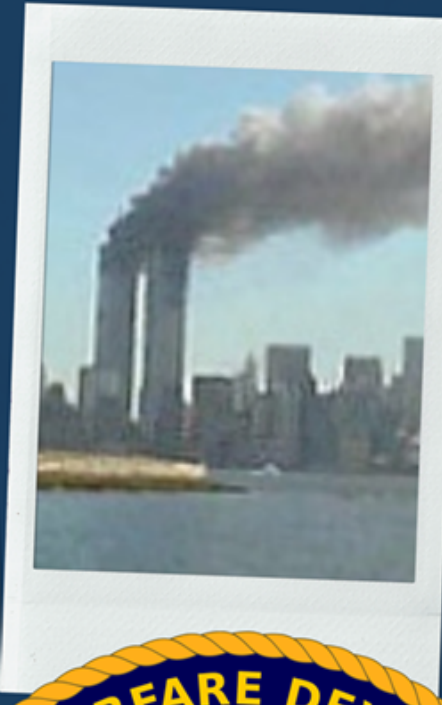


SEAL Team Six

SEAL Team Six & Osama Bin Laden

Forever Linked in History

By: **James G. Fausone**



SEAL TEAM SIX AND OBL FOREVER LINKED IN HISTORY

BY JAMES G. FAUSONE, ESQ.

The September 11 terrorist attacks changed history in many ways for Americans. Prior to 9/11, very few people knew the name Osama Bin Laden (OBL) and few people knew about [SEAL Team Six](#). After 10 years, the events of May 2, 2011 linked the two

forever.

U.S. Special Forces raided an al-Qaeda compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, on that May night and killed the world's most wanted terrorist. The entire operation lasted only 40 minutes from start to finish, and was the culmination of years of calculated planning and training.

The Mission



September 11, 2001

The mission was simple. Find and eliminate the person or persons who orchestrated the September 11 terrorist attacks. President George W. Bush gave the military a very simple mission, "get him". The President [addressed a joint session of Congress](#) on September 20, 2001, and stated in part:

"On September the 11th, enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country. Americans have known wars – but for the past 136 years, they have been wars on foreign soil, except for one Sunday in 1941. Americans have known the casualties of war – but not at the center of a great city on a peaceful morning. Americans have known surprise attacks – but never before on thousands of civilians. All of this was brought upon us in a single day – and night fell on a different world, a world where freedom itself is under attack.

Americans have many questions tonight. Americans are asking: Who attacked our country? The evidence we have gathered all points to a collection of loosely affiliated terrorist organizations known as al Qaeda. They are the same murderers indicted for bombing American embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, and responsible for bombing the USS Cole.

Al Qaeda is to terror what the mafia is to crime. But its goal is not

making money; its goal is remaking the world – and imposing its radical beliefs on people everywhere.

The terrorists practice a fringe form of Islamic extremism that has been rejected by Muslim scholars and the vast majority of Muslim clerics – a fringe movement that perverts the peaceful teachings of Islam. The terrorists' directive commands them to kill Christians and Jews, to kill all Americans, and make no distinction among military and civilians, including women and children.

This group and its leader – a person named Osama bin Laden – are linked to many other organizations in different countries, including the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. There are thousands of these terrorists in more than 60 countries. They are recruited from their own nations and neighborhoods and brought to camps in places like Afghanistan, where they are trained in the tactics of terror. They are sent back to their homes or sent to hide in countries around the world to plot evil and destruction.

The leadership of al Qaeda has great influence in Afghanistan and supports the Taliban regime in controlling most of that country. In Afghanistan, we see al Qaeda's vision for the world...

And tonight, the United States of America makes the following demands on the Taliban: Deliver to United States authorities all the leaders of al Qaeda who hide in your land. Release all foreign nations, including American citizens, you have unjustly imprisoned. Protect foreign journalists, diplomats and aid workers in your country. Close immediately and permanently every terrorist training camp in Afghanistan, and hand over every terrorist, and every person in their support structure, to appropriate authorities. Give the United States full access to terrorist training camps, so we can make sure they are no longer operating.

