

As the son of an American Air Force official, William H. McRaven loved adventure since he was a child. On Friday evenings, the five-year-old McRaven would creep into the American Officers' Club in Fontainebleau, France where his family was located. Holed up behind the bar, he would tune in as his dad and different officials lounging around an oval table alternately recounted accounts of World War Two battles, life in the course of battle and the brave deeds of honorable warriors.

McRaven not before long grew up and soon had his own couple stories to tell. As summarized, the sea stories narrated herein draw upon McRaven's life and his enduring career as a Navy SEAL official and leader of America's Special Operations Forces. They are the sort of stories mariners tell on long travels from home – or while sitting around a table at Fontainebleau.

William McRaven was a gutsy child and once made his way into a high-security nuclear site.

In 1963, William McRaven's dad was posted from Fontainebleau, France to Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas after enduring a minor stroke. There, in the military complex known as Medina Annex, McRaven was allowed to wander outside. Be that as it may, at the Cold War was most intense, one region of the complex was specifically off-bounds.

Encompassed by three eight-foot-high spiked metal wire fences, it was claimed that the high-security ammo storeroom in Medina Annex held atomic weapons. What's more, in 1966, with the assistance of his companions Billie and Jon, McRaven had made an arrangement to break into it.

"Activity Volcano," as they called it, was propelled by government agent stories and the volcanic-shaped Gravel Gertie dugouts in which the ammo inside was kept. The unserious mission was to determine if activities that were a risk to their nation were going on inside.

Outfitted with toy firearms and hot-dogs to guard them against the facility's K-9 watchdogs, McRaven and his companions discovered a forested zone of the fencing where they would make their entry. They slid long wooden boards against the steel hindrance, building an improvised bridge to the opposite side.

Despite the fact that Jon and Billie were hesitant initially, McRaven made it right to the highest point of the third fence before the sound of alarms and the increasing barks of watchdogs sent him into frenzy mode.

Air Police reported over a bull horn that the encroachers were in a limited region and that the utilization of deadly power was allowed. As opposed to turning himself over, McRaven ran back up the boards, sprinting over the two barriers left. As he made this move, his Roy Rogers pearl-handled six-shooter cap weapon fell behind, despite all of this confusion, he

and his companions figured out how to make their way to McRaven's home undetected and safe.

After a while, McRaven's dad returned home and inquired as to whether he knew anything about the recent break-in at the ammo storeroom., McRaven for the first time misled his dad, affirming that he didn't know anything about the event. His father's look showed he was filled with dissatisfaction. In any case, it was a sense of relief to McRaven, when his father never asked any further questions

That night, as he went to bed, lying beside him on the nightstand was his six-shooter cap weapon. Furthermore, although the occurrence taught him never to deceive his dad again, it absolutely didn't subdue his hunger for adventure.

While he was training to become a Navy SEAL officer, McRaven survived a helicopter crash, which taught him never to give up.

The psychological and physical energy involved in the half-a-year long Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL (BUD/S) training makes it the most troublesome aspect of completing the Navy SEAL training. Truth be told, in 1977, when McRaven began his training, the number of participants that made it through was less than half. That is mostly because one can quit relatively easily: you are simply required to ring a bell multiple times.

Seemingly the most difficult time of BUD/S is the notorious Hell Week. Hell Week is six days of no rest, incessant badgering and enthusiastic physical activities. Numerous instructions were conceived to be difficult to achieve. One official would pose unusual inquiries to McRaven, for example, he could be asked if he thought his girlfriend was beautiful. When he said yes, the instructor would appoint more push-ups after labeling him a liar.

Once during Hell Week, McRaven's misguided thinking while coordinating a boat group caused the boat to capsize. The way that this disappointment made others be cold and wet was especially troubling. In any case, by cooperating, he and his colleagues had the opportunity to get back in the boat and complete the activity.

From this experience and a lot more after that McRaven learned that strength, insight, and speed had a little influence on excellence in training; the eventual victors were just the individuals who continued on despite failure.

With this understanding new to him, he had almost completed the half-a-year training when he encountered an unforeseen circumstance. In the last BUD/S activity, helicopter cast and recovery, students were to hop from a twin-bladed CH-46 helicopter into the Coronado Bay and move up again into the aircraft, utilizing a rope stepping stool.

McRaven was back in the aircraft when he noticed there was an issue. Water was surging over his feet, and the team was no longer able to oversee the helicopter, which had lost power in one engine. Everybody was requested to leave the aircraft, and McRaven jumped into the water, swimming away as deep as could be expected under the circumstances and surfacing just when he was certain to have cleared the sharp edges.

