

# **Lone Survivor: The Eyewitness Account of Operation Redwing and the Lost... Study Guide**

**Lone Survivor: The Eyewitness Account of Operation Redwing and the Lost... by Marcus Luttrell**

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# Plot Summary

*Lone Survivor: The Eyewitness Account of Operation Redwing and the Lost Heroes of SEAL Team 10* by Marcus Luttrell tells the harrowing story of a soldier and his team out on a mission in which only one survives.

As the true story opens, Marcus is driving across the country to talk with the families of his fallen comrades about the bravery their loved ones displayed right up to the moment of death. Marcus and his team had been out on a mission to Afghanistan. They were Navy SEALs and very proud of it. Their training was superior, and they were sent to the toughest areas of the world to fight. At that point they were facing Taliban fighters, trying to prevent them from setting up training camps and their own government.

Marcus grew up in Texas with a close-knit family. When he was young, his father taught him and his twin brother how to face the harsh realities of life. He also told them about Navy SEALs. Marcus decided to become one. After some brutal training, he made it. Now he was with other members of the military elite heading into enemy territory, and the mission was tough thanks to the unsteady, mountainous terrain and hordes of Taliban fighters.

Because of political limitations, Marcus and his team let some unarmed Afghan men go free against their better instincts. They came back later with fighters. The Americans fought long and hard, but the four men on the ground were fighting nearly 100 Taliban fighters with no backup. They lost their equipment and were severely wounded. Three of the four of them lost their lives. As a last-ditch effort for survival, one used a cell phone that betrayed their location. A rescue team responded and was shot down with more lives lost.

Marcus was injured and in enemy territory with all his comrades dead. He struggled to find water and get to safety. Afghan villagers found him and decided to give him help and protection. Together they plotted to ward off the Taliban fighters and notify the U.S. military on Marcus' whereabouts. Meanwhile, Marcus' family back in Texas knew he was missing in action. Friends, family, and military members gathered to be with the family, support them, and pray for his survival.

Marcus had several close encounters where Taliban members beat him and tried to hunt him down. The villagers continued protecting him. When rescue finally came, he had been gone for six days. Marcus spent time healing then flew back to the United States where he was reunited with his family. After this, he went back and finished his tour overseas. He took his cross-country trip then worked in Coronado while his body healed.

A brave man, Marcus received an award from President Bush and received it in person in the Oval Office. After healing for a while, he went back to Iraq on another tour.



# Prologue - Chapter 3

## Prologue - Chapter 3 Summary and Analysis

Lone Survivor: The Eyewitness Account of Operation Redwing and the Lost Heroes of SEAL Team 10 by Marcus Luttrell tells the harrowing story of a soldier and his team out on a mission in which only one survives.

In the prologue, Marcus Luttrell, United States Navy SEAL, Team Leader, SDV Team 1, Alfa Platoon was traveling across the United States on a tough and sad mission. He was going to meet with the family and loved ones of the team members who were on the mission together. He was going to talk with them about the death of their loved ones. Marcus was the only survivor of the mission.

The trip was extremely difficult. Not only would his news bring a reality to the death of his friends, but Marcus himself was still haunted by the screams of his team members as they fought the enemy and begged for help as they were mortally wounded.

All the meetings were difficult. Dan had a wife and sister who grieved him. Eric's admiral father was left to grieve. James had a father and fiancée grieving for him. Axe had a wife and friends of the family who grieved for him. Shane's mother received the terrible news. The toughest part of the trip was when Marcus went to Long Island to tell Maureen, the mother of his best friend, that her son was dead. Marcus told her that it was because of her son that he was alive. After he talked with her he had to meet with Mikey's fiancée.

The men were all SEALs and proud of their unique status. Marcus himself was a medic and sniper who was trained in unarmed combat, demolition, and weapons. He was very proud to be an American fighting for his country. His friends died while they were fighting in Afghanistan.

### Chapter 1 - To Afghanistan...in a Flying Warehouse

In Chapter 1, Marcus was on his way to Afghanistan. He and his team were going after the enemy who destroyed the World Trade Center. They were used to going to war and felt invincible. After all, they were tough and specially trained in combat, stealth, strategy, and weaponry. The men got the name SEAL because they could handle nearly anything on sea, air, and land.

In March of 2005, six of the men left Bahrain to go on a mission. To do this, they had to go through a town where anti-American sentiment was high. They loaded onto a C-130 Hercules and complained about the primitive travel. Marcus reflected that it was typical and relaxed but pointed out that if they were in the toughest of situations, no-one would complain. These were tough men who cared deeply about their country, their president, George W. Bush, and their work.



Now they were headed to Afghanistan mountains where al Qaeda fighters trained. The Taliban was determined to set up headquarters and training camps in the mountains. They were a tough enemy so the specially trained SEALs were sent into fight. The six members of the team were excited about going out to do their job fighting the Taliban. They had grown beards so they looked more like Afghan fighters, and were ready to fight.

The group was diverse. Petty Officer Matthew Gene Axelson wasn't even 30 yet. He was devoted to his wife and his parents and his brother. The guys called him Axe, and Marcus was close to him. Axe was Marcus' twin brother's best friend. Axe was a tall (6'4"), quiet man who was very smart. When fighting, he was precise and professional. He could be brutal in battle.

Lieutenant Michael Patrick Murphy, known as Mikey, was Marcus' best friend. He loved reading and was an experienced soldier. Marcus loved how Mikey made him laugh. He had a great sense of humor, but was also serious about his job. He was a responsible, natural leader.

Senior Chief Daniel Richard Healy was a 37-year-old man who was married and had seven children. He and Marcus were on the same team for three years. Danny referred to the rest of the team as his kids and guarded them as a father would guard his children.

