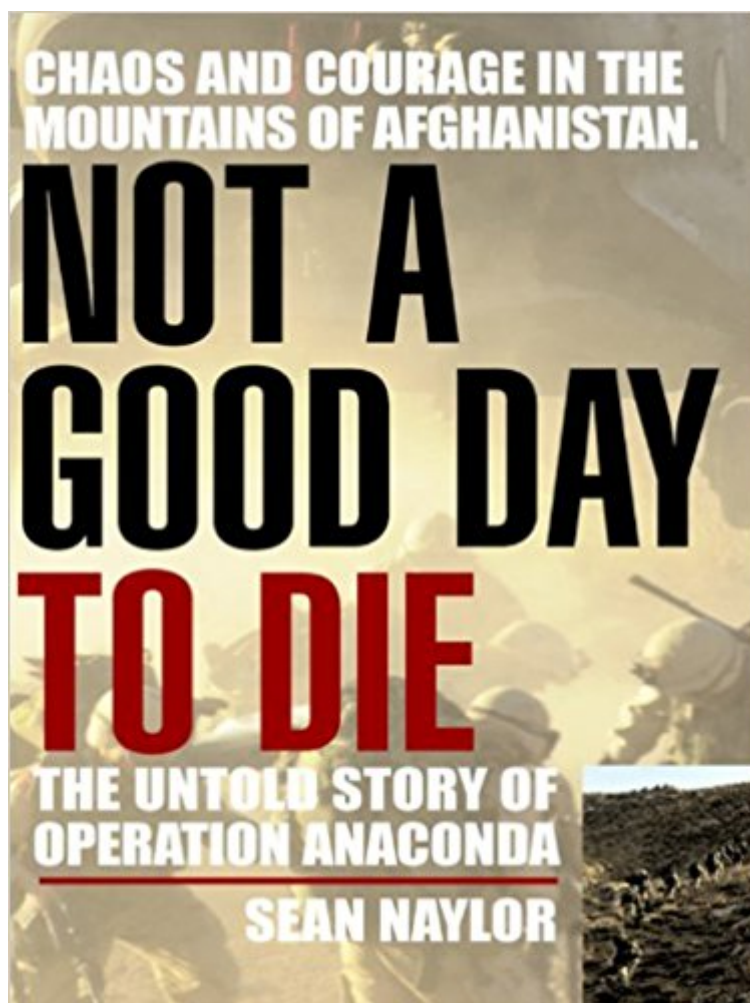


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Not A Good Day To Die: The Untold Story Of Operation Anaconda



Synopsis

Award-winning combat reporter Sean Naylor reveals how close American forces came to disaster in Afghanistan against Al Qaida – after easily defeating the ragtag Taliban that had sheltered the terrorist organization behind the 9/11 attacks. At dawn on March 2, 2002, over two hundred soldiers of the 101st Airborne and 10th Mountain Divisions flew into the mouth of a buzz saw in Afghanistan's Shahikot Valley. Believing the war all but over, U.S. military leaders refused to commit the extra infantry, artillery, and attack helicopters required to fight the war's biggest battle – a missed opportunity to crush hundreds of Al Qaida's fighters and some of its most senior leaders. Eyewitness Naylor vividly portrays the heroism of the young, untested soldiers, the fanaticism of their ferocious enemy, the mistakes that led to a hellish mountaintop firefight, and how thirteen American commandos embodied "Patton's three principles of war" – audacity, audacity, and audacity – by creeping unseen over frozen mountains into the heart of an enemy stronghold to prevent a U.S. military catastrophe.

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Customer Reviews

How can American troops go into combat without proper support such as artillery or better communications? Troops died in this combat operation because troops couldn't communicate with one another largely because of interservice rivalries. There is the story of a medevac carried out at night when a helicopter carrying a team of seals jumped out and provided 360 security. In the meantime army personal, medevac medics, and others had to struggle in the cold thin air for over 19 minutes to get their wounded on helicopters without the help of the seal team. All this angered the army personal and others. The sad part is that no one was ever held to answer for the incompetent leadership, the officers who threw their weapons down and tried to run from the battle, and the lack of support required to keep our men safe. I highly recommend this book and it should be read by all.

