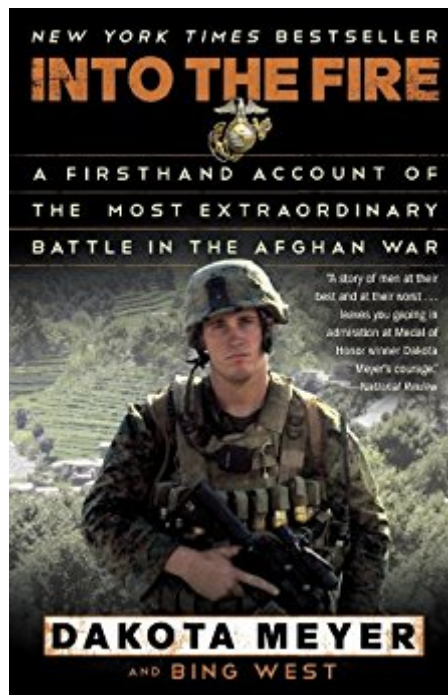


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Into The Fire: A Firsthand Account Of The Most Extraordinary Battle In The Afghan War



Synopsis

“The story of what Dakota did . . . will be told for generations.” —President Barack Obama, from remarks given at Meyer’s Medal of Honor ceremony

In the fall of 2009, Taliban insurgents ambushed a patrol of Afghan soldiers and Marine advisors in a mountain village called Ganjigal. Firing from entrenched positions, the enemy was positioned to wipe out one hundred men who were pinned down and were repeatedly refused artillery support. Ordered to remain behind with the vehicles, twenty-one year-old Marine corporal Dakota Meyer disobeyed orders and attacked to rescue his comrades. With a brave driver at the wheel, Meyer stood in the gun turret exposed to withering fire, rallying Afghan troops to follow. Over the course of the five hours, he charged into the valley time and again. Employing a variety of machine guns, rifles, grenade launchers, and even a rock, Meyer repeatedly repulsed enemy attackers, carried wounded Afghan soldiers to safety, and provided cover for dozens of others to escape—supreme acts of valor and determination. In the end, Meyer and four stalwart comrades—an Army captain, an Afghan sergeant major, and two Marines—cleared the battlefield and came to grips with a tragedy they knew could have been avoided. For his actions on that day, Meyer became the first living Marine in three decades to be awarded the Medal of Honor. Into the Fire tells the full story of the chaotic battle of Ganjigal for the first time, in a compelling, human way that reveals it as a microcosm of our recent wars. Meyer takes us from his upbringing on a farm in Kentucky, through his Marine and sniper training, onto the battlefield, and into the vexed aftermath of his harrowing exploits in a battle that has become the stuff of legend. Investigations ensued, even as he was pitched back into battle alongside U.S. Army soldiers who embraced him as a fellow grunt. When it was over, he returned to the States to confront living with the loss of his closest friends. This is a tale of American values and upbringing, of stunning heroism, and of adjusting to loss and to civilian life. We see it all through Meyer’s eyes, bullet by bullet, with raw honesty in telling of both the errors that resulted in tragedy and the resolve of American soldiers, U.S. Marines, and Afghan soldiers who’d been abandoned and faced certain death. Meticulously researched and thrillingly told, with nonstop pace and vivid detail, Into the Fire is the unvarnished story of a modern American hero. Praise for Into the Fire “A story of men at their best and at their worst . . . leaves you gaping in admiration at Medal of Honor winner Dakota Meyer’s courage.” —National Review “Meyer’s dazzling bravery wasn’t momentary or impulsive but deliberate and sustained.” —The Wall Street Journal “[A] cathartic, heartfelt account . . . Combat memoirs don’t get any more personal.” —Kirkus Reviews “A great contribution to the discussion of an agonizingly complex subject.” —The Virginian-Pilot

â œBlack Hawk Down meets Lone Survivor.â •â ”Library Journal

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Customer Reviews

This is the most intense and moving story, of Cpl. Dakota Meyer in a battle in Afghanistan, in which his best friends were KIA and he distinguished himself in gallantry and bravery. He trained hard, and that training and luck saved his life, during a 6 hour long battle in which his squad was ambushed by overpowering Taliban firepower from a superior position on high ground on three sides. Dakota was almost captured when a Taliban kushman tapped him on the shoulder while he was recovering the body of his Afghan soldier buddy. His quick thinking enabled him to stun the enemy soldier and kill him in hand to hand combat with a rock. This book describes the intensity of the fighting, of having bullets whiz past his ears and head, tilling up the ground around his feet during the operation, the numbness of treating other soldiers who were severely wounded, and finding bodies of friends who died when he was unable to help them due to higher ups in the chain of command. I highly recommend this book if you wish to know what close combat is like in Afghanistan, and the gut

wrenching terror and bravery that this US Marine displayed for which he was awarded the Medal of Honor!