These demands are not open to negotiation or discussion. The Taliban must act, and act immediately. They will hand over the terrorists, or they will share their fate.

I also want to speak tonight directly to Muslims throughout the world. We respect your faith. It's practiced freely by many millions of Americans, and by millions more in countries that America counts as friends. Its teachings are good and peaceful, and those who commit evil in the name of Allah blaspheme the name of Allah. The terrorists are traitors to their own faith, trying, in effect, to hijack Islam itself. The enemy of America is not our many Muslim friends; it is not our many Arab friends. Our enemy is a radical network of terrorists, and every government that supports them.

Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated.

Who Was Osama Bin Laden



Osama Bin Laden

From the beginning, Bin Laden was atop the list of high-value targets. There were numerous al Qaeda connections. Many of the 19 hijackers had ties to al Qaeda training camps.

They had financial links, as money trails linked some hijackers to known al Qaeda financiers. The FBI and other agencies conducted a massive investigation, interviewing witnesses, analyzing flight data, and examining crime scene evidence. Recordings were found that captured the hijackers and provided clues about their plans and connections. Cooperation with international partners yielded additional information and evidence. The collected evidence painted a clear picture of al Qaeda's involvement, with Bin Laden as the presumed mastermind due to his leadership role and past attacks. The evidence was so compelling that most governments, including US allies, agreed that al Qaeda and Bin Laden were responsible. Finally in a 2004 video that he released, Bin Laden claimed responsibility for the attacks.

This begs the question of who was Osama Bin Laden. Was he a great Muslim cleric? No. Was he a great military leader? No. He evolved from a financier opposing the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan to a tactician of global terrorist acts. In March 1957, Osama Bin Laden was born in Riyadh to the aristocratic bin Laden family. His father was a billionaire construction magnate with close ties to the Saudi royal family. He is claimed to have inherited over \$25 million from his father. He studied at local universities until 1979, when he joined the Afghan mujahideen against the Soviet Union in the wake of the Afghan-Soviet War. In 1984, he co-founded Maktab al-Khidamat which recruited foreign mujahidin into the war.

He founded al Qaeda, meaning "the base", in 1988 for worldwide jihad. During the Gulf

War (1990-1991), Bin Laden's offer for support against Iraq was rebuked by the Saudi royal family, which instead sought American aid. Bin Laden's views on worldwide caliphate and anti-Americanism resulted in his expulsion from Saudi Arabia in 1991. He subsequently shifted his headquarters to Sudan until 1996 when he left the country to establish a new base in Afghanistan, where the Taliban supported him. Bin Laden declared two fatwas, the first in August 1996, and the second in February 1998, declaring holy war against the United States. He orchestrated the 1998 U.S. embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in East Africa. He was then listed on the FBI's Most Wanted Terrorists and Most Wanted Fugitives lists. In October 1999, the United Nations designated al Qaeda as a terrorist organization. In 2000, he was behind the attack on the USS Cole. This all preceded the attack on 9/11.

The Search

The 10-year search for Bin Laden was not without clues and opportunity. He was identified in May 1998 for an elimination bombing. President Clinton did not clear the attack as a mosque was nearby and civilian deaths were of concern. In the fall of 2000, President Clinton cleared a drone attack in the caves of Tora Bora but the weather interfered. In January 2001, President George Bush did not reauthorize the drone strike. Thereafter, his allies and friends assisted him in escaping to Pakistan. He would occasionally reappear in videos produced for his followers. His 2004 video took credit for the 9/11 attacks.