At the point when McRaven thought everybody had made it out securely, a fellow participant cautioned him to look around in the water: the uncontrollable aircraft was drifting towards him! Swimming as quickly as possible, McRaven avoided the aircraft without wasting much time. Unknowing to him, the experience was just a sample of what trajectory his career would take.

McRaven's first war duty started with the premier naval conflict of Operation Desert Storm.

Over his initial 15 years as a naval officer, McRaven saw both the courage of officers and the mishap of loss, from unsuccessful missions and training that had gone amiss. In any case, he still couldn't seem to serve his nation in a manner he thought would give his life some significance. Basically, he desired to be part of an honorable battle.

His opportunity came in 1990 when Saddam Hussein attacked Kuwait. During that period, McRaven was on duty on board an amphibious assault ship called the USS Okinawa. In the following weeks, President Bush arranged commanded Desert Shield for the organization of troops to defend Saudi Arabia.

The USS Okinawa was used as the foremost ship for Amphibious Squadron Five, which in cooperation with the thirteenth Marine Expeditionary Unit/Special Operations Capable (MEU/SOC), made up the ARG (Amphibious Ready Group)/MEU Team. Under the authority of the squadron commodore and MEU/SOC authority, McRaven was given the twofold obligation of Naval Special Warfare Task Unit leader and senior special official.

while standing by in the Indian Ocean, the Okinawa got the information that the Amuriyah, an Iraqi supertanker, was moving "something" of importance to Saddam Hussein. This, in addition to the knowledge that Hussein himself had instructed the shipmaster not to stop under any circumstances, lent credence to the notion that the tanker may contain synthetic or atomic weapons.

As they were the main squadron on duty better positioned to force themselves onto a ship, the job of cutting the journey of Amuriyah short became the responsibility of the ARG/MEU team.

By getting onto Amuriyah from a helicopter, McRaven commanded a troop of Marines and SEALs to bring down the ship. The shipmaster and his team opposed, however, McRaven was eventually able to bring the ship to a halt without any loss of lives.

Nothing suspicious was found in the ship's consignment that day, and the Amuriyah was permitted to proceed to Iraq. Be that as it may, as it turned out, McRaven's endeavors had not been totally misinformed. In January 1991, the US found that Saddam Hussein was intending to sink Iraqi oil ships to elicit a biological calamity in the Arabian Gulf. Before any oil was stacked onto them, US troops were able to bomb these ships.

And for sure, Amuriyah was among them.

A parachute mishap nearly brought McRaven's career to an end.

In 2001, McRaven was filling in as the commodore of Naval Special Warfare Group One – a segment of the US Special Operations Command – while occasionally also leading all SEALs on the West Coast.

He was so successful in his career that the commander of Naval Special Warfare Command, Admiral Eric Olson, who was his boss was lining him up for promotion to admiral. Olson had made sure that his next task was to serve in the Pentagon as a Navy staff.

Be that as it may, as McRaven found out painfully, life definitely doesn't always have good things in stock for us. While he was on a freefall training jump south of San Diego with 15 other SEALs, a SEAL falling just beneath him pulled his ripcord, wrapping him in the parachute covering.

The power sent him spiraling haphazardly in the sky. Not being able to recognize his position, he pulled his own ripcord. As soon as the parachute opened up, the two nylon straps joining the shelter to the bridle folded over his feet. When the shot out covering caught air, it brutally destroyed his legs.

The agony was very painful, however, he reached the ground safely, and his companions rapidly carried him to the medical center. His pelvis had been pushed apart by five inches, the muscles in his stomach area and legs had been isolated from his bones, and he had somewhat broken his back. He consented to carry out a procedure that involved [utting a screw close to his spine to keep his pelvis in place, and with the help of his significant other, Georgeann, had the option to recuperated quickly.

In spite of his perseverance and recuperation, he was still using a wheelchair. It was looking somewhat uncertain that he was going to be successful in the full medical examination required by Navy guidelines to decide if he was fit to proceed with service. On the off chance that he failed, he would lose his forthcoming employment at the Pentagon.

It was known to him that the Navy was an establishment of stern principles and guidelines. Yet, Admiral Olson, in any case, made a deal to avoid sending the medical examination papers to Washington. This demonstration of outrageous benevolence was something McRaven recalled and repaid for the remainder of his career.

Subsequent to extending the period until when the medical necessities have to be fulfilled, Olson gave him 30 additional days to recuperate before informing Pentagon of his medical status. What's more, on September 11, during his additional long stretch of leave, he and his wife saw the horrific incidence of planes ram into the World Trade Center towers and the Pentagon.

