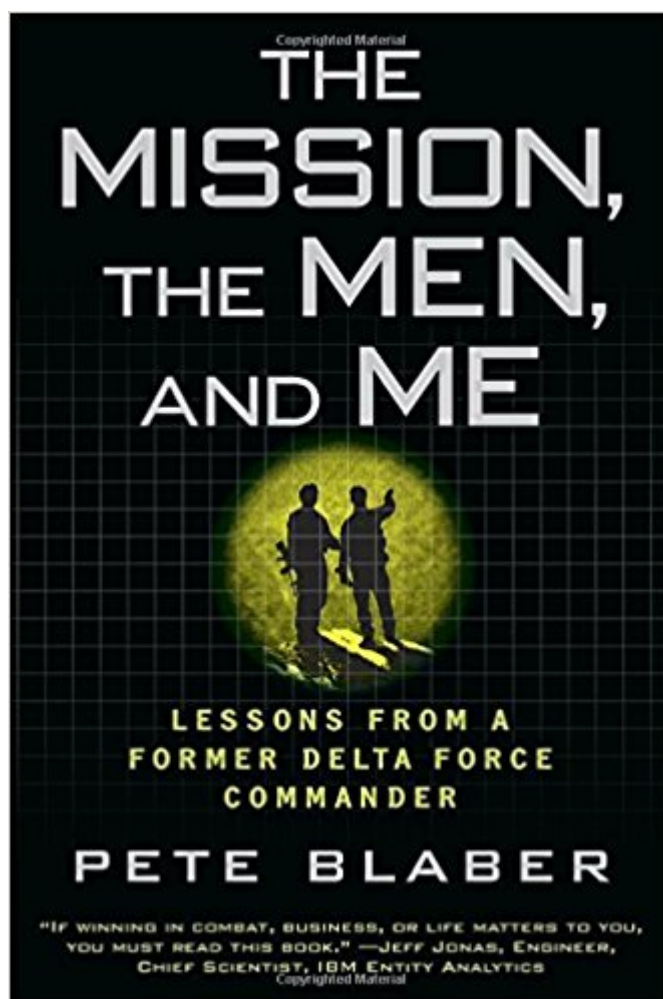


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The Mission, The Men, And Me: Lessons From A Former Delta Force Commander



Synopsis

“A book about the complexities of combat that’s just as applicable for dealing with the complexities of business and our personal lives.” —Kevin Sharer, chairman and CEO, Amgen
As a commander of Delta Force—the most elite counterterrorism organization in the world—Pete Blaber took part in some of the most dangerous, controversial, and significant military and political events of our time. Now he takes his intimate knowledge of warfare—and the heart, mind, and spirit it takes to win—and moves his focus from the combat zone to civilian life. As the smoke clears from exciting stories about never-before-revealed top-secret missions that were executed all over the globe, readers will emerge wiser, more capable, and more ready for life’s personal victories than they ever thought possible.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“His thesis is that there aren’t that many different situations in life, and there aren’t that many different ways of dealing with them—have a few, simple principles, and, when in doubt, refer to them. He’s a stoic with a sense of humor, and I very much enjoyed his book.” —David Mamet, Pulitzer Prize-winning American playwright, essayist, screenwriter, and film director
Blaber presents his hard-won principles of leadership and illustrates them with intense personal stories and accounts of leadership amidst chaotic modern warfare. The leadership principles ring true and have a commonsense appeal. Also, the “peek behind the curtain” look at Delta should please fans of special operations.
—Small Wars Journal
“Should be required reading for all flag-rank officers. Required, because it codifies in simple, accessible language the concepts that will allow us

to adapt, overcome and prevail in 21st-century warfare, whether it be asymmetric in nature and unconventional in approach, or along the classical Land-War models. And required because Lt. Col. Blaber demonstrates through multiple empirical examples why flexibility, audacity, situational awareness and preparation are superior to rigid, formulaic doctrine-influenced operational planning. • "The Washington Times

Pete Blaber commanded at every level of Delta Force, executing vital missions across the globe including destroying the largest pocket of Al Qaeda forces to date and helping to hasten the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq. He lives in Santa Monica, California.

Why is Pete Blaber's The Men, The Mission and Me one of the three or five books showcased as must-reads in all my business leadership courses? Consider these: Leadership textbooks, particularly the top-selling Leadership by Peter Northouse, point out how leadership functions can be reduced to two basic buckets: getting the task done, and taking care of people and relationships. Taking responsibility for the mission, and taking care of the men: in a crunch, we have to choose prioritizing one or the other. In psychology, at the core of personality development, is how the self evolves its posture towards the outside world, especially from its early trust experiences with primary caregivers. Taking charge, or taking care of others? Ambition and competition, or nurture and cooperation? Pete has given us the perfect bookend to those leadership and psychology textbooks: principles for decision and action, derived from personal experiences in the reality of war with all its immediate, personal, irreversible risks to life and limb. It's a great case book for brilliant insights into patterns of decisions and consequences. Bring leadership and developmental psychology together, and you have Pete's Delta leadership totem pole: a clear hierarchy of the mission, the men, and me. In everyday life, it's more of a triangle whose three points may rotate, depending on circumstance, but it forces clarity in our fundamental ethical outlook. Cognitive scientists propose that true capital is intuition is not just lazy, seat-of-the-pants ambiguities. True intuition is how our brain purposely seeks patterns, and reduces all the knowledge and experiences into models that it keeps ready on the right-brain shelf. Jet fighter pilots, firefighters and emergency responders apparently rely on this pattern recognition - not on the mathematical optimization constructs, because MBA textbooks are rarely packed into field rucksacks. Sometimes, life just does not allow us to engineer situations. Outstanding leaders can pull the right model out of the backpocket, adapting it real-time to current context and specifics. Pete brings us into specific situations. A fascinating narrative in real-world language, and with humorous

irony glinting here and there out of the fog and din of war. Can't wait for the next book, Mr. Blaber.