The US took its eye off Bin Laden and focused on Iraq. The Bush team focused on alleged weapons of mass destruction and put its energy into the Iraq war. By 2005, the CIA Alex Station which was solely focused on his movements, was closed down with no good leads. The CIA analysts called the "Sisterhood", were doggedly determined to find him. President Obama's team brought the focus back on him after taking office in 2009. By this point he had stopped using cell phones and emails, leaving no electronic footprint. The CIA analysts then focused on his communication couriers. The Guantanamo interrogations of Taliban captives lead to the name "al Kuwaiti" as a possible courier. Where did he go and could he be communicating with Bin Laden? After years of painstaking analysis, a compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan was identified. Although no positive ID on Bin Laden was made. The best information was surveillance that noted a tall man, about 6'4", walked the secured compound. President Obama made the call to work up a scenario for a team to enter the compound. President Obama gave the OK to plan a raid.

Operation Neptune Spear (15 Years After The Hunt Begins)



Four-star Admiral Bill McRaven, former commander of the U.S. Special Operations and Navy SEAL

SEAL Team Six got the call because it was stateside and available to mission train in secret. SEAL Team Six was transferred to the CIA so it could be maintained that the US military had not entered Pakistan for a military operation. Admiral McRaven was put in charge of the planning for the raid. Four-star Admiral Bill McRaven, former commander of the U.S. Special Operations and Navy SEAL, led a high-profile career – including facing Somali pirates.

McRaven of North Carolina, son of a career Air Force officer, attended the University of Texas – Austin on a ROTC scholarship. He graduated from BUD/S in 1978 becoming a Navy SEAL officer. His career is studded with success and rising responsibility. In command of Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) in 2008, McRaven set up a unit to deal with engaging female Afghans on different special operations in Afghanistan. These teams would be called Cultural Support Teams (CSTs), and once again proved the value of women in Special Operations and in combat.

CIA Director Leon Panetta delegated operational and execution decisions on the raid to McRaven, who had worked almost exclusively on counter-terrorism operations and strategy for a decade. [According to the New York Times:](#)

“In February, Mr. Panetta called then-Vice Adm. William H. McRaven, commander of the Pentagon’s Joint Special Operations Command, to CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia, to give him details about Bin Laden’s compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, and to begin planning a military strike. Admiral McRaven, a veteran of the covert world who had written a book on American Special Operations, spent weeks working with the CIA on the operation, and came up with three options: a helicopter assault using U.S. Navy SEALs, a strike with B-2 bombers that would obliterate the compound, or a joint raid with Pakistani intelligence operatives who would be told about the mission hours before the launch.”

Three years after the raid, Admiral McRaven gave a [May 2014 speech](#) about the rules of success learned at SEAL BUD/S, which starts with making your bed. That speech has been viewed on the internet over 30 million times in various versions. It was that inspirational military commander that President Obama and Director Panetta trusted with this critical mission. He retired a few months after the speech. McRaven went on to be the chancellor of the University of Texas system from 2015-2018.

Call on the SEALs

McRaven turned to the most secretive SEAL Team Six, officially known as Naval Special Warfare Development Group (DEVGRU), a highly classified counter-terrorism unit of the United States Navy. It’s part of the larger Naval Special Warfare Command. While specific details about the unit’s structure are classified, a general overview is based on available public information. Members of SEAL Team Six are drawn from the top ranks of the Navy SEALs, making it one of the most elite military units in the world.