Petty Officer Shane Patton was a 22-year-old son of a Navy SEAL. He was a skateboarder and surfer whom Marcus considered his protege. It was difficult for Marcus to relate to him since their personalities were so different, but he knew the young man was super-smart. In battle, he held his own and didn't get ruffled, which was extremely invaluable since he handled the radio.

James Suh was 28-years-old. He was very popular on the base. He was close to Shane and was a tough SEAL. He was very intelligent and cool under fire.

Marcus recalled arriving in Iraq three years earlier, on the day the U.S. Marines took Saddam's hometown. His team had been brought in for the dangerous jobs. The work was often dull, but important. They played by the book, making the enemy fear them. None of the SEAL team died in Iraq. Marcus commented on this, and it's a foreshadowing of what's to come when they choose not to play by the book. During the long flight, Marcus reflected on the growing problems the U.S. was facing, based on his experiences in Iraq.

## Chapter 2 - Baby Seals... and Big Ole Gators

When Chapter 2 opens, Marcus and the team are still in the air, flying to their destination. He is reflecting on his life at home in the United States. His twin brother, Morgan, is seven minutes older than he, and Morgan is also a SEAL. They live together in an apartment in Coronado, CA and have a close relationship. Together, they grew up on a ranch in Texas filled with oak trees and grazing animals. It's a very peaceful place. His family is Christian even though they don't go to church much.



His father taught his sons how to deal with the dangers of life. His mother had a knack for healing horses. Marcus reflects on how he came to be a Navy SEAL. He was a big, strong man (6'5"), determined man. His family was doing well in his early childhood, working with horses and selling to the rich oil people. The rise and fall of the monied oil people taught Marcus a good lesson on luck and keeping your money secure. His own family lost everything, including their house, because horses lost their value when the rich could no longer afford to purchase them.

Marcus worked four jobs to get through college. Life was tough, and he knew it. His father had taught him that. Relentless on discipline, because he loved his boys, the man was determined to have his sons ready to face the world's harshness. He taught the boys to shoot and survive in the wild. Marcus thought his father might have always wanted his sons to become SEALs since he was always talking about them. When he was 12, he made up his mind to become one.

At the age of 15, Marcus asked Billy Shelton for special training. It was brutal but helped prepare him. It helped prepare him for this mission. As Marcus flew on, he thought about how empty the mountains looked, yet it was where much of the world's violence originated. He thought about the Taliban and the way they rose in power. After seven hours in flight, they prepared to land in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Their mission was to stop tribal warriors from joining the Taliban cause.

### Chapter 3 - A School for Warriors

The team of six landed in Bagram in northeast Afghanistan right after the break of day. Marcus defined what made himself and his team stand out. It wasn't arrogance, but knowledge that they were elite. He left home on March 7, 1999 when he was 23.

When he signed up, they sent him to boot camp. He thought it would be easy, but had his first introduction to snow as the worst blizzard in a decade slammed the Navy Recruit Training Command in Great Lakes, Illinois. It wasn't easy. During the first week they learned to live by the ideal of honor, courage, and commitment. Week two was about developing confidence and learning to work as a team. The third week focused on hands-on learning about everything related to the ship. Week four focused on weaponry.

After graduation from boot camp, Marcus headed to Coronado and worked on getting back in shape. His body lost condition thanks to the blizzard and lack of exercise. He needed to get his body read for Indoctrination then Basic Underwater Demolition. Throughout all the training, teamwork was emphasized. Marcus commented on the fact that the SEAL teams never left a man - dead or alive. He pointed out that they did this for the soldiers themselves more than for the widows and loved ones. They all had a need to go home, preferably alive.

Training was brutal, but Marcus hadn't given up. He once fell from 50 feet up, but stood up and went back to training. Weeks later the medics diagnosed him with a cracked femur, but it never interrupted his training. Marcus knew he might not always be good enough, but he always did his best.



He listened carefully and made certain he was prepared for anything the officer threw at him. They had a serious lecture on SEAL ethos. They were not supposed to make mistakes. They had to remember accountability, respect, integrity, and reputation. They went through intense water training, and some of the trainees dropped out. Marcus excelled in this, thanks to his childhood. He struggled more with the running. Marcus found that the obstacle course was ideal for short guys, which he was not. The trainees also had to learn to deal with mental assaults so they could learn how to face injustice courageously. Indoc ended with inflatable boats. Instructor Reno congratulated Marcus on making it through the training.



# Chapters 4-6

## Chapters 4-6 Summary and Analysis

### Chapter 4 - Welcome to Hell, Gentlemen

At the beginning of Chapter 4, Marcus had experienced his last day of Indoc. He noticed that over 50 of the men who started out in the class never finished. He never noticed them leave, even his roommate. Next the group has to go through BUD/S. They had to survive Hell Week then go on to pool competency and weapons practicals.

Training was even more brutal than ever and 32 men dropped out before lunch the first day. This was several weeks before the official Hell Week. The men were relentlessly pushed, both physically and mentally. They ran, were sent into the icy surf only to come back and roll in sand and do pushups, hauled heavy logs, and had their pristine rooms trashed as they were yelled at.

They were told that 2/3 of them would quit. Captain Maguire gave a pep talk and told them to just try to make it through each day, and they would be all right. Only 54 of the initial 98 made it through the first four-week assessment. They went on to Hell Week. The men waited in a room for Hell Week to begin with Breakout. Men burst into the room with machine guns blaring as they shot the lights out. Ten men quit in the first nine hours of Hell Week. Marcus would never have thought of quitting.

