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Inside Delta Force



Synopsis

They are the Army's most elite top-secret strike force. But you won't hear about their heroics on the news, no headlines about them can appear in the papers, and no oneânot even their familiesâcan know who they are. First Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta Force, America's supersecret counterterrorist unit. On paper they do not exist, but without them, our lives wouldn't be the same. In this exclusive behind-the-scenes account, founding member Eric L. Haney, Command Sergeant Major, USA (ret.), takes you into the grueling selection and training process of Delta Force. From learning how to open a padlock with a soda can to rescuing a hijacked airplane, these men are masters of espionage and warfare. They are the anonymous heroes who protect us every day from threats we'll never know existed.

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Customer Reviews

I am Eric Haney's wife. I put my name and bias on the table. If only that were the case with those retired Delta men. For the record, it should be noted that the only legitimate dispute those men have with the book (all others being verifiable with research) is whether or not Logan Fitch was punched in the nose at Desert One. Fitch says not; that he would have killed any civilian who did that -- despite orders from President Carter not to harm civilians. In Mark Bowden's book, "Guests of the Ayatollah," Fitch explains the bloody nose he was sporting that night like this: He was attempting to

make an Iranian civilian outside the bus stand up. The man refused, so Fitch fired a shot into the ground. When the man stood up and made a move as if to run, Fitch swung his weapon at the man to clobber him with its butt and in the process, raked his own nose with his own gun sight. Oh. Well. Haney wrote that the nose punch happened, in the context of a highly complimentary sentence about Fitch's "leading from the front" (rare for a Delta officer). I've heard that story from other Desert One veterans. Be that as it may, Fitch remembers it differently. But Fitch doesn't dispute Haney's crediting him for saving his life that night by pulling him on board the last C-130 leaving the ground. The other commanders -- including Bucky Burruss -- left on the first plane out, before they knew for sure who was alive or dead from B. Squadron. There are a number of good books, both academic and personal, on the subject of Desert One. Beckwith's Delta Force; Kyle's The Guts to Try; Bill Daugherty's (CIA hostage in Iran); and now Mark Bowden's. Neither Beckwith, Kyle, nor Fitch were called traitor for writing their books and articles on Desert One. Fitch's article in Penthouse was merciless on Col. Beckwith. Warranted or not, it had to be heartbreaking for the Colonel at the time. Nor was Bucky Burruss called a traitor for his chock-full-of-opsec fiction published in 1990, "Mission for Delta." Any person wanting to know how Delta sets up satellite comms or infiltrates a nation or conducts covert snatch ops need only read that book. Interestingly, the main plot of Burruss' book centers around the very mission he has accused Haney of fabricating and denied ever took place: A 1983 CIA sanctioned covert op into Honduras to take out an American Green Beret turned defector. In Burruss' book, the defector/guerilla leader trained at Bragg and was a former friend of the tall, blond, Delta team leader who volunteers for the mission to take him out. Even some of the key names are the same. Back to Desert One. Each book on the subject agrees, even Beckwith's, that there was heated discussion about the possibility that the helo pilots didn't have the fortitude to go forward. Beckwith admitted in his book "maybe" having called them cowards that night (p. 313). He also used the term towards B Squadron, for not bringing their weapons out of the inferno. To his credit, Beckwith admitted in his book that he was wrong on all counts, helo and B Squadron, and apologized. For a man like Beckwith, that was an enormous thing. Others should be so gracious. One smart thing that came out of that tragedy was the realization that Delta needed its own specially trained, specially equipped helo team. The helos DID fail because of the sandstorms and had Beckwith insisted on taking the mission forward, he would have killed the men he had worked so hard to find. Some commanders might have done that anyway. Not Beckwith. God bless him for that. My husband would never have come home. Another result was the understanding that had B Squadron burned to death, the institutional knowledge they had created would have died with them. So Delta began codifying what they created and learned. Eric Haney was among the original

