

Lone Survivor, by Marcus Luttrell and Patrick Robinson

Reviewed by Hal Marshman, Sr.

I received this book as a Christmas gift, and just could not put it down; my attention was riveted from cover to cover. This is a first person account of a U.S. Navy SEAL's life, and the mission that brought him into prominence. Prior to reading this book, I knew the SEALs were a tough outfit, feeling they were probably the Navy's answer to the U.S. Army's Special Forces. Well, that's not too far from the truth, but in addition, they're well trained in all sorts of aquatic excellence.

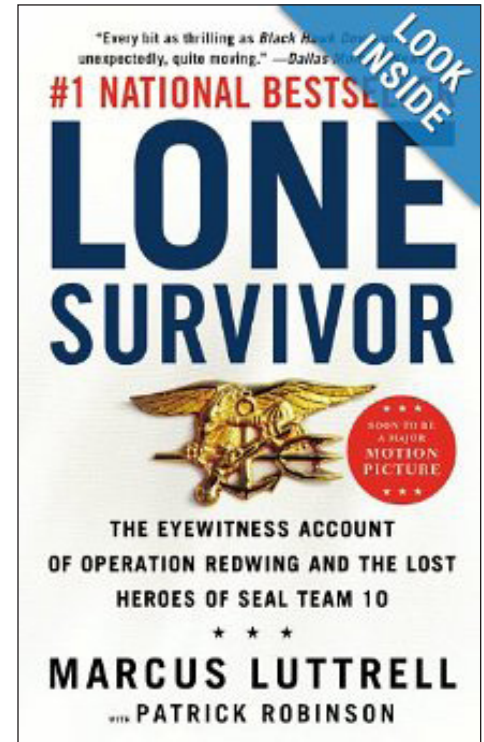
Marcus Luttrell and his twin brother Morgan were born Texans. As you get into the book, you are brought to realize exactly what a special relationship twins enjoy, that none of us who are not such, can ever truly appreciate.

Young Marcus wanted to be a SEAL from about age 12, and with his brother was put under the tutelage of a local former Green Beret. This gentleman initiated their physical and mental training, working with them daily. Luttrell eventually joined the Navy, and relates his training from enlistment to combat deployment. I'll not go into real detail here, but I'm no stranger to military training, having been in the U.S. Army myself, and having read many books concerning both American, and foreign training regimens. I have a good friend who went through both U.S. Ranger, and Special Forces training, serving three tours in Vietnam as a Green Beret officer. In any event, the training Marcus received was the most brutal, grueling,

intensive physical and mental training I've ever heard of. The dropout rate during this training is unbelievable, and I ended up wondering how anyone could survive such intense physical strain. Because the SEALs are naval personnel first and foremost, a great deal of this training took place under, over, and through the water. You quickly learn what "Get wet and sandy!" means.

The main story of the book takes place in Afghanistan, on a mission to take out a Taliban leader in charge of some 80 to 200 men. Luttrell and his team of three others, including his best friend, are inserted into place, and proceed to put their training into action. Most unfortunately, they are discovered, and the battle begins. You never really find out how many men they are opposed by, but they do eliminate a goodly number of the bad guys. I'm not revealing too much when I tell you that eventually the other three team members are killed, but certainly not until they'd made heavy inroads into the amount of people trying to kill them. The rest of this part of the book details how Marcus eludes his pursuers, and is eventually taken in by Afghan tribesmen. These tribesmen put him under the protection of their own ancient brand of hospitality, and protect him until his eventual rescue. You learn a good deal about these tribespeople, their history, and their relationship with the Taliban.

Marcus Luttrell and his co-writer Patrick Robinson are an excellent storytelling team, and although I've breezed through



the book in this narration, believe me, they'll keep you on the edge of your seat. Throughout most of the book, you are kept aware of Luttrell's burning patriotism, his pride of being a Texan, his devotion to duty, and to his outfit and comrades. He makes no bones about his admiration of his Commander-in-Chief, George W. Bush, nor does he show any attempt to temper his contempt for America's "Liberal Press". He also makes no bones about his belief in God, and credits Him for much of his survival. Whatever your own political tendencies, I do recommend this book highly as a very informative contemporary account of the career and actions of one of America's toughest and bravest young men.