Following the September 11 attack, McRaven contributed to coordinating the War on Terror from the White House.

In the weeks following September 11, the White House National Security Council set up the department of Combating Terrorism. McRaven took the position of Director of Strategy and Military Affairs for the new department, as his bosses thought that he would be more useful in the White House fighting the war than serving on the Navy Staff in the Pentagon.

You may as of now know about McRaven's work in the White House. During the early period of the commencement of his duty, a man by the name of Richard Reid tried to explode an explosive made out of his shoe on an American Airlines flight departing from Paris to Miami.

McRaven was told by an explosives specialist that this sort of bomb was an undeniable danger to airline voyagers. Accordingly, he exhorted his senior, General Wayne Downing, that the shoes and laptops of US-bound aircraft travelers should be checked. These guidelines are still in effect today!

Added to his job as Director of Military Affairs, McRaven was the new leader of the Interagency Hostage Coordination Group, and in this way in charge of liaising with the administration's several agencies in endeavoring to bring American citizens held as hostages home safely. In November 2001, he got a highly classified report specifying the hijacking of American missionaries Martin and Gracia Burnham by the terrorist organization Abu Sayyaf at Dos Palmas Resort on the Philippine island of Palawan.

As a rule, America's "no payment" strategy implied that there was not much that the US government could do in hostage circumstances. However, since Abu Sayyaf was a member of Al-Qaeda, McRaven wanted to persuade the president that a mission to rescue the hostages could likewise serve their push to disassemble the fanatic association.

He proposed an arrangement to President Bush which included the sending of Special Forces known as Green Berets to assist the Philippine Army with training and support in their quest to capture the terrorists. The CIA had consented to give covert aerial reconnaissance to help find the hostages. In conclusion, for the mission, an FBI negotiator would be provided by FBI Director Robert Mueller.

The president acknowledged the arrangement. Months after the fact, on June 7, the Filipino Special Forces traced the path of the Abu Sayyaf group and their hostages in the forest on Basilan Island. Lamentably, the salvage mission wasn't totally in order: while they saved Gracia successfully, Martin passed on in the first round of a hostile exchange.

As McRaven stayed in charge of the country's hostage rescue and anti-terrorist forces over the next years, he derived further motivation to serve the American people from his memory of Martin.

In 2003, McRaven coordinated the arrest of Saddam Hussein.

At the point of his deployment to Baghdad in October 2003, McRaven had completely recuperated from his parachute mishap. His central goal in Iraq was to direct the Army special operations unit created to orchestrate the catching or elimination of the United States' Top 50 High-Value Targets – including Saddam Hussein.

In December, McRaven was flying in a C-130 military airplane when he had a particular inclination that his group was going to arrest Saddam that night. When he touched base back in Baghdad, he discovered that the Special Operations Forces C-Squadron had caught Saddam's nearby partner, Mohammad Ibrahim Omar al-Muslit, that morning. Also, al-Muslit had information that the immediate past Iraqi president was holed up in his cook's home in Tikrit.

As his troops advanced toward Tikrit, McRaven coordinated the activity 50 miles from Camp NAMA, a military domain in Baghdad. It didn't take long for the soldiers to catch Saddam's cook, Qais, in a small building codenamed Wolverine One. Be that as it may, Saddam was out of sight, and Qais claimed he was unaware of his location.

At that point, unknown to McRaven, al-Muslit guided the C-Squadron leader, Lieutenant Colonel Bill Coultrup, and Colonel Jim Hickey from the First Brigade, Fourth Infantry Division to another house up the street. Inside the house, al-Muslit tapped the wood-made floors, indicating that something could be underneath. Also, just after, the officers located Saddam Hussein hiding away in a concealed spider hole.

McRaven could hear the sound of officers' fast strides from his monitoring station, however, he couldn't see them on screen. So he called Coultrup to get information on what was happening. To everybody's joy, Coultrup told him about the news. Following a nine-month pursuit, they had caught Hussein alive.

Hussein was kept at Camp NAMA for 30 days under McRaven's control before being moved to another military center. After three years, on December 30, 2006, the people of Iraq hanged for crimes committed against humankind.

Today brutality in Iraq has not ceased. In any case, McRaven trusts that the efforts of American soldiers in dispensing with Hussein and a great many other terrorists have spared the lives of thousands more in both America and the Middle East.

McRaven coordinated and supervised the mission that eliminated Osama bin Laden.

