

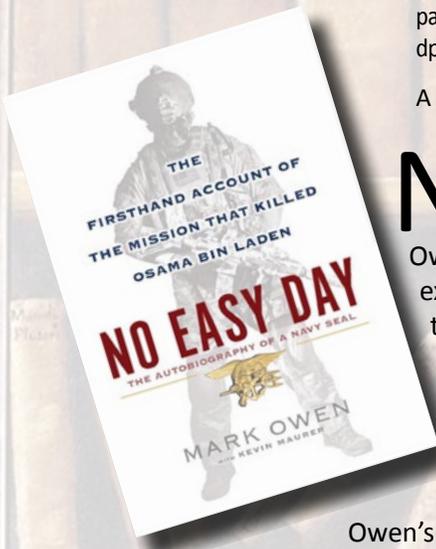
TURNING PAGES

~ book reviews of interest to the aviation professional

No Easy Day: The Firsthand Account of the Mission That Killed Osama Bin Laden

By Mark Owen. Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 375 Hudson St. New York, NY 10014 565pp. Available in hardcover, paperback, Kindle, and CD audiobook at <http://www.amazon.com/No-Easy-Day-Firsthand-Account/dp/0525953728>

A book review by WO1 Robert Burcham



No Easy Day is a compelling account of Operation Neptune Spear in which Mark Owen takes the reader on a step-by-step account of the raid inside the compound that killed the terrorist mastermind Osama Bin Laden. Mark Owen, a pseudonym selected by the author for security reasons, is a highly experienced veteran and has completed hundreds of missions across the globe throughout his 12- year career as a Navy Seal and former member of Seal Team Six. In his book, he describes the grueling process of becoming a Navy Seal, and chronologically unfolds the events that result in the successful joint force operation: “Operation Neptune Spear”.

Embedded throughout the book from the preface to the final chapter, is Owen’s main purpose for writing the book—to provide to the public an accurate account of the raid that killed Osama Bin Laden. Owen’s intentions are to clarify any confusion of the raid, and to provide the public with a first-hand account of how the operation took place.

The first eight chapters of No Easy Day provide the audience with details of the harsh and demanding variables involved in making the cut as a Navy Seal. The reader receives a descriptive idea of the punishing training as Owen recounts some of his coping techniques like, “just making it to the next meal” that he used during the nine-month selection course for Seal Team Six. The months of training created a strong camaraderie amongst the team members and played a large role in their success throughout many complex missions. Owen provides a firsthand account of several significant missions that his team performed; such as the successful rescue of Captain Richard Phillips from Somali pirates in 2009. In the first section of the book, Owen recounts several other similar missions; all leading up to his most significant event, Operation Neptune Spear.

The last ten chapters of No Easy Day reveal details of intelligence gathering, planning, and the execution of the raid that lead to the death of Osama Bin Laden. The depth, detail, and quantity of intelligence that was gathered, along with the amount of planning that went into the mission was incredible. Owen describes mission preparation events discussing team rock drills (mission rehearsal events), viewing animated clips of the infiltration, and performing several live exercises involving a scaled replica of the Pakistani compound. The lesson learned to the military leader is that the success of this mission by this elite military unit emphasizes and proves the importance of accurate intelligence, rehearsals, and performing contingency scenarios.

Mark Owen’s account of Operation Neptune Spear explains one person’s perspective of the complex raid. Aside from any controversy the release of the book may have brought, the extensive collective coordination, cooperation, and integration by many different U.S. agencies throughout the operation was impressive. Owen’s in-depth knowledge and experiences and casual presentation made the book an easy read. All in all, Owen achieved his objective in No Easy Day, and provided the reader with his account of events of the raid. I recommend this book to any leader because it demonstrates the importance of a mission-focused mindset, disciplined initiative, and knowing your job better than anyone else.