### Chapter 5 - Like the Remnants of a Ravaged Army

Hell Week continues in Chapter 5. The men were surviving on little sleep and sheer willpower. They took their boats everywhere and survived on teamwork. They went approximately 40 hours without sleep and with extreme physical exertion, fending off hallucinations. Marcus felt that those who quit did so because they weren't heeding Captain Maguire's advice to take each task as it came and not think too far to the horrors ahead.

The instructors knew the maximum the men could handle and still survive, and they pushed them to this limit. More trainees quit, some shockingly qualified. During one exercise, Marcus was taken by ambulance to the medical center. He didn't even know his name at that point. He lost consciousness, and when he regained it, he went right back to training.

After three days without sleep, the men were sent to their tents for an hour and 45 minutes of rest. Marcus couldn't sleep. They all went back to training, maneuvering their boats and swimming. One of their last tests was the fabled around-the-world paddle. The exhausted men fought to get through the night as they dealt with hallucinations. After a seemingly endless night, they were pushed to do more exercising. The men were told it was Thursday, not Friday as they made their way through obstacles such as





barbed wire and slime as smoke and explosions surrounded them. There were 32 men who made it through the week.

There were still three weeks to go in the first phase. They were perfecting their techniques in hydrology and learning tide levels and ocean floor demographics. Marcus failed the pool competency test the first time around, as did many others. He passed the second time. There were 21 men who made it to phase three, which focused on land warfare.

During the following ten weeks, the men would work on land navigation in La Posta. After that they would spend four days at Camp Pendleton working at the shooting ranges. Finally, they would go to San Clemente Island for advanced shooting and tactics, demolitions, and field training. By the end of the fourth week, 20 men remained.

After Marcus completed BUD/S, he went to jump school at Fort Benning, Georgia, where he became a paratrooper. After that he went to the Eighteenth Delta Force medical program in Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He became a battlefield medic. He left there to go to North Carolina for SEAL qualification training then on to the SDV school (submarines) at Panama City, Florida. He was there when the New York City attack occurred on 9/11. It angered him, yet he didn't realize the true impact it would have on his life at that point.

Marcus received his Trident on January 31, 2002, then went on to communication school then Sniper School at Camp Pendleton. In a tough test, the men had to cross a desert undetected by their instructors. The last school Marcus attended was joint tactical air control at Fallon Naval Airbase in Nevada. Marcus explained that he went into all this detail about their training to prove why they thought they were invincible.

## Chapter 6 - 'Bye, Dudes, Give 'Em Hell

In Chapter 6, the reader is back to the action in Bagram. It's morning in March of 2005. They were briefed on what was going to happen. The Taliban were taking over the mountain, preparing to take back holy Muslim country they felt Americans had taken. They were preparing to set up a new government. The terrain was difficult to maneuver in, and stealth was key to the mission.

Marcus and his team were dropped by helicopters into a border hot spot. They saw three Afghanistan tribesmen who opened fire. Marcus fought them and they went silent. The mission included photographing villages. On another mission, 50 men were dropped into the mountains. It took them eight hours to go one-and-a-half miles over the tough terrain. On another mission the men had to target two Afghan villages, one of which housed a brilliant young Taliban scientist who was a master of explosives. He was Marcus' first close encounter with a fanatical Taliban fighter. It was also his first experience with the extreme hatred of the Taliban extremists. Marcus also realized that their rules of training were awkward in this setting. They couldn't kill unarmed civilians, but what about the informers? The Afghans knew Americans were at a disadvantage



because they didn't want to be perceived as murderers. Therefore, they were hesitant to shoot to kill.

Marcus talked about how difficult the politics were when one was faced with the reality of warfare. The enemy was out to get the U.S. soldiers, and they try to survive. Sometimes the wrong people were killed in the process, but survival is key. He pointed out that nothing was fair in war. The opponents knew their rules and used them against the Americans. The enemy would do anything to win. American soldiers feared repercussion from their own when fighting, and that limited them.

When the soldiers went out, they tried to identify those they came across. Were the goatherds or trained fighters of the Taliban? They soon found out that the fighters were much cleaner and very well-trained fighters who wouldn't run away. Their eyes burned with defiance.

Night maneuvers were especially difficult since they couldn't see. One night, Marcus landed in a hole and started sliding. He crashed right into the town head. his team members tried to stifle their laughter, but he realized in all seriousness, he could have brought typhoid to his entire base. Between missions, Marcus volunteered in the Bagram hospital where he also treated locals. Every day Marcus went to the intel office to get information on the infidel who was their next target. In the book, he calls the man Sharmak.

There was a sudden decision to go out on a mission to get Sharmak. Shane was supposed to be on the mission, but at the last minute he was replaced by Danny Dietz. The four-man team was in place. Axe and Marcus were the snipers; Mikey and Danny were the spotters. The mission was called off twice. On June 27, 2005, they were once again given the go-ahead. Oddly enough, as he let the briefing room, Marcus felt doubt and disquiet. The feeling didn't leave him. As the team looked at satellite images of the land, they realized there wasn't any place to hide, and their target was a master of the land. All the team members were uneasy, which was very unusual.

They landed and began ascending to their destination. The weather was fighting against them. The men were soaked from heavy rains and dealing with fog. They realized they had to go through an area of absolutely no cover.



# Chapters 7-9

## Chapters 7-9 Summary and Analysis

### Chapter 7 - An Avalanche of Gunfire

In Chapter 7, the team backed away from the farm. It was tough on Marcus who wasn't great at steep inclines due to his size. They zigzagged as they tried to find cover, keeping out of the moonlight. They found respite for a while then Mikey and Axe went to find a better spot. They moved on to that spot. It was perfect for viewing the village. The sun shone full-force, drying the men out then steaming them.