By 2011, there had been numerous untrue leads in the chase of Osama bin Laden, the originator and afterward pioneer of the terrorist group al-Qaeda. In any case, this time, when McRaven was given the information that demonstrated a man who matched bin Laden's profile strolling around a lodging compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, something felt awry.

The CIA had three propositions for advancing to the compound. The highest priority was an attack. Furthermore, McRaven – who at this point was a three-star naval commander and the officer in charge of the Pentagon's Joint Special Operations Command – was going to coordinate it.

Poring over the choices available, McRaven reasoned that the best approach for the attack was the most straightforward: the troops would fly in with helicopters and eliminate or recover Laden in as little time as is achievable.

With President Obama's endorsement, McRaven had three weeks with his Navy SEAL troops to test what he called Operation Neptune's Spear. The practices, which occurred in a model compound, were important to make certain that the arrangement was plausible.

The practices for the attack went splendidly, and McRaven got the authority to proceed from the president. He promptly flew the SEALs and helicopter attack troops to the US Army base in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, bordering Pakistan.

From his extended period of service, McRaven understood that there was just so much he could do from his oversight position in Jalalabad. However, with his specially selected assault group, he was sure he could confide in his men on the ground.

So it did not shock him that when a vortex made by the compound's 18-foot divider made the first Black Hawk helicopter lose control, the able pilot managed to avoid a total accident and get the fighters into the compound with a hard landing.

With a subsequent Black Hawk forthcoming, the SEALs advanced into the structure. Inside, they discovered bin Laden on the third floor, protecting himself with an elderly person. The subsequent SEAL, Senior Chief Petty Officer Rob O'Neill, targetted and fired. In a short period of time, bin Laden was dead.

Soon after, the subsequent Black Hawk grabbed the ten SEALs and bin Laden's body together with some gadgets they had found in the compound. On their way back, McRaven sat in tension, trusting that the Pakistani government wouldn't intercept them, who were already mindful that something was occurring on their border.

He was relieved when the Black Hawk joined the third helicopter at a remote area to refuel immediately, and by 0330, both helicopters were securely back on Afghan soil.

McRaven's 37-year service showed him the need for teamwork, cooperation and the decency of mankind.

In August 2014, McRaven stood on a platform during his military retirement service in Tampa, Florida. Looking down at the spectators totaling 700 in number, he could see a considerable lot of the individuals who had impacted his life: fellow SEALs; colleagues from the CIA, FBI and Green Berets; and even his secondary school football coach.

After serving for almost four decades, McRaven had discovered that none of his triumphs would have been conceivable without the assistance of others. So it was proper that his last words that day started with a tale about his most significant fellow – his better half, Georgeann.

When he was a higher officer in the Naval Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program at the University of Texas, an administrative officer named Rummelhart had once called McRaven into his office. Actually, McRaven's mom had called. She was worried that he was going out with two ladies simultaneously. The officer concurred that it was a terrible action.

As humiliated as he was at the time, what the official said was valid. In the spring of 1977, when he became more acquainted with Georgeann, McRaven had been in a relationship, presumably long-distance with a lady he had met the earlier year.

McRaven ended his romantic relationship with his long-distance sweetheart and in the long run wedded Georgeann, which was the most brilliant choice of his life. In addition to mothering his three kids, Georgeann had encouraged him during the downs of his career, tended for him when he was injured, and taken on an inconceivable hardship each time he was sent away on duty. All that he had accomplished was basically not without her.

Proceeding with his discourse, McRaven contemplated the majority of his undertakings. He thought back about the lowliness of the soldiers he went to battle with and the important lessons he learned en route. From the majority of his encounters, what stood apart the most to him was that the benefit of mankind obscures its deficiencies. Despite all the contempt behind Taliban death squads or Al Qaeda torture rooms, the display of adoration made by loving mothers and noteworthy fathers on the planet would constantly be far more significant.

When the discourse was finished, Admiral Eric Olson, presently resigned, directed the exchange of the Bull Frog grant, regarding McRaven as the longest-serving SEAL on dynamic obligation. In spite of the fact that it was difficult to accept that his service as a Naval officer was now over, McRaven was certain that there would be more stories to tell.

Ocean Stories: My Life in Special Operations by William H. McRaven Book Review

From getting away from an almost-tragic helicopter crash by a hair to directing the assaults that caught Saddam Hussein and eliminating Osama bin Laden, William H. McRaven's 37 years as a maritime official and Special Operations Forces officer consisted of extraordinary undertakings. With the assistance of his fellows, McRaven was able to surmount even the most testing of conditions to become one of the most revered leaders in military history, recently. The lessons he learned en route concerns every one of us.

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