

0. A HORNET'S NEST - Story Preface

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From *The United States Army in Somalia 1992-1994*, released by the U.S. Army Center of Military History, this map (which appears on page 20) depicts the crash-site areas for the two Black Hawk helicopters which were hit by RPG (rocket-propelled grenades) fire on October 3, 1993 during a battle in Mogadishu. Click on the image for a better view.

When Task Force Ranger went in to south Mogadishu to weaken, or topple, Mohamed Farrah Aidid, the soldiers didn't just "stumble into a hornet's nest" of upset Somalis. Those troops were not given the military reinforcements they needed to get the job safely done.

As a result, all of their lives were put at serious risk.

To ensure the success of their mission, with as few lives lost as possible, Task Force Ranger needed the elements of surprise, superiority and strength. On 3-4 October 1993, the Rangers and Delta Force commandos were asked to do something they were not equipped to do.

The battle was intense. Somali women and children were used as shields for their own militia. They also fired guns. Hand-to-hand combat and point-blank shooting were part of the scene.

One hundred twenty Americans had been assigned to the mission. During the course of the battle, eighteen were killed and around eighty were wounded.

Many Somalis died too. Estimates vary between 1000 and 2000 casualties. Because women and children were shields and shooters (scroll down 80%), they represented about one-third of the dead and wounded.

Since two Black Hawks were down, the Rangers needed to secure both crash sites and rescue the crews. Convoys of humvees, slated to return to base with the captured warlord lieutenants, were diverted to the crash sites to pick up the dead and wounded.

Because of narrow streets, mass confusion and unreliable directions, the convoys got lost. The longer they were on the streets, the more vulnerable they were. As more and more Somalis caught up with the convoy, the Americans found themselves in the middle of a shooting gallery.

It became clear that many soldiers would not return to base that night.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/-A-HORNET-S-NEST-Black-Hawk-Down)

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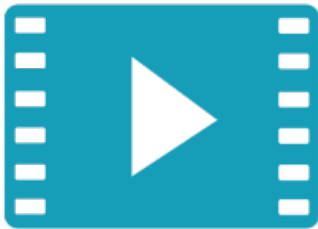
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Black Hawk Down - Historical Footage

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Black Hawk Down - Historical Footage of Street Fighting

Video clip online via YouTube.

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