They waited and watched for hours. A man in a turban carrying an axe jumped over Marcus, scaring him. Axe had the man in his gun-sight. Goats surrounded them and two others appeared - a man and a boy who was around 14-years-old. Upon questioning, they said they weren't Taliban. Since they were unarmed civilians, obvious goatherds, the soldiers didn't know what to do with them. The Geneva Convention stated that they shouldn't be killed. Practicality on the battlefield indicated otherwise.

Mikey pointed out that if they killed them, their guys would figure it out quickly, especially since the goats would be unwatched. If bodies were found, the Americans would be charged with murder, and the team members would most likely be jailed. Danny tried to radio in for help on the situation, but nobody responded. The men took a vote and it was decided to let the men go free. Marcus had the last vote, and he voted to let them go. It would be a decision that haunted him for the rest of his life. The Afghan men ran off. An hour later, there was no sign of disturbance in the village and no sign of anyone coming after them.

Ten minutes later, it was a different story. There were between 80 and 100 heavily armed Taliban warriors coming after them with AK-47s and rocket-propelled grenades. One warrior was behind a tree with Marcus' head right in his gun-sight. Marcus shot him and blew his head off. All hell broke loose. Fighting hard, the team realized they had to move. They were boxed in on three sides. They backed over the side of the mountain, a sheer drop. A copse of trees gave them something to grab on to as they fell. Marcus lost his supplies in the fall. When he landed, his rifle was miraculously next to him.

After the fall, Mikey was next to Marcus. He noticed Mikey was shot, and blood was pouring out of his stomach. There wasn't any time to deal with it because the enemy were throwing grenades at them. They had to take cover. Axe soon joined them as they fought, and they kept on the lookout for Danny who eventually came hurtling down the mountain. When he landed at the bottom, he didn't move. Running out into the open they rescued Danny, knowing that no SEAL is left behind. Danny had been shot, and Marcus knew that as a medic he could have helped Mikey and Danny, but his supplies had been torn from him during his fall. They continued blasting at the enemy. The village was below them, and they tried to get to it. The odds against them were too great.



In desperation, they jumped off the mountain again. The drop was about 30-40 feet before they hit a level area. The Taliban kept firing at them, and Danny was shot again - this time in the back and out his stomach. He kept fighting back. More Taliban reinforcements came in. Marcus and his team continued fighting hard. Danny was shot yet again - this time through his neck. He continued shooting, even though he couldn't speak. They knew they had to get down to the village.

#### Chapter 8 - The Final Battle for Murphy's Ridge

Mike made the call at the beginning of Chapter 8, "Fall back." Axe shot through a hole and out over the edge of the mountain. Marcus followed but was stuck under the log. An RPG hit the log and freed him. Amazingly, his rifle was still with him when he landed after flying off the edge of the mountain. The four continued fighting approximately 80 Taliban fighters. Danny was shot again. He continued trying to fire his rifle. Marcus was dragging him to safety and he continued firing at the enemy.

They had to get to the village. Marcus was on the move; Axe acknowledged that right before he was shot in the chest. He grabbed his weapon and began firing again. They struggled down, and Danny was shot again. This time he died in Marcus' arms. Marcus had to leave his body there or die himself. He rejoined the team. Even as he wrote, he had nightmares about Danny's death. He had to tell the others about Danny, and it tore at them all that they couldn't go back to get his body.

The men continued to fight, but they couldn't get to the village. Mikey was shot through the chest, and Axe was shot in the head. Mikey took out his mobile phone. They hadn't used it up to this point because it would betray their position. He walked to open ground to get a signal, sacrificing his life for his comrades. He was shot in the back. When the call was over, he staggered back and began shooting again. As they were trying to gain ground, Axe walked by Marcus. The right side of his head was almost gone. Mikey screamed for Marcus to help him, but he couldn't. Mikey died. Marcus found Axe and knew he wasn't going to survive. With his last words, he asked Marcus to tell his wife he loved her.

The Taliban fighters didn't find Marcus. When the battle was over he couldn't stand because his leg was full of shrapnel, and his pants had been blown off. Incredibly, his weapon was still next to him. His faith in God had not let him down, and while he lost his human teammates, he still felt God's presence. He refused to quit and hunkered in as he watched the Taliban soldiers hunt for him.

Help was on the way thanks to Mikey, but the Taliban fighters were waiting for them. They took down a MH-47, killing the soldiers within. Marcus hadn't known that at this point. He was trying to make contact by radio, but he couldn't speak because he was so dehydrated his tongue was sticking to the roof of his mouth. He used an infrared strobe light and the laser from his rifle to signal the regular U.S. flyby. As he lay hidden, Marcus killed three Taliban fighters who could have found him. He had to get out of there and survive for his friends. He also desperately needed water.



His legs were working now, although he was in great pain from what he later found out was three cracked vertebrae. He also had a torn rotator cuff and a broken nose.

#### Chapter 9 - Blown-up, Shot, and Presumed Dead

Marcus decided to move up to the top of the mountain in the beginning of Chapter 9. He wanted the advantage of flat ground and also wanted to be able to call for help. Getting away from the village was a priority, also.

Moving upwards and looking for water, Marcus sensed something behind him after a few hours. It was pitch black that night so he couldn't see anything clearly. Marcus continued to hear people tracking him. As he was trying to get away, he fell off the mountain. The people following him grew louder, and they had dogs. He heard the sound of the river, but it was the river that flowed past his dead comrades, and he refused to drink from it. Survival became a mental battle, and it was tempting to give up, but Marcus kept pulling himself from these thoughts.

