

November 11, 2014

Dear Grace Church Family and Friends,

I want to tell you about this guy I know.

Matt Eversmann is my wife's cousin, the youngest son of her mother's brother, and probably the nicest person you will ever meet. Matt grew up in Virginia; and, attended Hampden-Sydney College for a while; but, college was not a good fit for him, so he left before graduation to enroll in the Army.

Competitive by nature, Matt became an Army Ranger, part of the Army's elite fighting force, capable of conducting the most complex missions, including airborne and air assault operations. Matt was an outstanding soldier and soon earned the rank of First Sergeant which gave him command of a "chalk," or, small unit of soldiers.

On October 3, 1993, Matt and his fellow rangers were serving in Mogadishu, Somalia with Operation Restore Hope, a humanitarian effort to help the Somali people. Based upon reliable information on the location of a few Somali warlords, a large task force of American soldiers, including Matt's chalk, left the U.S. compound on the outskirts of Mogadishu and headed for the center of the city in hopes of capturing the warlords

The Battle of Mogadishu, or Black Hawk Down, as it is more commonly called, lasted for the next 18 hours as the American soldiers, vastly outnumbered and surrounded by mobs of Somalis, came under fierce attack and were trapped inside the city until they were finally rescued the next day. In all, eighteen American soldiers, including some of Matt's closest friends, were killed and seventy-three were wounded.

For his courage and leadership during the battle, Matt Eversmann was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Valor device and the Combat Infantryman's Badge. He was 26 years old.

Today, we honor all the brave men and woman who served in our armed forces, willing, if need be, to give last full measure of devotion that we might live in freedom. And, we particularly want to remember the members of our own family who have served. As we honor them, though, we also pray for a future without war or battles, when God's kingdom will be on earth as it is in heaven, and we no longer must ask those we love – our children, our brothers and sisters, and our cousins – to go into harm's way.

See you in church,
Andrew

Note: If you would like to learn more about the Battle of Mogadishu, I encourage you to see the film *Black Hawk Down*. The lead character in the movie is Matt Eversmann, who is portrayed by the actor Josh Hartnett.