Military historians will continue to laud this story for its richness in geopolitics, technical excellence, usefulness for teaching military principles, survival credits, esprit de corps and Joe Morton's performance. I recommend this audiobook without reservation.

It was riveting, and it is a true story. I just about couldn't stop reading it so as to get my other daily things done. It is very well written. This should be required reading for anyone in the U.S. government, about what can go wrong when the U.S. gets involved in places that can't be fixed.

I read Black Hawk Down with a group of four other people as a part of a literature discussion. Most, if not all, of them had seen the film already, but I had not. I had a little trouble keeping up with the many character names at the beginning of the book, but I settled in about a third of the way through.

This is, of course, a violent book, made more intense because of the fact that it all really happened, and the language and subject matter of fighting men under stress is a constant. I can't imagine being in the situation in which these soldiers found themselves. Bowden also goes beyond the battlefield to look at the politics involved before, during, and after the situation: if you are interested in that subject, the material after the end of the story (author interview, etc.) is worth reading.

The amazing story of the 1993 battle in Mogadishu, Somalia in which 18 US soldiers were killed, along with many 100's of Somali's presumed dead. This story is very relevant to the current situation (in October 2001) where we are trying to use traditional military action to capture a single person. In 1993, we were trying to apprehend "warlord" Mohamed Farrah Aidid - and today we are going after Osama bin Laden.Our critical mistake in this episode was drastically underestimating the enemy. While we had every advantage in terms of technology and military hardware, the Somali's had on their side sheer numbers of fighters as well as their determined willingness to fight regardless of the dangers to their own lives. Time and again, Somali fighters would put themselves in direct fire of the US forces to attack, usually being killed in the process. Another Somali fighter would then pick up their weapon and take their place. This went on for 12 to 18 hours in a house-to-house street battle that kept the relatively small force of Americans pinned down all night.Like the movies Saving Private Ryan and Three Kings this book depicts a very graphic image of war and battle. While I do believe that there are things we need to be willing to fight for, every one of us needs to understand the type of situation we are asking our military to go in to.

Many moves and books about combat have an almost abstract atmosphere. The participants casually think about great philosophy or remember their early lives while trying to kill each other.Black Hawk Down, on the other hand, treats combat as a very intense, extraordinarily terrifying experience. The combatants are solely concerned with keeping themselves and their comrades alive for as long as possible.I have had the good fortune never to be involved in a combat situation and now I hope like hell that I never do.It's a very good book. I highly recommend it, provided that you don't start reading it within two hours of the time you plan to go to sleep. You'll glance at the clock to realise that five hours have passed.After reading the book, I understand why people volunteer to go into the armed forces. However, it's probably a good idea for the recruiters to provide a copy of this book to a prospective volunteer, just to make sure that the person knows what he or she is signing up for.

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