The sun came up, and the heat was intense. He thought about going down the mountain for water and realized that the snow at the peak must melt and flow somewhere. As he was mentally reciting the 23rd Psalm from the Bible, Marcus heard water. He thought about home and whether his family wondered if he were dead.

Back at home in Texas, his parents heard about the mission. The newspaper reporters were stating that all of the men had been killed in action. People - friends and neighbors - gathered to stay with them until they heard definite news. The SEALs wouldn't believe he was dead until they found a body, and Morgan insisted his brother was alive. People donated services and food so hundreds were fed over the days. The people at the ranch supported his family and prayed.

Back on the mountain, a Taliban sniper shot Marcus. He slid down the mountain again. The Taliban continued shooting at him, but he was rolling down the mountain and was moving too erratically for them to get him. Thinking of his brother and how he would get out of the situation gave him strength. He waited until a Taliban fighter was very close to him, then shot. He killed two others with a grenade and knew he had to get out of there. Marcus also had to figure out how to fight alone.

He crawled for miles and found a waterfall. Standing up, he scoped the area, and his leg gave out. He fell again, and it took two hours to get to the water. As he was drinking Marcus noticed three men near him. One was yelling at him. He tried to crawl away. They weren't trying to kill him, and Marcus discovered that they weren't Taliban. One was the village doctor. They chose to save his life and protect him.



# Chapters 10-11

## Chapters 10-11 Summary and Analysis

### Chapter 10 - An American Fugitive Cornered by the Taliban

In Chapter 10, Sarawa took him to the village and patched him up. They took his belongings, and he was finally able to rest. The home was very simple. Taliban fighters burst into his room and beat him. They interrogated him for hours. A young boy around 17 came in, and enjoyed watching the soldiers beat Marcus. They messed with his camera and rifle. The village elder came in. Marcus found out later that he told the Taliban fighters that they couldn't take him away.

Sarawa and other villagers took him away to a cave on June 30. They gave him an old Pepsi bottle to drink from. It smelled horrible. Marcus drank by pouring drink into his mouth rather than sipping from it so he wouldn't get typhoid. Sarawa left the cave saying he would come back in five minutes, but he was gone for more than two hours. While he was gone, Marcus re-thought his situation. Sarawa came back five hours after he had left.

Back at the ranch, over 200 people had gathered. People continued to send food and help. In July, many lost hope, but Morgan kept insisting his brother was alive. The SEALs still wouldn't give up, either.

Marcus was taken from his cave back to the village. The children in the village came to visit him, and he enjoyed their company. He learned there was an American base two miles away. He couldn't walk thanks to his injuries. It wasn't safe for him to remain in the village, and the villagers were in danger, too, for harboring him. They came up with a plan. Marcus wrote a note stating they helped him, and Gulab's father took it to the American base. Marcus was in severe pain from his wounds, and they gave him some opium. He thought it was amazing and understood why it was so addictive.

### Chapter 11 - Reports of My Death Greatly Exaggerated

The Taliban fighters were threatening the villagers, demanding that they hand over the American. Gulab assured Marcus of his safety. Marcus tried to pay him for his kindness by giving Gulab his watch, but he wouldn't take it. One day the villagers called out to him excitedly because they had seen a parachute. They gave him back his gear. Using the pen and paper in the box, he drew pictures for the kids and learned from their responses that he would have supplies.

The villagers spread out to find out what was dropped. They brought back what they could, but the Taliban fighters beat them to the useful items. The kids had been beaten by the Taliban fighters. This made Marcus upset. He rigged up his radio emergency beacon and left it on the windowsill. That afternoon, the Americans began bombing the



Taliban. Fearing retaliation from the Taliban, Marcus knew he had to leave the village. They made plans to head out that night.

When darkness fell, their plans were thwarted by a colossal thunderstorm. Back in Texas, Marcus' mom was getting depressed. Marcus had been missing for five days. Even more people came to offer support. It bolstered the family, and they never forgot the kindness and generosity of those who came to be with them. It was tough to keep positive when there were continuous negative reports. Once when Marcus' mom was crying, Senior Chief Gothro talked with her telling her that Marcus was Missing in Action - not dead in their opinion. He insisted none of them believed Marcus was dead without a body. She rallied.

Marcus was furious that he had slept through the night instead of leaving. He went outside to think it through. While he was there, Gulab hurried over to him and told him to run since Taliban fighters were in the village. They ran into a home for shelter. Marcus learned the true meaning of lokhay. It meant the village would fight to the death for him. Marcus discussed strategy with Gulab. The Taliban left. Gulab insisted that helicopters would come, then took Marcus out of the village into the mountains.

Back in Texas there were now nearly 300 people trying to stay optimistic. These supporters prayed for Marcus and thought about him, trying to connect to him.

In the mountain, Marcus was still moving. He saw Sharmak, the man who was his mission. Tempted to shoot him dead, Marcus knew that if he did, he, too, would die. And so would Gulab. Sharmak and Gulab conversed, and Marcus wondered what they were discussing.



# Chapter 12- Afterword

## Chapter 12- Afterword Summary and Analysis

Chapter 12 - "Two-two-eight! It's Two-two-eight!"

As Chapter 12 began, Sharmak left. He had given Gulab a note telling him that his family would be killed if he didn't hand Marcus over. They waited, but nothing happened. They began to move up the mountain again. An Afghani fighter was in their path. When he saw Marcus, he raised his weapon. On his hat, there was a badge saying, "Bush for President." Gulab started reciting Marcus' BUD/S class numbers, and the men realized Marcus was American.

Teams had been searching for Marcus since Wednesday, and now it was Sunday. They fixed Marcus up, setting his wounds. Marcus told them how dangerous their situation on the mountain was. He told them what happened to his team comrades and where they could find the bodies and made maps of the Taliban camps. He asked how they found him and discovered it was the beacon signal from the window. They went back to the village and radioed back to the base that Marcus was safe then debriefed.

