

Keynote Speaker



First Sergeant Matt Eversmann (Ret.)

Hero of the Epic Film, *Black Hawk Down*, and the Battle of Mogadishu

Matthew Eversmann is a testament to the true nature of war and heroism. He was immortalized in the epic film *Black Hawk Down* (his character was played by Josh Hartnett), which tells the heroic account of a group of elite US soldiers sent into Mogadishu, Somalia, in 1993 as part of a UN peacekeeping operation. Young Rangers and veteran Delta Force soldiers fight side by side, outnumbered and surrounded, for 18 hours in the most hostile district of

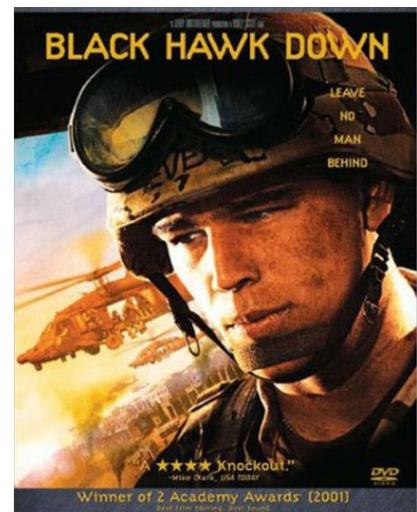
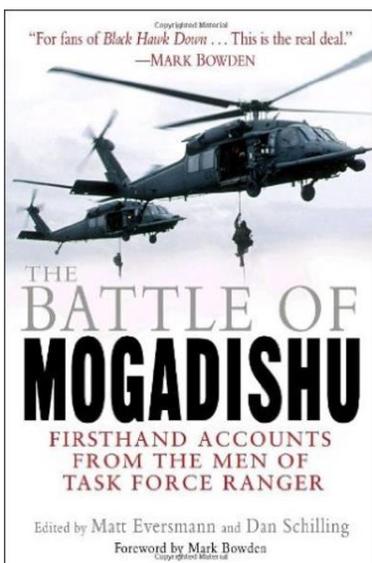
Mogadishu until a rescue convoy could be mounted to retrieve them. As a part of that mission, both as a survivor and a hero, Eversmann brings to life the horrors of his experience, what he took from it, and humanizes the creed by which he lived: "Never shall I fail my comrades...RANGERS LEAD THE WAY!"

Eversmann enlisted in the Army as an infantryman in December 1987, and was stationed at Fort Drum, NY, with the 10th Mountain Division. In 1992, he reenlisted and arrived at Fort Benning, GA, for his assignment in the Third Battalion, Seventy Fifth Ranger Regiment. He spent eight-and-a-half years in the Regiment, serving as a squad leader,

a weapons squad leader, the battalion air operations sergeant, the battalion liaison sergeant, and a platoon sergeant. Eversmann also was the officer in charge of the 75th Ranger Regiment's Pre-Ranger Course that helped train future leaders to pass the grueling Army Ranger School.

While serving as a sergeant in the Ranger Regiment, Matt traveled the world. From Panama to England, Korea to Egypt, he met and trained with soldiers across the globe. In August of 1993, Matt and his company deployed to Mogadishu, Somalia, in support of Operation Gothic Serpent.

Eversmann has attended many military schools: Airborne,



Ranger, Sniper, Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape or SERE School, the Primary Leadership Development Course, the Army's Basic Noncommissioned Officers Course, as well as the Advanced Noncommissioned Officers Course. He was the Leadership Award winner at Ranger School, the Primary Course, and the Basic Course. He also graduated from the Master Fitness School, Jumpmaster School, Special Operations Tactics course, and the Equal Opportunity Course. Eversmann wears the following awards and decorations: the Army Service Ribbon, the National Defense Service Ribbon, eight Army Achievement Medals, four Army Commendation Medals, a Meritorious Service Medal, the Ranger Tab, Master Parachute Wings, Royal Thai Jump Wings, British Jump Wings, Egyptian Jump Wings, and the Expert Infantryman's Badge.

For his service in Somalia, he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Valor device and the Combat Infantryman's Badge.

In August 2000, Eversmann was awarded an honorary bachelor's degree from Hampden-Sydney College in recognition of his service to his country.

Eversmann has lectured on his experience in Somalia all over the world. He has given presentations to soldiers at all levels, from officer candidates at Fort Benning to colonels at the Army War College. He has represented the Army on *Larry King Live* and on *Dateline with Stone Phillips*, and has lectured the cadets and faculty at West Point, Annapolis, and the Air Force Academy. Eversmann's list of presentations to the professional community is impressive. He has appeared before audiences at Ford, PriceWaterhouseCoopers, Goldman Sachs, Merck, RAND, the Bakersfield Business Conference, *USA Today*, and the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce. Eversmann has been to many colleges across America, too, from Penn State to Notre Dame, Virginia Tech to Ball State, and he makes lasting impressions on every campus he visits.

Eversmann returned to the US after serving 15 months in Iraq during the surge. He retired from the Army as an Infantry Company First Sergeant after 20 years of service. Matt and his family live in South Florida and actively support Veteran's causes.