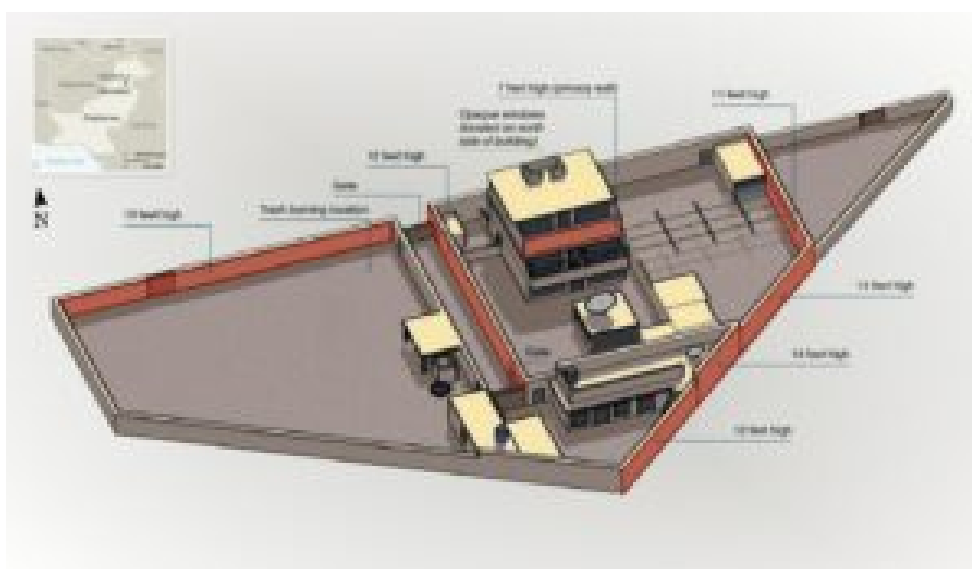
Beyond the rigorous SEAL training, members undergo extensive specialized training in counterterrorism, hostage rescue, direct action, intelligence, and other critical skills. The unit is composed of operators with a variety of roles, including assault operators; intelligence specialists; and support personnel: including medics, engineers, and communications experts. Behind the scenes, a large support staff is essential for the unit’s operations. This includes intelligence analysts, logistics specialists, and administrative personnel.

SEAL Team Six is further organized into operational squadrons, each with multiple teams. These teams are further divided into smaller assault elements. The structure is designed for flexibility and adaptability to meet the demands of various missions.

The specific composition of the SEAL Team Six unit that carried out the Bin Laden raid remains highly classified. Due to the sensitive nature of the operation, exact details about the number of personnel, their roles, and specific units involved have not been officially and publicly disclosed.

The SEAL Team Six unit chosen for the raid on Bin Laden's compound had just returned to the United States from a deployment in Afghanistan. Since they were scheduled for normal leave, the Red Squadron operators were able to train for the mission without attracting unwanted attention. The individual SEEALs were selected for their extensive experience in demanding operations and specialized skills. The Bin Laden compound was mocked up and multiple exercises were run for the operators to develop their best approach. What was unknown was the nature of the fighting force in the compound and the degree to which explosives were being deployed. The CIA final briefing was simple "Ace him if you get a shot."

The compound was a fortified building located in a relatively affluent area of Abbottabad. It was unusual for the area, with high walls, security measures, and no internet or phone lines. It was not far from the Pakistan Military Academy. This proximity raised significant questions about how such a high-value target could be hidden so close to a major military installation and would the PMA come to his defense.



Layout of the Bin Laden compound

The Raid

The Osama Bin Laden raid may be the most documented military endeavor ever undertaken by the SEALs. A close second is the 2009 rescue by SEAL Team Six, and an air combat controller, of the merchant ship MV Maersk Alabama and its Captain, from Somali pirates. Members of that team were also on the team for the raid, including the sniper who shot Bin Laden. In a 2013 film, [actor Tom Hanks plays Captain Richard Phillips](#), who was the commanding officer of the ship during the hijacking.

The raid was told in two 2012 movies "Zero Dark Thirty" and "SEAL Team Six: The Raid on Osama Bin Laden." There are probably a dozen documentaries on the internet of the raid. The portion of the story that is beyond belief is the speed and success of the

raid. They were to be on the ground for adrenaline pumping 32 minutes. It lasted 15 minutes longer as there was so much intel to gather and then they carried out the body of OBL.

SEAL Team Six, transported by helicopters, infiltrated the compound undeterred. The flight from Afghanistan into Pakistan, without notifying the latter, was a very dangerous part of the operation. The Pakistan air force could have been dispatched to take down the unauthorized helicopters. The air transport had to fly approximately 120 miles from a US airbase in Afghanistan to Abbottabad. While stealth helicopters were used on the mission it was not really a sneak attack as the arrival would have been noisy. Two specially equipped Black Hawk helicopters piloted by U.S. Army aviators transported 23 SEALs, an interpreter, and a combat dog to carry out the raid in Abbottabad, Pakistan.