operators who helped create that body of knowledge. It was not handed down to Delta from previous generations in the Army, as is so much else in the military. It was, for the most part, a completely new world explored and developed by those men. Delta was founded only by Charlie Beckwith and midwifed by the small group of men around him, including Bucky Burruss. Burruss authored a paper justifying to DOD why it would take at least two years to select enough men to bring Delta to operational strength. One reason it took that long was the kibosh put on recruiting from the Rangers by commanders protecting their best men. Beckwith had to fight tooth and nail up the chain of command to get access to the Rangers. (This is from Beckwith's book.) And even after he got formal cooperation, commanders such as Joe Stringham, by then with the Rangers, issued the unofficial dictum that if his soldiers tried out and failed, they would not be welcome back. For many potential candidates, that was a showstopper. Haney took the chance and succeeded. That's Stringham's mad-on with Haney right there. Had Stringham not interceded, Haney and others could have entered Delta selection in April of 78 instead of in September of 78. Interesting history. When you put Beckwith's book next to Haney's, a more vivid picture of Delta Force comes together. With Beckwith, you get the 100,000 foot perspective of the political infighting in the Army and just how bitterly some factions in the Army truly wanted Delta to fail. You see just how hard Beckwith really had to work to pull the whole thing off and how many people stood against it. And then with Haney's, you get a personal view of one man's journey through selection and training and the development of strategy and tactics and his love for his comrades. You also see why Haney said that "no other man in the Army" could have done what Charlie Beckwith did in founding Delta Force. What you do not get from Haney's book is any sense of sniping, jealousy, bitterness, or chest beating. IDF is very much a tribute to comradeship. We have seen the other side of that story, sadly, from others in Delta. When writing a personal memoir, one does not have to read the history of others. Desert One is both literally and figuratively burned into Eric Haney's memory. He still carries the scars of that night in the desert on his body. Burns that could have killed him as that inferno did kill other brave men. Haney's book is the first book or article to mention the names of the men who died that night. Beckwith's book didn't. And although Fitch's article was titled, "Death at Desert One," his article didn't mention the names of the dead, either. When Beckwith wrote his book, he had access to Delta's files. I suppose because his book was more historical in nature. Eric's is personal and that is what makes it such a refreshing perspective. It isn't about HIM, though. Eric loved some of his comrades and respected all of them. Even the ones who have given him a hard time. Living and dying together in Delta Force creates a bond that spans time, no matter what. That's what we see in his book. That's what the book is truly about. Thanks again to Logan Fitch. Not for the nose punch

debate. For saving Eric's life.

Be advised that this is a shortened version for "Young Readers" and not the original book written by Eric Haney. This version starts and ends with the Selection process and leaves out the balance of the various training and operations (about 2/3) contained in the original book. It is a good read for what it is but the full version is much better. The product description does not make clear that this is a different version. This "Young Readers" version in hardback ran 246pp.

"Inside Delta Force: The Story of America's Elite Counterterrorist Unit," by Eric L. Haney, is a gripping book written by one of the organization's founding members. Haney retired from the U.S. Army as a Command Sergeant Major with over 20 years service. Early in the book Haney introduces the reader to Delta Force founder Colonel Charlie Beckwith, who had a vision of "a compact, highly skilled, and versatile unit able to undertake and execute difficult and unusual 'special' missions." Haney describes in detail how, starting from Colonel Beckwith's vision, Delta Force was created from scratch. An early section of the book describes the torturous tests used on candidates for the newly forming unit. He also reveals the elements that Delta Force's creators drew upon as they shaped the emerging organization. Fundamentally modeled on the British Special Air Service commando organization, the new force drew its research and training from many sources: Secret Service snipers, Delta Airlines, the Department of Energy's Nuclear Emergency Search Teams, a veteran CIA agent, and more, including convicted criminals who provided insights into breaching and demolitions. We get to see how each ingredient is added into the potent mix. This glimpse into Delta Force's "DNA" is absolutely fascinating. Equally gripping is Haney's account of the actual training received by selectees for the new unit; the training includes a detailed espionage exercise that reads like something out of a suspense novel. A high point in the book is the official "birth" of the new Delta Force as "a fully grown and reasoning predator, armed with fangs and claws and intelligence, able to run and to fight." Haney takes the reader beyond this milestone and into many missions undertaken by himself and other Delta Force operators: the botched attempt to rescue American hostages from Iran, an anti-sniper mission in Beirut, a seagoing countersmuggling operation off the coast of Central America, and more. Particularly interesting is Haney's account of the U.S. invasion of Grenada during the Reagan years; this section of the book includes a particularly powerful description of a combat helicopter assault. I have read many military memoirs and historical accounts, and this book stands out in a number of ways. Its exploration of the building of a brand new unit from ground up is striking and important. Also significant is the glimpse Haney

offers us into what he calls "Mr. Reagan's secret wars in Central America," which the author further notes "were always merciless affairs." The book is very well written; Haney particularly shines in the mode of storyteller. He is equally skilled at describing colorful, heroic personalities and intense scenes of violence and destruction. Haney includes a post-9/11 postscript in which he offers words of encouragement to the reader. I highly recommend this book to those who love military nonfiction.

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