They heard the helicopter, and the Taliban came out in full force. American military fought hard, and the Taliban lost that night. Marcus and Gulab loaded onto the helicopter to go back to the base. They parted ways there. Marcus was on his way back to Bagram. Six days and four hours after he left, he was back - a very different man. He was treated for his wounds, and his parents were informed that he was alive.

People kept filing in to talk with Marcus as he recovered. He was fighting a mountain bacteria. They had an intensive debriefing. The bodies of his friends were found after Marcus pointed them out on a map, which was very difficult to do. Mikey's and Danny's bodies were brought to the base first. They hadn't been able to find Axe. The coffins were treated with the greatest respect. Marcus flashed back to the terror on the mountain. He was worried that they wouldn't find Axe's body. They contacted the head man in the village. They found his body a few hundred yards from where Marcus thought it should have been. All the bodies had been found. Marcus flew out July 8 to Germany where he spent nine days recovering from his wounds, his back, and the bug (which lasted for months). He left Germany for the U.S.A. His family met him at the airport in San Antonio, Texas.

He saw the love people had shown his family. They had even built a house for him. Marcus received a phone call from President George Bush who said he was proud of him. It meant the world to him. He also had a meeting with Admiral Mullin who also said he was proud of him. The great man also asked if there was anything Marcus wanted. Marcus asked if they could send his Star of Texas patch to the President. He also told his superiors that he wanted to go back to Bahrain. He flew back September 12, 2005.





They completed their tour and flew back to Hawaii in late October. When that was done, Marcus began his journey to see the relatives of his fallen comrades and tell their story. They drove to Las Vegas from San Diego to meet the families of Shane Patton, who was killed in the helicopter crash on the mountain. They went to Mikey's mother and fiancée in New York then went on to Washington, D.C. to meet with the parents of Eric Kristensen, their acting commanding officer who was part of the helicopter deaths. In Arlington Cemetery, they visited the graves of Mike McGreevy and Jeff Lucas, who also died in the helicopter. After Arlington they visited James Suh's huge family after they flew across the country. Back in California, they visited the family of Dan Healy who was buried at Point Loma, San Diego, which is near Coronado. Visiting Chico, they talked with Axe's family and Marcus passed on Axe's final words - the message that he loved Cindy. Even though Danny Dietz was buried in Colorado, they went to Virginia Beach to talk with his wife.

After the trip, Marcus was posted in Coronado due to his injuries. He joined SEAL Team 5 where he became the leading petty officer to Alfa Platoon. It brought back memories of training and what he had been through. He knew who he was and was proud. He was a Navy SEAL.

Epilogue: Lone Star

On September 13, 2005, Danny and Axe were awarded the highest honor possible - the Navy Cross for combat heroism. On July 18, 2006, Marcus went to the White House to get his. He was honored to meet President Bush in the Oval Office and shake his hand. On the President's desk was the battle patch Marcus had sent. The President planned to put it in his future museum.

Afterword

Marcus redeployed with SEAL Team 5 in Iraq in the fall of 2006. His wounds had not completely healed, but he wanted to finish out his contract. On the same flight was Petty Officer Morgan Luttrell.



# Characters

## Marcus Luttrell

Marcus is the main character and the man who co-wrote this book. He was a Navy SEAL who was proud to serve his country, even if he had to give up his own life. He had a twin brother who also became a SEAL. Marcus was humble. He was a tall man who wasn't the fastest or best at everything he did, but he did have determination. He trained hard and fought tough. When he was young, his father was hard on him, teaching him how to overcome obstacles life threw at a person. While others might have thought this was particularly harsh, he knew his dad did it out of love. He had great respect for his fellow soldiers and he was sharp on the battlefield. Marcus had a strong faith in God. He also had a strong sense of honor, which he displayed on the battlefield and off. In spite of his own hardships, he went out of his way to speak to each of the families of his fallen comrades.

## Mikey

Mikey was Marcus' best friend. His real name was Lieutenant Michael Patrick Murphy. At the book opened, Marcus was on his way to Long Island to talk with Mikey's mother and fiancée. The man was greatly loved. He really enjoyed reading, and he was a very experienced soldier who could keep his cool in tough situations. He fought hard even after he was fatally wounded. Marcus loved the way that Mikey made him laugh. The man was a responsible, natural leader. As the team members were shot down and surrounded by Taliban fighters with their communication radios gone, Mikey made a decision to use a cell phone to call in for backups. He knew this call would cost him his life because he had to step away from his shelter and out into the open to get a signal for the call. He did it without bravado and was shot, but he continued to relay the message. He died a true hero.

## Matthew Gene Axelson

Matthew Gene Axelson was Marcus' brother's best friend. He was quiet and smart but brutal in battle.

## Daniel Richard Healy

Daniel Richard Healy was a married man with seven children. He and Marcus were on the same team for three years.



## **Shane Patton**

Shane Patton was the 22-year-old son of a Navy SEAL. Marcus considered him his protege.

## **James Suh**

James Suh was a popular young man of 28. He was very close to Shane. Very intelligent, he was also cool under fire.

## **The Taliban**

The Taliban were fighting in the mountains trying to create more training camps. Marcus viewed them as violent religious fanatics.

## **Gulab**

Gulab was Marcus' best friend in the Afghan village. He protected him and made sure he was fed and cared for.

## **Sarawa**

Sarawa was the village doctor who saved and protected Marcus.

## **Morgan**

Morgan was Marcus' twin brother who was naturally good at everything. He, too, was a Navy SEAL.