The Black Hawks incorporated stealth technology and put it into use for the first time in hostile activities. A wide range of technologies were used to achieve decreased detectability; these have largely involved the reduction of several different signatures typically generated by a rotorcraft, including those of noise, radar, and infrared.

One of the amazing piloting feats at the start of the OBL raid was the crashing landing of one helicopter on the compound wall. The crash was the result of heat and dust interfering with life. A planning miscalculation, not pilot error.

The men exited the craft, Dash 1, and carried on the raid just adjusting to the unplanned landing. The SEAL team in the other helicopter, Dash 2, was initially unaware of the controlled crash. That landing led to a unique problem that the technology could not be left intact and behind. Ultimately the copter was partially destroyed by the SEALs blowing it up. However, the remains were recovered and studied by various authorities, revealing the existence of some of the stealth technology. The helicopter's most notable features are the extreme modifications to the nose, the "doghouse" where the engines and main gearbox are situated, as well as the engine intakes and exhausts. It also has a heavily modified rotor hub. All of these features appear to be designed to reduce its radar signature, especially from the critical forward hemisphere aspect.

As the team members sought entrance into the compound buildings, they met the unknown such as a fake door that was detonated revealing a brick wall. Yet, the level of security was probably less than expected. OBL had family members in the compound that they had safely lived in for years. While planning included consideration of the compound being rigged with explosives, that was not the case. It was expected that one of OBL's sons would be armed and the last line of defense on the second floor.

After returning fire, Khalid was called out in his native tongue and apparently confused as to who was coming up the stairs.

Upon looking down, he was killed by the SEALs. Eight men then searched the second floor and two went to up the third floor, still expecting a suicide bomb. As the third floor bedroom was entered, a tall man, three women and a child were encountered. Bin Laden was killed in his bedroom on the third floor of the building standing next to one of his wives. He was shot twice in the face while standing and once on the floor for certainty. Photos were taken to confirm his identity and two daughters in the compound confirmed it was OBL.

Along with OBL, three adult males which included one son Khalid, were killed in the raid. A woman was killed in the crossfire that erupted. She was the wife of the brother of the courier Abu Ahmed al-Kuwaiti who led the CIA to OBL's compound. The courier and his brother were both killed in the raid.

The SEALs recovered a significant amount of material from the compound, including computers, hard drives, papers and documents. This intelligence provided valuable insights into al-Qaeda's operations and plans. They also found bricks of raw opium which would be currency in that part of the world.

MH-47G Chinooks were used during the operation, helping to bring in a SEAL quick reaction force to the compound after a Black Hawk crashed. The Chinooks crew then joined in the effort to help load up Bin Laden's body and items of potential intelligence interest from the compound, before departing for Afghanistan. On the way out of Pakistan, the remaining Black Hawk and the Chinooks had to evade Pakistani F-16s which were sent to investigate the incursion.

OBL's body was transported to the USS Carl Vinson, where a military burial at sea was conducted in accordance with Islamic rituals. This decision was made to prevent his grave from becoming a potential shrine for his followers. The decision makers were never publicly disclosed but one assumes it was within the highest levels of the government. While the Quran does not outline rituals for sea burials generically it would include respect for the body, purity by washing the body and shrouding in white cloth, the body should face Mecca and a swift burial. However, there are no public pictures of the burial to confirm the rituals.

The Shooter – Rob O'Neill

The raid was a major victory in the global war on terror, marking the end of a decade-long manhunt for the mastermind of the September 11 attacks. Ultimately, it came down to terminating OBL with extreme prejudice. Ultimately one person pulls the trigger and ends OBL's reign of terror. The self-announced shooter was SEAL Robert

O'Neill.

O'Neill claims withstanding verbal abuse and jealousy in the Teams lead to the decision to retire early. In 2014, Senior Chief Petty Officer Robert J. O'Neill, then retired, came forward in a series of interviews with Fox News claiming to be the SEAL who killed OBL. His account of the raid and his role in it garnered significant media attention. O'Neill's narrative has since been incorporated into a memoir titled "The Operator: Firing the Shot That Killed Osama bin Laden."