Vince Flynn, Brad Thor, Tom Clancy, Alex Berenson, Rob Sinclair, Lee Child, and now comes Pete Blaber, a real life Special Ops machine who tells a compelling story of his real life adventures from childhood in Illinois to the battlefield of Afghanistan. I flew through this book, I couldn't put it down and I'm sad that I'm through reading it as I'm sure there is so much more Pete can write (or can't for security reasons can't) about his adventures in the mountains of Afghanistan fighting for our freedom from the terrorists hell bent on inflicting pain on the western world. We need more people like Pete not only to fight, but also tell a story for our kids and their kids to know what we fought for. Thanks Pete for sharing your story!

.As others have noted the content was somewhat of a surprise. Rather than 300 pages of adrenalin filled action, Pete Blaber has offers critical, big picture lessons in thinking and managing which are priceless. Blaber does an outstanding job of weaving the lesson into a first hand story of the battles at Takur Ghar and events leading up to the battle. For openers it's interesting to note that he arrived in the area in January 02, only four months after 9-11 and that the primary action took place several months later. It was a classic use of Lesson 1 - When in doubt, develop the situation and Lesson 2 Always listen to the guy on the ground. Most of the last third of the book (approximately 100 pages) focus on the events leading up to the battle, the opportunities lost and the losses that need not have occurred. Blaber describes the development of the situation as a process that began long before his arrival in Afghanistan. Understanding operations in high, snow covered mountains Interviewing terrorists who had knowledge of the area and bin Laden's operations Reading both Afghan and Russian accounts of the earlier war with the Soviets Listening to the guy on the ground is remarkably similar to Colin Powell's advice that in the absence of concrete evidence to the contrary, headquarters should assume the people in the field are correct. Blaber takes it one step further in seeking out shepherders, taxi drivers and other sources while avoiding the more traditional government officials who may be working for the other side. One of Blaber's great contributions, and something that Washington should heed, is that the lack of a complete plan should not inhibit the development of the situation in a way that you are prepared to act upon opportunity. The use of the Lewis and Clark expedition as a classic example is enlightening. The lessons continue..... Although Blaber does not make direct accusations it's clear that he believes the mission was compromised and a too many US and Afghanistan troops died because several people up the chain of command

made bad (perhaps ego driven) decisions from distant command posts. The decisions were based on a lack of awareness of what was on the ground and ignored the advice of those who had been on the ground for several months carefully developing the situation. In addition to our losses, too many of the Arabs escaped. We had one opportunity to corner and exterminate them and we lost it. One of the reasons the US was able to accomplish the unexpectedly rapid removal of the Taliban from control of most of the country was that in the early days we focused on sending a very limited number of people to work with the existing forces and provided them with support not supervision. While the mainstream press pronounced the US incapable of acting before the spring of 02, the Taliban were forced from government by Christmas 01, only a few months after the 9-11 attacks. Back in the beginning of the book there is a partial account of an audacious operation which airlifted less than a dozen lightly armed vehicles far behind Saddam's lines to create the impression that there was another US army loose in the country. In a supreme act of courage they took the remaining 5 vehicles into Tikrit and engaged in a firefight with the best of Saddam's forces who had believed there were no American ground forces within hundreds of miles. There's no doubt that the flood of information available to field commanders, from internet searches, sat photos, Predator and Global Hawk sensors, AC-130 sensors and personnel and the troops engaged give our side a great advantage. However, the flood of information flowing from the battlefield to distant commands gives rise to an almost irresistible temptation on the part of both military and civilian leaders to inject themselves into tactical decisions while looking through a keyhole, without context. This is not a new problem but one that has multiplied with the flow of information. The withdrawal of the AC-130 from the battle at a very critical point was just one of the examples. I thought we had learned one of the key decisions of the Vietnam war, that the micromanagement of the air war over N Vietnam by high DOD and WH officials who wanted to play god in the dark of the night. These decisions often resulted in orders to fly missions that were not the optimal missions for the weather, opportunities or targets. Hundreds of fliers directly paid the ultimate price for their arrogance and thousands more died on the ground. The book is a light read and 300 pages pass quickly. The lessons should last a lifetime. Highly recommended along with *First In and Not A Good Day To Die*.

Great read, easy to follow and read. Book covers the mission in Iraqi and Afghanistan of JSOC units. The history and the mission and organization is covered. The difficult command relationship is also covered. The interesting portion of the book is the command relationship with higher command authority and conventional units.

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