

Army Ranger Who Inspired 'Black Hawk Down' Returns to Mogadishu

FILM CREW FOLLOWS FIRST SOLDIERS TO BATTLE SITE

The Battle of Mogadishu, an intense fight pitting U.S. armed forces against thousands of Somalis and inspiring the best-selling book and movie *Black Hawk Down*, marks its 20th anniversary on October 3. Recently, U.S. Army Best Ranger Jeff Struecker returned with a film crew to the battle site in Somalia—**the first time ever a U.S. Ranger from this battle has returned to Mogadishu**—to retrace the route the rescue convoy took as they braved enemy gunfire to save their own.

The new short film, *Return to Mogadishu: Remembering Black Hawk Down*, is available starting tomorrow at ReturntoMogadishu.com, YouTube and Vimeo. It documents Struecker's reaction during a trip to Somalia, driving in armored vehicles through areas rarely seen by foreigners—the notorious "Bakaara Market," the two crash sites, and the streets near the original target building of the fight. Keni Thomas, a fellow former Army Ranger who fought in the Battle of Mogadishu with Struecker, accompanies him on the emotional journey.

Struecker was one of the primary inspirations for the book and subsequent movie *Black Hawk Down*. But, as he says in the short film, "*There is a great deal of killing, a whole lot of violence in the movie 'Black Hawk Down', but to be honest with you, it is a fraction of what really happened in Somalia.*"

Producer Mary Beth Minnis and independent Chicago director Matt Knighton created this film after learning the inspiring story about Struecker facing down potential death by leaning on his faith during the brutal fighting.

Return to Mogadishu offers insight into not only a battle with enemy fire, but also the inner peace a soldier found in the midst of it all.

Upon arrival in Mogadishu, Struecker said, "*Life and death became a lot less significant for me in Mogadishu.*"

About Army Best Ranger Jeff Struecker

Serving more than a decade with the 75th Ranger Regiment from Private to Platoon Sergeant, he is a decorated member of the U.S. Army's most elite fighting corps. His efforts in the Battle of Mogadishu were chronicled prominently in the national best-seller *Black Hawk Down*, which later became a major motion picture. In addition to his experience in Somalia, Struecker participated in the invasion of Panama, Operation Desert Storm, and more than a dozen combat tours in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Return to Mogadishu Film

Twenty years after the Battle of Mogadishu, Jeff Struecker, a former Army Ranger from the fight and a key character in the film *Black Hawk Down*, returns to what is still considered the most dangerous place in the world—the streets of Mogadishu—in order to relive the battle. In this attempt to retrace the exact route the rescue convoy took during the firefight, filmmakers share Jeff's firsthand story while driving through the city streets. With some of the first footage shot from inside "Bakaara Market" the film uncovers the emotions experienced by special operators during the battle, seen as Jeff wrestles with the aftermath of a place that reshaped his personal perspective on life and death.