O'Neill's public disclosure of the military operation has sparked considerable debate and controversy. Such as security risks by publicly discussing details of a classified operation which could potentially compromise national security by revealing tactics, procedures, and vulnerabilities. O'Neill's actions have been criticized for violating the SEAL ethos of teamwork and humility. Publicly claiming individual credit for a team-based operation can undermine unit cohesion and morale.

Given the classified nature of the operation and the SEAL community's emphasis on secrecy, independently verifying O'Neill's claims is extremely difficult. Multiple sources within the SEAL community have disputed his account, adding to the complexity of the issue. The Department of Defense has never officially confirmed he was the individual involved in killing OBL.

In a May 2022 interview, [O'Neill told Veterans Radio:](#)

“The first thing you gotta do is stop caring. I’ve had everyone hit me up with, “You didn’t kill bin Laden or bin Laden’s not even dead, or he died at whatever.” You’ve got to stop caring because at some point if you know that you have the truth on your side, there’s nothing to worry about and you’re not going to convince somebody else whatever. People that say you shouldn’t talk about your stories have no stories to tell and they’re the ones at the bar getting drunk, pissed off at someone else who has a story. You’ve got to stop caring.

The only reason I shot bin Laden was because there was a guy in front of me who’s braver than I was that went up the stairs first. He went straight and I went right. That’s it. There were two people that saw what happened and one of the one of us is dead – that’s Osama bin Laden. I can’t convince people. I don’t care, I don’t care about something you can’t change. The only thing that really gets to me you know who doesn’t get credit is the air crew. The guys that put their butts on the seats on the helicopters that we flew into Pakistan, that if a missile hit us they would be just as dead. Their job was to keep the plane flying and open the door. It’s the pilots that flew us in. It’s the women that found bin Laden. I was smart enough to carry a sledgehammer and go to where the woman Maya told me to go. That’s it.

I mean I’m to the point now where if someone says you didn’t kill bin Laden then great. Stop following me on Twitter. I don’t care. Give some respect to the people that got us there. We do this every night. Every single night I fly somewhere, I go in a house and I kill bad guys and I leave. I don’t really care. The respect needs to be given to the people behind the scenes.”

A well-known management statement is there is no “I” in TEAM. O’Neill was the shooter but not the story. The planning and execution involved dozens of people to make this mission a success. Some of those people were on SEAL Team Six and others were CIA, Air Force, Army, and civilians. In the end, the job got done and history was made.

About the Author

Jim Fausone is a **partner** with **Legal Help For Veterans, PLLC**, with over twenty years of experience helping veterans apply for service-connected disability benefits and starting their claims, appealing VA decisions, and filing claims for an increased disability rating so veterans can receive a higher level of benefits.

If you were denied service connection or benefits for any service-connected disease, our firm can help. We can also put you and your family in touch with other critical resources to ensure you receive the treatment you deserve.

Give us a call at [\(800\) 693-4800](tel:8006934800) or visit us online at www.LegalHelpForVeterans.com.

This electronic book is available for free download and printing from www.homeofheroes.com. You may print and distribute in quantity for all non-profit, and educational purposes.

Copyright © 2018 by [Legal Help for Veterans, PLLC](#)

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Heroes Stories Index

[Global War on Terror](#)

[Vietnam War](#)

[Korean War](#)

[World War II](#)

[World War I](#)

[Civil War](#)

[Spanish American War](#)

[Mexican-American War](#)

[War of 1812](#)

[American Indian Wars](#)

[Revolutionary War](#)

[Other Conflicts](#)

[All Major Military Award Recipients \(PDF\)](#)

Our Sponsors



LEGAL HELP FOR VETERANS, PLLC
(800) 693-4800

New Claims

Appeals at VA

Increased Ratings

Appeals to Court



**The Voice of America's Veterans
Since 2003**

www.veteransradio.org