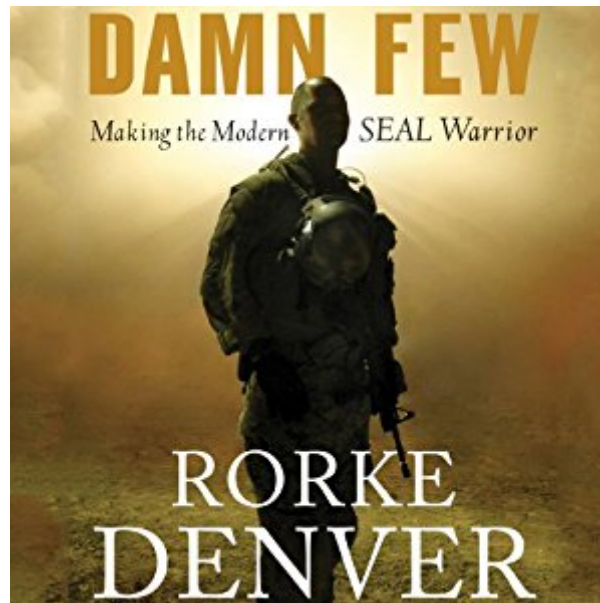


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Damn Few: Making The Modern SEAL Warrior



Synopsis

Rorke Denver trains the men who become Navy SEALs - the most creative problem solvers on the modern battlefield, ideal warriors for the kinds of wars America is fighting now. With his years of action-packed mission experience and a top training role, Lieutenant Commander Denver understands exactly how tomorrow's soldiers are recruited, sculpted, motivated, and deployed. Now, Denver takes you inside his personal story and the fascinating, demanding SEAL training program he now oversees. He recounts his experience evolving from a young SEAL hopeful pushing his way through Hell Week, into a warrior engaging in dangerous stealth missions across the globe, and finally into a lieutenant commander directing the indoctrination, requalification programs, and the "Hero or Zero" missions his SEALs undertake. From his own SEAL training and missions overseas, Denver details how the SEALs' creative operations became front and center in America's War on Terror - and how they are altering warfare everywhere. In fourteen years as a SEAL officer, Rorke Denver tangled with drug lords in Latin America, stood up to violent mobs in Liberia, and battled terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan. Leading 200 commando missions, he earned the Bronze Star with V for valor. He has also served as flag aide to the admiral in charge and spent the past four years as executive officer of the Navy Special Warfare Center's Advanced Training Command in Coronado, California, directing all phases of the basic and advanced training that prepare men for war in SEAL teams. He recently starred in the film Act of Valor. He is married and has two daughters. Ellis Henican is a columnist at Newsday and an on-air commentator at the Fox News Channel. He has written two recent New York Times best sellers, Home Team with New Orleans Saints coach Sean Payton and In the Blink of an Eye with NASCAR legend Michael Waltrip. "With all the SEALs' recent successes, we have been getting a level of acclaim we're not used to. But something important has been missing in this warm burst of publicity.... Correcting that is my mission here. "My own SEAL dream was launched by a book. My hope is that this one teaches lessons that go far beyond the battlefield, inspiring a fresh generation of warriors to carry on that dream." —Lieutenant Commander Rorke Denver

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Rorke Denver, I really enjoyed your book! I decided to read it after seeing Act of Valor and I want to take the opportunity to thank you your SEAL brothers and your family for your sacrifices. I read Mike Atkinson's review, which is, in itself, a testament to the respect your friends feel for you and your opinions. Many of the premises you have discussed are so very much like what my community, Emergency Nurses, experience. My enemy is death and disease. When faced with trauma, I feel the increase in concentration, the intensity, the slowing of time... There is nothing like practice and experience to force that muscle memory. There is pride when we are able to save a life. Grief when we cannot. It is comforting to see feelings and thoughts put into words that many of us experience, even in other, less demanding occupations. I appreciate your effort to bring to the public your story of the SEAL's. I know it gives the US comfort to know they exist. Thank you for showing the human side of the SEAL. To those wondering if they should read this book, all I can say is PLEASE DO. You won't regret it.