## **David**

David didn't let the hard times in life keep him down. A former Navy gunner in Vietnam, he taught his sons how to rise up against adversity. He was Marcus' father.

## **Holly**

Holly was a brilliant horsewoman with a knack for healing horses. She's a 7th generation Texan who once spent some time living in New York City. She was Marcus' mother.



# Objects/Places

## Texas

Texas is where Marcus grew up. He is very proud of his heritage and attributes his stubbornness and courage to his heritage there.

## Coronado

Coronado is where the Navy SEALs received their training.

## Bagram

Bagram is where Marcus and his comrades took off to go out on their mission. He returned there without his team.

## Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is where the SEAL members were dropped off. It's a landlocked country that's approximately the size of Texas.

## Hindu Kush

Hindu Kush was the mountain range where the SEAL members were sent to fight the members of the Taliban.

## Asadabad

Asadabad is the town where the American base was. It's where Gulab's dad went to find help for Marcus.

## Waterfall

Marcus was found by the villagers at a waterfall.

## Bahrain

Bahrain is where Marcus and his men were stationed. It is where he went to go finish his tour.



## **Germany**

Germany is where Marcus went to heal.

## **Long Island**

Long Island is where Marcus was going at the beginning of the book when he went to talk with Mikey's mother and wife.

## **Las Vegas**

Las Vegas is where Marcus met with Shan Patton's family.

## **Washington, D.C.**

Washington, D.C. is where Marcus met with Eric Kristensen's family.

## **Arlington National Cemetery**

Arlington National Cemetery is where Mike and Jeff were buried.

## **Point Loma, San Diego**

Point Loma, San Diego is where Dan was buried.

## **Chico**

Chico is where Marcus met with Axe's family.

## **Virginia Beach**

Virginia Beach is where Marcus met with Danny's family.



# Themes

## Pride in Being a Navy SEAL

Marcus has great regard and passion for those who survive the training to become a Navy SEAL. When he was young his father told Marcus and his twin brother a story about the Navy SEALs - the elite group of fighters who were sent into the most dangerous situations. He trained with a local with a tough reputation so he would be ready to attend SEAL training. The training was still brutal. Marcus never took his eyes off his goal, though, and he eventually became part of the strong brotherhood of men trained to deal with the toughest situations on sea, air, and land. The men were pretty near invincible and would fight to their dying breath for their country.

Every time the men went out on a mission, they knew that they might not survive. They also knew that the odds were great that they would survive thanks to their training. The SEALs have a dictate that no man is ever left behind. Marcus thought this to be very comforting and helpful psychologically. The men watched out for each other, they were trained to work as a team, and their families were never left wondering what happened to them. Watching his fellow comrades die on the battlefield was excruciatingly difficult for Marcus; however, he knew that they were some of the best fighters and had done everything that they could for their country. The four men faced almost 100 opponents, and the opponents were the ones who had to call in reserve troops.

## God and Faith

Marcus' parents raised him in the Christian faith. While he was growing up, he never attended church regularly, but he was still very serious about his relationship with God. He referred to his faith many times throughout the book. When he was training and had to carry a heavy log, he commented that no piece of wood in all of history except for the one Jesus Christ carried to Calvary had ever been heavier.

Each time Marcus fell down the mountain, he landed with his rifle next to him. He attributed this to a miracle, and took it as proof that God intended for him to remain living. He prayed to God regularly for guidance, and didn't doubt God even when God's ways weren't clear to him.

In the village, the children told him about Allah and tried to convert him to Islam. He joined the family in their prayers, but was silently praying to his own God. While he was missing, his family was back in Texas waiting to hear news about his death or survival. Family, friends, neighbors, SEALs, and even strangers gathered at the ranch to offer his family support. They prayed to God for his safety, and they sang hymns and recited the 23rd Psalm. This was a Psalm he was often repeating to himself. Marcus felt that their prayers were a great source of comfort for his parents, especially his mother. He felt that it is part of what got him through the ordeal. Even though he was devastated to lose



his comrades on the mission, Marcus took comfort in the fact that they, too, were Christians.

## Family and Friends

Marcus felt very strongly about his family and his friends. As the book opened, he was driving across the country to talk with the families of each of his fallen comrades in person so he could tell them about the death of their loved ones, including how much they meant to him, and how they inspired him as a soldier. He thought very highly of these men both as friends and as soldiers.

He also had great respect for his own family. He wrote about the way his mother had a unique touch with horses. His father was the one who introduced him to the idea of becoming a Navy SEAL. Both his parents stuck together in good times and in tough times. They showed Marcus how to plan for and face the future.

One of the closest people to Marcus was his twin brother, Morgan. He was a few minutes older than Marcus, and Marcus held him in high esteem. It was he who refused to accept that Marcus was dead when he was missing in action. Morgan felt he had a direct link to his twin brother and would have known if Marcus was dead.

When Marcus was missing, around 300 friends came to help his family get through the tough time. Marcus was extremely grateful for that and realized that was how his parents made it. People donated their time, their resources, and their talents to help the family. When he came back to recover from his injuries, kind friends had even made him a house so he could recover in peace. He commented that he and his family would never forget the kindness shown them.



# Style

## Perspective

Marcus Luttrell was proud to be a Navy SEAL fighting for his country. He had survived the tough training and was ready for action on the dangerous mission that he and his comrades were on. A good portion of this book showed the intense training the SEALs went through. It is very clear to the reader that it was not a matter of bragging, but more of a matter of showing how well trained these men were so that they received the respect they deserved.