A few things are apparent when reading this book. Sergeant Dakota Meyer was intensely dedicated to those he lived and fought with. The Ganjigal Valley is a bad, bad place. And those in command of providing support for these brave fighting men were hugely negligent in their duties to provide artillery and air support. Sergeant Meyer is the first living Marine in three decades to be awarded the Medal of Honor. While most people think of that award as a huge achievement and acknowledgement of his actions, Dakota Meyer thinks of that day as the worst day of his life. He was not looking for an award, he was looking to rescue his teammates that were trapped in a ferocious battle. A battle he was repeatedly ordered not to engage in because the danger was so great. Orders he eventually disobeyed, and went to find his team. The battle scenes are intense. There are dozens of times in Ginjigal where Dakota should have died. He made multiple trips in and out of the battlefield searching for his team and in the process saved many wounded Afghan soldiers by pulling them into his vehicle, or carrying them out of dangerous situations, with total disregard for his own safety. Dakota Meyer was running from body to body trying to help. At one point he was recovering a dead Afghan soldier when an insurgent with an AK-47 approached and tried to kill him. Dakota's only action was to fire his 40MM grenade launcher directly into the insurgents chest at a distance so close the grenade was not able to arm itself. The grenade hit the insurgent's body armor and knocked him down giving Dakota enough time to close the distance and start wrestling with this man. He was finally able to finish him off with a rock. Sergeant Meyer eventually finds his team but it is too late for them. He then wrestles with guilt for not being able to save them. He also wrestles with anger at the Army officials that refused to provide artillery or air support because they could not verify what was actually happening in that valley. This entire battle was a classic textbook case of "everything that could go wrong, did go wrong." The most shocking part was that Dakota Meyer was actually able to walk away from this intense battle. He was not afraid to die, he had actually accepted that there was no way he was going to be able to survive, so he just kept on going, trying to help and save others. After reading this book I wondered how he survived. The only answer I can think of is sometimes its just not your day to die. Thank you for your service Sergeant Dakota Meyer. You are a true hero.

If you want to read about the exploits of two medal of Honor recipients here is the book for you. Dakota Meyer is an unabashed warrior for his country. No B.S here about right and wrong. This

man knows killing the enemy is right. It was a riveting tale about a man doing mans work. Just the type of work that makes the average American of today cringe. We need more Dakota Meyer's. I liked that the book also told the story of William Swenson who was punished for telling the truth. We need more William Swenson's in leadership of our military and not less. You hold up a mans MOH because he tells you the truth. If that alone doesn't tell you all that is wrong with this country. I truly hope that Mr. Swenson writes his own book. I will be the first to buy it.

I purchased this book after watching Jon Stewart interview Dakota Meyer on the daily show. My motivation was simply a show of support for a brave soldier. I actually read the book over the course of one day, staying up into the night. I am a 50 year old woman without a military family history. The first thing I took away from this story was how atypical Dakota is in his compassionate view of foreigners; from describing the itinerant Mexican farm workers on his father's farm, to the Afghan army he trained and fought with. It stands in stark contrast to the vile, right wing anti-immigrant, anti-muslim rhetoric. Even more astonishing was his brutal honesty on the failure of military policy and command that left our men and the Afghan soldiers exposed without back-up. Dakota humanizes all participants in the theater of battle and takes you into the chaos; where the quality of training and split second decisions determine life or death. Finally, you share his grief over his inability to save his team and ambivalence accepting the Medal of Honor for what he perceives as his failure. His description of transition back to civilian life is important for all of us to understand as our veterans struggle with the aftermath of their service. You cannot read this book however and not believe that when it is not your time to die, you won't. He cheated death multiple times while fully embracing that he would not come out alive. An extraordinary man, raised by an admirable father; this book pays honor to those who made the ultimate sacrifice so we not only remember Dakota Meyer-Medal of Honor recipient; but the names of those he fought to save on that fateful day. All of them taking the war to the enemy to preserve our freedom and keep us safe on our home soil.

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