Some may wonder why I, a romance novelist, am reviewing *Damn Few*, a book about training America's elite warriors, the Navy SEALs. That's easy to answer. It's because I am a romance novelist. I write books wherein the male lead is always a hero: a man who does the right thing for the right reasons. I've read and reviewed quite a few military memoirs. I admire men who put themselves in harm's way for the greater good of their fellow soldiers and their country. Rorke Denver, former head of Basic and Advanced SEAL Training is one of these men. In his book, he shares his own experience as a SEAL and later as the man who directed SEAL Training, as well as his philosophical insights into the mental and emotional makeup of a candidate who successfully completes SEAL training and wins the Trident, the gold pin that is the visible symbol of being a SEAL. Of all the books I've read about Navy SEALs, this is the first that offers the perspective of an officer who was an active duty SEAL and who was the officer in charge of a SEAL team. Denver shows the hard decisions an officer must make to consider the risk and reward of every operation,

to deploy his team effectively, and to know that every decision he makes will affect not only a SEAL in his command but also the wife, children, parents, and siblings waiting stateside for that SEAL to return. Although not characterized by "war stories" of firefight after firefight, Denver's story has power that comes from the emotion and philosophy he infuses. To be perfectly honest, he had me from the first line of the dedication: "For my wife, my heartbeat." There is not a woman on this earth who would not be affected by such a declaration of love. The fact that it comes from a man's man, a warrior, just makes the sentiment more profound. There are three sections in the book: Learning It, Doing It, and Passing It On. If you've seen any of the popular television documentaries that began popping up after the rescue of Maersk Alabama Captain Richard Phillips in 2009, then you probably are familiar with the Navy SEALs BUD/s Training and Hell Week. Learning It, the first third of the book, deals with BUD/s and Hell Week in detail as well as an analysis of why some men make it, some don't, and some quit before anything really hellish even begins. The second third of the book, Doing It, covers the Peacetime Warrior era and Denver's long-awaited and eagerly-anticipated insertion into war-torn Iraq. Passing It On is the final third of the book. Denver discusses his movie role as a Navy SEAL in the movie "Act of Valor," produced by Mike McCoy and Scott Waugh and written by Kurt Johnstad who wrote the screenplay for the very successful "300," about King Leonidas and his 300 men who fought the Persians at Thermopylae. After reading the "behind the scenes" story of this movie, I plan to watch it again with an eye for the detail Denver mentions. More importantly, in this part of the book, Denver presents the challenges facing the SEAL program now when they are under pressure to produce more SEALs, as if that would be the ultimate answer to the challenges facing our country. I think it's obvious to anyone, after reading this book, and others written by SEALs, that if more SEALs are wanted, they'd better start young. The will to prevail--to never give up--is the overriding characteristic of these warriors. That is not something that can be created in an adult. It's something that is created as a child grows and is influenced by parents, by a value system that emphasizes greater good as well as a belief in one's ability to succeed, just to mention the obvious. Damn Few is a testament to heroic men who are not saints, but who are selfless in their patriotism. Perhaps more than any other group of people, SEALs recognize, as Denver says in his book: "You can do everything right, and things can still go catastrophically wrong." How tragically true. At the beginning of Damn Few, Denver quotes an early Scottish toast that seems ironically appropriate given the murder of SEAL Sniper Chris Kyle, killed by a former soldier he was trying to help. "Here's tae us / Wha's like us? / Damn few, / And they're a' dead." Damn Few will inspire, educate, and instill in you a deep appreciation for these men who are the ultimate warriors and for their willingness to make hard decisions and do the right thing.

This book was extremely fun and amazing to read. What I like about this book was how he also talks about ways on how to help people get through BUDS training, and his experience through training. Which I thought was really neat. I also like how he talks about how he knew it was for him, and how his personality is what caused him to think job was for him. I also liked how he talked about his experiences that he went through, through his many deployments as a SEAL. So I would recommend this book to anyone who is interested in becoming a Navy SEAL, and also anyone who is looking for a book that is great to read.

I have read military books since I was a young teen, but started reading books by SEALs because I felt I had challenges in my own life that seemed impossible to overcome. I wanted to learn the mindset and determination it takes to mentally (and physically) overcome these seemingly impossible obstacles and sought insight from SEAL authors because I knew that they, with the honor and integrity that I desired to model, could teach me that through their personal stories. Since that time a few years ago I have read almost every SEAL book out there and this one is SUPERB. Although he covers some material that is not new to readers of SEAL books, he does a good job discussing topics like the decision process and maturity it takes to be able to kill someone while still maintaining a sense of justice and even mercy within oneself, the current state of the SEAL teams and the struggle to balance a greater need for SEALs without sacrificing or diluting the quality of the men who become SEALs, and finally he shares personal insights about filming Act of Valor that reveal that there was only the noblest of motivations for the film's creation. As a wife and mother I'm also personally thrilled that he publicly praises his wife and even explains how he had to carefully work with an actress in the movie that wasn't his wife (I'm thankful to the author for sharing that...it actually made me respect him that much more). Of the many, many SEAL books I've read and collected this one is definitely a keeper and a treasured inspiration. My sincerest thanks and deepest gratitude to Lt. Commander Denver for sharing so much of his life and passions.

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