The book was written in first person from Marcus' point of view. There were times when he addressed the reader directly with comments such as "trust me." Throughout the book the reader understands what the mission was, how dangerous it was, what it took to become a Navy SEAL, and what the political situation on the battlefield is really like. Warding off prejudice, the author was very clear that the Taliban fighters had very different beliefs than some of the other people in Afghanistan.

Since he was the one who survived the battle and saw his friends die, Marcus had a unique perspective on the situation that occurred on the mountain. His story was one of bravery amidst the most severe adversity. It was also a story of respect and hope. It showed the reader the dedication of those fighting for their country and gave them an inside look into the background activity that the reader might not glean from the news.

## Tone

The tone of this book is subjective. *Lone Survivor: The Eyewitness Account of Operation Redwing and the Lost Heroes of SEAL Team 10* is a narration of the events that happened to Navy SEAL Marcus Luttrell and his team members. Even though the topic is very serious, the book is readable, moving along without becoming too depressing. The individuals highlighted are not glorified, nor are they unjustly disregarded, even in the case of the enemy.

The reader has the opportunity to connect with the author and with military life on a personal and professional basis. Marcus' constant regard for his friends and family showed his human qualities, and his willingness to help others actually helped keep him alive. The tone is casual, and the writing is in first person. Although it's historic, it's clear that Marcus is trying to remain objective. At the end of the book he thanks others for their record-keeping. He admitted that he didn't remember some of the specifics, yet the records and logs kept this book factual.

The language in this book is very clear and earthy. It's filled with swearing. The author is educated, expanding the reader's vocabulary but never to a point where the ideas couldn't be understood. All the tough words are used in context so the reader is never lost. This is also true regarding military explanations. When Marcus describes





weaponry, tactical moves, and other military terms, the reader gets a clear understanding and visual as to what is going on even if the reader is not familiar with military protocol.

## Structure

Lone Survivor: The Eyewitness Account of Operation Redwing and the Lost Heroes of SEAL Team 10 consists of a prologue, 12 chapters followed by an epilogue, an afterword, acknowledgements and photos before finishing up with information about the authors. The chapters are named, and the name pulls out a pivotal point in each chapter. Following the chapter title is a brief quote from within the chapter. The book jumps back and forth from after the mission to the mission itself to before the mission. The second chapter offers a detailed description of the members of Marcus' team. The chapters vary in length, but generally run around 30 pages.

The very beginning of the book highlights a dedication page. It lists all those who died during the mission. There is also a map of the area they fought in when they were in Afghanistan. The end of the book contains images so the reader can clearly see and visualize the members of the team before they headed out on their mission. The images show the men as well as the families and fiancées they left behind. On a happier note, there are also positive images such as the one that shows President George Bush pinning the Navy Cross on the author's uniform in the Oval Office. It was one of the highlights of the author's life.

## Quotes

"I tried to get a hold of myself. But again in my mind I heard that terrible, terrible scream, the same one that awakens me, bullying its way into my solitary dreams, night after night, the confirmation of guilt. The endless guilt of the survivor." Chapter 1, p. 4.

"Somehow, shifting positions in the big Hercules freighter, we were leaving behind a place which was systematically tearing itself apart and heading for a place full of wild mountain men who were hell-bent on tearing Chapter 1, Lone Survivor: The Eyewitness Account of Operation Redwing and the Lost Heroes of SEAL Team 10 pp. 13.

"And I can state with absolute certainty that all six of us were excited by the prospect, looking forward to doing our job out there in the open, confident of our ultimate success, sure of our training, experience, and judgment." Chapter 1, p. 15.

"Because in the end, your enemy must ultimately fear you, understand your supremacy. That's what we were taught, out there in the absolute front line of U.S. military might. And that's probably why we never lost one Navy SEAL in all my long months in Iraq. Because we played it by the book." Chapter 1, p. 28.

"Over and over during training, we were told never to be complacent, reminded constantly of the sheer cunning and unpredictability of our terrorist enemy, of the necessity for total vigilance at all times, of the endless need to watch out for our teammates." Chapter 1, p. 30.

"Hardly a day goes by, wherever I am in the world, when I don't think of our little ranch and my huge circle of family and friends, of having a beer on the front porch and telling tall stories full of facts, some of 'em true, all of 'em funny." Chapter 2, p. 45.

"You know, I think Dad always wanted us to be Navy SEALs. He was forever telling us about those elite warriors, the stuff they did and what they stood for." Chapter 2, p. 53.

"Honor, Courage, Commitment, the motto of the United States Navy, the core values that immediately became the ideals we all lived by." Chapter 3, p. 78.

"Whatever the risk to the living, however deadly the opposing fire, SEALs will fight through the jaws of death to recover the remains of a fallen comrade. It's a maxim that has survived since the SEALs were first formed in 1962, and it still applies today." Chapter 3, p. 81.

"The screaming had stopped. For everyone except me. I still hear Mikey, every night." Chapter 7, p. 240.

"My God had not spoken again. But neither had He forsaken me. I knew that." Chapter 7, p. 243.



"Lokhay means not only providing care and shelter, it means an unbreakable commitment to defend that wounded man to the death." Chapter 9, p. 285.

"I have only one piece of advice for what it's worth: if you don't want to get into a war where things go wrong, where the wrong people sometimes get killed, where innocent people sometimes have to die, then stay the hell out of it in the first place." Chapter 9, p. 313.

## Topics for Discussion

What was the team's mission, and why was it dangerous?

What unusual circumstances did the team face on the mountain making it more challenging for them?

What caused the mission to turn out badly? How could it have been prevented?

What kept Marcus from succumbing to his pain and giving up?

How did Marcus react mentally to his situation after his teammates died?

How did Marcus' family respond to his disappearance? What helped them?

What did Marcus do after he recovered and was home for a while?

Why did the author write the book?