I think, although I gave it 'four stars', that Naylor should get five stars SIMPLY for trying to sort out the 'confusion' and 'chaos' of a military operation in modern times. As some have stated in their reviews, there is an lot of minutiae in the pages of this excellent book. The reader will have to turn those pages slowly and be prepared to 'review back' to cement some of the shifting actions/names/places/groups that make up the book. One thing is clear, when the action heats up the 'plans' (as anyone who studies the military and war knows) can go out the window. As Eisenhower said, "In preparing for battle I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable." That is proven by the outcomes in the various stages of "Not A Good Day To Die". The book's strengths: displaying, as is often the case, the incredible fortitude, courage and heroics of those who step up into harms way and serve each other and our country; displaying, as is (again) often the case, that politics, politicians and any military personalities that aspire to such political positions are as useless as 'teats on a bull.' America's military direction has not been towards strength and the reader must recognize that even this many years ago 'expediency', 'ROEs', and politically arrived at arbitrary 'caps' can do more to ruin a campaign than well placed enemy fire. I very much liked this book and believe it is a fine example of the many goods in our military and the few 'bads' in our overall management of the Armed Services. We mustn't allow the military to be further degraded and this book shows how wrong motivations can handicap even the best of military leaders and intentions. Bravo to Americans in uniform... hiss and boo to the 'opportunistic' politicians and like motivated military personnel who put their advancement ahead of the lives of our men and women and victory. Everyone should read this to see how 'it really works.'

This is a very eye opening experience, as to what really goes on in our military. As a veteran of the Army and the Infantry in particular, I did not find it completely surprising, the micromanaging, the infighting for control. But the micromanaging of our generals thousands of miles away, NOT providing everything that was needed for this battle due to political concerns, is what is eye opening. It makes me angry that our government will not give our troops EVERYTHING that is needed to win a battle. That kind of micromanaging costs the lives of OUR troops. Our military has done everything asked of them, they have won almost EVERY battle of the war, DESPITE our governments best efforts, to set them up for failure. The only reason I did not give it 5, stars, is because it becomes very difficult tracking all the players, their units, their commands, without occasionally reminding the reader who they are and what unit or task force they are with. Thank you Mr. Naylor for putting these travesties, these wrongs done to our troops in print.

Sean Naylor brings a unique package of skills to this undertaking. His through knowledge of the Army, much of it gained in the field under fire, gives him a unique ability to bring the reader into the chaos of night combat on the top of a frozen mountain and then, a few pages later, gain an understanding of what was happening all the way up the command structure. It is apparent from the detail that he did his research among people who trusted him with some very difficult truths. The author pulls no punches, brave people do dumb things on occasion and egos at the command level get people killed. Naylor traces the breakdowns in strategy, leadership, intelligence and communications from start to finish. He also does a magnificent job of putting the reader in the middle of some of the most intense firefights since Vietnam. It's also clear how much of a role luck plays in many of the encounters. Some have compared the book with Blackhawk Down; however, I believe it is far superior due to the author's knowledge, relationships with the troops and writing skills. It is also a great read with First In. Finishing the book it is hard not to be angry that we seem to be forgetting the lessons of Vietnam, where our tuition was paid in blood, and returning to an era of micromanagement of the battlefield from afar, with those who lack the through knowledge of the field conditions making decisions. Of rigidity in planning that squanders opportunity. It is a stinging illustration of the deadly results of ignoring the role of field leadership. However, it is also the story of true warriors, operating under the most difficult conditions with a common purpose and courage. It's not defeat snatched from the jaws of victory; but, certainly qualifies as an opportunity lost and avoidable tragedy. Highly recommended.

Husband read this book as our son was featured as one of the characters incognito. He said it was

a very good book!

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